

All about the Appalachian Trail by Leonard M. Adkins

Reviewed by Danny Bernstein

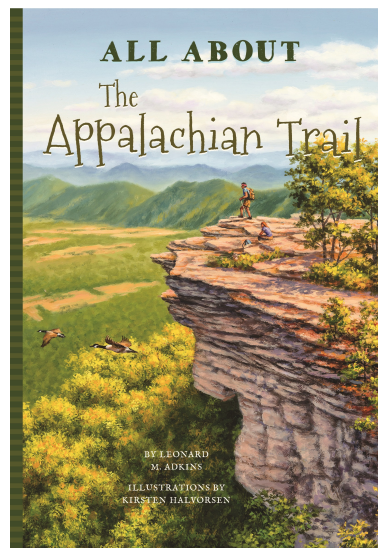
The Appalachian Trail may be the most documented trail in the world; it is certainly one of the best known. Hikers come from all over the world to walk the entire 2,190 miles. Each year, thousands of hikers attempt a thru-hike; only about one in four makes it all the way. But there are many ways to explore and sample the A.T.

All about the Appalachian Trail by Leonard Adkins is a small book aimed at the 9 to 13 year old market. Adkins explains that the trail is not just a walk through nature. It's also an introduction to American history and geology. Adults, and not just adults with children, could learn a lot from this book.

For geology, Adkins suggests that you put a throw rug flat on the floor. Then push on one side while someone holds the other side in place. That explains how the earth's surface wrinkled and the huge pile of rocks became the Appalachian Mountains.

The history of the Eastern United States can be told by examining the trail from Springer Mountain, Georgia to Mount Katahdin, Maine. On Blood Mountain, Georgia, the Cherokee and Creek tribes fought so fiercely that the mountain was covered in blood. In North Carolina, Adkins tells the story of the Trail of Tears where Cherokees and other eastern tribes were forced to march to Oklahoma in the 1830s. In Shenandoah National Park, we meet the CCC who built much of the infrastructure of the park. Further north, the A.T. goes past the first George Washington memorial in Maryland. And we push north until Mountain Katahdin in Baxter State Park; Katahdin is an Abenaki Indian word which means "greatest mountain."

After the history, the book discusses the "cool gear" needed to hike and camp on the A.T. Though children won't be buying their own gear, they may encourage their parents to get them a pack and proper footwear. So many kids and their adults hike in sandals or street shoes with just a phone in their hands – no water, snacks, or day pack.



The author talks about A.T. lore and culture including staying in hostels and shelters where you make friends on the trail. Reading this section during the pandemic was the saddest part of the book. Will shelters ever reopen officially?

Leonard M. Adkins is a veteran hiker and award winning outdoor writer. He's hiked the full length of the A.T. five times. He's written trail guides, wildflower books, and compiled historic photo books.

His book on the Blue Ridge Parkway is the most thorough I've seen.

All about the Appalachian Trail is 5 by 7 inches with exquisite line drawings. It's been published in a modest manner and lists for \$5.99. It's the book to give to your children or grandchildren – but get one for yourself to read.

Details: Published by Blue River Press, ISBN: 978-1-68157-099-0, 128 pages with 60 Illustrations, \$5.99