that his death was there, but it is hard to accept that such a vital friend is no longer with us.

EARL W. HAMILTON

HELEN I. BUCK
1884-1972

This year the Club lost a most distinguished member, Helen I. Buck, known and loved by generations of American mountaineers. Many climbers, foreign and American, came to know this cheerful, knowledgeable, modest woman in the years after her retirement when she was librarian at the Clubhouse, but few knew the extent of her own climbing. She was not only the outstanding American woman mountain climber of her generation (as Miriam Underhill was of the generation following) but the Carl V. Carlsen outstanding American woman athlete.

Helen I. Buck was born in Manchester, N.H., near the Uncanoonuck hills. Perhaps in imitation of her four older brothers she quickly developed her interest in active sports. By 1905, when she was graduated from Mt. Holyoke College, her athletic feats were known across the country, for she broke several world records for women in track and field.

The Boston Post of June 19, 1905, for instance, wrote, “Swift as Atalanta, mighty as an Amazon, is Miss Helen Buck, president of the graduating class at Mt. Holyoke College, and probably the greatest woman athlete in the world.” There is no doubt that if there had been participation by women in the Olympic Games of that period, she would have won gold medals and become world famous.

After her graduation she became a teacher at Staten Island High School, and later at Bay Ridge High School and Washington Irving High School in New York. During this career, her love for mountains, mountain travel and mountain friends was paramount, and she climbed in many areas. Though less well known than Mrs. Bullock Workman, Dora Handy or Annie Peck, she was a far more experienced climber. For instance, she climbed in the French, Swiss, Italian and Austrian Alps, in the Pyrenees, and in Wales and the Lake District in England. She was apparently the first American woman to climb the three peaks of Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn and the Jungfrau. She made many climbs in Colorado, ascended Popocatépetl and Ixtaccíhuatl in Mexico, and made one of the early climbs of Mount Robson in the Canadian Rockies, an area to which she was especially attached. She was the first woman to climb Mount Edith Cavell, and with two fellow members of the Club (Dr. A. J. Gilmour and N. D. Waffl) made the difficult first ascent of Mount Sir Alexander. In order to reach the foot of the mountain in 1929, the party had to pack in on horses 148 miles. Only three of the party of seven eventually reached the summit, and that at 5 P.M. after twelve hours of continuous climbing!
She made many lesser first ascents, but she is better known to her climbing friends for her services to American mountaineering. The Club library, for instance, is a monument to Helen Buck. It was through her efforts that Henry Montagnier left his library to the American Alpine Club, where it became the nucleus of the greatest library on American mountaineering in the world. Thanks to her development of this collection, mountaineers came to consider the Club as the safest and most enduring place to entrust the records of the mountaineering past to the future. The Club museum was also one of her basic concerns. She aided Dr. Thorington by cataloguing this historic collection, which with the library has proved a most useful research facility for a range of users from writers like James Ramsey Ullman to wartime analysts of mountain operations.

The number of young people, foreign climbers, would-be expeditionaries and experienced mountaineers who benefited from Helen Buck’s warm and encouraging advice at the Clubhouse is far larger than most people realize. She never lost her enthusiasm for life and she continued walking in the hills and travelling well into her eighties. She was a mountaineering friend par excellence, and those of us who were fortunate to know her well shall never forget her.

ROBERT H. BATES

GEORGE H. RILEY
1912-1972

George Riley died in Philadelphia on April 22, 1972, at the age of 60. He was born on his parents’ farm near Newtown, Bucks Co., in 1912, graduated from Richboro High School and took courses at the Palmer Business School. For a time he was a reporter for the Daily Intelligencer, Doylestown. He joined the staff of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin in 1930 and was a police reporter for several years. After World War II he was assigned to the Church and Education Department and became religious editor in 1957. He had an extensive knowledge of church matters of all denominations and covered many religious conventions throughout the country. This knowledge and a genial, outgoing manner made him close friends in the Bulletin staff, by whom he was known as the “Deacon” or the “Bishop.” For many years he was a lay reader in the Episcopal Church. He never married.

His interest in outdoor life began in boyhood. He hiked in the Neshaminy area and, in 1939, ascended Longs Peak in Colorado. Whenever time permitted he would take off for the high places, his car jammed with blankets, camera, ropes and climbing gear, a frequent companion being our late member Victor Fritz. In 1940 he attended the camp of the Alpine Club of Canada and climbed one of the peaks of Mount Lyell.

During World War II he served in the U.S. Mountain Troops, training with the 87th Mountain Infantry in the Leadville, Colo., area. He