

# Climbs and Expeditions

*It is obvious that this section could not be compiled without the help of many others than the Editorial Board. We are very grateful to all of those who have assisted us. We can not possibly mention here all who have done so much, but we do wish to thank especially Dr. Adolf Diemberger, Michael Cheney, Soli S. Mehta, Kamal K. Guha, Ichiro Yoshizawa, Tsunemichi Ikeda, José Paytubi, César Morales Arnao, Vojslav Arko, Mario Fantin, Lucien Devies, Marek Brniak, Andrzej Kuś, Ken Wilson, David Edmundson, Ramón Bramona Rams and Anders Bolinder.*

## UNITED STATES

### Alaska

*Climbing in Mount McKinley National Park.* On Mount McKinley 1977 was a pleasantly quiet year. After the large number of climbers and the many accidents of 1976, it was a relief that the situation was more settled. Nearly 150 fewer climbers registered, but the number of successful ascents of McKinley were nearly as high as the year before. With another season of exceptionally good weather, an amazing 79% of those who attempted McKinley were successful. Mount Foraker was climbed by only 48% of those who attempted it. It is not an easy mountain by any route. There were fine climbs in 1977. Two climbers put up a new route on the south face of Foraker after completing a difficult new route on the north face of Mount Hunter. (See article.) The Southwest ridge of Foraker was climbed for the first time. (Also see article.) The original ascent route on Foraker, the west ridge, was climbed for the second time. On Mount McKinley two new variations were made on the south face. A Japanese party climbed the Centennial Wall via a more difficult route, to the west of the original route up to 16,000 feet. A Canadian-American party made a variation of the West Rib. The West Rib was climbed solo by the German, Ruprecht Kammerlander, whose party of four originally registered for the Cassin route but split soon after reaching the mountain. The 1963 route on the East Buttress was climbed for the second time by William Dimpfl, Michael Syvanen, Richard Meinig, Urs Kühnlein and Peter McGann. One Japanese and three American guide services led a total of nine expeditions and 86 climbers to the summit of McKinley, all by the West Buttress. Only five climbers required emergency evacuation this year, a dramatic decline

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NOTE: All dates in this section refer to 1977 unless otherwise stated.

from the 33 of 1976. Two were injured in a fall on Foraker in March and evacuated by commercial helicopter. On McKinley a Japanese suffering from high-altitude pulmonary edema was evacuated by military helicopter, an American with torn knee ligaments by airplane from 14,000 feet and a Japanese with a broken leg by airplane from 9000 feet. For the first time, in 1977, the National Park Service stationed two mountaineering rangers in Talkeetna for the climbing season. The rangers checked groups in and out, advised climbers on the hazards of high-altitude arctic mountaineering and helped coordinate rescues. In addition they carried out two ten-day patrols on the West Buttress up to 17,000 feet. They were able to assist three injured climbers who did not need air evacuation. We feel this was very successful and, budget permitting, we shall continue to have them in the future. All interested climbers are reminded that to climb on Mount McKinley or Mount Foraker you must register in advance with the National Park Service, PO Box 9, McKinley Park, Alaska 99755, submit a signed physician's certificate for each climber, carry a two-way radio on your climb and check in on your return. For smaller peaks, you are only required to register in advance. All trash, equipment and unused food must be removed from the Park. If you carry it up the mountain, you can carry it back down.

Mount McKinley was ascended by the following numbers: West Buttress by 125; Muldrow Glacier by 32; Cassin Ridge by 8; South Face by 5; West Rib by 23; East Buttress by 5. Mount Foraker was climbed by the following: South Face by 2; Southeast Ridge by 4; Southwest Ridge by 4; West Ridge by 6. Other mountains had the following number of climbers: Silverthrone by 4; Brooks by 2; Scott Peak by 7.

ROBERT GERHARD, *National Park Service*

*Mount McKinley, New Start on the American Direct Route, South Face.* A Japanese expedition led by Kichitaka Kimura and composed of Ms. Tamae Watanabe, Yuji Tsuneto, Mitsuo Yamaura and Yushichi Senda made a new direct start on the direct route of the Centennial Wall and joined the American route of 1967 some 3300 feet up the wall. They climbed the lower 1000 feet on June 23. A fall into a crevasse the next day luckily had no ill effects. Camps were placed at 13,800, 14,750 and 16,400 feet on June 30, July 4 and 9. The whole party set out from Camp III on July 13 and reached the summit the next day after a bivouac. Further details and a marked photograph are found in *Iwa To Yuki*, 59, of February, 1978.

*Soviet Climbers on Mount McKinley.* On May 15 Reilly Moss and I arrived in Anchorage with Soviet mountaineers of the American Alpine Club exchange program, Eduard Myslovski, leader, Vladimir Shatayev,

Sergei Efimov, Valia Ivanov, Oleg Borisenok and Alexei Lebedihin. We were finally flown to the Kahiltna Glacier on May 20. On May 21 we established Base Camp at 8500 feet on the northeast fork of the Kahiltna. On May 24 Shatayev, Efimov, Borisenok and Lebedihin began climbing Mount McKinley by the Western Rib route. The following morning Myslovski and Ivanov started up the Cassin route, while Moss and I started up the prominent ridge west of the Western Rib with Canadians Pat Morrow and Bernard Ehmann. (See their account below.) The Western Rib team reached Denali's summit on the afternoon of May 28, having placed camps at 10,500, 12,000, 15,360 and 17,800 feet. They descended the West Buttress, returning to Base Camp on May 30. The pair on the Cassin route ran into slightly more difficulty. Myslovski and Ivanov placed camps at 10,500, 11,100, 12,000, 12,600, 13,950, 15,600 and 17,100 feet, reaching the summit on June 1. They descended the West Buttress to Base Camp on June 2. Moss and I were separated from the Canadians Morrow and Ehmann halfway up our route by bad weather. We completed the rib in six days and returned to Base Camp on May 31. After climbing Denali, Efimov and Borisenok climbed a very difficult ice route on the northwest ridge of P 10,450 on June 1 while Shatayev and Lebedihin climbed Mount Crosson. We all returned to Talkeetna on June 5.

MICHAEL HELMS

*Mount McKinley, New Route Variant on the Southwest Flank.* Bernhard Ehmann and I climbed the prominent snow and ice rib which rises from the northeast fork of the Kahiltna Glacier three miles from its junction with the main glacier. The rib ascends in 60 roped pitches of mixed snow, rock and ice, from 9500 to 13,500 feet at a point opposite Windy Corner on the West Buttress route. Mixed rock and snow gave way to a 35° snow rib up which we plowed for 15 pitches to one of the few naturally suited bivouac sites at about 11,000 feet, immediately above a short steep ice pitch. At midday on the second day we climbed a series of pitches in a delicate corniced section, which offered the greatest objective danger on the entire rib. Belays were ineffective in the unstable honey-combed snow. Several pitches of ice culminated in a 60° ice ramp which joined the gently sloping glacier above. We continued climbing through the night, hoping for a bivouac spot and finding a frigid one in a partially filled schrund several pitches from the top at 4:30 A.M. In the middle of the third day we trudged across the upper Kahiltna Glacier to intercept the well broken West Buttress trail at about 13,600 feet. We paralleled the upper West Rib to the left of it in a 6000-foot couloir to reach the summit on May 20. Mike Helms and Reilly Moss repeated our route a couple of days later.

PATRICK MORROW, *Calgary Mountain Club*



PLATE 61

*Photo by Patrick Morrow.*

Bernhard Ehmann at 12,500 feet on a new route between the Kahiltna Glacier and the West Buttress route on Mount McKinley.

*Mount McKinley, New Routes on the Southwest.* In addition to the route described above by Patrick Morrow, our CLOD expedition made several climbs. Jon Jones soloed the West Buttress from 14,200 feet on June 9 and 10. Roger Marshall and Dave Reid climbed the Western Rib from May 28 to June 4 and Eckhard Grassman and Allan Derbyshire climbed the upper part in 11 hours from 16,000 feet on June 10. Morrow and Ehmann made the second ascent of Messner's couloir on June 8 and 9. The two new routes were as follows: *Southwest face*, 8500-foot-high (from 11,100 to 19,600 feet). This route climbs the upper 5500 feet of the face, using the first 3000 feet of the Western Rib route to avoid the hanging glacier in the centre of the face. (A diagonal start from the head of the northeast fork of the Kahiltna Glacier to the Western Rib at around 14,000 feet was done by Wickwire in 1971, and a separate, direct start up the 3000-foot rock-and-ice wall to the immediate left of the Cassin Ridge may be possible, but this whole lower area of the southwest face is exposed to immense avalanches.) Apart from a short rock step at 15,700 feet and 100 feet of rock at 19,500 feet, the climbing was mostly on snow or ice at angles similar to those encountered in the initial Western Rib Couloir, i.e. 40° to 50° (not 50° to 60° as indicated in the *Mt. McKinley Climber's Guide* published by Alaska Alpine Co.). From the flat crest of the Western Rib at 14,000 feet, angle up and right, then traverse between two prominent bergschrunds to reach the crest of a subsidiary rock rib at 15,000 feet, about 2000 feet right of the Western Rib (possible campsite). Follow the crest of the rib past a short rock-and-ice step at 15,700 feet, till it blends with a snow-and-ice slope at 16,200 feet (possible campsite). There are two prominent, large boulders in this area: one 300 feet to the left of the top of the rib and the other 300 feet above the rib (possible campsite under the higher boulder at 16,500 feet). Now angle up and right across mixed slopes to the base of a steep rock buttress at 17,000 feet. Follow the upper edge of the hanging glacier in the centre of the southwest face, at first horizontally right, then diagonally up right to its apex at 17,800 feet. (Possible bivouac in bergschrund.) (A very prominent, wide couloir leads up off the lower right side of the hanging glacier towards the Cassin Ridge. This is not the route.) From the apex of the hanging glacier, move right across a rock shoulder into a steep, shallow couloir. From this point to the plateau at 19,600 feet, there are probably several possible routes linking various couloirs separated by rock outcrops. The most prominent skyline feature is a long, square-cut cornice with a huge block at its right end. Aim to emerge from the face to the immediate right of this feature where a shallow rock-and-ice chimney at 19,500 feet leads to the plateau at 19,600 feet, about half a mile from the summit. Jon Jones, Eckhart Grassman, Allan Derbyshire and I did this route from May 27 to June 3. *McClod's Rib*: on the west face, the 4500-foot-high rib left of the Messner Couloir, which I climbed solo (the rib only) on June 10. (14,700 to 19,200 feet.)

Seen from the 14,200-foot camp on the West Buttress route, the west face of McKinley is dominated by a prominent, central couloir. There is a small icefall at its base and it is pinched in the centre by two rock buttresses before fanning out into a huge snow-and-ice bowl. Both this couloir and the narrower one to its right, close to the Western Rib, have been climbed previously. McClod's Rib, the third route on the west face, defines the left edge of the central couloir. Half a mile up from the 14,200-foot camp, work past several bergschrunds below and to the left of the icefall to gain access to the face. For the first 2000 feet, the rib is barely defined as a few rock outcrops, protruding from a broad, 40° to 50°, snow-and-ice face. At 16,700 feet, a steep, rock buttress is bypassed on the left by a wide couloir which trifurcates several hundred feet higher. Take the right branch (up to 60°) to regain the crest of the rib. This is now followed by straightforward, mixed climbing, till it merges with the face a few hundred feet below the summit ridge, where the route emerges at 19,200 feet, about a mile from the summit of the South Peak.

A full report will appear in the *Canadian Alpine Journal*.

BUGS MCKEITH, *Canadian Alpine Club*

*Foraker, Second Ascent of West Ridge.* On June 24 Spencer Fulweiler, Bob Garmirian, Chris Niles, Mark Siks, Bruce Underwood and I were dropped off at the Purkey Pile landing strip, just west of the McKinley Park boundary. We were hoping to climb the northwest ridge of Mount Foraker, but a closer look at the ridge from Clark Engle's plane and the recurrence of an old knee injury which meant that Bob Garmirian had to be hiked out after the first few days of load-carrying convinced us to try something easier. We chose to attempt a repeat of Houston's first-ascent route, the west ridge (see *A.A.J.*, 1935), which would also mean a shorter distance to carry out gear. More than two weeks later, we had enough gear at the bottom of the ridge to give us a good shot. Our first few days of climbing, up to Camp II at 8900 feet, went well, up a steep, narrow snow ridge, and around a crumbly rock pinnacle. But a week-long snowstorm, now and then with lightning, kept us at Camp II for eight nights, where we contented ourselves with one or two rope-lengths of progress on the better days and watched our food run low. Finally on July 20, it cleared enough to let us put our third camp at 11,700 feet, after the prettiest section of the climb, over and around cornices on the main section of the ridge. We made extensive use of snowshoes there. Next we slogged up the steep section close to the great icefall at Foraker's west end and set up camp at 14,200 feet. Our luck held long enough for us to grab the next day of good weather. We reached the summit at 5:30 A.M. on July 24, seven-and-a-half hours after leaving camp. On the descent, we had difficulty below Camp II, where the snow had melted and left ice. We had removed the fixed ropes

to use them again up to Camp III and then burned them to save weight. The greatest danger of the climb was crossing the Swift Fork River, where we nearly lost Chris and Bruce, but we all made it safely back by the evening of August 1.

CHARLES B. MORGAN

*Foraker, Southeast Ridge.* Günther Fluhrer, Herbert Karasek, Dr. Fritz Weidman and I climbed Foraker's southeast ridge alpine-style, following the 1963 route, from Base Camp on the west side of the Kahiltna Glacier. Camp I was above the toe where the traverse begins and Camp II nearly at the same spot as in 1963. The upper part of the steep ice slope and hanging glacier below Camp II provided some interesting ice climbing. There was a big schrund all across the slope. We could get around it at the right end, but we got exciting ice-climbing up an almost vertical snow wall and climbing on a very steep, sharply corniced rotten snow spur below a wide cornice. After eleven hours we dug a snow cave for Camp II. On July 26 the weather was beautiful and we found it reasonable to try for the summit. A steep, blue-ice slope took us to the sharply corniced ridge, which we followed endlessly, reaching the summit at seven P.M. On the descent, at the beginning of the ridge, where it is still wide, we suddenly found ourselves in thick fog. Around ten P.M. we had to dig in where we were. We had to stay there for three nights as the storm raged on. Our food ran low. On July 28 there was sunshine and bitter cold and we were able to descend.

HERMANN HUBER, *Sektion Bayerland, Deutscher Alpenverein*

*P 12,380.* This peak lies between Hunter and McKinley. On May 11, after two previous attempts and a barrage of rotten weather, Chuck Sink, Mal Ulrich and I ascended a large couloir on P 12,380's south face and joined the southwest ridge at a col. Snow-covered ice and rock outcrops on the ridge led to the top. Our 22-hour first ascent and descent were followed by several days of more inclement weather.

ALAN KEARNEY

*Silverthrone Attempt.* With eight days of food and minimal gear Bruce Hickok and I left Wonder Lake for Silverthrone. We used tennis shoes and wet-suit socks to cross the mile-wide McKinley River, which provided us expected excitement. In three days we were at the 10,000-foot Silverthrone col. Our summit was lost 200 feet below it when we were avalanched, luckily extricating ourselves. Poor weather came in and we got no further chance. We walked the last 35 miles to Wonder Lake in 27 hours.

JAMES HALE, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*Mount Hunter, Southeast Spur of South Face.* Our expedition was composed of Lincoln Stoller, William Nicholson,\* David M. Sweet and me.\* We succeeded in climbing about one-third of the ridge before acknowledging defeat. The decision to withdraw was reached after we had coped with extremely bad weather, difficult climbing conditions, lack of suitable campsites and finally a 400-foot rock wall overhang. The latter would have required direct-aid and free climbing of the highest degree of skill, even by warm-weather Yosemite standards. Had the weather been more stable, the rock face in better condition and the descent more promising, and had sufficient rope been available to fix a rope, the wall might have been climbed.

PETER METCALF

*Peaks in "Little Switzerland."* As far as I know, Roger Robinson, Ken Cook and I are the only climbers to have been in "Little Switzerland," which lies within the big bend of the Kahiltna. On July 19 & 20 we climbed P 8130 ("The Royal Tower") by the east face and northeast ridge. Though the weather was unsettled, the first 1000 feet went quickly as the bergschrund and runneled face presented no problems. Luckily so, for as we gained the rock, the entire face below was involved in one big mushy snow dance, celebrating the coming of the sun! The first two belayed pitches led up a narrow steepening ice gully which was plagued by falling rocks, anxious to join the dance below. At the end of the ice, Ken Cook changed to EBs and began to show us what a Californian rock climber really was. He moved lightly up over some loose blocks and seemed to float up a slimey, wet, vertical section to where the real climbing began. Grunts, groans and excited laughter fell our way and at any moment we expected that Ken might fall our way too. He cursed because of cold hands, of leaving needed hardware behind and of the fact that he should have aided sections; we tried to set up a better belay as his voice became more and more desperate. Eventually Ken gained the ridge and was off-belay. Pitch three had gone free at F10. We continued up enjoyable F7 to F8 cracks, crystals and dimples, wandering here and there up the rock band. Ken found friction-climbing up ice patches in EBs challenging. The eighth pitch got us above the rock band and onto mixed ground along a narrowing ridge. We again donned crampons and ice gear and continued toward the summit in puffy clouds. The summit icefields, which had looked steep and horrendous from below took on an easier nature as we climbed across them to reach the summit on the 15th pitch. After several days of cards in the tent, we set out on July 22 for P 6950 ("South Troll") on a fine, clear, warm day. A long stretch got us over the schrund, and then five pitches of snow took us around the shattered rock of the lower west face to the better rock of the upper half. The flowers,

\* Recipients of American Alpine Club Mountaineering Fellowship grants.





PLATE 62

*Photo by Roger Robinson*

**Royal Throne, "Little Switzerland,"  
south of McKinley.**

the moss, the pikas, the ptarmigan, the fine view and the hot sun made this most delightful. We changed to rock shoes to enjoy the fine rock to the utmost. Four pitches of F7 found us on top. The trek back to Base Camp was under the unique light that only evening can bring. Patterns in the snow etched by shadow and far-off peaks crimsoned by the low sun made a scene that no artist could ever duplicate. Ken departed for home and Roger and I were foiled on two good attempts on "The Crowned Jewel." On one of the attempts, while belaying on the sixth pitch, I noticed a black bear wandering up the glacier below. He ambled along sniffing and skirting numerous crevasses. Then suddenly it dawned on us that he was following our tracks toward Base Camp. What a drag it would be to have camp mutilated by our furry friend! We started yelling. The echoes that bounced around the cirque made the bear think he was vastly outnumbered or in a haunted valley, for he beat a retreat. Once again the weather cleared and on July 28 we wandered up a side glacier to do P 7950 ("Your Highness"). In the crisp morning air we circled to the west face and followed a glacier to within four pitches of the summit. The rock was magnificent: solid and sound; rough and warm to the touch. The climb was a push-over, much easier than we had expected. P 7390 ("The Throne") is perhaps the most striking mountain in "Little Switzerland" in that it is one huge hunk of clean granite, somewhat like the Bugaboos. Roger Robinson and I gave "The Throne" a try via the south face on July 31, 1976. The first two pitches led up the "garden ledges," a series of clean, solid cliffs cut by jam-cracks and faces of quartz crystals, each separated by an absolutely beautiful ledge of heather, mosses and a variety of sweet-smelling flowers. We found a two-pitch broken crack/chimney system that cut up an otherwise void, vertical cliff to a laid-back boulder patch and snowfield. Roger made nice moves getting past a waterfall and staying dry; I wasn't so graceful. The upper eight pitches followed a wandering line directly to a large triangular visor up an unplanned route. Each move gave access to a previously unseen hold and thus we advanced, never sure where the next belay would be. The 12th pitch found us looking down the north face from the summit block. It was easily the finest climb of the summer after a long list of attempts and ascents. Other climbs in this region which Roger Robinson and I did in 1976 were very briefly mentioned in A.A.J., 1977 on page 157. On July 22, 1976 we climbed P 7510 ("Italy's Boot"). We ascended the northeast ice couloir, which ended in three pitches of 50° to 70° ice to the north ridge. We then dropped off the ridge to the west, skirting the broken knife-edged ridge below the schrund. We reached the ridge again at a small icefall and followed it on rock and ice to the summit. The climb took eleven hours. P 7100 ("The Scimitar") was climbed on July 25, 1976 via the south side of this small granite pinnacle. We climbed P 7490 ("The Dragon's Spine") on July 26, 1976 via the southeast snow couloir to the saddle and thence up the

northeast ridge. We ascended P 6910 that same day via the northwest couloir to a notch above which three pitches of fourth- or fifth-class climbing took us to the summit pinnacle. A short F7 friction slab of good granite topped out on the airy summit.

BRIAN OKONEK, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*Peaks Between the Kahiltna Glacier and Spink Lake.* From the Kahiltna Glacier, Roger Robinson and I traversed over to the Granite Creek Glacier to explore its upper regions and then continue east. We climbed P 5610 on our way over to the Kanikula Glacier. The two summits of Mount Goldie (6315 feet) and P 6182 were climbed in bad weather as we cut over to the Tokositna Glacier and across to a lake. We rambled our way to the top of the rolling ridges above the Ruth Glacier. The summits of P 5412 and P 5600 were void of human markings. We descended to the Backside Glacier and put in a heroic effort on one of the Ruth Gorge peaks, only to be chased back by a wind-driven downpour after we had climbed some 4000 feet. The radio being broken and food supplies running short, we passed up many a planned climb and hustled across the Ruth Glacier and up the Glacier Point fork past the Fake Peak and dropped down onto the Coffee Glacier to its terminus. Meadows of lush fireweed welcomed us back to the lowlands, but we knew that alders ahead awaited our arrival with outstretched arms. The 12 miles of alders we encountered on the way to Spink Lake were terrible. At times we were able to bypass long stretches of brush by wading down the river, half swimming and half grabbing for alders to keep from getting washed away by the current. We arrived at Spink Lake with one day's food, wet and tired. My Dad found us from the air after many hours of aerial search time.

BRIAN OKONEK, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*P 8233, Ruth Gorge and Other Peaks.* Stacy Taniguchi, Grant Henke, Dick Wheaton and I had a successful two weeks on the Ruth Glacier. We made the first ascent of P 8233, which lies south of Mount Dickey and west of Glacier Point. We first climbed a 2800-foot snow and ice couloir on the east in about three hours. Whiteout conditions forced us to bivouac in a col for several hours. We then completed the climb in another five hours on the north ridge, which involved snow, some 60° ice and rock scrambling. Around Mount Barrille and the peaks to the north we did rock routes, which ranged in difficulty from F6 to F9 on mostly excellent rock. Charlie Porter and I made an attempt on the great couloir on the north face of Mount Hunter. After sixteen pitches of high-angle front-pointing and avalanche-dodging we came down.

GARY BOCARDE

*Dickey, Barrille and P 7580.* A five-man Japanese party led by Koji Naka climbed Barrille by its northwest face on May 5, 1976 and Dickey and P 7580 two miles northwest of Barrille on May 6.

*Deborah, Hayes, Hess and Other Peaks, Central Alaska Range.* In April and May an Alaska Alpine Club sponsored group did some extensive climbing in the central Alaska Range. On April 14 Carl Tobin, Cliff Moore, Peter Hollis and I were flown to the Yanert Glacier by Horace Black. We proceeded through the two icefalls on Mount Deborah's western side and established a snow-cave camp at 9000 feet, following to here essentially Beckey's 1954 first-ascent route. From there we fixed 1400 feet of rope on a blue-ice gully which reaches the northwest ridge at 10,500 feet. Another 200 feet were used on a band of rock between this point of the ridge and the 11,000-foot confluence with the more northerly ridge leading out of the Gillam Glacier. Here we joined Nolting's 1976 route. A camp was established at 11,000 feet and from there Moore, Hollis and Tobin reached Deborah's summit (12,339 feet) on May 8 with no further assistance from fixed ropes (including those left by a previous group). This was a partly new route. Meanwhile the second half of the expedition, my wife Nancy Brady, Dave Buchannon and Toby Wheeler, had come in from Isabel Pass by dog sled and skis via the Black Rapids and Susitna glaciers. Also on May 8, having climbed the south ridge, Wheeler and Buchannon stood on the summit of Mount Hayes while Nancy bivouacked at 12,500 feet on the south shoulder. After descending Deborah and pulling off our fixed lines, we traversed around to the Gillam Glacier, where at the base of Mount Hess our two groups joined. After a five-day wind storm we moved our camp up to 7700 feet in the high basin on the northern side of Mount Hess (11,940 feet). From here we split into two groups. Buchannon, Tobin and Moore climbed the more ambitious and previously unclimbed northeast ridge, descending the northwest ridge, which Hollis, Wheeler and I climbed. After Mount Hess, Buchannon and Hollis climbed by its west ridge P 9448, a beautifully symmetrical peak four miles up the Gillam from our Base Camp. Wheeler, Nancy and I proceeded up an extinct branch of the Gillam, where out of the same camp at 8600 feet we climbed Mounts Giddings (10,100 feet), Skarland (10,300 feet) and Geist (10,720 feet) on three consecutive days. We all hiked out to Healy in early July.

JAMES A. BRADY, *Alaska Alpine Club*

*Mount Moffit, Southwest Ridge.* A pair of Japanese medical students sat on the Talkeetna airstrip for ten days before they could be ferried to the eastern fork of the Trident Glacier on July 23. They were landed at 8700 feet. After the plane left, they realized that one of the food bags

had been left behind. With scanty food, they made three camps getting to the Moffit-Shand col at 11,000 feet. They reached the summit of Moffit (13,020 feet) on July 29. They climbed Shand (12,660 feet) on the 31st. Although they were back at their pick-up point on August 2, bad weather prevented their return to Talkeetna until August 11. (Information from *Iwa To Yuki*.)

*Mount Geist, North Face.* This 3000-foot face was climbed in August by Jim Jennings, Bill Kitson and Geoff Radford.

*Peaks in the Endicott Mountains, Brooks Range.* In late July I spent a few days at the headwaters of the Iniakuk River, six to eight miles north-northeast of Ernie Lake. The approach was up and through a series of unique canyons with stair-stepped waterfalls and spillways over smoother schistose bedrock. Two high peaks ( $62^{\circ}28'29''$  N,  $152^{\circ}52'55''$  W) with steep cirqued north faces dominate the region between the Alatna and John Rivers. Iniakuk Peak (6539 feet) and Shukok Peak (6253 feet) were climbed in a day from the south. I ascended Iniakuk via the easterly buttress and ridge. Descent was down the true east ridge to a col and then up the sharp west ridge to the top of the Shukok and down its south buttress. I could see the central Brooks Range from the Arrigetch in the west to Doonerak in the east. In mid-August Barb Campbell, Dick Jablonowski and I met at Takahula Lake, alongside the Alatna River, 15 miles due east of the Arrigetch Peaks. We cached food and inflatable kayaks and trekked up the alder-choked Aiyagomahala Creek valley, through Independence Pass and into the headwaters of the Kobuk River. Rain and fog prevented our reaching any summits. We paddled down the Alatna River, arriving at Allakaket on August 27.

STEVEN W. HACKETT

*Schwanda Peak and P 8130, Brooks Range.* I led a trip up the Jago River and over a 7000-foot pass near the Continental Divide to the Hulahula River. On the way Vess Irvine, Ken Jonaitis, Rick Mohun and I climbed Schwanda Peak in a 17-hour day on August 14. Our route went up the north (right) fork of the Hubley Glacier, up 800 feet of firm 45% snow to the col between Schwanda and Mount Hubley and up loose talus to the 8500-foot summit. On August 24 Irvine and I climbed P 8130, which lies some 12 miles south of Hubley and four miles southeast of the pass.

WILLIAM RODAMOR

*The Tusk Attempt, Chigmit Mountains.* In June Fred Beckey, Craig Martinson and I made an attempt on the Tusk, an impressive 1000-foot tower in the Merrill Pass area, about 100 miles southwest of Anchorage.

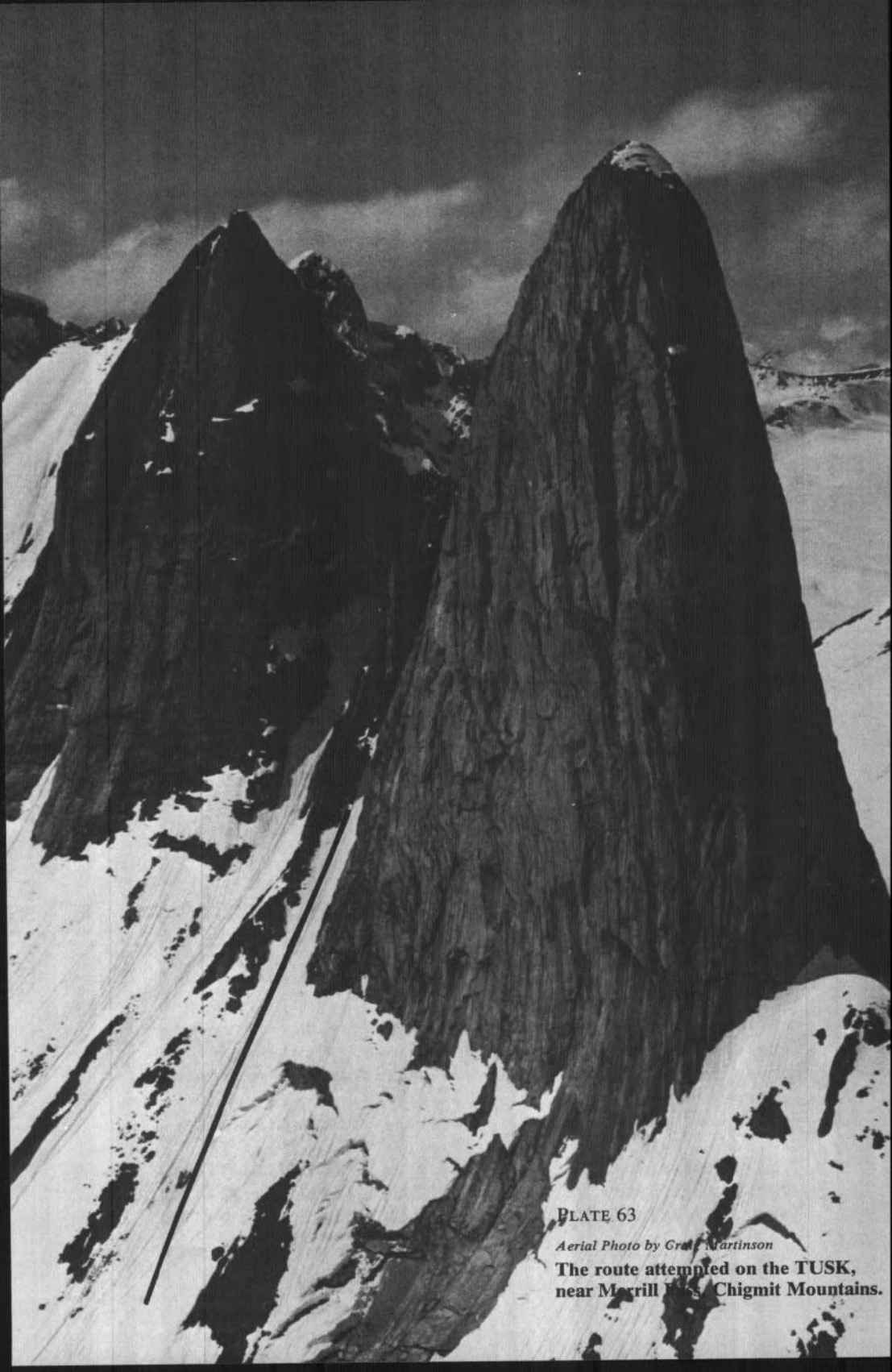


PLATE 63

*Aerial Photo by Grant Martinson*

**The route attempted on the TUSK,  
near Merrill Pass, Chigmit Mountains.**

We turned back at about the same point as Steve Hackett and Barry Kircher in 1971, with perhaps two-thirds of the tower below us. Both of the other two had been hit by rockfall but were not seriously injured. Beckey called the decomposed granite the "worst rock I have been on in 20 years." We did climb to two summits, possibly the first ones reached in this remote range. They lie just west and south of the Tusk.

ERIC BJORNSTAD

*Chigmit Mountains.* Flying by float-plane to Chakachamna Lake on August 10 gave Mark Moderow, Margit Breski, my wife Rowi and me breath-taking views of the previously unexplored peaks of the northern Chigmit Range. Rain and alders spiced our approach to the glacier on the southeast corner of the lake. After climbing wet granite slabs and moraine, we were at 61° 10' North and 152° 20' West on the glacier. Our first day found us traversing a gray spire, P 5550, in clouds and mist. We climbed one pitch of F7 mossy rock to the summit. The descent was down a long glacier to the south. Margit walked into the one exposed crevasse in the area, all of five feet deep! Other days were spent doing short ice climbs, waiting in the rain and trekking to the upper snowfields of our glacier. We explored to the east and climbed P 4356 on August 16. The area is beautiful but rotten rock limits technical climbing. We flew from the lake to Anchorage on August 17.

JAMES HALE, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*Lindita Peak, Chugach Mountains.* Jon Fisher and I organized this trip to the head of the Tazlina Glacier. The whole party, Gary Benninger, Gregory Bramlet, Fisher, Halford Joiner, Tom Lamb, Bill Plock, Dr. Randall Travis and I, made the third ascent of "Mount Freuchen" (6965 feet) on June 29. On July 1, the first ascent was made of Lindita Peak (7910 feet) (Valdez B7 Quadrangle) on the divide between the Tazlina and the East Branch of the Columbia Glaciers. The route was the northeast face, the north-facing knife-edged ridge, and along the corniced and humpy ridge to the small snow summit. Hal Joiner led the climb for Doc Travis, Tom Lamb, and me. On the descent, we were carried down the last 200 yards by a wet snow avalanche. Lindita Peak is the highest peak that can be seen at the head of the Tazlina Glacier from the Glenn Highway near the Tazlina Glacier Lodge.

LAWRENCE E. NIELSEN

*Marcus Baker.* A three-man Japanese party led by Koichi Okuda flew to the Matanuska Glacier on July 29, 1976 and placed Base Camp at 7500 feet on the glacier on the 31st. Their original objective, the north ridge was abandoned because of falling ice. They climbed the glacier

to 11,500 feet on August 1 and ascended the north face on August 2 in a snowstorm. Okuda, Yoshikazu Ueda and Yasuhisa Nakamura got to the top.

*Castle Peak, Wrangell Mountains.* Castle Peak is very deserving of its name, for it is a giant monolith whose rock walls rise almost straight up 3500 feet from the glacier below its southern and eastern exposures and a good 2000 feet on the west. Its summit is glacier-capped and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile long. Its northern side is guarded by a glacier clear to the summit. In August, 1973 John Pinamont, Scott Mueller, Paul Canicelli, Art Ward and I stood below this north side on the Kuskulana Glacier after a three-day walk. The series of ice blocks and séracs looked impossible to ascend. So we settled on P 9820, which rises only 900 feet from the pass between it and Mount Blackburn. We all got to within 100 feet of the summit, but only Pinamont and I had time to do the final pitch before bad weather forced us back. In 1977 with the aid of Art Ward's supercub, we landed at 2350 feet on a gravel bar. We followed up Mill Creek for about three miles and took the west fork for another two miles to another fork, this time to the east. We ascended this to what should be Mill Glacier, since it is the largest of the glaciers draining into Mill Creek. From camp on the glacier we looked up a steep ice gully that rose 1200 feet to the top of the ridge which connects the west ridge of Castle Peak to P 9847. On the morning of June 16 we climbed the gully early hoping the snow would not be soft and dodging falling rocks. The distance to the summit ridge was a series of snow bridges and ice blocks and just before the summit ridge we had to climb a steep slope in deep snow. Most of the summit ridge was a long slog, but the high point was a spectacular, corniced knife-edge. The gully on the descent was a nasty waterfall of ice and slush down which huge boulders sometimes plunged.

LARRY SWANSON, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*Mount Sanford.* Mount Sanford was attempted by two Japanese expeditions in 1976. A five-man-and-a-woman expedition climbed the north ridge. From Camp IV on April 24, 1976 Masaru Nakagawa, Minoru Naka, Tomotsu Ohfuji and Ms. Kazuko Ohmori reached the summit. A four-man party led by Masaoh Nishigai retreated from some 500 feet below the summit on May 8 in bad weather.

*Mount Sanford, Ski Ascent.* A winter attempt on Mount Sanford (16,230 feet) by Mark Moderow, Dennis Cowacs, Bill Laxson and me in late March failed in miserable weather at 13,000 feet. On July 17 David Titus, my wife Rowi and I climbed the peak from 7000 feet on the Sheep Glacier. A 10,000-foot powder ski run was our reward. In a



year of notoriously bad weather, ours was only the second ascent in 13 attempts.

JAMES HALE, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*Mount Blackburn, Second Ascent of Southeast Ridge.* On Memorial Day weekend, Rob Blair, Jerry Hinkle, Roger Grette, my wife Barb and I were flown to the dirt airstrip at Nugget Creek. In 3½ days we walked up the Kuskalana Glacier to the 9000-foot pass at its head which overlooks the Kennecott Glacier and received our airdrop. We followed the southeast ridge of Blackburn from this pass over two false summits to the east peak of Blackburn. This ridge had been climbed in March 1974 by five Alaskans. (*A.A.J.*, 1975, pages 120-1.) In 1912 Dora Keen and party followed the Kennecott Glacier and climbed glacier slopes at its head directly to the east peak. The 1912 route\* did not intersect the

southeast ridge at all. As we had intended to traverse the peak, we took the ridge in small bites and pulled our meager supply of anchors and fixed line up behind us and used them over and over again. We were hampered by the usual rotten snow and poor visibility. Our technically easy summit day, June 24, was delayed for over a week by consistently poor weather. We were pinned down for four days just a few hundred feet below the east peak. We nibbled at our dwindling food and played Canasta for Big Macs. When the weather cleared, we snowshoed to the east peak, traversed the two miles to the main peak (16,523 feet), descended the north ridge in 36 hours and were flown out.

GERARD A. ROACH

*Mount Bona.* Apparently two Japanese parties climbed Mount Bona (16,500 feet) in 1977. From information in *Iwa To Yuki* the second party made the eleventh ascent of the mountain and the sixth Japanese one. They followed close on a party from Kawasaki City. The party from Hokkaido was led by Isao Tomita. They climbed the peak by the east ridge with two high camps. On May 25 the leader, T. Kubota, Y. Koyama and Y. Tsunemoto reached the summit.

*Fairweather, Attempt on Southeast Ridge.* The personnel of our expedition finally was made up of Leonard Cook, Mark Fields, Rich Bloom and Chris Carpenter. (I was injured fighting a fire with the

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\* In 1912 the maps showed the east peak to be the highest and so the actual first ascent of Blackburn was not made until 1957 when the west peak, which is over 100 feet higher, was climbed. It is likely that this was the second time the east peak was visited, since the Alaskans seem to have skirted it in 1974. A definitive account of the 1912 ascent was published in *World's Work*, 1913, "First up Mt. Blackburn" by Dora Keen.

Anchorage Fire Department and had to drop out.) Our main objective was the first ascent via the southeast ridge, which had been descended by the Wickwire party in 1973. One of the major problems was personality clashes. Weather also became an unyielding factor. Finally Camp IV was established close to the junction of our route and the Harvard route of 1975. In a four-day storm at Camp IV they had to use up most of the remaining food. When the storm finally lifted enough for a summit attempt, the remaining food sack was knocked off the ridge while ice screws were being dug out of a pack. The group decided to head down.

MICHAEL DUNN, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*Mount Crillon, West Ridge.* Terry Cline, Dave Dahl, Bruce Tickell and I left Lituya Bay in early July and on July 6 after several days of packing loads through the endless moraine of the North Crillon Glacier established Base Camp in the cirque below Mount Crillon's north face. A reconnaissance of the approaches to the north ridge showed that the 2500-foot wall of loose rock leading to the ridge crest from the cirque was a dangerous avalanche hazard and would require extensive fixed rope. We diverted to the west ridge and by July 12 had a high camp at 8000 feet below a prominent grey tower, one of the main obstacles of the route. A summit attempt on the following day failed at 9000 feet in a storm. Turning the south flank of the tower had consumed most of our time. On July 18 we were back in our 8000-foot camp. That afternoon Tickell and I climbed a crack system (F5) leading directly over the south shoulder of the grey tower, shortening our route considerably. On the following day we moved to our final camp at 9000 feet and on the 20th reached the summit in shirtsleeves in an 18-hour push. We remained on top for two hours and even brewed a pot of tea. Marginal weather delayed our return to Lituya Bay until the 26th. It was the second ascent of this ridge and the third of the mountain.

WALTER VENNUM

*Devil's Thumb.* In *Climbing* of January-February, 1978 there is the report of the first ascent of the pillar which divides the northwest face of the Devil's Thumb, made between August 16 and 19 by Bob Plumb and David Stutzman. This Grade VI, 5.9 climb was made in 57 pitches from the Witches' Cauldron. It was climbed completely free.

#### **Washington—Cascade Mountains**

*Little Johannesburg, Plumline Buttress.* Unnamed on maps, this 7945-foot monolith sits directly across the valley from Easy Pass, just inside the boundary of North Cascade National Park. On August 21 Steve Costie, Chris Martenson, Ken Small and I made the first ascent

PLATE 64

*Photo by Bradford Washburn*

**Mount Crillon. The West Ridge is at the right.**



of the north face. We followed a prominent buttress for 2700 feet from the valley directly to the summit. NCCS II, F4.

RICHARD FILLEY

*Whistler Mountain, Southeast Rib.* On September 1 Barry Nelson and I climbed a rib of good-to-rotten rock on Whistler. A nice layback and face-climbing pitch led to several pitches of scrambling up unstable rock. NCCS I, F7.

ALAN KEARNEY

*Bear Mountain, North Face.* After several days of trail and of vicious brush from our Beaver Creek-Perry Creek approach, Jeff Thomas, Ed Newville, Shari Kearney and I scrutinized Bear's north face. We spotted a long 2000-foot buttress west of Beckey's first-ascent route. We scrambled up 400 feet on September 10 to bivouac under the stars. After a false start up and right in the morning, we worked left and up a chimney. Cracks and face climbing got us up the left edge of the buttress. Seventeen pitches later, we watched the sun set minutes after reaching the top of the buttress within easy scrambling of the top. Excellent rock and hard free climbing made this particularly enjoyable. NCCS IV, F9.

ALAN KEARNEY

*Sporohyte Spire, Cashmere Crags, Stuart Range.* On August 11 Shari Kearney and I climbed the north face of this vegetated tower of granite. It lies partway up Toketie Creek, south of Snow Creek Wall. We followed an obvious cleft which cuts across the west end of the face. The rock itself was excellent, but we were plagued with moss-filled cracks. NCCS II, F8.

ALAN KEARNEY

*Dorado Needle, South Side.* In August Margarite Hargrave and I did a new route on the south side of Dorado Needle up a prominent ridge leading towards a point southeast of the main summit. We approached from a camp at the Klawatti col, traversing west over the Inspiration Glacier and head of the west branch of the McAllister Glacier to drop through the notch between Eldorado and Dorado Needle. The 1200-foot route had about eight leads of moderate class 5. Generally the rock is sound and of good quality though dikes of softer rock must be climbed with care. The route began with third- and fourth-class scrambling to the ridge crest; then we climbed one lead of the steepest section on a loose grey dike just on the north side of the ridge. We left the ridge before the top third and followed a class-three gully to a notch between the southeast point and main summit block. Two further leads gained the summit. NCCS III, F5.

JOAN FIREY

*Mount Forbidden, South Face.* Craig McKibben and I made a new route in July on the south face that ascends directly to the summit and lies 150 to 200 feet to the right of the other south-face route. We started on right-hand slabs 100 feet below a five-foot, blue-green streak of copper mineral. From a belay twenty feet below the streak we climbed left and up to a horn, then left again and up sixty feet to a belay alcove (F9). The third lead traversed left forty feet then climbed up and right another seventy feet. The fourth lead climbed left through a roof onto easy ground. The next lead was easy and for the next four leads we climbed straight up. Leads number seven and eight were in a right-facing open-book and the ninth had a very hard start getting into a left-facing book (F9 or 10). We traversed right on lead ten to a large ledge then climbed straight up steep thin slabs (F9) to a point thirty feet left of the summit. NCCS IV, F9.

JIM MCCARTHY

*Winter Ascents in the Cascades.* The drought winter of 1976-1977 presented climbing conditions that had not been experienced in recent history and may not be seen again in the present generation. February was particularly calm, clear and warm. There was little snow. Many winter ascents were done in unusually inaccessible regions because of relatively easy access. A few are listed: Prusik Peak, south face in December 1976 by Les Nugent and Alan Kearney; Whistler Peak, via the major east-facing couloir to the north ridge and seven pitches on the north ridge in February by Dave Lord, Dick Filley and Steve Costie; Mount Terror in February by Paul Eckman, Roy Farrel, Joan Firey and Joe Weis.

*Soviet Climbing in the Cascades.* After their successful return from Alaska the Soviet team enjoyed a couple of days of "R&R" in Seattle. Then their attention turned to the mountains of the Cascade Range. During the weekend of June 11 and 12, Sergei Efimov and Alexei Lebedehin, accompanied by Yosemite veteran Chuck Kroger, headed off into the North Cascades for an attempt up the classic Liberty Crack route on the east face of Liberty Bell Mountain. When they arrived at the base of the face, they were dismayed to find another team already attempting the route. Fortunately, it started to rain heavily and the climbers on the face decided to rappel off. Kroger took the first lead up the nearly vertical wall. Efimov's lead took him over the twelve-foot-deep, 190° roof of the second pitch. Lebedehin's pitch involved the delicate A-4 section of the route. The climbing gained momentum with the fourth pitch as the threesome swung leads. After nine hours of climbing they reached the top: a remarkable time for this Grade V climb, considering that the two Soviet climbers claimed that they were

"out of their element" on such a technical route. During the same weekend Eduard Myslovsky, Vladimir Shatayev, Valia Ivanov and Oleg Borisenok chose to traverse Mount Rainier. They packed their packs with enough provisions and equipment for a minor expedition. When I suggested that the mountain did not justify such heavy packs and that they certainly did not need tents weighing sixteen pounds, Shateyev replied that it is difficult to play cards in small tents and impossible with no tent at all! Early Saturday afternoon, I dropped them off at the trailhead of the Carbon River Campground (2600 feet). We reported to the Park rangers that this team would climb the mountain via the beautiful Liberty Ridge, traverse the summit (14,410 feet) and descend to Paradise via the Success Cleaver route: a two-day undertaking, normally. The Park Service was quite surprised to see the team appear at the Paradise Ranger Station the following afternoon. A couple of days later the Soviet team, Mark Fielding and I set off on a ten-day trip to the Picket Range. After a day and a half of hiking over Sourdough Ridge we descended into McMillan Creek Basin: a magnificent cirque of rugged peaks, tumbling glaciers, streams and waterfalls. We established camp at 3600 feet and felt dwarfed by the many summits towering 5500 feet above us. On June 19 Shatayev, Myslovsky, Ivanov and Borisenok undertook the second ascent of the 2300-foot north face of East McMillan Spire. Efimov, Lebedehin, Fielding and I set off to attempt the unclimbed north face of Inspiration Peak. The face is one of the shortest (1500 vertical feet) yet one of the steepest in the Cirque. At my suggestion, we left hammer and pitons behind and relied totally on American and Soviet "clean hardware" for protection. As usual, at the base of the face, the two Soviet climbers stuffed their heavy alpine boots into their rucksacks and put on tight-fitting "galoshes." Fielding, who had just returned from several grade V and VI climbs in Yosemite Valley, roped up with Efimov. I shared the rope with Lebedihin. After about eighteen pitches of strenuous free climbing (almost every lead involved F8 or F9 moves) we reached the precipitous summit in dense clouds. The descent involved complicated traverses and rappels. We were benighted before reaching camp. The following day, while resting in deteriorating weather, we decided to head home earlier than planned. Back on Sourdough Ridge we found ourselves at the mercy of high winds and horizontal rain. After searching a long time for level tent sites the situation appeared to become distressing (for the comfort-loving group that we were). In diminishing daylight, Ivanov, looking wet and miserable, exclaimed in his limited English: "McKinley: no problem. North Cascades: problem!" The Soviet team departed for Moscow on June 26 after extending sincere invitations to meet again in the mountains of the USSR.

ALEX BERTULIS

**California—Sierra Nevada**

*Mount Langley, East Face of Southeast Peak.* In April Will Crjenko and I climbed this route by first traversing over the ridge from Cottonwood Lakes. The climb involved a snow descent to the face, then eight leads of moderate to serious rock climbing. The face is quite prominent from the highway in Owens Valley just north of Lone Pine.

FRED BECKEY

*Maxson Dome, South Face.* In October Burt Miller, Mark Meng, and I made the first ascent of the south face. This dome is quite spectacular when viewed from the roadhead at Courtwright Reservoir, and it was surprising that this 9547-foot dome had no previous technical ascents. Our route followed a three-pitch open-book near mid-face that had challenging crack climbing and jamming problems. A ledge then bore west to where a layback problem led to a higher ledge. Bathooks and a bolt for aid permitted frictioning onward. Higher the dome rounded to the summit ridge. The route will be known as the Burt Miller Route because, about a week later, Burt met his fate in a rappelling accident on the Apron in Yosemite. NCCS III, F10, A1.

FRED BECKEY

*Domeland, North Portion of White Dome.* In October Mark Meng and I climbed this route. Bubbly, chicken-head rock provided surprising climbing for three pitches that turned out easier than anticipated.

FRED BECKEY

*Premiere Buttress, The Phoenix.* In March Don Reid and I climbed this route that starts in an obvious left-slanting crack system several hundred feet right of the Beckey-Goechoel route. Difficult climbing over decomposing rock leads to a belay ledge with a bush. A short section of aid is necessary on the second pitch to reach a right-slanting crack leading to a hidden ledge. We worked up, then right, then ascended a chimney to easier climbing. NCCS III, F9, A2.

ALAN BARTLETT, *Buff Alpine Club*

*Quarry Peak, East Face.* In August Vern Clevenger and I established the first route on this massive face in Matterhorn Canyon. Our line lies on the left-most (smoothest) section of the face and follows a right-leaning, left-facing chimney and open-book system. Five of the nine pitches involved chimneys, including the eighth (crux) pitch, a shallow,

flared slot that Vern led with a great deal of finesse and much cursing. NCCS IV, F10.

ALAN BARTLETT, *Buff Alpine Club*

*Wells Peak, lower half of East Face, December's Children.* This route on Wells Peak, in the Wheeler Crest area, was climbed in December by James Wilson and me. It follows the only crack system just right of the center of the face. The fourth pitch starts in a left-facing book, but as further progress becomes improbable, one works around the corner to the right to easier ground. NCCS III, F10.

ALAN BARTLETT, *Buff Alpine Club*

*The Needles, Warlock Needle, Romantic Warrior.* In October John Peca and I spent three days on this magnificent seven-pitch route. The route is located on Warlock's steep west face, on the southernmost of the three massive summit towers. A scramble to a small ledge leads to steep aid cracks (A2, all clean except for one hand-placed piton that we fixed). Higher, free climbing up jamcracks and face climbing (F7) end at a hanging belay 160 feet up. Then a fantastic lead (F7) up a long, colorful corner continues to a sloping belay ledge. The third lead is a long aid pitch up a steep crack. Work up and right, then left and up, to a hanging belay on bolts (A2, all clean). A spectacular and difficult aid pitch (A4) follows a thin diagonal face crack up and right from the belay. Two bolts and easier aid climbing lead to Excess Reality Ledge—a small stance. A few moves up a right-facing corner and a mantle lead to a huge sloping area and a traverse right (F6) to a fixed piton. At this point, lower down about 30 feet to a short arch and friction right, then up, to a fingertip crack (F8) that leads to the base of the enormous summit dihedral—the Book of Deception. A long aid pitch (A2) follows this book to a ledge for belay. The summit pitch is short. A few moves of aid and face-climbing lead to Warlock's south summit. NCCS IV-V, F8, A4.

EDWIN C. JOE, *unaffiliated*

*The Needles, Warlock Needle, Imaginary Voyage.* In August Dick Leverage and I made an ascent of this five-pitch route up the east face of Warlock Needle. The first lead starts in a long, left-slanting jam-crack on the right-hand portion of the east face. Steep jamming ends at a semi-hanging belay far up the wall. The second pitch continues up the diminishing jam-crack to where one must step out of the crack and face-climb upwards to a short left-facing open-book and a sloping belay ledge below a chimney. Steep buckets lead up to the chimney. Climb the chimney to a small ledge below huge blocks. A right-facing corner and a ramp take one to the terrace below the summit block. We climbed



the summit block free just to the right of the bolt ladder (F8). NCCS II, F8.

EDWIN C. JOE, *unaffiliated*

*Peak 12,960, South Face.* In May, 1976 Jay Foster, Shari Nelson, and I spent two and a half days ascending a new route up the south face of this peak that is directly west of Lone Pine peak. Our route followed a large chimney system right of center, and finished through crack systems slightly left of the chimney's end. One bolt was placed for a bivouac anchor, otherwise the route was done clean. NCCS V, F9, A2.

ALAN KEARNEY

*Day Needle, East Face.* In July Ed Conner and I free-climbed this face staying, as far as we could tell, on Beckey's original route up the prow except that we started the route by third-classing about 300 feet up the couloir to a point about 30 feet below and left of a prominent roof. The route was 13 to 15 pitches, and took 8 hours. NCCS IV, F7-F8.

JOHN VAWTER, *W-town Mountaineers*

*Angel Wings, South Face.* A new line up an old mountain: Angel Wings. That was the proposal Fred Beckey, Dougal McCarty, and Brian Leo had up their sleeve. With little or no persuasion I accompanied them. Things didn't quite work out right that first trip. After a fifteen-mile hike in late October of 1975, the weather, food, and time were gradually destroying us. The weather was cold, foggy, and drizzly. The food, well the lack of it, did not help matters, and time, that's another problem! Three pitches in three days! Granted, the first three pitches turned out to be the hardest on the entire climb: devious, hard nailing, spiced with some F9. The fall of 1976 rolled around. This time Fred and Dougal got together with another climber. What happened this time is like a bad dream. The attempt was pretty much aborted the first night while they sat around the campfire at Hamilton Lake, below Angel Wings south face. One of the people hiking in with the climbers emptied his pockets of trash into the fire at night. The trash contained a 22-caliber bullet. If you've guessed the worst, relax; it only grazed Dougal's lip! Angel Wings: 2, Climbers: 0. In May of 1977 the final group is together; Bill Lahr and Alan Neifeld join Fred and me. The first three pitches are fixed. Fred takes the lead, the going slow and artificial. A time to think, a time to climb, a time to lead. Up I go, silently; the weather is perfect; what more could one ask for. The ground getting farther away, the trees smaller, the top closer. Changing leads, Alan traverses right under a small roof. "Delicate free climbing," he says. "The angle easing back; the way is clear to the top." The mind, tense for the past couple

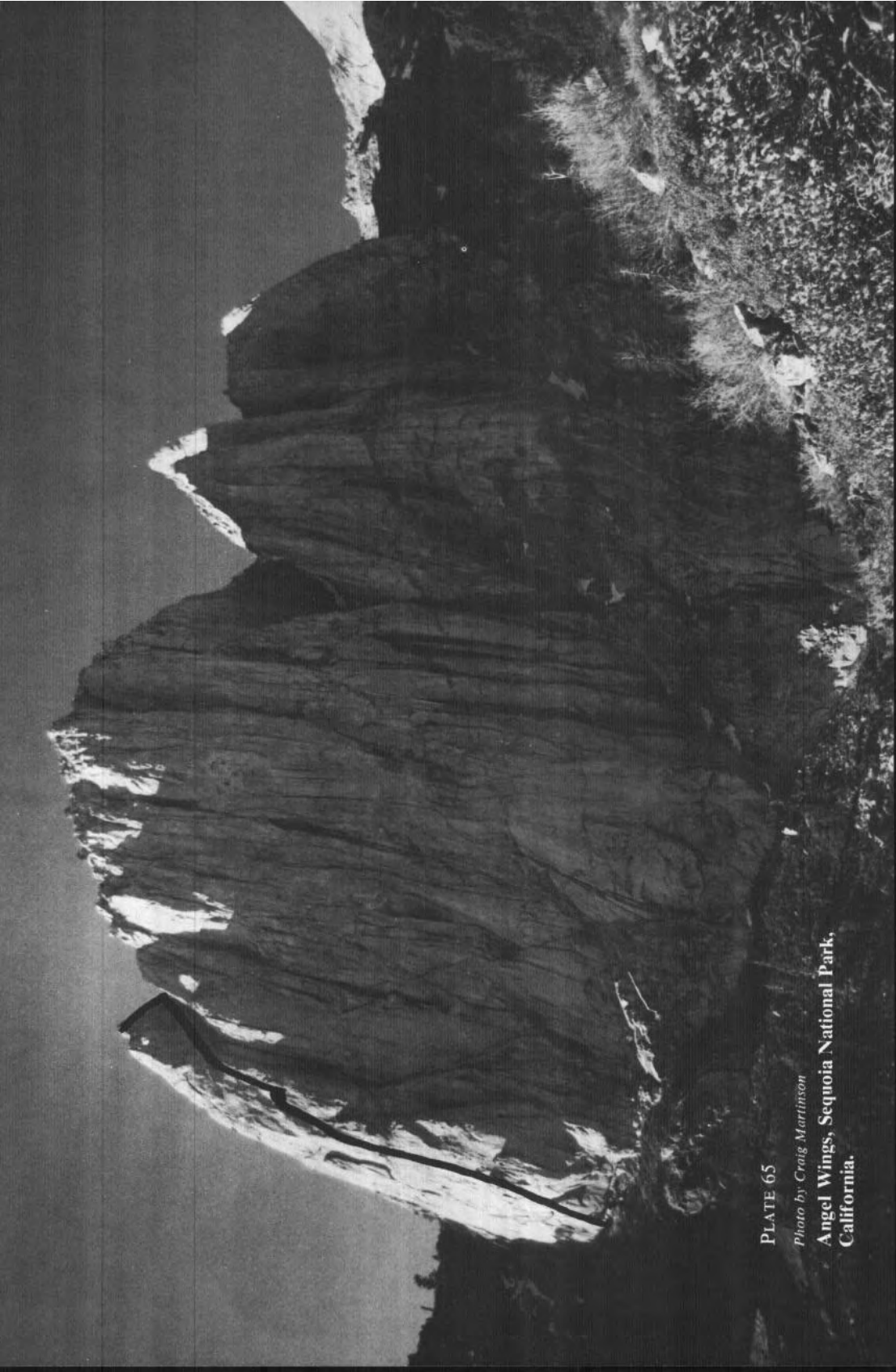


PLATE 65

*Photo by Craig Martinson*

Angel Wings, Sequoia National Park,  
California.

of days, relaxes. Two nights in hammocks are bearable. Tonight we'll sleep on top. The end of the third day the final pitch is led in the dark, jumaring under the stars with the moon shining brightly. But alas, there are no level spots left for me to sleep. A tree is in sight, the hammock goes up, and I go in. Like a bed in a house, a hammock in the air, but here there is a difference, for my mind is free to wander in the High Sierra.

CRAIG MARTINSON

*Picture Peak, Bishop Area.* Rick Wheeler and I made a new route on Picture Peak above the Hungry Packer Lake basin, seven miles from Lake Sabrina. We decided to head for a hand-and-fist crack near the right center of the face. This runs parallel to a chimney for 200 feet. We hiked around the southeastern shore of the lake and third-classed several hundred feet of shattered rock to the first obstacle, a small F9 roof, which we passed on the left. This led to a short section of face climbing. From there we followed the line of least resistance upward for several pitches until we reached the top of the first ridge. The rock rib we were climbing was divided into three sections. The finest climbing was in the bottom section, which contained the hand-and fist crack. From the top of the first rib we dropped into a small notch and continued to climb two additional sections, one pitch of which was an awkward corner requiring some very wide stemming (F10).

TONY JENNINGS

*Mount Williamson, North Face.* The 2200-foot high north cliffs are impressive, even when viewed from far up Owens Valley. In contrast to the popular west and southeast sides, only two north-side routes are known to exist. My wife Ruth and I ascended just left of center in 1957, using a swing traverse. Tim Ryan, Fred Wing, and I climbed the right-hand portion of the face on May 30, 1976. We cramponed up a steep couloir that slants to the right, then ascended the rocks. Tim led the crux pitch on aid chocks. We tied on for the night at 13,880 feet, and reached the 14,375-foot summit early the next morning. NCCS IV, F5, A1.

JOHN D. MENDENHALL

### California—Yosemite Valley

*El Capitan, Mirage.* In September Jim Pettigrew, Kim Schmitz and I climbed a new route on the west face of El Capitan. The route lies between the West Face route and the Lurking Fear route. The apparently blank lower face required only 33 holes, the total for the route. The

climbing was predominately enjoyable 5th class crack climbing. We spent three nights on the wall, the first two in hammocks. NCCS VI, F10, A4.

JAMES D. BRIDWELL

*Half Dome.* In October Dale Bard and I did a new route on the northwest face of Half Dome. The route is on the right side of the face. The first 900 feet followed a huge arch with very awkward, strenuous, loose, expanding aid climbing. The upper part required many holes (105 total). Dale, who has done all the routes on Half Dome's northwest face, said this route was certainly the most difficult. The climb required eight days of continuous climbing, with four pitches fixed. The route is extremely steep, strenuous, and dangerous, with no retreat possible. NCCS VI, F10, A4+.

JAMES D. BRIDWELL

*Glacier Point Apron, Hoser's Highway.* Eric Sanford, Greg Davis, Scott Woodruff and I on April 20 put up a new route on Glacier Point Apron, starting between Patio and Goodrich Pinnacle. We followed the obvious water groove to the Oasis. Ten pitches: 8 F9 and 2 F8; 9 bolts for protection and 10 for belay.

LARRY BRUCE

## Utah

*Moab Area.* David Mondeau and Marty Barcus made the first ascent of Chimney Smoke in Westwater Canyon in July or August, 1976. The sandstone tower was reported to be NCCS III, F8, A2. Lou Dawson and Don Peterson climbed Rimrock Crack to the left of Artist's Tears, probably the first free ascent. F10. Jim Dunn, Stewart Green and Bill Westbay climbed a new route on popular Castleton Tower in Castle Valley about 30 miles east of Moab. The route followed the obvious crack system on the west face. Dunn feels future ascents should go free. NCCS III, F10, A3. Dunn and Doug Snively did the second ascent of the north face of Castleton Tower, thinking it was a first. They found it had been done a week before by French, whose names are not known. NCCS III, F10, A3. The original route on the tower was soloed free by Mark Hesse, who used protection, a bolt, only on the third pitch. F9. Ken Wyrick and party made the first ascent of a prominent rock outcrop located six miles south of "Hole-in-the-Rock" (20 miles south of Moab). The unnamed 300-foot fin is easily seen by looking east from Highway 163. It was ascended via its north ridge. They rappelled from bolts down the south face. NCCS II, F5, A3. Previously unreported, the 200-foot Green Crack was first done in 1972 by Steve Chaney and John Hall and next by Doug Snively and Jim Dunn in 1974. The climb

is located 1½ miles from Highway 163 on the river highway of 128. Used were eight bolts and pitons of 4", 2½", ¾", several small angles and two lost arrows. NCCS III, F9, A3. I believe the canyon formerly known as Niggerbill Canyon has been changed on recent maps to Black Bill Canyon. It is the first canyon beyond Sheep Canyon on Highway 128 from Moab. About 200 yards up the canyon Black Bill Flake will appear obvious on the right walls. It was first climbed by Earl Wiggins, Chris Wood and Jim Dunn. NCCS III, F10, A4. About a mile from Highway 163 on 128 is a fracture line, the Sorcerer, which was first climbed by Chris Wood and Jim Dunn up the left side of the largest flake. NCCS III, F10, A1.

ERIC BJØRNSTAD

*Canyonlands Area.* On the road to North Sharpshooter Tower, a mile from the dug-out ranch and on the north side of the highway, is the canyon often called "Fringe of Death Canyon." Jim Dunn and companions have climbed a couple of dozen crack lines there in the past few years, all free, all nut ascents with an occasional bolt for belays. The most popular of the wall ascents is "Super Crack," climbed by Dunn, Ed Webster and Earl Wiggins. This F10 crack runs through a small roof 20 feet up and a small niche 75 feet up and is otherwise 300 feet of flawless single-fractured sandstone.

ERIC BJØRNSTAD

*Moses, Canyonlands National Park.* A new route was put up on Moses Tower by Steve Green, Doug Snively, Jim Dunn and Kurt Rasmusson. The route was to the right of the first-ascent line, roughly up the northwest edge of the rock. The two routes meet at the highest belay, just before the free-climbed summit blocks. The ascent required only two bolts, which were used for belays. NCCS IV, F9, A4. The third ascent of Moses was done by Italian climbers Giorgio Bertone and Lorenzino Cosson and the American Craig Martinson. The climb was filmed by Carlo Mauri for Italian and German television. They used the Beckey-Bjørnstad first-ascent line. Zeus, the thin tower next to Moses, was climbed by a new route by Dunn and Snively, who placed five bolts for aid. The route begins on the ridge closest to Moses. NCCS III, F8, A4.

ERIC BJØRNSTAD

*Zion National Park.* Jim Dunn and Dean Tspapport did a new route on Angel's Landing, free and aid with large belay ledges and no bolts. NCCS V, F10, A4. Ron Olevsky climbed Cerberus Gendarme, a 900-foot face across from Angel's Landing. He climbed solo, half aid and half free.

ERIC BJØRNSTAD

*Titan, West Face and River Tower, Fisher Towers.* An 11-pitch route was made but not reported in the fall of 1973 by Lou Dawson and Harvey T. Carter with Kenney Williams and Mike Kennedy working on the first six pitches but unable to return for the final ascent. The rappel from this six-day ascent was via the route climbed. NCCS V, F8, A3. River Tower is located a short distance beyond the Fisher Towers turn-off on Highway 128 from Moab. It was first climbed but not reported in 1973 by Ken Wyrick and Cardo Merrill. Harvey T. Carter and party made the second ascent. There are several possible chimneys on the west side of the tower. The first ascent began toward the rear or up-slope side of the west face, where the tower is some 250 feet high. The third belay is from the top of the summit blocks. From there one can either rappel 20 feet into the notch and reascend to the true summit or loop a rope over the summit block flake and do a Tyrolean traverse (15 feet). NCCS II, F5, A2.

ERIC BJØRNSTAD

### Arizona

*The Mace.* In late March, I made a roped solo ascent of *The Mace* (F9) by the original route. After third-classing the first two pitches, I used the rope for protection on the last three, including the infamous "step-across," where one bridges across to the higher of the two summits. The climb took 2½ hours from base to summit, and an almost equal length of time for the descent; my ropes tangled on one rappel, forcing me to jumar back to the anchors.

MICHAEL KENNEDY

### Wyoming

*Climbs in the Monolith-Dogtooth Cirque, Wind River Range.* Intrigued by scant glimpses caught of the Monolith-Dogtooth cirque on a stormy day last summer, Angus Thuermer and I swore to return to attempt some of the elegant lines that caught our eye in this seldom visited area. During our seven-day visit in the third week of August, we completed three new routes and made what we believe to be the second or third ascent of the striking Hudson-Gran-Tompkins line on Monolith's north face. (See *A.A.J.*, 1964, pages 72-74). Since much of the latter climb is moderate fifth-class, a competent party could climb Monolith's 1800-foot north face in a long day by avoiding the tedium of hauling and jumaring. (In the 16 pitches we used only five points of aid, which could be avoided by F10 climbing.) From our camp at the cirque mouth a long, pretty, easy-looking ridge rose some 1500 feet to the west, separating Monolith from Dogtooth Pinnacle. The ridge does not appear on the USGS *Mosquito Lake* quadrant. We climbed it in an

enjoyable day. Mostly third-class climbing with a few F6 pitches made this Grade III and good fun. We descended a south-branching couloir at the junction of the ridge with the main cirque wall. To the right of the Dogtooth lie four prominent 1500-foot towers. We set our sights on the third tower north of Dogtooth, which we later found that Chuck Pratt had called "A-Frame Buttress" after its sharp pyramidal shape capped by large overhangs at its pointy summit. We completed a fine route on this face in one long day. We followed the huge dihedral in the face's center to a third of the way up. There a clean, tapering crack branched left to a sloping ledge, which we followed left to the south corner of the face. Pitch 4 went up steep cracks around the corner before we emerged again on the main face. Steep cracks and beautiful flakes on the face's left side led to the summit overhangs, which required strenuous climbing, thus completing a potential classic. (NCCS IV, F9, A2; 10 pitches). To the east of the Monolith lie three smaller but distinct prominent towers. The central one is split through its bottom half by a large chimney, visible from miles away. The chimney suggested an obvious line. The otherwise flawless line reminded us of a giant tombstone. In the company of Glenn Randall, we gave the "Tombstone" a try and climbed a beautiful six-pitch route. After chopping 100 feet of steps in a snowfield and climbing an F7 pitch, we reached the immense vertical chimney, which proved quite easy. Due to its depth, two huge, difficult-looking chockstones were passed on the inside (F5 and F7). Glenn led the crux pitch (F10), which followed a thin crack in a wall graced with fine face holds. Two more interesting pitches on the tower's left side brought us to the top of a highly recommended climb. (NCCS III, F10).

PETER METCALF

*Fremont Peak, West Face, Wind River Range.* On the third day, August 1, of a nine-day solo trip I climbed a new route on the west face of Fremont Peak. The route followed the obvious and attractive crack system in the center of the face, and involved nine pitches. A small amount of aid was used in the lower part of the route to climb a roof and a very thin crack, although these two sections could probably be climbed free. I did enjoy many exciting sections of wild and difficult stemming on generally excellent rock. I reached the summit at dark. NCCS IV, F9, A1. The route followed the prominent, left-leaning corner system just left of the Beckey-Lahr-Martinson route, seen on Plate 34 in *A.A.J.*, 1977.

CHRIS LANDRY, *Elk Mountain Climbing Club*

*Climbs on the Southwest Face of the Fremont-Sacajawea Ridge, Wind River Range.* On June 23 Jim M. McCarthy and I climbed the

wishbone arête leading up to the summit south of Sacajawea. Looking up, we took the right-hand bone to start and climbed on the right side of the arête after the third pitch until we reached the intersection of the bones. (About 13 pitches, NCCS F8 or F9.) On June 25 we climbed a new route on a west-facing buttress on the Fremont Massif. The route is between two huge chimney gullies and is north of the Kennedy route on Fremont. There is a steep buttress between the Kennedy route and the buttress we climbed. The route began in a flared chimney. At the end of the fourth pitch we traversed left, out of a dihedral system, to third-class ledges on the prow of the buttress. We did a total of about twelve pitches and then traversed left into the gully near the top. The climbing and rock were excellent. A regular nut rack is adequate; it is good to have a tube chock (4½"). (NCCS, F9.) On June 28 we did a short climb on the southeast arête of Garnick's Needle. (Five pitches, F8.)

CARLA FIREY

*Squaretop from the West, Wind River Range.* In the second week of August Joe Giovannone and I climbed Squaretop up the north side of the southwest couloir. The route started just a little south of a point due west of the summit. To start, we climbed the couloir directly to the second waterfall. The route went up a crack system, a chockstone-filled chimney, ledges and a narrow, wet chimney to scree and the summit plateau. NCCS II, F6.

RON GLASER, *Acromania Mountaineering*

*Cloud Peak, East Face, Bighorns.* On July 2, I climbed a couloir to the left of the sheer, blank section of the east face, solo. It was 45° ice and snow. It should be climbed in August as wet snow slides were frequent when I was in the couloir. Later I discovered that Gary Poush had climbed this couloir two or three years before.

RON GLASER, *Acromania Mountaineering*

## Colorado

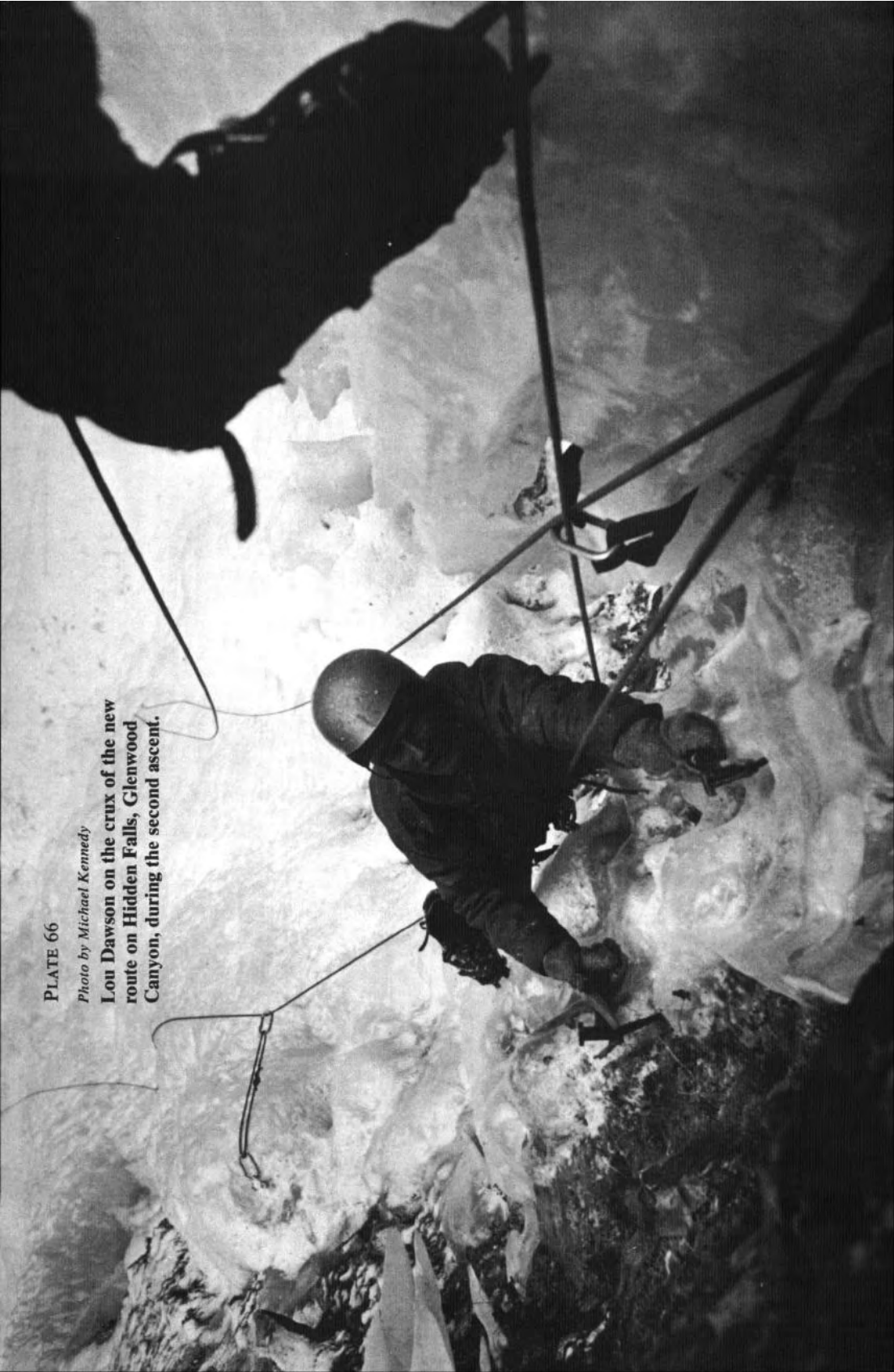
*Colorado, 1977.* The winter of 1977 was unusually dry and warm. Above 10,000 feet there was little snow accumulation, although it was frequently cold and windy. Because of a rainy summer and fall, ice was everywhere; many could enjoy the gullies and waterfalls without typical avalanche danger from above. The Rocky Mountain National Park winter season was off to an ambitious start when Ken Duncan and Mark Wilford made the first winter ascent of the Diagonal Direct on Longs Peak in three days of climbing with clear, but cold and windy, conditions. Most of the climbing was on aid with lots of hooking. Also



PLATE 66

*Photo by Michael Kennedy*

**Lou Dawson on the crux of the new route on Hidden Falls, Glenwood Canyon, during the second ascent.**



in December Mike Kennedy and Gordon Smith did Alexander's Chimney and The Eighth Route on Longs. In January I made rapid second winter solos of Blitzen Ridge on Ypsilon in 27½ hours and on the north face of Meeker in eight hours. The Blitzen climb turned into a desperate struggle 1000 feet below the summit when a vicious storm moved in and I was forced to crawl to keep from being blown away. I had to make a forced bivouac without parka or bag, food or water, below the summit on the descent. Jeff and Mike Lowe completed a five-day ascent of the Diamond I route on Longs Peak. This was the first winter ascent and the fifth altogether of the route. In February Scott Kimball and Joe Hladick completed a new route on the northeast face of McHenry's Peak with one bivouac in a cave halfway up. The route began on the Snow Bench route and continued straight up after two pitches. There were 11 pitches in all, nine of which were fifth-class up to F8 with some aid. A short while later Glenn Randall and Joe Kaelin did another new route on McHenry's a little to the right. This was also 11 pitches on mixed snow and rock with some ice. In March the same pair completed the first winter ascent of the prominent prow on the east face of Taylor with two bivouacs. The climb was mostly on snow. On the final pitch they had to tunnel through the summit cornice. Other winter ascents included a solo ascent of Kierners Notch Couloir on Longs Peak by Steve Pomerance in eight hours. Harry Kent and Joe Hladick made the first winter ascent of the south face of the Petit Grepon doing it all free (F8). Scott Kimball and Scott Thornburn completed with one bivouac a long snow climb to the right of the Y-Couloir on Ypsilon with two rock pitches of F6 to gain the Blitzen Ridge 300 feet below the summit. In late March Tomas Gross completed the most spectacular winter climb thus far done in Rocky Mountain National Park by soloing the Diamond I route in nine days. He had been attempting the climb since December and on one occasion spent 19 days on the mountain, only reaching Broadway Ledge once. Ice climbing dominated the Western Slope with numerous ascents of Bridalveil Falls near Telluride and other ice spills in Glenwood Canyon near Aspen. Near Aspen, Chris Landry and Mike Kennedy made the first winter ascent of the northwest buttress of Capitol Peak (NCCS IV, F9, A1), using aid for only 60 feet. In February Lou Dawson, Mike Kennedy and Steve Shea climbed the complete north face of Pyramid Peak (V, F9, A1) with one bivouac. Eldorado Canyon in Boulder saw activity in February by Dave Breashears, Jeff Lowe, Greg Lowe and Kevin Worrall and a most ambitious free solo by Pat Adams of the Klobberdanz Roof (F11). In the Estes Park area Eric Weinstein and Bruce Morris did a hard new route on the Crescent Wall. Late spring and early summer in Rocky Mountain National Park was plagued with several fatalities from unroped accidents. In the Y-Couloir two climbers luckily escaped death when a cornice

PLATE 67

*Photo by Michael Kennedy*

**Chris Landry on the new buttress of  
Capital Peak.**



broke and swept them down about 1200 feet. This is the third year in a row that this has happened on the same day, July 3, but the first time that those involved were not killed. Spring in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison was very active. Earl Wiggins and Brian Becker put up a new route just left of the Goss-Logan route (NCCS VI, F10, A4). Scott Gilbert and John Rosholt succeeded on a new 15-pitch free climb at the west end of the Painted Wall (F9). Jeff Lowe and Jane Wilson climbed a new grade IV, F10, which they called *Kama Sutra*, on the buttress above the prominent chimney above the Kor-Dalke *South Chasm View* on the North Chasm View Wall. Other developments in the Black Canyon include the *Milky Way III* (F8) by Karin Budding and Steve Hong. Another route close by Kor's *Porcelain Arête* was put up by Bob Robertson and Ed Russell. Earl Wiggins free soloed in two hours the *Russian Arête*, not realizing it was that route (NCCS IV, F9). On the North Chasm View Wall Steve Hong and Ed Webster climbed a first ascent all free, the *Movable Feast* (NCCS IV, F10). Brian Becker and Ed Webster climbed a new free route just above the *South Chasm View Wall* route with 1500-feet of sustained F9 and 10, the *Journey Home*. Steve Hong and Harvey Miller did a V, F9, A3 route, which they called *Air City*. Bob Sullivan and Terry Stemp climbed *Merlin* (NCCS V, F9, A3). On the south side of the canyon Hong and Webster climbed a first free ascent of a prominent curving crack visible from the North Chasm View overlook with excellent rock except for one rotten F10 pitch at the top. We have just had the report of a seven-hour nearly all-free ascent of the original Goss-Logan *Chasm View Nose* by Jimmy Dunn and Peter Williams. All went free except for 80 feet. On Longs Peak this summer there were two exceptional climbs. John Bachar and Richard Harris completed the upper pitches of *Diamond 7* (F11). Roger and Bill Briggs completed an all-free ascent of the Diagonal on the lower east face.

MICHAEL M. COVINGTON

## CANADA

### Yukon Territory

*Summary of Climbing in the St. Elias Mountains.* Climbing activity in the St. Elias Mountains in 1977 was double that of the year before; a total of 98 climbers from 17 expeditions spent nearly 1900 man-days in the Icefield Ranges. The Arctic Institute of North America had a busy field season. Some 30 people took part in the HAPS program at the Logan High Camp. Professor G. Clark of the University of British Columbia continued his research on surging glaciers in the Lowell and Steele Glacier areas.

RONALD FREY, *Park Warden, Kluane National Park*