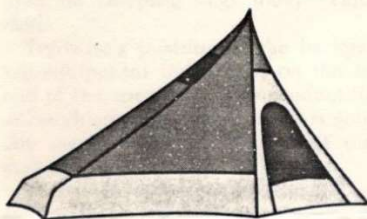


3/1/78

# GEAR SHIFTS

by Don Geary

## 4 LB. 11 OZ. COMPLETE WITH SKYLIGHT



Backpackers carry only what they need. Chances are you need our Starflight.

This light weight tent is designed beyond other 2-man tents. It's uniquely engineered for maximum headroom with plenty of floor space. It's tough too, with total rain and storm protection. We've thought of everything—even a skylight to look to the stars.

Designed for two people, the Starflight is light enough for solo trips. And a great value pound for pound.

All our products carry Life Time Seam Protection Guarantee. Inspect our tents at specialty wilderness shops or write for the name of your nearest dealer: Sierra Designs, 247 Fourth Street, Oakland, CA 94607.



## SIERRA DESIGNS STARFLIGHT

CIRCLE 24 ON READER SERVICE COUPON

□ Have you ever wondered about the companies that design, make and sell backpacking equipment? Who started them, how did they get started, and where are they going, design wise, in the industry? Several months ago I started asking a few of these questions; I was quite surprised at the responses I received. Most equipment makers, as it turns out, are quite accessible and willing to talk about their company. There are a number of interesting stories to be told and what follows are but two. They seem to be fairly representative of the industry.

Of the two companies, one is older and well-established and the other fairly new. The first company is Trailwise of Berkeley, California, and the second is Hine/Snowbridge of Boulder, Colorado.

Trailwise began as a company back in 1951, spawned out of a retail backpack shop called the Ski Hut, in Berkeley. The owner of the Ski Hut, George Rudolf, was at that time one of the few adventurers who liked to climb mountains and camp in the woods for days on end. He wanted to spread this spirit to other people; in 1935 he opened the Ski Hut.

Obviously, backpacking retail stores were a rarity in those days; the Ski Hut being one of the few, it attracted the best mountaineers in the country. Rudolf soon discovered, however, that the gear available on the market was lacking sophistication in numerous areas. Specifically, weight consideration. Consequently, Trailwise was born in 1951.

Initially, Trailwise production was reserved exclusively for the Ski Hut retail store and mail order operation. Since then, however, distribution has in-

creased to over 350 dealers nationwide.

Seven years ago, Trailwise and Ski Hut were in the same building, with the companies owned by George Rudolf. As Trailwise grew, distribution increased to include the western half of the United States, with two or three accounts in the East. In 1973, Saska Sports Industries purchased Ski Hut and Trailwise from George Rudolf. No changes were made in retail or manufacturing or in the quality of Trailwise products. The next change occurred in September 1976 when Richard C. Munson (who was kind enough to supply much of the information for this article) became the general manager of Trailwise. The latest change occurred in July 1977, when Boss Manufacturing (of Kewanee, Illinois) purchased Saska Sports Industries and its operating divisions.

The following is a capsule history of Trailwise and its products.

1951 The name Trailwise was first registered as a legal trademark.

1952 Trailwise introduces a baffled sleeping bag.

1953 Trailwise introduces the first yoke suspension system for packs.

1954 Trailwise introduces the first contoured aluminum packframe.

1955 A big year. Trailwise introduces the padded yoke for packs, the first nylon baffling material for bags and a bag side zipper for improved thermal qualities. About this same time, Trailwise introduced a Dacron-filled bag.

1956 A daring introduction, the first zip-together sleeping bags.

1958 For added strength and safety, Trailwise introduces the exclusive eyebolt and rivnut system to packframes. Trailwise also introduces the 1.5-ounce

## Equip TIP

I had the opportunity to try a new type of beef jerky recently, and I found it to be quite different and very tasty. Actually, the name beef jerky really does not do justice to this new light-weight food—dried beef steak is closer to the mark. This new dried meat is made by the Minaret Mountain Food Company (3569 South Santa Fe Drive, Sheridan, CO 80110), and it is called Top Round Steak—Applewood Smoked.

Based on the philosophy that the end product is dependent on the raw material, the folks at Minaret Mountain Food Company start with top round beef steak

tips. They then slice it thinly, season it with natural herbs and spices and smoke it over an applewood fire until dried to a 12 percent moisture content. The end result is a form of beef jerky that is surprisingly tender and flavorful.

There are no preservatives added to this dried beef steak—just salt, natural spices and the steak. Because there are no preservatives to extend the shelf life of the steak, each package is dated for freshness and should be used before the expiration date (usually about two months from the date it was packaged).

Minaret Mountain lists all nutritional information on request.

The steak is available in pre-packaged sizes and in bulk. The makers have a mail order service, in case this new steak is not available in your area yet.

Even if you don't like beef jerky you will probably enjoy this smoked steak. ■

SEE NEXT PAGE

French Nylon for sleeping bags.

1959 For more efficient distribution of load, Trailwise introduces the full circle hipbelt. For greater thermal conservation, Trailwise introduces the first sleeping bags with "V" chevron baffling and half offset tubing, soon to become the Trailwise trademark.

1960 Trailwise introduces Zeta cloth, the forerunner of Tenaya.

1962 Trailwise introduces the first full mesh packframe back panel for unexcelled ventilation and evaporation.

1967 Trailwise introduces the strongest, lightest, most water resistant fabric used on sleeping bags today—Tenaya cloth.

Trailwise's position in the backpacking equipment industry is on the high end of the spectrum. The product line, although competitively priced, is generally more expensive than most other maker's lines.

Several of today's manufacturers, such as the North Face, Sierra Designs and Class 5 got their start at Ski Hut/Trailwise in the early and mid 60's.

Hine/Snowbridge is a relative newcomer to the backpacking equipment industry. But, since the company's beginning in 1972, the names Hine/Snowbridge and Kirtland/Tourpak have established strong reputations in a highly competitive market. Hine/Snowbridge was started by two brothers, Ted and Greg Hine. Their basic premise was to build a backpacking equipment company which would specialize in one item—packs. In 1972, it would have been financial suicide to jump into the highly competitive backpacking equipment market with a complete line of gear (sleeping bags, backpacks, tents, clothing and other items).

"As we were entering the market we needed an edge," recalls Ted. "We just couldn't do something well; we had to do it better. The only way I figured that we could do a better job than our established competition was to specialize in one area and outflank the competition, and we chose packs."

It wasn't until 1970 that Ted and Greg seriously started designing camping equipment. "That was the year we went to Canada," recalls Greg. "Being a student at the time I didn't have a lot of money to buy equipment, so I designed and made some of my own."

After both Ted and Greg graduated from the University of Colorado (Ted in 1969 and Greg in 1971), they both went their separate ways. Ted, with his business degree, joined a recreation firm in Boulder, while Greg, with a degree in Environmental Biology, joined the National Park Service as a Ranger. Greg started working at Mount Rainier in June of '71 and transferred down to Yosemite for the following winter.

It was in the winter of 1971 at Yosemite that Ted and Greg met up again

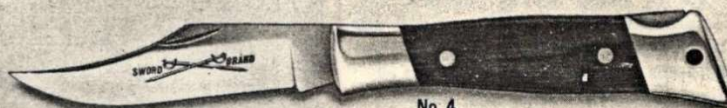
# Lok\* Backs

from  
CAMILLUS

No. 2  
Size closed:  
3 1/8 in.



No. 3  
Size closed:  
4 1/8 in.



No. 4  
Size closed: 4 3/4 in.

Camillus LOK\*BACKS come in 3 sizes, each with etched blade of high-carbon stainless steel that automatically locks in open position, and hand-contoured wood handle. No. 2 bolsters are solid nickel silver... No. 3 and 4 are solid brass. Gift packaged with top-grain leather pouch.

Available at your local sporting goods or hardware dealer. For complete catalog, send \$1.00 to:



**CAMILLUS CUTLERY COMPANY**

(K&MILL-us)

Dept. AD, Camillus, New York 13031

CIRCLE 3 ON READER SERVICE COUPON

## NEW from CLEAR CREEK Mt. Shasta Tent

sleeps 4 people - weighs 9 lbs.



- 6' interior height
- 3 zippered windows and large front door—all backed with mosquito netting
- Shock-corded aluminum poles
- External tripod design combines maximum stability with unobstructed interior space

**Clear  
Creek**

Everything (tent, poles & rainfly) packs into an 8" x 20" stuffsack

RETAILERS AND OUTFITTERS:  
Write for dealer information.

14361 Catalina St. • San Leandro, CA 94577

CIRCLE 34 ON READER SERVICE COUPON

SPRING 1978 / 17



We put  
our high standards  
at your feet.



### The Danner Philosophy

At Danner, we're fighting a tough battle. In times like these when real quality seems to be a thing of the past, we're holding out to preserve our high standards. And it's not easy.

But because we insist on making the finest boots possible, we don't cut corners.

Our boots have thick quality leather insoles for greater comfort and longer wear. Our uppers are cut and sewn from the highest grade leather, and we think you'll find they'll last longer than any boot you've ever worn.

At Danner, we don't believe in mass producing our boots, or compromising our quality. And that's the way we've done business for over 40 years.

Drop us a line for the name of your nearest dealer.



Danner Shoe Mfg. Co., P.O. Box 22204, Portland, OR 97222

CIRCLE 35 ON READER SERVICE COUPON

### Three Week Wilderness Adventure

BACKPACKING  
WHITE WATER RAFTING  
MOUNTAINEERING



WRITE: COLORADO ADVENTURING  
BOX 293C, WESTCLIFFE, COLORADO 81252  
PHONE 303/783-2763

CIRCLE 5 ON READER SERVICE COUPON

18 / BACKPACKING JOURNAL

and conceived the idea of Hine/Snowbridge.

The Hine Brothers moved into an office in downtown Boulder, above a fabric shop in June of 1972. The company stayed there for 11 months while the first packs were being designed, materials were being purchased and contracts were being made. Hine/Snowbridge moved to their first production facility in May 1973.

"It was 2,500 square feet, sub-leased from the garage on the other side of the wall," says Greg. "We started with one sewing machine, then two, and I can remember how excited we were when we received our third and fourth machine. Then came our first leather cutting "clicker" press. When we signed the five-year lease on the building we knew we were finally committed."

In the first year, except for some contract work, Hine/Snowbridge made only rucksacks and day packs, but at the start of the second year another line of packs began to evolve.

"We had initially looked at bicycling packs," Greg said, "but in 1972 the market just had not matured enough. Because I was living largely on my savings, I had chosen to live in Lafayette and commute into Boulder everyday. On the better days, I would ride my bicycle to our plant—11 miles each way. Of course my interest in bicycling continued to grow until eventually, during the summer of 1973, we decided to produce a whole new line of packs for our company—bicycle touring packs. After much experimenting and several different designs, we developed a new line of bicycle touring packs in the spring of 1974—the Kirtland/Tourpaks. There have been many improvements since then, but the original two Kirtland/Tourpak models have remained basically the same, even today."

By the summer of 1974, the interest in bicycle touring had started to grow in the United States, and the Kirtland/Tourpak line was well received.

Instead of selling their new product line under the Hine/Snowbridge label, the Hine brothers chose to market a new name: Kirtland/Tourpak.

"It was a risky decision," recalls Greg, "marketing two product lines and two labels through two different kinds of dealers from only 2,500 square feet. It probably goes against every tenet one learns in business school. But we felt that the growing bicycle touring market needed a fresh image and a new name. In retrospect, it was one of the best decisions we made."

In the years since, Hine/Snowbridge has grown to the point where it now produces over 30 different models of packs and employs over 60 people in two plants. The Hine/Snowbridge and Kirtland/Tourpak lines are currently being sold through hundreds of specialty sporting goods shops nationwide. ■