

STANFORD ALPINE CLUB  
JOURNAL



1958

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA







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## *Contents*

First Ascent of the East Peak of Mount Logan . . . . .	1
Out of My Journal (Peru, 1955) . . . . .	10
Battle Range, 1957 . . . . .	28
The SAC Trans-Sierra Tour . . . . .	40
Climbing Notes . . . . .	51

*Frontispiece: Dave Sowles enroute El Capitan Tree, Yosemite Valley.  
Photo by Henry Kendall*

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# FIRST ASCENT OF THE EAST PEAK OF MOUNT LOGAN

by GILBERT ROBERTS

Mount Logan, North America's second highest peak at 19,850 feet, is also one of the world's largest mountain masses. Located in the wildest part of the St. Elias Range, it has seen little mountaineering activity. In 1925, the first ascent was accomplished by a route from the Ogilvie Glacier which gained the long ridge leading to the summit from King Col. This ascent had gone down as one of the great efforts in mountaineering history. McCarthy, Foster, Lambert, Carpe, Read, and Taylor ultimately reached the central summit after months of effort including the relaying of loads by dog sled in the long Yukon winter--a far cry from the age of the air drop. In 1950 their route was repeated by two parties within nine days of each other. First by Norman Read (of the first ascent party) and Andre Roch, and later by three University of Alaska students; Herried, Christenson, and Paige.

In 1953 McGowan, Mohling, Miller, Kelly, and Long scouted the eastern aspect of Logan in hopes of finding a new route. They discovered a promising ridge leading to the 16,000 foot summit beneath the east peak. Unfortunately, Long developed appendicitis and had to be evacuated. The four remaining members pressed on in poor weather and were able to reconnoiter the ridge to about 10,500 feet. Their report in the 1954 AAC Journal was of great interest to members of our group.

In the fall of 1956, I began contacting people for an attempt on Logan's East Ridge and found Dave Collins very enthusiastic. However, the expedition did not actually take shape until a few weeks prior to departure. We had done much letter writing but were still short-handed; fortunately Don Monk and Kermit Ross had been

considering a similar venture and we joined forces. The last week of June saw five of us gathered in Yakutat, Alaska, Monk from Danville, Calif. is a math grad student at the Univ. of California. Ross is a patent attorney for the Navy. Cecil Ouellette, recently escaped from the mountain troops, was preparing to study geography. Collins was doing graduate work in engineering at the University of Washington. I am a medical student at Stanford Hospital in San Francisco. No leader was chosen. All decisions were the result of group discussion and a system which proved thoroughly satisfactory, despite the fact that only two of us had climbed together previously. Our gear was shipped air freight to Yakutat; with some discretion exercised, this method proved economically feasible. Needless to say, we were all quite warmly dressed when we boarded the plane in Seattle; our pockets full of pitons and other feather-weight items.

At Yakutat we became better acquainted during the usual three day wait for flying weather. Finally, on June 25th, we made two air drop flights to the base of the East Ridge and the party was landed about nine miles down the Hubbard Glacier in three trips by ski equipped Super Cub. Next morning the plane came in with one more load of food and equipment and we were on our own.

Because of our isolated situation any mishaps would have to be handled by ourselves. We had been unable to arrange radio communication. It was a hundred miles of difficult glacier travel to the coast of Yakutat Bay and once there it might be several days before we could attract the attention of a passing plane. We planned on a conservative course. Mindful of the first ascent party's difficulty in one of Logan's notorious storms, we resolved to always have adequate caches of food and fuel on the ridge so that we would not be placed in the position of having to retreat in bad weather. We also planned to place fixed ropes in hazardous locations that we would be crossing repeatedly with loads. (Almost 2000 feet of 5/16" manila were used for this purpose before

we were through.)

The two days after our landing were spent collecting gear and hauling it up through an icefall to the base of the East Ridge where Camp I was set up. The sun was scorching, situated as we were between three walls of ice and snow, and we worked mostly at night. An aluminum ski sled fabricated by Ross was of great aid in this work and again later on during our long walk out.

After Cecil and Don climbed the steep rock at the base of the ridge, we established an A frame and pulley system off the crest and hauled our gear up a 400 foot ice slope to the ridge. Carrying loads to the bergschrund and pulling them up occupied two more days. June 30th saw us all on the ridge with supplies for at least a month. During the hauling we used a small tent platform, christened Camp 2, but we soon moved up the ridge about one hour to a larger perch, Camp 3, at about 9000 feet. This was to serve as our big supply dump and advance base camp.

On July 2nd, we carried loads about six hours up ridge to Camp 4 at 11,000 feet. This portion of the ridge was loose and exposed but not technically difficult. Still, a couple of fixed ropes were used. After another day of relaying loads, we spent July 4th in camp, with the first storm howling outside. Kermit and Dave made a reconnaissance above Camp 4 during one lull, but it was the evening of July 7th before the three below could move up with the last loads to Camp 4. The storm continued next day, but one trip down ridge was made to replace a stove that had gone over the side. July 9th was also stormy but everyone finally set out with loads and the weather cleared in the afternoon.

Climbing above Camp 4 was much more difficult. The south side of the ridge presented steep rotten rock with patchy snow and outslipping slabs. The north side was primarily high angle ice. We left several fixed ropes and stayed close to the crest except for one traverse out onto a series of ledges on the south face of the ridge. At 12,000 feet, Kermit and Dave had placed a

cache. Above this the ridge was a knife edge of ice for 350 feet with 4000 foot drops to the upper Hubbard on either side. The cold wind numbed us as Kermit and Cecil went ahead to cut steps suitable for men with forty to fifty pound packs, using ice pitons for the first time on the mountain. Finally we reached a broad portion of the ridge in the lee of a large ice cliff and established Camp 5 at 12,300 feet. After some hasty platform digging we all hurried down to warm up.

By July 11th, everyone was settled with supplies in Camp 5 and the route had been scouted for 1200 feet further. The next day we got about two hours further up the ridge but were forced to cache our loads and retreat when what looked like a minor flurry of snow and mist took a turn for the worse. Snow and high winds held us in Camp 5 for three days. By now we were out of reading matter and attention was given to preparing new culinary delights. One, the 'Logan TV breakfast,' was without doubt the worst thing any of us had ever eaten.

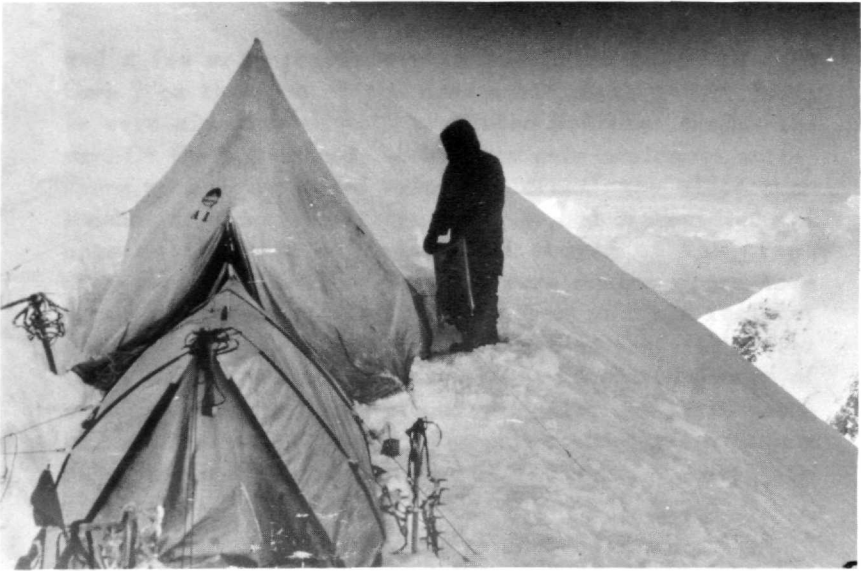
On July 15th the weather cleared once again and we decided to make our moves from camp to camp in one day to avoid being stranded above or below our supplies. Also, a series of shorter double carries would solve the problem of steps drifting in between trips. Carrying out this plan we made two carries to Camp 6, situated in a rather exposed position on the lower lip of a crevasse at about 13,500 feet. The route from 5 to 6 involved steep ice covered slabs, where more fixed ropes were placed, and another narrow ridge covered with soft snow which the advance party removed in an hour's shoveling. Above 13,000 feet the ridge began to widen and ultimately merged into the face of the 15,500 foot dome rising to the edge of the summit plateau. We now traded rock and narrow ridge for steep snow slopes with crevasses and avalanche worries.

One false start of two hundred feet above Camp 6 ended on the wrong side of a large crevasse. Removing our tubular aluminum pickets and fixed line we tried again, and after a traverse on the south below the crest



MT. LOGAN.





CAMP 6. AT TOP OF RIDGE NEAR 13,500 FT.



RELAYING LOADS ON RIDGE BETWEEN CAMPS 3 AND 4.





and a few more problems in a small ice fall, we made Camp 7 on the face of the dome a bit above 14,000 feet. We were almost even with unclimbed McArthur across the way. On the way around, we had our only avalanche scare. Where we had traversed below the crest, the slope avalanched to a depth of three feet. We had appreciated the possibility of a slide and had stayed on the crest wherever possible, but here we were moving close to a transverse crevasse. One man was swept off his feet but scrambled to safety even before the rope went tight from those above the fracture line. We had observed dozens of avalanches on the faces around us during our three weeks in the area, but this one took on a special significance as we watched it sweep down the face and out onto the glacier 6000 feet below.

On July 17th we made two carries over the dome to establish Camp 8. Our route was on high angle snow for the most part and forced us to make two long traverses to avoid crevasses and avalanche slopes. It was a big day for us--we got our first look at the unclimbed East Peak since the landing on the Hubbard. Set back several miles from the edge of the plateau, it had been hidden from us on the ridge. Below only the higher peaks could be seen piercing a layer of cloud. Camp 8 was the first site we did not have to level ourselves. We felt isolated but optimistic in the knowledge that we had enough food for ten days or more.

Next morning the weather was discouraging; we moved on with heavy packs in mist and snow. Soon we were in the lee of a small peak on the edge of the plateau and the drifts were thigh deep. At three we decided we had gone far enough. Camp 9 was placed at 16,000 feet about two miles from the base of the East Peak. The sky looked bad but we were prepared to wait up to five days. No one slept much that night; at five a.m. it was windy and socked in. Finally at nine we decided that the weather had improved enough to justify a summit try.

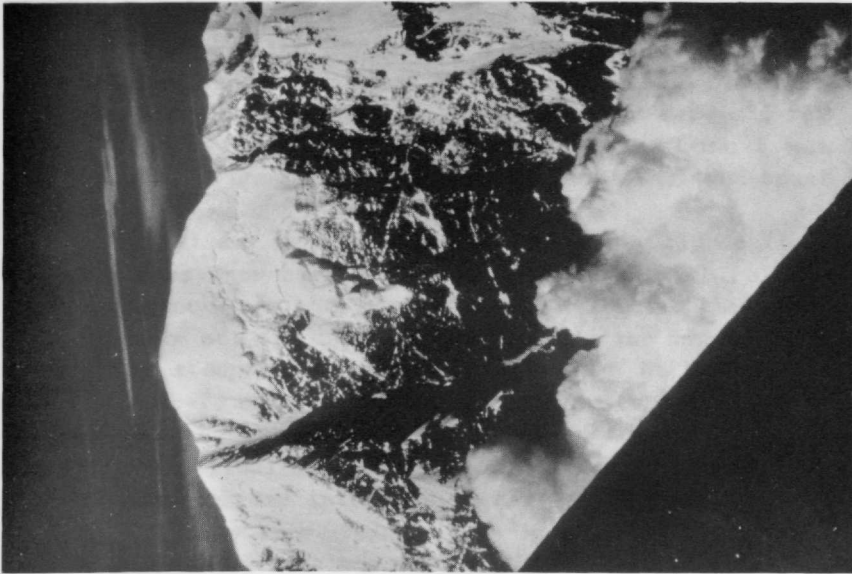
We headed for the southeast ridge of the East Peak. still slogging in deep snow but making better time with-

out packs. Below the ridge an ice slope forced us to use crampons. Once on the ridge the climbing was hard snow with occasional islands of rock. As we moved upward the weather improved--we had our first view of mighty Saint Elias. At four p.m. all five of us finally reached Logan's East Summit. Stepping gingerly at first until the cornice seen from below had been investigated, we were soon milling about in a mess of 'rope salad.' The entire St. Elias Range spread out on all sides of us as we shot pictures with complete abandon and tried to decide which of Logan's peaks was highest. The central peak about two miles away had been climbed the three previous ascents from the other side. Sighting with an ice axe left room for question. In the end we were pretty much in agreement with others who have debated the question. The two peaks are very close in elevation; if anything, the central peak is perhaps 50-100 feet higher. The long ridge dropping to 18,000 feet and then rising to the central peak was tempting, but we were already on a long limb. The weather had been good too long and clouds were rising. We had never seriously considered carrying one or two more camps over the East Peak; we were happy to be where we were. It was cold (one camera shutter froze). and all too soon the five of us started down.

We made good time going down, glissading in a few places, and reached Camp 9 at seven p.m. None of us felt the altitude particularly (19,800 ft at the top), but all were tired and thirsty. The temperature was eleven below zero as we began melting soup water.

Next morning everyone moved in slow motion; our last five days of heavy going were beginning to tell. Finally we broke camp and started down, leaving our tent where it stood. Soon heavy mist closed in and we were thankful for the flagged wands we had placed on the way up. Camp by camp we descended, pausing just long enough to reclaim personal gear and eat any particularly tempting food. We were very hungry, despite an adequate supply of food on the ascent. Poor visibility and drifted powder snow made for crevasse problems; between Camps

5 and 5 the lead man suddenly disappeared from view but  
was seen extricated about. On this portion of ridge as



AVALANCHE ON MT. McARTHUR.

pondered down the icefall making many convoluted detours  
in the 100 foot visibility. At the foot of the icefall  
we played 'cubs, cubs, where's the cubs.' The weather  
was still foul and pulling the sled in soft snow a real



CLEARING RIDGE ABOVE CAMP 5.



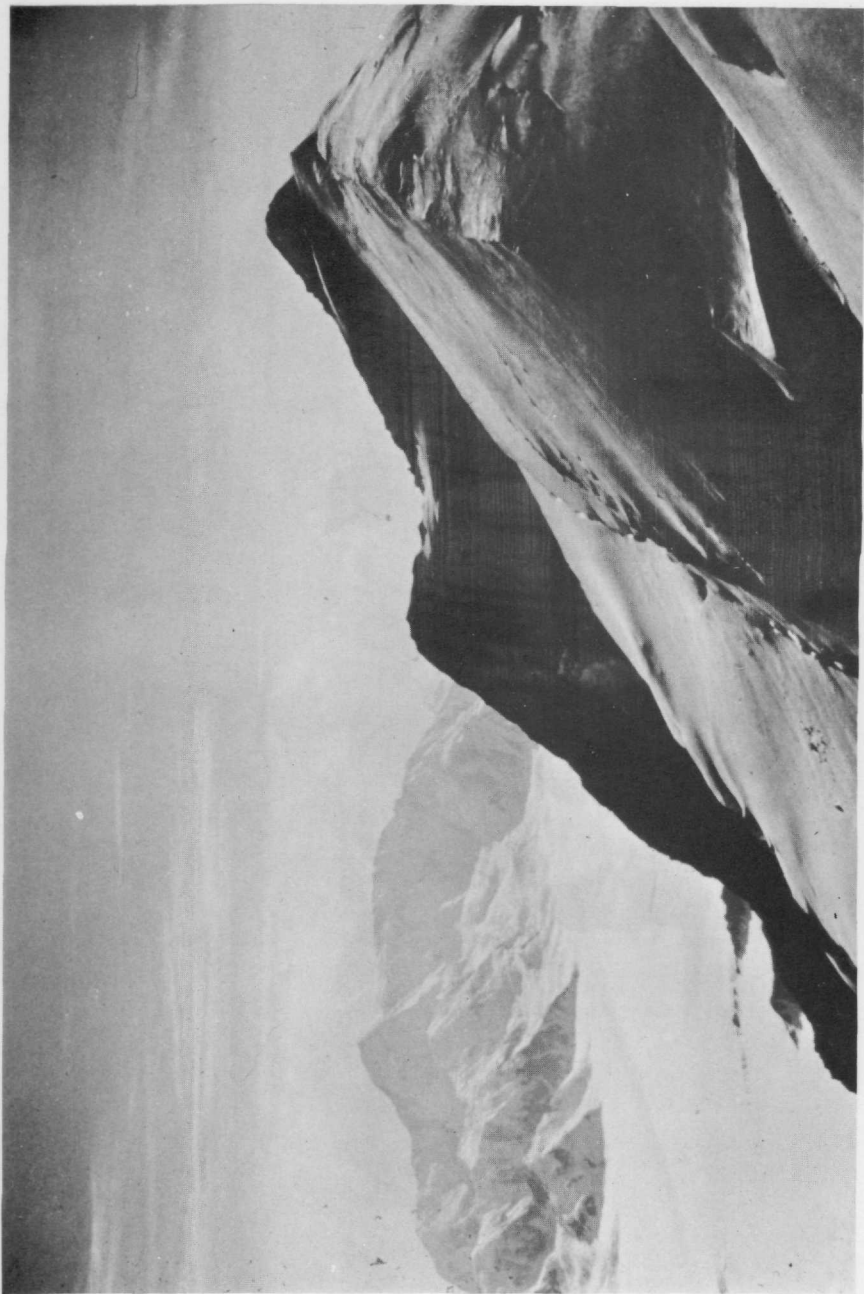
6 and 5 the lead man suddenly disappeared from view but was soon extricated unhurt. On this portion of ridge we were also treated to the view of air beneath a particularly deep step and moved a bit further below the corniced ridge. Our fixed ropes were still in place and proved valuable on several occasions. We were all relieved when the narrow ice ridge below Camp 5 was passed. At Camp 4 we cooked an enormous meal and spent the night.

Next day we continued down the rocky ridge. There was less snow here now and more trouble with rolling loose rocks. In some places we moved one at a time until all were out of range. Camp 3 with all the canned goods almost stopped us--ham, sardines, peanut butter, honey, roast beef, canned fruit. Late in the afternoon we pushed on and heavily laden internally and externally, we made the final 400 foot rappel off the ridge and over the bergschrund into a thick mist.

A heavy snow storm held us in camp for a day and a half, but the rest was welcome. When it eased a bit, we meandered down the icefall making many crevasse detours in the 100 foot visibility. At the foot of the icefall we played 'cache, cache, where's the cache.' The weather was still foul and pulling the sled in soft snow a real effort. We camped and next morning things cleared somewhat. Behind us the East Ridge was covered with white--luck had been with us.

One hundred miles lay between us and the coast as we started down the Hubbard Glacier on July 24th. Traveling on snowshoes and pulling our loaded sled we made about 15 miles the first day. The next day we pulled and carried over Water Pass and viewed the enormous Seward Glacier. Logan's huge southern faces came into view and far above the Central and East Peaks emerged from the clouds. That night the fog closed in and we traveled by compass across the Seward neve toward Seward Trough, a fantastically broken channel where the Seward funnels down to the Malispina between Mounts Augusta and Cook. Late on the afternoon of the 26th, we heard a rock

fall and our voices echoed off something close to our left--Cook Nunatak, we were right on course. Next morning the fog began to lift and we started threading our way through the crevasses at the entrance to the trough. These crevasses were the biggest any of us had seen. Many were bottle shaped; with snow bridges fifty to sixty feet wide. Further along the trough was too broken to travel. Here we went along the left hand margin through little bays of dead ice and up and down over intervening ridges, each of which meant unloading the sled. Still these ridges had flowers, heather for beds, and running water; all very welcome indeed after nothing but snow and rock for a month. At Point Glorious we had our first contact with civilization when a Yakutat pilot spotted our signal mirror. He buzzed us and we signalled that all was well. Continuing down along the edge of the trough and passing between Seward Rock and the Hitchcock Hills, we reached the Malispina Glacier on the evening of July 29th. From here we took a bearing of 150 degrees magnetic for the coast 35 miles away. The Malispina is a vast wasteland of dirty ice, moraines, and pressure ridges. About half way across it, we abandoned our sled (snowshoes had been left behind halfway down the trough.) On July 30th we had our only casualty, when a small crevasse covered with snow and an eighty pound pack combined to produce a shoulder dislocation. Fortunately, it reduced easily and proved to be a minor disability. We continued our up and down course, getting high enough to see the ocean only twice during the day. By the evening of the 31st, we could hear the surf. But we were low on food and faced the biggest problem of the entire walk out, a system of lakes and channels paralleling the beach. On the flight in we had seen a corridor through the lakes, but on the ground it seemed to have disappeared. The thought of miles of moraines and ice hills covered with sliding debris leading around the lakes was a strong incentive and the next day produced a dubious route through the mess. It involved much iceberg jumping, a swim on our air mattresses and a high

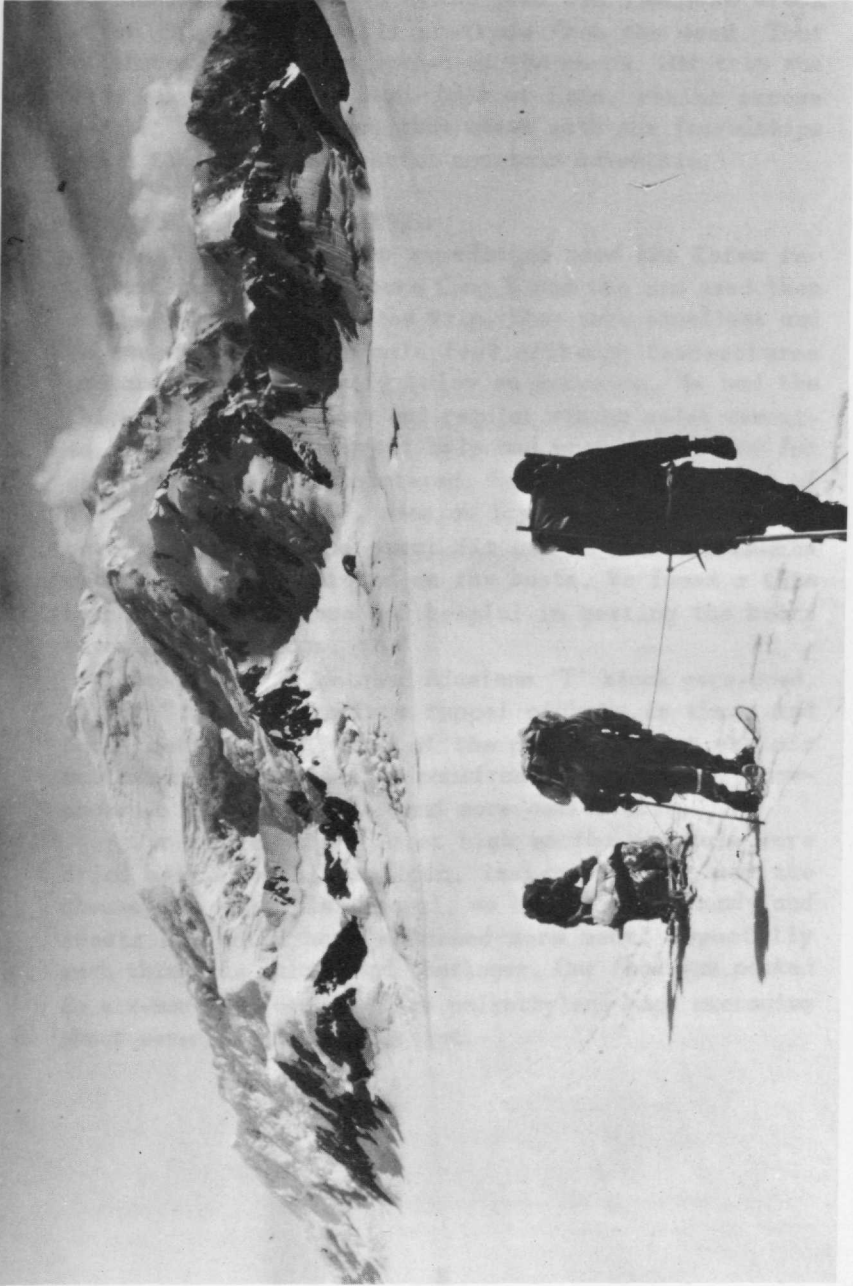


MOUNT ST. ELIAS ON LEFT. CENTRAL PEAK OF MT. LOGAN IN MIDDLE  
DISTANCE TAKEN ON RIDGE JUST BELOW EAST PEAK.





line for equipment. The morning of August 2nd found us



THE LONG WALK OUT. MT. VANCOUVER IN BACKGROUND.



line for equipment. The morning of August 2nd found us at the Satsuma Maru--a sixty year old Japanese wreck whose three masts still protrude from the sand. That afternoon two Cessnas landed on the beach. Our trip was over except for one last look at Logan rising across Yakutat Bay and the joy that comes with new friendships and a thoroughly successful mountain adventure.

#### FOOD AND EQUIPMENT NOTES:

All members of the expedition used the Korea insulated rubber boots above Camp 4 and two men used them exclusively throughout the trip. They were excellent and no one suffered from cold feet although temperatures probably reached twenty below on occasion. We had the thick soles ground down and regular vibram soles cemented on. These were a great help and proved adequate for all rock climbing encountered. We used crampons most of the time above Camp 4, even on icy rock. They were very carefully bent to an exact fit and we had no trouble with them sliding around on the boots. We found a thin slippery polyethylene bag helpful in getting the boots on on cold mornings.

Ice pitons of notched Aluminum 'T' stock were good, as were tubular aluminum rappel pickets in three and four foot lengths. Some of the party did not use air mattresses and found that packframes, extra gear, snowshoes, etc., were warmer and more comfortable.

Our main items of diet high on the mountain were dried beef, Bovril, pemmican, instant potato, and the cheese and candy. In general, we had too much candy and sweets and would have welcomed more meat, especially such things as salami and thuringer. Our food was packed in six-man-day lots in large polyethylene bags averaging about seventeen pounds per lot.

# OUT OF MY JOURNAL (PERU, 1955)

by DAVID SOWLES

July 16:....Slept soundly. It was 4:00 already. I hauled out my little climbing pack and put 400 feet of nylon line in it for fixed line. Thought of climb a mixture of apprehension and desire. Strawberry jello down, Ralston down. Crampons now, straps loose and supple this morning! Then down-jacket and into Bill's pack. Hooded pullover on, pack on, rope, sling, gloves. Bill is about ready, the others a little behind. Well, ready. And with a headlamp on, I moved off in the dark, 4:25! Going too fast. I slowed down. At the top of the hill before the col-slope we both stopped. By this time a light beginning to move away from camp. With the headlamp I led up to the rock. Decided Bill go on and I would shine light on slopes. After a moment Bill found he could see the steps - where they weren't ruined by the others rappelling down the slope --and I turned out the light. I moved out as Bill hit the end of the rope. We were slower than we figured because of the dark and a good wind that was getting harder as we approached the col. Finally we were on it and a very strong cold wind stung our faces. Slowly up the ridge. 'Let's go over to the bivouac cave.' We did. And I said I was going in to put on my wind parka and on my hands and knees, pack and all, I crawled in and Bill followed. We were there ten or fifteen minutes, savoring the silence and the relief from the wind. It was a good little place and would be warm with four. Well! out we went. I forgot my ax momentarily and crawled half in and got it. We went on in a nasty wind, toward the schrund. I got to it and

belayed Bill the last few feet. Then I worked on the bridge to the first rope and up the steps. Bill had to move before I reached the rocks-nearly straight above. He came on. About this time the other three appeared at the top of the col. The route goes up beside the rocks a few feet then across to a corner and around up a slope diagonally to another set of rocks. This was another lead and Bill had a little trouble with the aluminum pickets on the corner, sticking out of the pack. From here I missed the route and went nearly straight up using the rope and noted at the top the route of steps further to the left - I mentioned this to Bill after I reached the piton to belay him from. We were about three and half rope lengths or more above the schrund at this point. Bill came up and went on, fully on rock now - 4th class with crampons. He led on and off ice and rock and went up around a corner finally. We were almost beside a large mushroom cornice now. 'On Belay' came floating down in the wind. It was very strong still, and cold - I hadn't been so cold before. I came up and just beyond the cornice was Bill, cold and belaying. The clouds were minor-clear over the mountain. The steps from here led up along the shoulder of Nevado Angeles to the schrund, then down to the col below North Pucahirca...

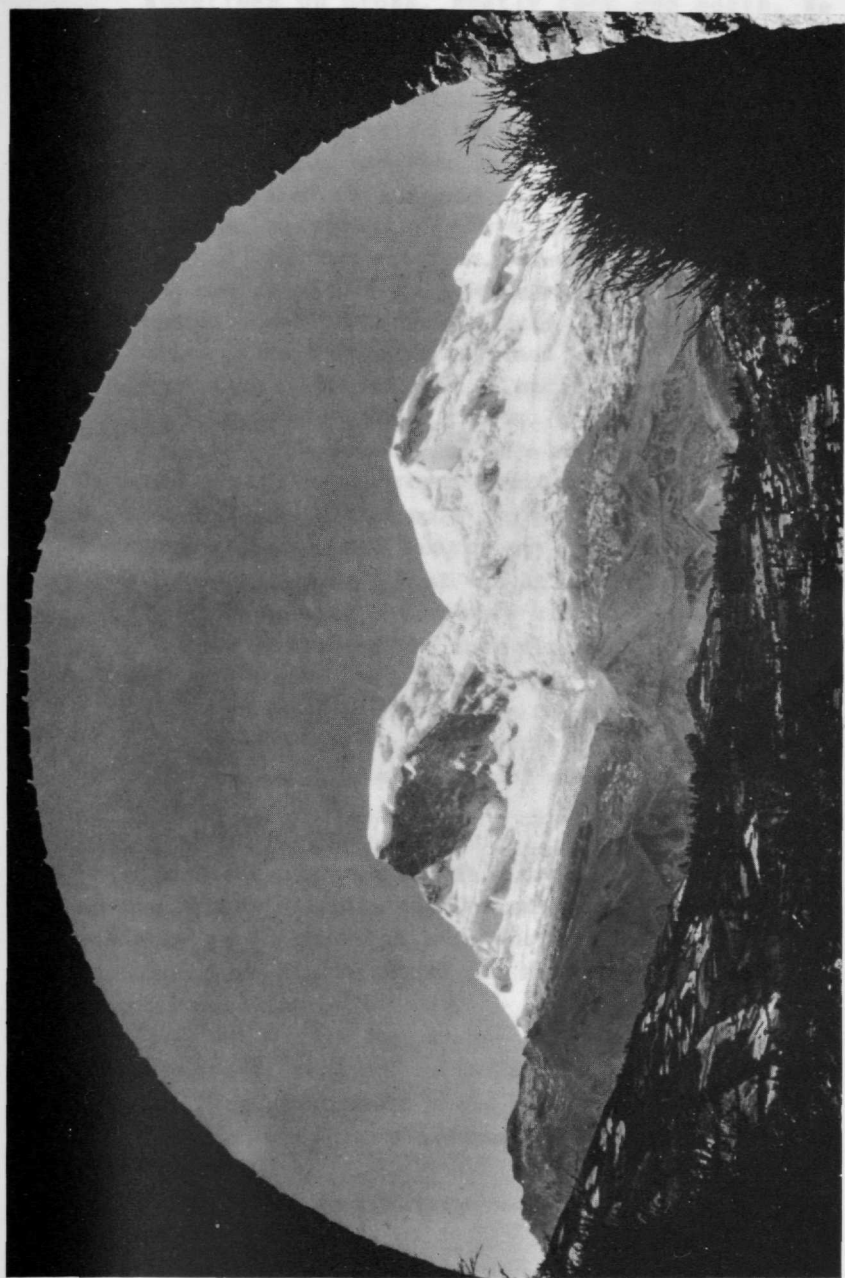
The 16th of July began as I've written above, at least it did according to the journal I kept the summer of 1955. Bill McMannis and I climbed North Pucahirca that day. This was the culmination of what I like to call Section I of the 1955 Cordillera Blanca Expedition. Section II involves the ascent of Huascaran and that story had been told elsewhere. Here I would like to give a vague idea of Section I. I say vague because until one stands in the square of Yungay, and looking up at the bulk of Huascaran and the beauty of Nevado Huandoy, sets out to climb, the immensity of and the magnificence of

these mountains can only be a vague apprehension. This article will only do a little to dispel that feeling. I suggest that there is only one adequate solution - leave for Lima tomorrow!

Section I: Yungay - Nevado Pucahirca - Yungay. There were eight of us and four porters and twenty burros and two horses and three burro drivers. It is not too clear who was running the show. Perhaps it was Emilio and Eugenio and Victorino Angeles, the porters, or Juan Ramirez, the porter-interpreter, or possibly Harvey Platts and Dave Gagliardo and Harold Walton, from Boulder. Maybe Andy Kauffman or Nick Clinch or I led the mob. It might have been Bill McMannis or Ray Hopponen of Kansas. It was never too clear, and that's a good thing, I guess.

The eight norte americanos had all flown to Lima and driven north and east up the Santa Valley, between the barren Cordillera Negra on the west and the snow-covered Cordillera Blanca on the east. The objective evolved into an attempt on the two unclimbed peaks of Nevado Pucahirca. This mountain is on the northern end of the Cordillera Blanca and to reach it we had to cross the range, turn north and traverse several intervening valleys and then turn west up the Quebrado Jancapampa (Quebrado: deep gorge or canyon) at the head of which stand the Pucahircas. There is a shorter way to the peaks, but it is unpassable for the very necessary burros. Our walk began on June 26:

Lunch at El Pinguino (a local restaurant). When we got back to the mules, everything was packed and ready to go. Pictures, goodbys, get your pack and camera, and finally a triumphal procession through the town and the beginning of the long walk. The line of burros stretched out. Andy and I forged ahead and began to gain altitude. Yungay disappeared and Huascarán gleaming in the noon sun, came and went behind the hills. Behind us Harold began to catch up, moving at a very good pace. After he came



LOOKING UP FROM YUNGAY AT HUASCORAN, THE HIGHEST PEAK IN PERU AT 22,205 FT.





we moved on - the trail rising steadily and easily, sometimes on grass, mostly rock and earth. We crossed a level plateau and came to a division in the trail. One way led up to the right steeply. A little boy and girl sitting under a shelter told us it was a shortcut to the Yancanuco. We took it. It went slowly and when it rejoined a major trail, the three of us stopped for a while. Yungay was gone and we were high above the valley...Nick and Dave arrived and sat down. 'Where were the burros,' No one knew. 'Were they ahead or behind?' We couldn't see them, and so finally moved off. It was a long time before we regained the main trail...it was across the valley....and bushwacked down to and across some wheat fields, the last cultivation before the Quebrado. And here we really had bush - and a stream to cross! Back on the trail we sat resting. We met a mule driver. 'Si... there are many gringos and burros up in the Quebrado... Circa la laguna.' That was it. A three hour walk. We moved up with not as much vigor. Hike-Hike-Hike! It grew darker and the last rise to the lake stayed in the distance. Harold and I walked in the evening. We stopped twice in the moonlight. Suddenly voices - then a fire - and a Coleman lantern! Soup was on the stove and I sat down and ate an orange.

Our first camp was beside a small lake, seven miles east of Yungay, deep in the Quebrado Yancanuco. Everyone was very tired and that night no one slept well. The next day, June 27, we headed for the major pass over the range, Puerto Chuelo.

'Buenos dios, Nino!' - Emilio had taken to calling me 'Nino' because I'm the youngest of the group. This is sometimes altered by 'super nino' and 'bueno nino'.

I lay on my sack - very comfortable by the way -

for some time, rolling a few times. There was a deep orange glow now on Huascaran Norte. Finally I got up. Ray was making Ralston. He had put the milk in the cereal, an oversight to be changed for sure. The sugar on top rougher in grain than usual - Peruvian. I finished it barely and went up and rolled my bag and air mattress up and brought them down and with a little difficulty stuffed it all in my duffel. The sun was on our camp now and the arrieros were beginning to bring the burros in and saddle and load them. I took my towel and toilet gear and went down to the stream. A few minutes and I found a place where the water was slow - Cold! hand, face, teeth Cold! I sat down in the sun - cool wind moving down the valley - and began to write. It was about 8:00...noticing Nick taking movies, Andy and Ray packing up - and later Andy going down to the bridge over the stream to keep the burros from moving away. Dave came over and cut off the top of his boots because they were already tearing, and we talked about the altitude to gain today, 2600 feet; the altitude gained yesterday, 5280 feet! We'll go higher than any climb I've ever done. Finally all was ready - Victorino gave me an orange and I stuck it in a pocket for lunch.

Ha! Burro!, etc. Move along. We were off! We came out beside the lake, a turquoise green shimmering in the morning sun, and then paralleled it, sometimes over a steep up and down rocky trail, 50 feet above the lake. Perhaps the color was lapis-lazulis, it reminded me of what I thought the glacial lakes of Canada were like. The horses were setting a good slow pace, now and then one having to be slightly repacked. We soon contoured the end of the first lake and crossed a marshy plain between the two lakes, following the stream to the second lake, a smaller one. We moved out into a broad marshy plain that filled the valley from side to side. We went far out into the middle of it and

the burros spread out to feed. I caught the burro with the lunch sack and most of us gathered around the lunch. Nick and Harold were quiet and tired. They ate only a little lunch, and subject of the 'happiness pills' came up. Nick and Andy and Harold finally decided to take one. Ray sunbathed. Emilio slept with his shoes off. Dave rested, and I lay on the barely wet ground and wrote. Well, let's go.

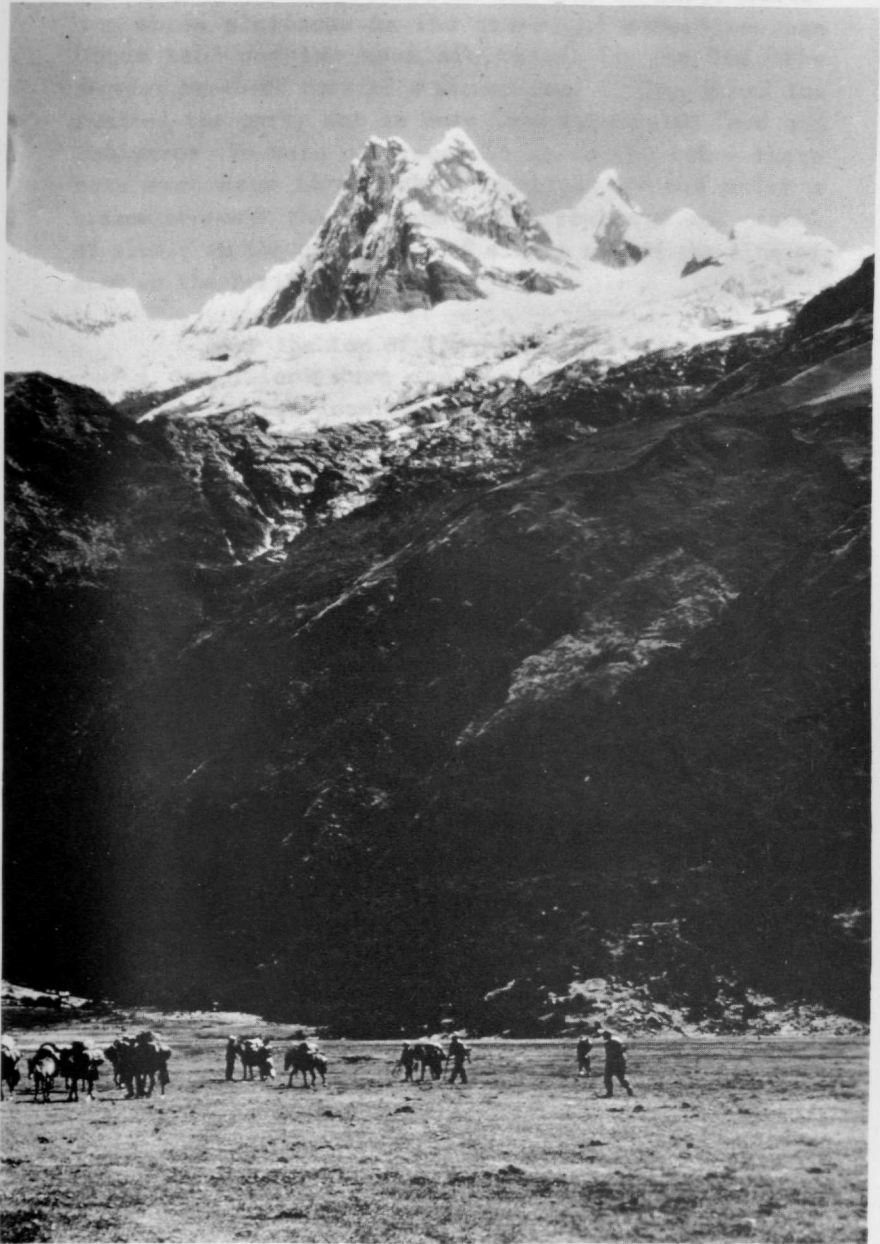
Juan and I walked slowly across the meadow together and went around a group of houses on a small hill. We paced along with Andy on the right side of the valley and later crossed a bridge and rested on the far side. We walked for about 40 minutes and Andy stopped to rest, so I stopped and got out the water. Ray caught up and I pointed out the summit tip of Chacaraju over a hill. The peak had filled the sky all day. God, what a peak! Now we could see Huascaran's two peaks so high and close. The burros came steadily on. I looked high above and decided to reach a switchback I could see. It had a green border and a long scree slope below it. At the first snow I scratched HELLO and moved on. The col not far now. Then the trail swung left! Away from the obvious route. The trail came slowly out to a corner and there was Chacaraju! The final pass was only a few hundred yards! I moved over the top and sat down. I had walked steadily and I felt good, breathing fully in the thin air 15,600. I got out my orange and ate it greedily. It was 3:45. Too cold here. Into the sun on the other side and lay happily in the sun. Andy came over the horizon. 'Sit down.' We sat talking. Juan came slowly up and sat down beside us. The conversation turned to the lack of faith and peace in the world. 'We do not live as our God would like,' said Juan. Pasa! Pasa! and the first burro came over the hill - with my sack! followed by the burro driver chewing his wad of coca leaves.

We just sat - enjoying our non-nobility.

Coming down from the pass we decided to move the loads to a small lake where we could camp. The burros and loads were all spread among the rocks, some distance above the lake! 'Caramba', says Dave, Everything has to be moved down to the lake. Unhappy burro driver. We all loaded burros and led them to the lake. By six we were all settled. The stoves were started and three pots of water heating. It took a long time. Dinner: noodles and meat. More water boiling. More tea. Complete dark since six and the Coleman and flashlights for light. Moon brighter tonight, very cold, perhaps freezing. The moon shone in my face and I was hot from the down hood and the past day's sun. I slept for half the night, dozed and turned the rest.

For three days more we walked up and down the land of the Quechua Indian. There is one level place of a hundred feet or so, but I've forgotten where it is. One day was much like the one before, except for the morning that we burned half a hillside of grass to keep warm. We would light a tuft and then move on when it had been reduced to ashes. Luckily for Peru, the sun came over the hill early. On the 30th of June we met the advanced party of Bill, Harv and Eugenio. They were camped at the head of the Jancapampa and led us up a subsidiary valley, the Quebrado Yanajanca, to base camp, at 12,900. We put up a large open canvas tent and a smaller sheepherder's tent and a cover for the supplies and built a fireplace and sat on the grass in the afternoon and made our plans.

Our first high camp was just below the glacier on a ledge overlooking the upper Yanajanca. The general line of our route was from east to west, to the main ridge of the Pucahircas, and from there south to the summits. The glacier we traveled was a minor one - more accurately described as a finger of the main ice field. It began on the slopes of the northernmost peak of the Pucahircas, an unnamed snow summit that we named Nevado Angeles. We



THE MIDDLE AND NORTH PEAKS OF NEVADO PUCAHIRCA AND NEVADO ANGELES.  
PHOTO BY DAVE SOWLES.



set up Camp I, at 15,500, on the 2nd of July, building three platforms in the gravel of a moraine: one Logan tent and two mountain tents. On the 3rd, the Angeles brothers carried a second load to Camp I and the rest of the party sat in Base Camp organizing food and equipment. We were all ready to go on the 4th - there were even some firecrackers available - and under a broken overcast the complete party, twelve of us, climbed slowly up the grass covered slopes toward the line of snow on the horizon.

Near the top of the first hill I had to stop; I could look down and see Base Camp and three porters just leaving. In the upper valley I could see three people. The last pull to the saddle above camp was a beatout. It was 12:00. We set up the camp and I began looking over the food. Bill and Andy decided they would spend the afternoon going through the ice fall, so they got their gear and took off. Nick returned from somewhere and we watched them work up the ice. Andy in the lead. Harv and Dave arrived, and later Harold and Ray - with a big pack. The sun came out for a while. At dinner the weather was still indifferent. Then came the discussion of things. Divide the party? who to set up the camps? It finally came out that everyone thought we all should concentrate on the Pucahircas (I have forgotten to mention that Taul-liraju, since climbed by Lionel Terray, was a possible objective, within reach of our Base Camp, and the idea of making an attempt on it had been mentioned. One look at it and we let it slip our minds.) All set up Camp II and all climb. So that was it. Further talk was speculation on what Andy and Bill had seen in their long hike up the glacier. They had reached approximately 17,000 and had picked out a shoulder of the east ridge of North Pucahirca which might take us to the summit. I finished a selection from D.H. Lawrence's

'Women in Love', took two sleeping pills, and turned out my light.

In the process of learning what this mountain was like and where we should go if we wanted to climb it, several days were spent properly positioning Camp II, so that we could work for the summits from there. I was about to say summit. Middle Pucahirca is still unclimbed and I suspect will remain so for a while. We attempted to find a route for it till the last day. But from our position it was impossible (and I use that word fully realizing the danger involved) and for our party it was unfeasible. So if I seem to forget it in the ensuing narrative, I hope you will understand.

Well, the position of Camp II occupied us for five days following the holiday. Lacking experience in big mountains, we neglected to divide the party in two or three groups and explore the limited possibilities - I'd say now that there were three open to consideration. Eventually all of these were examined, but it took us a while. My journal is not noticeably introspective, so many of the reasons for this won't be found in it. And I won't go into it in any detail. But it seems important for me to mention one thing. If anything impeded our progress, it was the simple fact that within the party of eight every degree of talent and experience in the mountains was represented. Combining this with our not being originally a party of friends going into the mountains together but rather a group of mountaineers organized for the purpose of going to Peru to climb, produced an obstacle that we never quite surmounted. The fact that we did reach the summit of two fine peaks is apart from this. A fine accomplishment but it didn't make the trip a success.

Getting back to the establishment of Camp II, the essential factor involved was that, wherever it was finally placed, we must be able to reach the col between North Pucahirca and Nevado Angeles. The two peaks appeared climbable only from that col. Leading to it was



the east ridge of North Pucahirca. It dropped down to the glacier at a point west and south of Camp I. And on this ridge we made our first move toward the summit.

Through the tent door I saw mist drifting past. It floated in the valley and up on the glacier. Andy and I roped up and put on our crampons just below the ice. I led and felt the load and the altitude. Then as we worked up and drifted left through the glacier, things improved. After the second stop I had it - move the left foot and breath in, put the left down and breath out. It wasn't a bad walk and when the mists broke and the peaks appeared, it was an immensely striking scene. As we neared Andy and Bill's high point there was increased crevassing and we dipped and swooped and twisted and finally sat by their highest willow wand. Lunch. We heard nothing of the others. The mist folded in deeply then and we sat resting and waiting for it to clear. It did and I took the lead, up on the shoulder from which we could gain the east ridge of North Pucahirca. It was a long steep rise and I sat gratefully at the top. The mist closed down to 25 feet. On a belay I explored further. O.K. A steep slope appeared...we could cut under and by some cornices and gain the ridge. We kicked on up the slope. I told Andy I thought it would level above and we could camp there. He came up and went up over a crevasse smoothly and on, disappearing in the mist. 'Can you give me 20 feet?' Andy asked. 'No.' 'Well, come on up then.' I led 30 feet up a short rise and saw an ice tower blocking the ridge just beyond. But it was level for a bit and not directly under the tower, so here was camp.

It looked like there might be room for three tents. We started to stamp out a tent space. We couldn't have picked a more spectacular place for a camp. Corniced slightly on two sides, dropping off

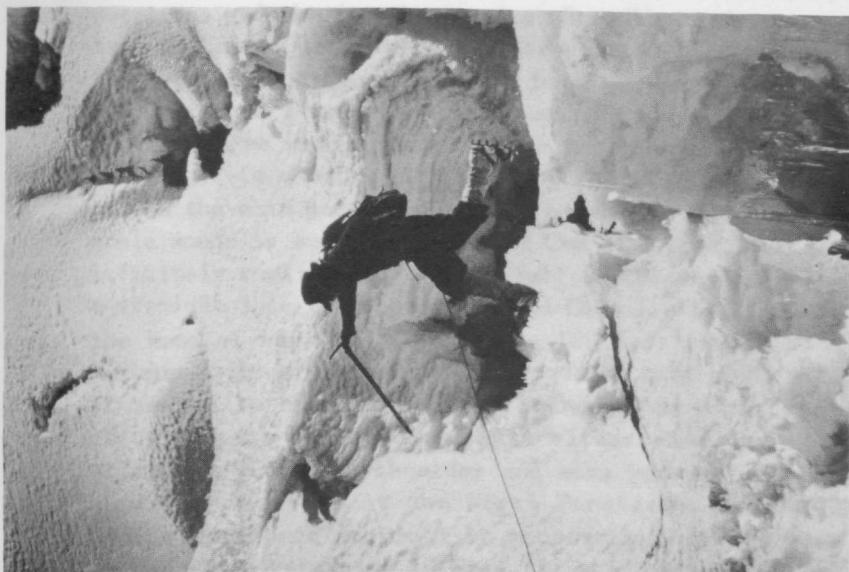
to the glaciers below, the ridge dropping off at one end and a ridge above guarded by gendarmes of ice and snow. By this time four others had arrived and Andy suggested he and I turn the tower to see how it would go. It was rotten snow but it was o.k. We plowed up to the top of a small mound and looked at the rest of the ridge. It didn't look easy but it would probably go - with work. We came back, emptied our packs, and started the trek down to Camp I. In the descending I prepared my evening's work, slashing three holes in my trousers with my crampons. We went down and down and back and forth. It seemed a long way. Finally the Logan appeared. In the hazy light of dusk we sat on rocks around the Coleman stoves and ate rice and meat and drank hot jello. Tomorrow everyone would go up to Camp II to stay.

On the 6th of July we carried personal gear and food and stoves to Camp II, at 17,500, and sang Happy Birthday to Ray. In the afternoon Andy and Harold and I worked along the ridge. It wasn't promising. In the evening we had an informal meeting and decided that Andy and I would try and see if it would go in the morning.

Just before dark...struggled out of the tent and stood looking...absolutely clear below us. Lights and a fire glow orange in the Jancapampa Valley. Moon to the southeast rides above a few tinted layers of clouds...a few stars and a wind not too cold.

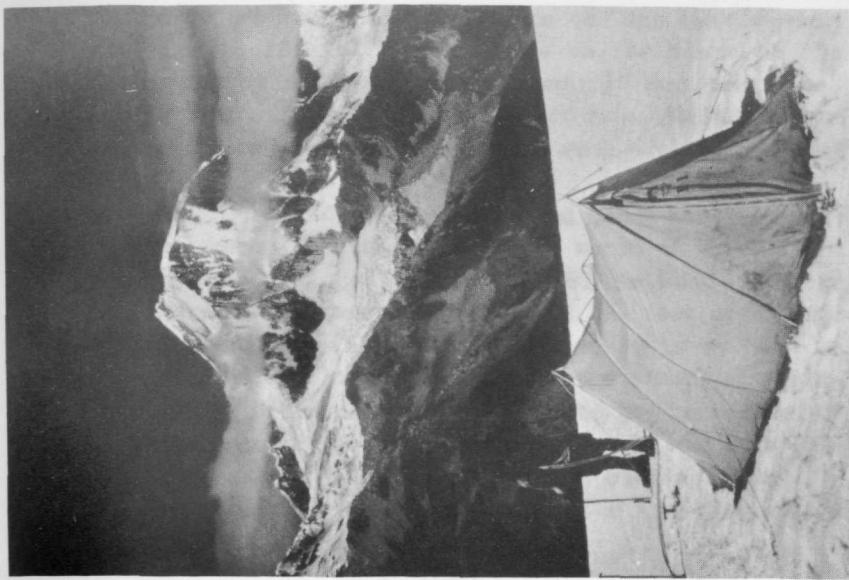
Andy and I came back from the ridge - in lousy weather - after deciding the ridge was just not our cup of tea. It would be long and difficult. The swirling fog and blowing snow didn't help. The result of our reconnaissance was to divide the party into four groups. One group explored the ice fall to the left, south of the ridge; one explored the glacier to the right, north

of the ridge; another descended to base to bring up



ONE OF THE PORTERS JUMPING A CREVASSE  
ON THE HUASCORAN GLACIER.

called in, we found Nick and Harold had found nothing  
to the south, so our route was accepted. By the evening  
of the 24th, Bill, Harold, Nick and I were established in  
Camp III, at about 16,700. Below, in Camp I, the rest of



NEVADO RANRALPACA FROM BASE CAMP.  
PHOTOS BY T. MCCORMACK.



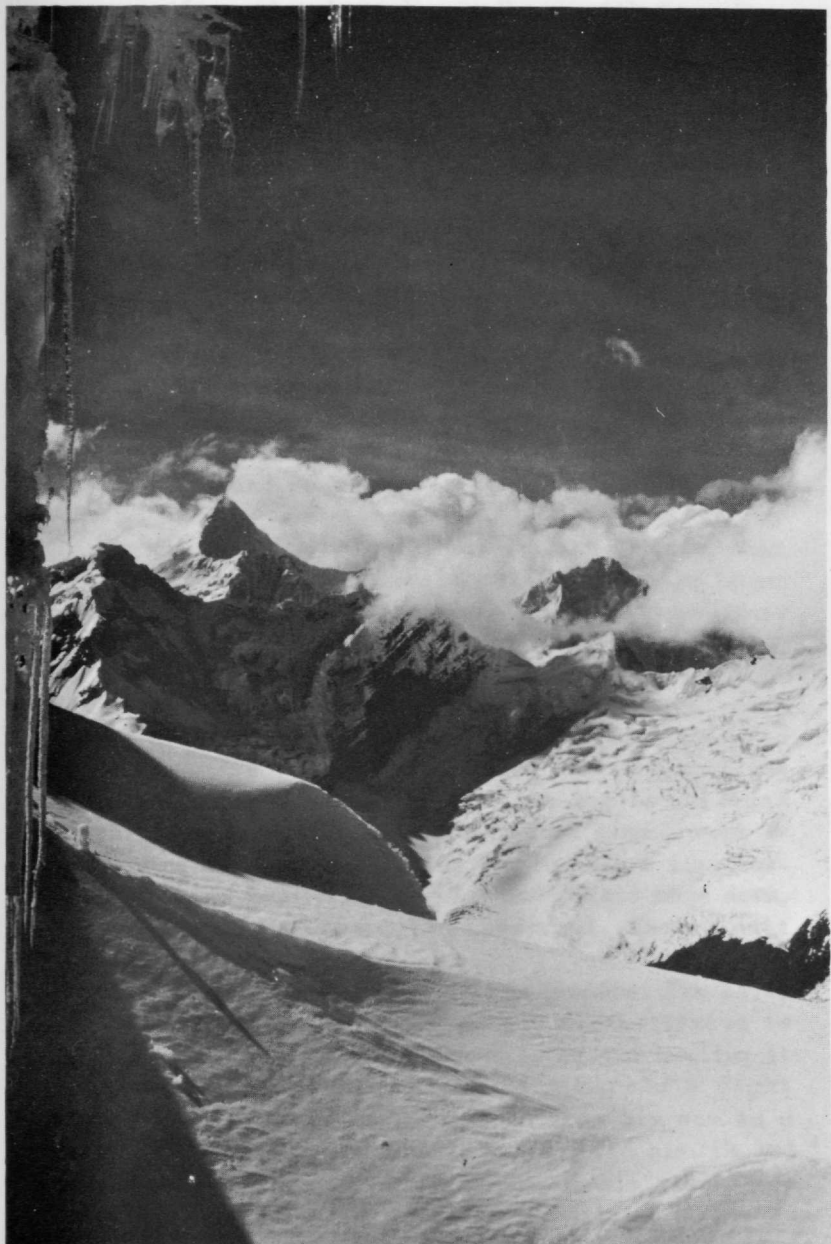
of the ridge; another descended to Base to bring up supplies, and the fourth stayed at Camp II, ready to return to Camp I to pass on the information if either of the two reconnaissance parties found a feasible route.

Bill and I were the lucky ones. By early afternoon of the 8th we had a route through the glacier north of the ridge, to a point just short of the final slope to a col on the main north-south ridge of the Pucahircas. The whole scene is much like the West Cwm of Everest, except infinitely smaller and the ice fall at the end drops in a straight line to the moraine and Camp I. The slope at the head of the Cwm is perhaps a 500 foot rise with a maximum angle of 60 degrees. By reaching this lower col. it seemed to us that you could then, turning south, either bypass Nevado Angeles to either side, or even climb over its east shoulder and make your way to the upper col between it and North Pucahirca. To reach Middle Pucahirca it might be necessary to climb over North. After returning to Camp II, which was now being called IIa, we found Nick and Harold had found nothing to the south, so our route was accepted. By the evening of the 9th, Bill, Harold, Nick and I were established in Camp IIb, at about 18,000- Below, in Camp I, the rest of the party was ready to carry loads to Camp IIb the next day. On the 10th Bill and I were on the slope to the Lower col at 8:00 in the morning. It was too late. Debris came off the slope as the sun rose. We set up one fixed rope and descended to return much earlier the next day. July 11:

...then I scrunched up and began getting ready to emerge into the silent cold world of snow. 'Get up, you b.....s, the cereal is ready,' said Harold. With much effort we got 125 feet of quarter inch nylon off the coil and put it in my pack. I started off in the lead and as the streak of light-ed sky broadened, we pulled up to the bergshrund at the base of the slope. Over it easily and by stages to the high point. Then I start cutting - easy to cut and reasonably far apart. The fixed rope-line

falls out on my pack...but Bill catches it. Rest, cut - about ten feet - 'Victory is in sight' - come on up. So I belay him up 2/3rds of the rope and go on. Near the end of the rope again. Harold and Nick are nearing the slope now -as I look down past Bill, smiling calmly up. It was about 7:45 when we got to the top of the col. First of all notice the horribly corniced ridge of the small peak to the north. There's one peak we won't climb! Bill's toes are cold. We alternate up the ridge till we get just under the bergshrund on Nevado Angeles. Still cold, blowing, exasperating. The places for traversing to the left and right are impossible. The route over the shrund is tenuous. I move down, get a belay on Bill. Suddenly - boom! There he goes! The belay came taut and he stopped himself. A hat sailing off toward Alpamayo. 'You o.k.?' 'Let's go look over here to the right. ' We worked down the shrund and looked at a bridge, where the snow was stained brown with rock falls. Nick and Harold arrived and Nick moved up to try it. He had turned to say something...when debris started down on us. Soon it stopped and we hauled ourselves out of the crevasse and exclaimed over the experience. We talked it over. Harold was the only one who was eager to go any further. We decided to call it a day. So we worked down to the col - a long tiring business. Finally down we plodded back to camp. Noon. Andy and three porters arrived. We all watched Harold and Nick on the col slope.

With the perspective of three years, I still cannot help feel that we didn't do the best we could. There are several explanations for our failure that day to push the route over Nevado Angeles to the Upper col, as the party the next day was able to do, but none of them satisfy me. We could have done better, and as Bill and I and three of the porters descended to Camp I, the disappointment I felt in myself filled my thoughts. But



NEVADO CHENCHEY FROM THE NORTH. PICTURE  
TAKEN ON SAN JUAN GLACIER.  
PHOTO BY TOM MCCORMACK.





on a magnificently clear day in Peru, with four fine companions, it's hard to be unhappy.

We went down quickly, stopping twice to remove clothes under the glacier heat. I had a great time without crampons glissading. Somewhere I decided to go to Base. Bill was staying in I. In the upper valley I outstared a herd of bulls and scrambled down the last switchbacks. Juan was there - and lonely - and we talked, sitting in the sun as the grass waved in the breeze and the stream flashed and sparkled. We ate a huge dinner and talked of the United States. Very late I lay down to sleep. Clouds and mist above, but the Southern Cross still visible, just over the high hill, where Juan had seen a grand deer.

It was the 13th before I was in Camp I again. Most of that day and the next, Bill and I lay in the Logan smoking our pipes and having one of those extraordinary conversations that cover everything, decide everything, and of which you never remember a word. Just after lunch on the 14th Harv and Dave appeared. Their news was a mixture of melodrama and success. On the 12th they had pushed the route over Nevado Angeles, setting up fixed ropes, and reaching the Upper col, the key to the North and the lower peak. There had been just time enough in the growing dusk and thickening fog to make a first ascent of Nevado Angeles. After Ray and Harold came down, they hurried down toward the Lower col. They didn't reach it.

In the dark Harold fell over a cornice. The belay held, but a moment later the people above, trying to pull Harold up, felt the rope come loose and hauling it in, found a frayed end. Eventually Harold's light appeared on the slope below and he made his way to a place where the rope could be thrown down to him. He had cut the rope because of the pressure on his ribs! They stopped at that point and bivouacked, building a cave in

the snow.

Meanwhile down in Camp IIb, Nick and Andy waited. In the morning, the 13th, the two groups met at the fixed rope just below the Lower col and all returned to camp for many hours of making water and drinking every hot drink imaginable. Before dawn on the 14th Nick and Andy were up and on their way to try and make the ascent of North Pucahirca. Harv and Dave had seen them at the Upper col at 9:00, so their chances were excellent. That afternoon Bill and I sat talking over the trip. Tomorrow we would go up to II again, hoping to make our try on the peak on the 16th. Harv and Dave were on their way to a local village at the end of the Quebrado Jancapampa, to arrange for burros to carry us back to civilization. July 15:

My God! not a cloud in all the distance, no mists, no, nothing. 'Say, this is the best we've had, isn't it?' But we waited for the valley mists to rise. Happily they didn't and we packed for the climb. 'We'll get there by lunch, so just a couple of candy bars, eh Dave?' 'Sure.' 'Emilio carried my pack over to below the ice and watched as we donned our crampons. There a last goodbye. You're up on the glacier much sooner it seems, and the peaks come in sight with a rush. Up and over a hill and there were 3 figures! coming down! We stopped and waited for them. Ray and Harold and Andy. 'We made it! We made it!' said Andy.

Andy described the remainder of the route for us and we talked over the possibilities of making a try for Middle Pucahirca. They were poor. Andy and I would meet in Camp I on the 18th to make an ascent of a small rock and snow peak just above camp. And Harold and Ray were coming back to Camp II, to follow us up in the morning. They had come down to pick up some camera gear for Nick. By late afternoon we were all at Camp IIb again, eating, as we usually did when there was nothing else to do.



NEVADO CAYESH, ONE OF THE SHARPEST PEAKS IN THE  
CORDILLERA BLANCA AND STILL UNCLIMBED.  
PHOTO BY TOM MCCORMACK.



And so, here we are back where we started, on the 16th of July, when Bill McMannis and I climbed North Pucahirca. Reaching the Upper col, we looked across to the last 500 feet. They were worthy of a 20,000 foot mountain.

...a terrible wind blowing. 3 hours to the col. The route that Andy had led went up in the middle of the slope to a brow, and then swung left and up to under a bergshrund. At the shrund there was a picket driven into the snow up to its head and there I belayed Bill. Just beyond was the high angle 'avalanche slope', as Nick had described it. It looked loose...wind still bad and cold but in the lee of the shrund it was better. Bill went on belay and I carefully crossed the bridge. Your axe did very little good; the snow was too soft. I moved up toward the fixed line that Andy had placed. The slope is steep, about 60 degrees or more and seems to be held up - being bottomlessly soft in composition - by interlacing bands of ice. Curious. 120 feet out, the rope hanging beside me, I was still on the slope. I put in the axe as deep as it would go - beyond the head - and brought Bill up. The steepest section was just above, where the steps go left over a rib and the angle is probably 70 degrees. This section above the schrund is continually under the figurative and later literal shadow of the most extraordinary cornice I've ever seen. It bulges out over the slope, unsupported, at least fifteen feet, curving up like a huge mushroom head.

Bill came up and went on, reached a point where he was right up under the mushroom and brought me up. We were about as high as we could get. Leaving Bill, I traversed left and up a few feet. All the plans for climbing over the cornice faded slowly as I stepped up and out over Andy's last steps. They were cut in ice and were out from

the cornice. I cut a step or two higher. The sun was full on us and icicles were melting and the snow in the vertical wall in front of me was soft and unstable. 'Bill.' 'Yah?' 'This is as far as we're going' I set my axe and gloves in the niche where Andy had thought you could put a belayer and leaning around the corner, took a picture of Bill. I could see Ray and Nick and Harold at the Upper col. We rappelled down the fixed line...into the cold vicious wind...

Bill and Harold and I climbed Nevado Angeles and from the summit you could see most of the northern Cordillera Blanca. We were back at Camp IIb at 3:30 and another adventure was done. Andy was at Camp I when Bill and I arrived there the next day. In the morning Bill left us, mumbling something about food as he went toward Base Camp. Pico Sin Nombre - as we named it - was a lovely peak. Andy and I came down happy that we had given a day to it. We were at Base for dinner. It took three days to dismantle the high camps and organize our equipment for the hike out. On the 22nd of July the pack horses stamped into camp with Eugenio riding herd. The last came down and the last pictures were taken.

Three days of the usual roller coaster trail and then we clattered over a great wooden bridge and found our way into the center of the village of Pasacancha. The road began here. We waited through the day for a truck to carry us back to Yungay.

...the truck arrived a little after three in the morning. Within seconds a horde of Indians appeared out of the night. It wouldn't have been too crowded if they hadnot added those twenty sacks of potatoes. I fell asleep, encased in my sleeping bag, standing, it seemed, upright between a potato sack and Ray...they looking up and past the silent figures of my fellow passengers and across the deepest valley and then back along

the road we were churning down and watching a gray dawn light touch the highest slopes above us.

Reaching the lower end of the Santa Valley - actually an extraordinary gorge called the Canon de Patate - we switched to another truck and rode on through the dust and tunnels of the 'highway', which had once been a railroad cut into the west wall of the canyon. After a short stop in Caras, we were off on the last leg of our odyssey.

Then around the shoulder of a hill appeared Nevado Huandoy and I forgot I was tired and hungry. Then another hill passed and there was Huascaran, an old friend now, and we swung under the shadow of the cemetery of Yungay and down the narrow street to the square.

There was set before me a mighty hill,  
And long days I climbed  
Through regions of snow.  
When I had before me the summit-view,  
It seemed that my labour  
Had been to see gardens  
Lying at impossible distances.

---Stephen Crane

*Editor's Note: With the exception of the Pucahirc shot, all the pictures accompanying this article were taken by the 1957 Hudson Expedition, which included SAC members Tom McCormack, Rich Tidrich and Nick Clinch.*

# BATTLE RANGE - 1957

by HENRY KENDALL

The Battle Mountains, a small group of summits in the Selkirk Range of the Interior Ranges of British Columbia, are rarely visited because of their inaccessibility. Only one expedition in recent years has succeeded in reaching them: one in 1947 led by Andy Kauffman, which came from the south up the Incomappleux River. Possibly as many as 8 or 10 attempts have been made from the north and east - we know of 6 groups who have tried unsuccessfully to gain access to the range. The frustrations are many: heavy snows en route, alder thickets in which a day's travel may be only a mile or two, the almost necessary reliance on unreliable air drops, or the alternatives of crushingly heavy packs or endless re-laying of supplies.

The Battle Range, just south of Glacier National Park, lies about 30 miles airline south of Glacier, B.C., but is separated from it by three ranges of mountains and narrow steep-sided valleys or by two extensive ice fields: The Illecillewaet and Deville neves. No route from the north had yet been successful when two other members of the Stanford Alpine Club, Hobey DeStaebler, John Harlin, and I, together with a member of the Sierra Club, Gary Hemming, decided that we would try to find one by craft and foresight. Using the old Glacier National Park map of 1934 and advance prints of new maps being prepared by the Canadian Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, we determined that we might push far south along an old trail, recently cleared in part, which started at the railroad stop of Stoney Creek, B. C., NE of Glacier, and ran at relatively low altitude (3000-4000 feet) along the Beaver River in the mighty depression known as the Purcell Trench. To reach the



Battle Range we would have to find a break in the massive west rampart of the trench - a continuous row of summits ranging from 9000 to 11,000 feet in height. The Beaver Glacier seemed like the best approach; map comparison showed it to have extended in years past nearly to the Beaver River, yet it had receded so fast that impenetrable alder thickets might not yet be in existence. This glacier gave access to a pass which we called the Beaver Pass (9200 feet), which in turn led into Battle Valley. We then proposed to contour south at an altitude of about 7000 feet, keeping well out of the steep valley of Battle Brook which would lie nearly 4000 feet below us. Six miles south of the pass we would set up base camp at the north foot of Holways Peak, north of Mt. Butters, the highest of the Battle Mountains, in a pass at 7600 feet, which connected the Battle Brook region with the Trench, via another difficult steep valley housing Nemo Creek. From base camp a series of short trips to the south would make all the peaks of the Battle Range easily accessible.

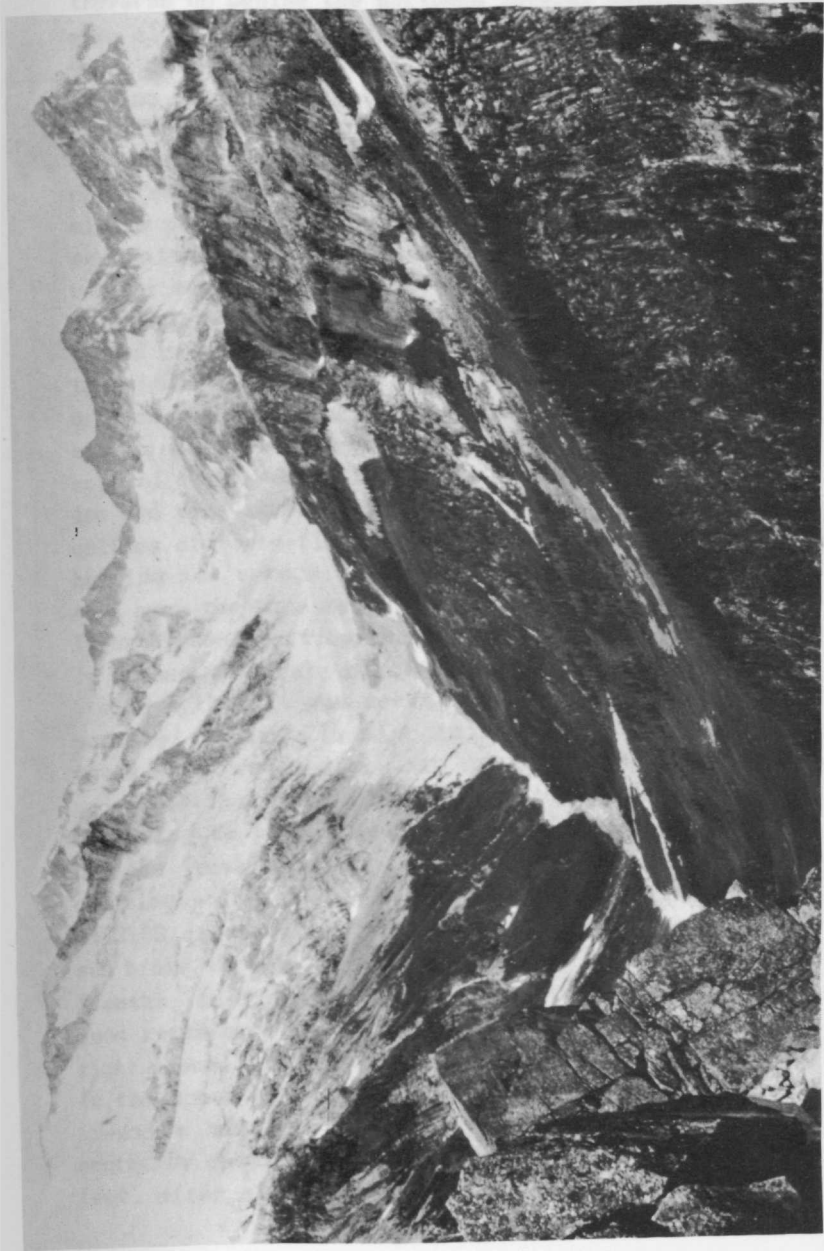
The distance from Stoney Creek to base camp was approximately 35 miles, and a double air drop seemed necessary to allow us to carry packs of reasonable weight (i.e., less than 60 lb.). We contacted a man experienced in these matters in Kelowna, B.C. We were to go first to the airport and accompany the plane in to drop the supplies, before the expedition started, at the selected places. We proposed to carry in 6 x 4 man-days of back-pack rations plus 2 x 4 man-days of emergency rations. Drop I would leave 6 x 4 man-days of back-pack rations on a large level area halfway up the Beaver Glacier, estimated as three days' travel from Stoney Creek. This drop on snow or ice was to be marked by specially prepared, weighted poles designed to stick upright in either snow or ice. Drop II on the pass at Base Camp would consist of 6 x 4 man-days of luxurious living - a variety of carefully chosen canned goods. An alternative plan, in case this air drop was frustrated by poor weather, was for us to shoulder the extra pack

ration and have the plane come and meet us en route, near base camp and drop the heavy rations.

As the air drop was frustrated by poor weather, the expedition found itself, lonely and forsaken, at 3:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 30, 1957, standing by the shack which was the whole of Stoney Creek, B.C., looking aghast at its packs which, ready to go, weighed 75 lbs. apiece. We had over a tenth of a mile of rope, ice and snow pitons, carabiners, slings, and assorted climbing gear, plus food, clothing, and equipment for existing on snow and ice. Food for 14 days came to about 30 lbs. per man.

We made 6 miles south that afternoon along a nicely-cleared trail, gaining elevation very slowly. We made camp at dusk in a thick cloud of mosquitoes, black flies, and no-see-ums, which fortunately responded well to head nets and 6-12.

Up the next morning at 4:30, we started off at 6:30 over more cleared trail, walking through lovely ever-green stands and winding along the river. The weather was pleasant, with scattered cumulus, and we had a fine view of the Trench and of the impressive west wall. We covered about 15 miles, although the trail had vanished toward the end of the trek and we were essentially bushwhacking. Made camp about 5 o'clock at a point estimated as 4 miles north of the Beaver Glacier. The packs made their impression that day, and aching muscles were the rule. It rained lightly during the night, and bushwacking through the underbrush the next day left us all soaking after a few hours. The trail was by then non-existent, and the going more difficult. We crossed the Beaver River on two logs which failed to meet over the center of the stream by about 2 feet. This delicate bit of foolishness over safely, we hurried over to the bottom of the Beaver Glacier, arriving in time to have lunch and build a big fire to dry out. The glacier was a bit of a surprise - it had receded as we had expected, but its lower reaches consisted of a stupendously shattered icefall tumbling down a 45 degree rock cliff.



LOOKING NORTH AT THE HEADWATERS OF BATTLE CREEK AND THE THOR GLACIER. THREE HIGHEST PEAKS ARE (L. TO R.) MT. PURITY, MT. KILPATRICK, AND MT. WHEELER.



We successfully bypassed this unclimbable section by a traverse up behind the northern lateral moraine, through some alder thickets and up steeply along the side of the upper part of the icefall. We made camp at 7000 feet, on sloping ground overlooking the icefall.

The next morning dense fog and light rain dampened our enthusiasm, and we started off at a late 8:30. We could see that we would soon be on the relatively flat middle portion of the glacier and that another icefall separated us from the easy going near the pass. The weather began to close in more and more, and by the time we had reached the second icefall it was snowing. It looked as though we could force a route right up through the middle of the fall, so we started off, up a 35 degree snow slope, kicking or cutting steps for our crampons as we passed from snow to ice. We were a single rope of four, which I led. We soon came to the broken ice and were immediately involved in the complex difficulties of route-finding through crevasses, under overhanging ice seracs, over underhanging ice seracs, and then back the same route. We were finally stopped utterly by a sheer vertical wall of ice, extending apparently across the whole glacier, which was so shattered at its base that it was nearly impossible even to travel parallel to it. Climbing this wall with our burdens would have required all our energies, and there was no guarantee that it was the last obstacle. Exhaustion was beginning to play around the edges of the expedition, and the fresh snow and cold wind made the climbing increasingly difficult. At 1:30 we decided to pull out and at 2:30 stopped for lunch in a sheltered spot, as the sun broke through for the first time. We traversed left (south), losing altitude whenever necessary to keep a good route and, in a few hours, were able to traverse right around our friend, the icefall, and out and up on to the upper snowfields, just out of reach of the impressive hanging glacier on Beaver Mountain to the south. By about 5:00 we had reached Beaver Pass at 9200 feet, after slogging through new snow all the way. We

looked out on a breathtaking view of glacier-covered mountains that extended from Holways Peak in the south to Mts. Wheeler and Kilpatrick in the north, and to the absolute horizon in the west. There were scores of peaks clearly visible under a high broken ceiling of clouds, with streamers of sunlight here and there, accentuating now this mountain, now that. At our feet, nearly 5000 feet below, lay the headwaters of Battle Brook. We could see our goal.

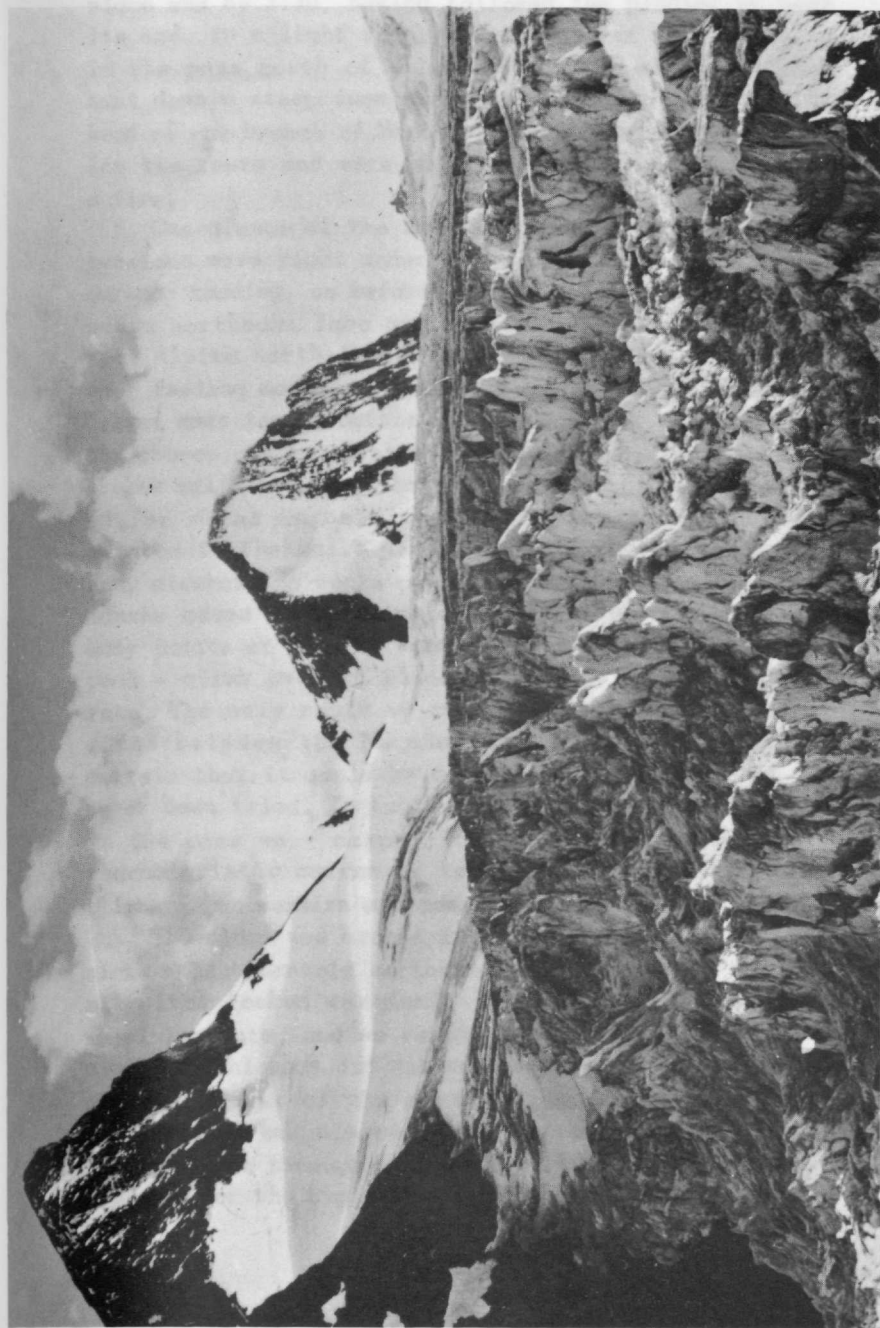
We had some trouble getting down from the pass onto the glacier remnants, a thousand or so feet lower. The map hadn't shown the contours in sufficient detail, and the only feasible route required much step-kicking in the fresh soft snow and both rock and ice belays for all members of the party. We camped on snow at about 8:30 and were in our sleeping bags by 10:00.

The night was the coldest of the trip - the thermometer must have reached 20 degrees F, and we were all a bit chilly.

Saturday dawned crystal clear, with no wind and a stunning view. This was the first day on which we were to expect our air drop, so we were up at 4:30 and off without breakfast, to find a suitable site. By 6:30 we had descended to about 7000 feet, to an excellent drop area and had staked out markers. John and Gary stood by, ready to wave the tent, Hobey managed the signal mirror while I, as munitions officer, was prepared to actuate two red railroad flares. The air drop never came. Finally we quit standing at the alert and cooked breakfast, speculating just what reasons would eventually be set forth for the failure. We finally packed up and left for the base campsite.

We pattered along the rest of the day, figuratively picking daisies along the glacier remnants as we contoured south. The map route we had laid out was impossible to follow, and we dropped down off the snow onto wet rock ledges and then over precarious talus and scree slopes. We finally dropped 'way down onto a blue ice glacier which we tentatively and wrongly identified as

The Escalade Glacier. It was approximately 100 miles long.



Mts. DUNCAN AND BEAVER, WITH LOWER BEAVER ICEFALL IN FOREGROUND.





the Escalade Glacier. We were nevertheless in the right place and by 3:30, having followed the glacier up near its end, in a light rain, we were at our base campsite in the pass north of Holways Peak. We now could look east down a steep snow slope at a glacial lake and the head of one branch of Nemo Creek. We found a grassy spot for the tents and were able to collect wood and build a fire.

One glance at the Battle Range, whose norther extensions were right under our noses now showed us that our map reading, as before, had been deceiving. The peak had a northeast face and a northwest face. They were real Alpine north-faces, each feeding man-size faces, each feeding man-size glaciers, one of which turned and flowed west toward Battle Brook, the other east, forming the source of our offshoot of Nemo Creek. The steep unbroken walls bounding the south of both glaciers extended for miles in both directions; what small breaks existed in the walls were avalanche chutes which were busy discharging rocks and ice onto well-developed avalanche cones on the glaciers below. There would be no easy jaunts at all. We wanted, above all, to climb this peak - climb over it if possible, but climb it at any rate. The only route we could see was the very sharp ridge between the NE and the NW faces. It was not certain that it could be climbed - we were sure it had never been tried. In fact, we felt that no one had been in the pass we camped in. We had seen none of the characteristic cairns of rocks usually constructed by climbers, on summits and passes.

The ridge was broken in several places by vertical nicks which foretold serious difficulties, and the summit pitch looked vertical. It was, however, the only feasible route, and we resolved to tackle it the first clear day. This day did not arrive at once. It rained all night and most of the next day, which we spent most unhappily in our sleeping bags, mopping out the tents. The sun broke through at 5:00 p.m., and we dried out and prepared for the big climb.

Monday, August 5: Up at 4:00 a.m. for a summit try. The weather was clear, with clouds on the horizon, wind west 3-5mph, temperature about 40 degrees F. Cooked a hurried breakfast and left at 5:20, carrying two 150-foot climbing ropes, ice axes, ice and rock pitons, Prussik slings, and food and clothing for a possible bivouac in case we were benighted. By 7:15 we had climbed well above camp, up a broad, soft snow slope, which gradually narrowed to a fine snow ridge, leading SW, then gave way to rocks. A traverse onto the rocky east face of the ridge and we were soon on the summit of a minor peak, due north of the summit, looking straight into the basins of both glaciers and the ferocious-looking NE and NW faces. We could see where the NW face bulged out somewhat above us and plunged down to its glacier, overhanging for nearly 1000 feet. The ridge we were on turned south from the minor summit. We descended a short way on lichen-covered rocks and soon came to the first vertical impasse in the ridge. We were able to bypass this easily - we roped up and with John in the lead, cut and kicked steps in the side of a bowl of windblown snow, which very conveniently bridged the gap. The snow was steep but firm. The crampons and ice axes soon gave way to rubber soles and rock belays as John traversed left across some muddy ledges and up a rocky chimney to the base of more steep snow still on the ridge. He led up this steep snow, which in places rested gently on blue ice and required some step-cutting in addition to the very careful belaying of second man, Hobey. Gary was third on the rope, while I held up last position, taking one photograph after another. The weather was by now assuming spectacular form. Great masses of cumulus cloud rushed over, under, and around us - we would be in sunlight one minute, fog the next - then the clouds would form a dense overcast and break below us, giving us a view of the great chasms to our left and right, and of Battle Brook now over a mile below us. We had been working somewhat to our left as the ridge became more and more difficult. We had several times

traversed back to the ridge and once more John tried this only now to find the ridge unclimbable. The word came back, 'Swap leads and out onto the NE face.' I put away the camera, and with Gary now belaying, moved out and up on the alternating rocks and soft snow of the face. We kept trying to regain the ridge because the snow on the face was soft and required very deep steps to be kicked before the crampons bit reassuringly into firm snow. We all had to be very careful - the leader as well as the others, for no one could afford to dislodge either rocks or snow. The climbing went slowly, and it was already afternoon when we made a successful traverse back to a saddle on the ridge, just under what turned out to be the summit pitch. The face was out of the question, since it was too steep and treacherous. The ridge ended at our feet - above us three vertical rock chimneys appeared to be the only way up. Facing due north, they were icy and formed in part of rotten, crumbling yellow rock. The right hand one was overhanging. I tried the middle one and got about halfway up, clearing ice from the hand holds with my ice axe. John was watching from a good observation spot and advised that it probably wouldn't go all the way, so I returned, using some tension from an upper belay over a rock outcropping. I couldn't get into the last chimney until John, again from his vantage spot, found part of a route which might 'go'. Time was running out, but with help from Hobey and John route-finding, two pitons and a tension traverse (Tension by Gary Hemming), I found myself in the last chimney. One piton and ten minutes later I was on the summit, in the clouds. At 2:10 the whole party was on top, and we were feverishly distributing lunch, building a cairn to hold our poly bagged summit message, and setting a rappel. We had little doubt that we were in for an unpleasant night somewhere on the mountain. We had been en route nearly nine hours and had less than six hours of light left. At 2:40 we started rappelling, one by one, down into the fog. The close damp air gave a feeling of desolation to the summit area, which dropped

spirits, and little was said as the next and then the next rappels were run off. A few anxious seconds came when the second rappel 'hung up', and it looked as though someone would have to climb up to retrieve it, thus insuring a bivouac on the mountain - but we pulled it free by brute force. Not long after the third rappel the sun broke through, cheering everyone considerably and speeding us on our way. The view down nearly 8000 feet into Battle Brook was very impressive. We were climbing well then, and the descent went faster. The rocks and lichen were dry and the lower snow slopes soft. A monstrous glissade, nearly one-fourth mile, on the lower snow slopes, went wonderfully fast and even the rain, starting as we neared camp, didn't shake our good mood. We reached our tents at 7:45 just as dusk was falling. We had just barely made it, and we were tired.

Hobey and I sharing a tent, rigged a fly sheet as John and Gary had done previously, and the intermittent rain during the night bothered us little. The expedition slept soundly and late - breakfast was not over until 11:30 a.m., when we started to break camp. By 2:30 we were just about to shoulder our packs and start, when a snow, hail, and sleet squall moved in very suddenly with dense fog and a strong chill wind. We dropped our packs and took shelter in a cave nearby, debating on the meaning of the sudden turn in the weather. We were all wet and uncomfortable almost anywhere, so we might as well be on our way. We contoured at the 7000 foot level back towards Beaver Pass in intermittent rain, dropping down once about 500 feet to cross a spine of rocks. By 6:30 we were above the blue ice bottom of the retreating ice field, and had found a comparatively level spot on sodden fresh snow. We made a hasty meal and put up the tents in the rain. It rained most of the night and the expedition reached its low point in comfort. We were all cold, with wet sleeping bags, and no one slept much. The next morning at 4:30 the weather was no more reassuring: fog and overcast. We packed up and got an early start, however, and by mid-morning we were on the steepening

snow, leading up to Beaver Pass. There was about a foot of fresh snow, and it began to snow as we began to belay. The last lead was too steep for safe steps to be kicked in the fresh snow - the snow had to be cleared laboriously away and about 40 steps cut in the blue ice underneath. A final short delicate section up the steep, icy split in the rocks put us onto a soft snow slope leading to the pass. It was snowing hard by now, and we were feeling the bite of the wind through our wet clothing and boots. We hurried up over the pass and didn't stop until we were well over and down out of the wind. The weather appeared much better on the east side of the pass.

We were moving much faster now, and the route-finding experience of the trip up was paying dividends. By lunch time we were at the lower icefall, and by evening had crossed the Beaver River over the two logs which failed to meet over the center. This time we took the precaution of shoving a third across as positive insurance against a slip. We made camp by the river a short way below the 'bridge' and built two fires with an extensive cantilever system of poles, ice axes, and pack lines to dry, simultaneously, all our wet clothing.

The next morning it was raining again. We were soon soaked as we bushwhacked through the under brush, so we decided, in the interest of comfort to try to force march out to a cabin north of the Beaver Cabin opposite Glacier Circle. This cabin, known as 14 mile Cabin, was actually 10 miles south of Stoney Creek and would put us at a good point from which to make the 3:30 train from Stoney Creek. At 6:30 we arrived and soon had a fire in the stove and our sleeping bags on the bunks.

We had a leisurely trek the next day, broken by a huge lunch given us by the trail crew whom we met at about 10:30, leisurely starting out to work. They had worked several hours the day before so they knocked off and summoned the cook. We took about an hour and a half off, and over bread, jam, peanut butter, sardines,

cheese, oranges, and coffee, discussed life in the Selkirks. In spite of this, we made the train rather handily, arriving at the Warden's house in Stoney Creek in the inevitable rain.

#### EQUIPMENT NOTES:

Our packs were too heavy: due in part to the failure of the air drop. 75 lbs. is certainly an upper limit when it is necessary for a party, somewhat out of condition, to engage in ice and snow climbing at altitudes to 9000 feet. The equipment for the trip was well chosen, and there did not seem to be any alterations indicated. Personal clothing was not always the most suitable - it is hard to say just what clothing is best for the combination of snow and rain we met. Hobey and I used heavy cotton army fatigue pants with pucker strings at the bottom. They were as satisfactory as any, but weighed a bit too much.

A careful calorie count indicated we were getting about 3300 calories per day. This is definitely on the short side, as our appetites at the end of the trip indicated. The calorie intake could have been increased to possibly 3700 per day by several minor modifications in the menu, without exceeding two pounds of food per manday. The cheese allotment for lunches could have been cut down; lunches were certainly excessive, if anything. Breakfast needed to be increased slightly - from the 1 cup of cereal per man to about 1½ cups per man. The extra calories should be added principally in the form of butter, margarine, or peanut butter, which can be mixed with many dishes - e.g., cereal.

In planning calorie intake, a complete set of data on foods is extremely useful and holds many surprises. A booklet of about 100 pages, Nutritional Data, published and distributed free by the H.J. Heinz Company, Box 57, Pittsburgh, Penn., was found, ex post facto, to be very useful.

Entire meals, and perhaps whole days' supplies of food, should be sealed together in heavy polyethylene

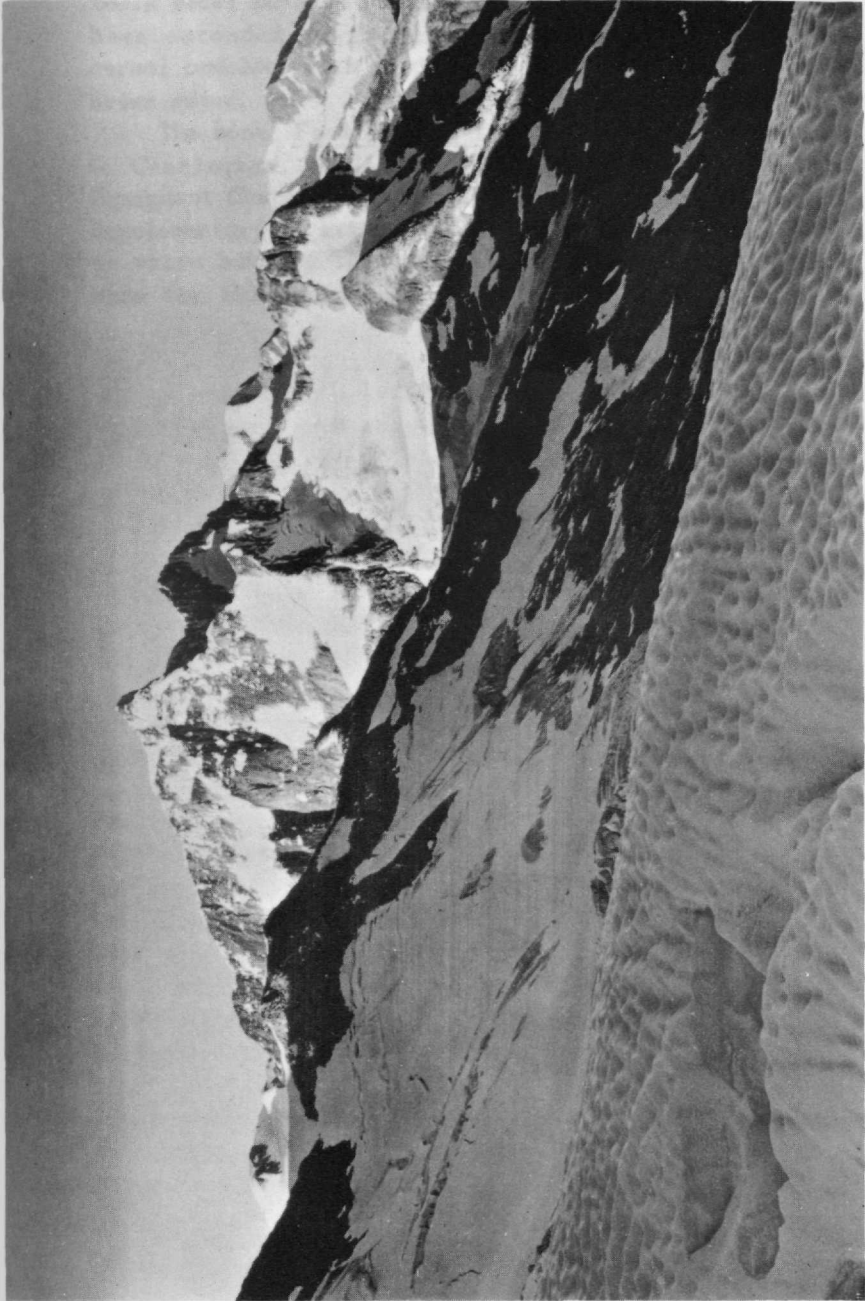


Hoby DeStaebler on Dana Glacier, Tuolumne Meadows,  
the latter part of June, 1957.  
Photo by Henry Kendall





bags. The packaging you can do, beforehand, in the  
convenience of your kitchen, is time saved in preparing



BATTLE RANGE



bags. 'The packaging you can do, beforehand, in the convenience of your kitchen, is time saved in preparing meals under adverse conditions.' This dictum could have been extended to include, for example, a breakfast cereal complete with powdered whole milk, salt, and some brown sugar.

The book, Food Packing for Back Packing, by A. and G. Cunningham, published by the Gerry Mountaineering Equipment Company, Ward, Colorado, suggests the use of supplementary or extra rations to be used when the party is extra hungry. This device could have been explored more for this trip.

# THE SAC TRANS-SIERRA TOUR

by MICHAEL ROBERTS

I stood in the deep snow, breathing heavily after stamping out a ten foot circle with my skis, and watched the little red plane circle and come back over. 'All right; I'll be back in an hour with the helicopter.' yelled Bob Symons out of the door of his Piper Cub, steering with his knees forty feet off the snow. Thus began the final phase of a trip that received nationwide publicity before it was over, yet had started innocently enough the previous January over several hot buttered rums in a ski lodge at Reno's Slide Mountain. Bart Hooley and I had both nurtured hopes of making a trans-Sierra crossing this winter for some time; however, it was chance that put us to talking about it one weekend. I had thought of a crossing from west to east through Tuolumne Meadows, while Bart wanted to go east to west from June Lake to Yosemite Valley. Eventually we decided that the east-west crossing offered more mountaineering opportunities, and also had the advantage of reaching the crest after only 12 miles, whereas the west-east route was nearly 35 miles to the crest. Margi Meyer and Lennie Lamb were immediately included in the trip, partly because Bart and I had climbed and skied with them previously, partly because they had been at Alta and Sun Valley with me at Christmas, as well as skiing competitively for Stanford, and consequently were in excellent shape. Bill Pope and Max Allen were later asked to come along to strengthen the party.

As our plans progressed, Bart one day happened to mention the trip to a friend and fellow skier, Newt Thompson. Newt suggested that perhaps the National Guard group with whom he flew on weekends might be interested in doing an air drop for us near the crest, so that we

would be spared the necessity of hauling fifty or sixty pounds of food some 5000 vertical feet. The National Guard was indeed interested and eventually undertook to pack and drop ninety pounds of food and equipment to us midway in the trip.

The pains of packing and making final arrangements for a trip of this magnitude while at the same time taking final exams cannot truly be realistically described; suffice to say that it was with six heartfelt sighs of relief that we finally left Palo Alto the night of March 21, 1958.

On a winter mountaineering trip a year earlier into the Palisades, I had experienced ideal weather and hard snow, and hoped for a repeat this year. However, the storms continued to roll in all during March, and when we left Palo Alto in a downpour, it was with the thought, 'Well, we can't just let this thing die here at school, we'd better go over there and take a look.' Twelve hours later we stood in the road next to the Silver Lake powerhouse in brilliant sunshine and gazed up at the mountains, off whose steep flanks the previous day's snow had freshly avalanched. Considering the dramatic improvement in the weather no less than a mandate from above, we hurriedly made final adjustments to packs and skis, parked the car off the road, and started up the initial slope to Agnew Lake at noon. The snow had consolidated rapidly in the warm sun and we made good time, gaining 1300 feet in two hours. We traversed to the far end of the lake and, faced with another steep slope and tired from the all night drive, we made camp.

The next day was uneventful, except for deep snow and slower going than we had anticipated. Travel was straightforward, up over Gem Lake, then to Waugh Lake - all three of the lakes being part of the hydroelectric system for the powerhouse at Silver Lake. That night we spent in a sheltered spot at the lower end of the Rush Creek Basin, very near where the John Muir Trail crosses the basin on its way to Thousand Island Lake and the Minarets. The snow was deep under the trees and had to

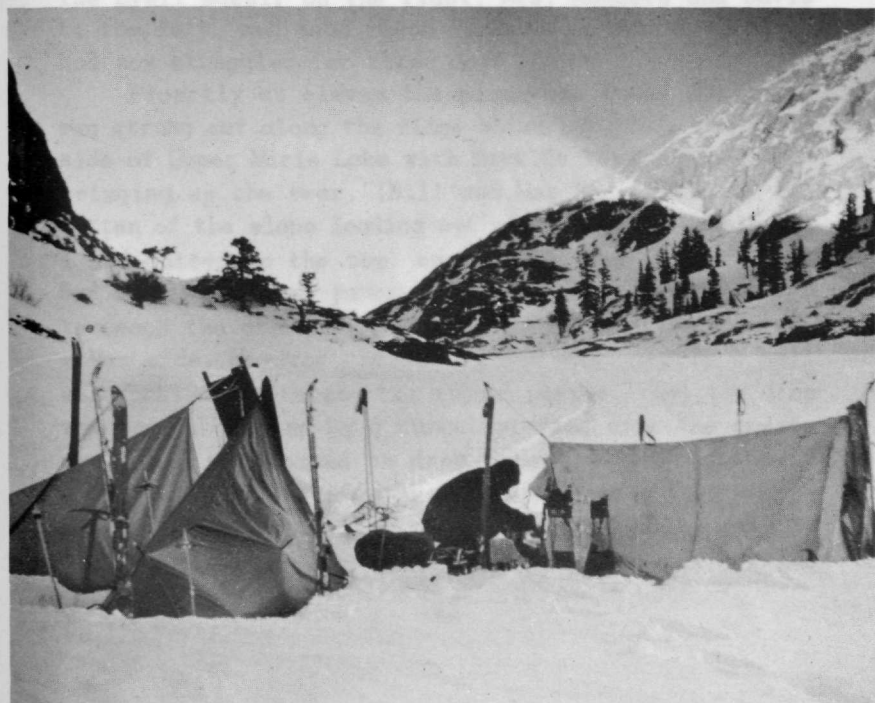
be packed extensively before we could set up the tents.

The next morning was clear and beautiful, with the peaks of the crest, now only three miles away, mostly hidden by streamers of mist. It had snowed during the night, and our train was more than a foot deep, even with skis. By noon we had gained the main ridge leading to the Rodgers-Lyell saddle, where we meant to cross the crest, but were moving very slowly dead into a forty mile an hour wind. At about 10,000 feet we decided to leave the ridge and traverse a quarter of a mile to a saddle which led to Lower Marie Lake. The slope looked dubious in the deep snow, and we were strung out about 200 feet apart, with Bart leading, when a whole section of snow opened into small cracks just ahead of Bart. Evidently our deep transverse track had weakened the slope. We returned hastily to the ridge and followed it for another half mile before being able to safely move down onto the lake.

This day, Monday, was scheduled to be the first air drop attempt - our original calculation being that we could gain the crest by noon of the third day. However, we were still more than a day's travel from the crest, and hoped that the plane would follow our prearranged plan and, seeing us lying down in the snow, drop to our present position. When, about one p.m., we heard the drone of engines and sighted the black bottom of the Guard plane (a C-46), we quickly dumped a can of red poster paint out on the snow and lay down in a large circle. Max dug the signal mirror out of his pack and tried to catch the plane in its beam. For the next hour and a half we lay freezing in the cold and wind, while the plane, alternately damned and praised, continued to make passes directly over us and into the mist covering the crest. Our conclusion was that they did not want to make a drop run over us and into the mist with such a big, unmaneuverable plane, and would return the next day. Actually, they never saw us that day, poster paint and signal mirror to the contrary, and were looking on the other side of the crest in the original drop spot.



STARTING OUT THE FIRST DAY FROM SILVER LAKE.



CAMP THE FIRST NIGHT ON AGNEW LAKE.  
PHOTOS BY L. LAMB.





By the time they finally left, we were too cold and tired to go on and made camp on the lake about three. A chance prod with one of the ice axes discovered the astonishing presence of water only eighteen inches below the surface, despite the 10,500 foot elevation. This was a welcome surprise, as it obviated the necessity of melting snow: a slow, laborious process at best. Bill and I decided that the deep snow cover prevented the lake ice from becoming more than a few inches deep, and that capillary action pulled water toward the surface. Except for the night in Rush Creek Basin, we made all our camps on lakes, which proved very satisfactory, as they offered easier access to water when it was available and were generally better protected against avalanche danger.

The wind had subsided by the next morning and we got an early start. I led off up a slope toward Upper Marie Lake, which lies just below the Rodgers-Lyell saddle. It was steep and open, forcing us to climb straight up to minimize the avalanche danger. We were ringed round on three sides by jagged mountain peaks lying vividly black and white in the early morning sun - the Lyell massif on the right, Mts. Rodgers and Davis to the left, and dead ahead the saddle toward which we had now struggled for three days.

Promptly at eleven the plane was back. The party was strung out along the ridge which parallels the south side of Upper Marie Lake with Bart in the lead and Bill bringing up the rear. (Bill and Max had waited at the bottom of the slope leading out of camp until Lennie and I had gotten to the top, nearly 500 feet above.) Bart had on his red down jacket and dashed ahead in an effort to reach the crest so that the plane could drop on the other side. However, it was to Max who, nearly a half mile behind, was using the signal mirror, that the drop was made. Hampered by a turbulent wind over the crest, the plane was forced to drop from five thousand feet above us - the two parcels fortunately came down on the edge of Upper Marie Lake and not several miles away as

they easily might have. We descended to the lake and spent the rest of the afternoon rearranging the food sacks and gorging on canned orange juices, beer, and spaghetti. Needless to say, we were all beginning to feel the altitude (11,500 feet). and no one's appetite was very large, so that 'gorged' might more properly be replaced by 'nibbled'. Bart and Bill felt active enough, however, to start a game of ice hockey on the wind-blown ice of the lake, using ice axes and beer cans. The rest of us lay on air mattresses in the shelter of some rocks and watched, feeling more tired by the minute.

We were now camped at the foot of Mt. Rodgers (13,056 feet). whose rocky east ridge offered an easy route to the summit. It was decided Wednesday morning that Max and Bart would climb the peak while the rest of the party remained in camp to act as support and to prepare for the crossing of the crest later in the day. About noon, as the two climbers were well on their way down, Lennie, Margi, Bill and I set out across the lake and up the twenty-five degree slope that reached the saddle 800 feet above. In general, the higher we went, the better the snow got and this slope was no exception. The surface was well settled and crusted so hard in places that our skis barely marked the snow as we side-stepped up.

The long, slow climb finally brought us out on top of the narrow ridge and into a vicious wind. After assuring myself that the others were following, I belayed Lennie down the first 120 feet, a steep snow couloir lying between two ribs of broken rock, and leaving the rope in place, followed her in a controlled glissade. The view to the west as we trudged down on foot the first thousand feet below the saddle revealed a great expanse of snow covered peaks - Clark, Triple Divide, Cloud's Rest, Hoffman, Foerster - now overlaid by a thick cloud that indicated a change in the good weather we had been having.

Lennie and I arrived at Rodgers Lake, at the head of the Lyell Fork of the Merced, about four o'clock and



BART, BILL, MIKE, AND MAX CONSULTING THE TOPO.  
PHOTO BY L. LAMB.



SKIRTING AN AVALANCHE WITH PEAKS OF SIERRA CREST HIDDEN IN THE MIST.  
PHOTO BY L. LAMB.



began stamping out our camp for the night. Behind, the other four members of the group could be seen slowly descending, with Bill and Max still near the top. Max tried to come down on his skis and presented a hilarious figure when a long traverse was abruptly terminated by a headfirst tumble into the snow. The situation was given a more serious turn, however, when Bart reached camp and reported that Bill had lost all his strength at the top of the climb and had had to be helped the last fifty feet over the ridge. Now it became obvious why Bill and Max were so far behind. When they got in shortly after five Bill was completely exhausted and having trouble breathing. All of us were fatigued by the exertion and altitude and felt that although Bill was in the worst shape, the loss of two thousand feet the next day on the way down would alleviate his respiratory problem.

Thursday dawned cloudy and blowing; we were so tired that no one made any effort to break camp until after eight and it was nearly ten before we were underway. Bill was extremely weak and coughing a good deal, but we still felt the best treatment would be to get him down out of the altitude. Shortly after we started out the weather closed in completely, leaving us stumbling generally southwestward in heavy snow. About noon Bill could not go any further and a conference was held among Bart, Max, and myself. Bart and Max had worked for several summers in Yosemite and knew the terrain over which we were traveling quite well; the decision was that they would continue on in the storm and try to reach the Valley for help, since it was apparent that Bill was very seriously ill. The girls and I would remain in our present position and care for Bill.

The next two days were anxious ones for the three of us. The storm continued, and Bill's condition did not improve. In spite of the antibiotic which was begun Thursday morning, he was delirious most of Thursday and Friday. And there was the question of Bart and Max, whose progress in the storm was a complete unknown. However, with the supplies that the two of them had left

behind, we had food and fuel for almost a week, and antibiotic for five days. Our diagnosis of the illness was acute pneumonia - a common enough ailment at high altitude - and our hope was that the antibiotic would work, since it is considered specific for the disease. (It turned out later on that he actually suffered from viro-myocarditis, an infection of the lining of the heart, and this was complicated by a comparatively minor case of pneumonia. In any case, antibiotic and rest is the only known treatment.)

Saturday morning brought a dramatic change in events. I had fully recovered from a stomach ailment attributable to altitude from which I had suffered earlier in the week and had decided that we would make a strong effort to move Bill down that day if the weather improved. When the day began sunny and clear, and Bill awakened fully coherent, it seemed as though our luck was beginning to take hold again. I busied myself making a sled for Bill out of his pack frame, two ice axes, and his skis, while the girls helped Bill out of the tent and into his sleeping bag laid on an air mattress, and then broke camp.

About ten o'clock, just as we were making the initial effort to move the sled, we heard a plane engine quite close, and almost momentarily a Piper Cub flew overhead from down the valley. There was no mistaking that this was help: Bart and Max had gotten out in two days, and the rescue was underway. The pilot dropped a note identifying himself as Bob Symons and urging us to try to get Bill down about two miles further where there was evidently a place that he could land. While he was gone we endeavored to comply with the request, but found the snow too soft for the strength of three people. At one Bob was back, this time with a message saying that a helicopter rescue effort was under way and that they would be at our position about two. We were now to move Bill to the top of a knoll about a mile away, since the helicopter could not land on the lake upon which we were camped. At the same time more small planes appeared,

dropping gas, food, and more antibiotic. Our efforts to move Bill were frustrated again, however, by the weather, which closed in and began to snow. We hastily set up the tents again and crawled in out of the storm.

The clouds cleared away later in the afternoon and about five Symons flew over with another message wrapped in the usual roll of toilet paper. This one was to the effect that the helicopter had been prevented by the weather from getting close to us, and that another effort was scheduled early the next morning. The message also asked if we wanted oxygen, and if so, to make an O in the snow. I considered this for a moment, standing out in the cold wind in the middle of the small lake surrounded by the harsh peaks of the crest - Lyell, Rodgers, Electra - and decided that Bill's condition had improved so much that it was no longer necessary, and would be difficult to administer in the crowded, filthy interior of the tent in which he had now spent three full days. Unbeknownst to us, this caused consternation among the doctors in Yosemite, who assumed that this meant Bill was dead.

Sunday was to be a rescue day; however, another storm moved in and blizzarded during the night and all through the next day as we lay in our tents, warm and well-fed, but frustrated. The snow fell very heavily. I spent an hour in the afternoon scraping snow away from the sides of the tents. By evening it was above my knees as I stood on the level of the original platform.

Knowing that the first clear moment would bring the planes and helicopter back. Lennie and I were up before light Monday, staring at the brilliant early morning stars. It had cleared off and turned cold, perhaps the coldest of the trip - near zero, I think. My boots required extensive heating with the Borde before they would go on, and it was just after six that I stood outside the tents and heard the faint drone of a plane. Bob made one pass and dropped a message 'If all members of party are still alive stamp an O in the snow. If some member is dead, stamp an X'. I hurriedly made an O with

my skis...and we are back where this narrative began.

The helicopter arrived before we were quite ready; I had stamped a track to the top of a nearby hill, returned, and sent Lennie up the two hundred feet to mark out the spot with crepe paper that had been dropped to us. Margi helped Bill into his boots; I worked on the bindings of his skis. At last we began the long trudge up the hill, Bill stopping every twenty feet or so to regain his breath. One of the pilots came down the hill and grabbed Bill's other arm, together we struggled up. Margi and the other pilot quickly thrust as much of our gear as they could into two packs and followed us up. Then we were inside, the door bolted shut, and the noise of the motors drowning out any conversation. An anxious moment and we were airborne. Scarcely ten minutes later the Army deposited us in the Old Village parking lot, Yosemite Valley, into the hands of the relieved Park Service, anxious and annoyed parents, and publicity, with a capital P.

#### Epilogue

Bart and Max spent two days in the hospital recovering from dilated hearts suffered as a result of the exertion of the forced march out; I spent a day in the hospital waiting for my blood pressure to go down; Bill Pope spent two weeks there while his heart and lungs came back to normal. The girls left the day of the rescue for school, apparently unscathed by the experience. The two helicopter pilots are in the process of receiving Distinguished Flying Crosses. Bob Symons is dead, the victim of a glider accident two weeks after the rescue. The rangers are back at their assigned tasks, perhaps meditating on the folly of those who brave the vicissitudes of Sierra weather.

Twenty years ago if we hadn't gotten out on our own, we wouldn't have gotten out. Today the stranded mountaineer has hundreds of men and their equipment as far away as the nearest phone. A rescue operation such as we were involved in endangers the lives of countless



other people. Mountaineering projects must necessarily now assume more than the burden of the individual members' lives, leaving the climber with the sobering problem of not can he climb, but ought he to climb?

#### Equipment Notes:

Planning for this trip occupied the best part of three months and was quite extensive. We purchased aerial photos of the area from the USGS and although helpful, they were taken in October, when the snow cover is least extensive, and consequently did not give an accurate picture of the terrain. An aerial reconnaissance was made with the National Guard the week before we went in and was quite revealing. The route looked feasible from the air, there were no signs of avalanche in the general area, and visibility of objects on the ground was excellent. We used the eighty foot contour series of topo maps on the trip and found them very good. Five of us went on a twenty mile tour over Washington's Birthday to the Ostrander Lake Ski Hut (8500 feet), near the Badger Pass ski area in Yosemite, to test tents, packs, and cooking equipment. All worked satisfactorily. We took two Co-op two man mountain tents and one Army mountain tent. Two sets of skis and poles are exactly sufficient to set up the Co-op tent so that it will stay up in any storm. Condensation was a minor problem, which indicates that the fabric used in the tents breathes adequately.

A great deal of thought went into the food planning and packing with the following results: Menus were made up on a six day basis by tent. Each tent was given four rubberized nylon food bags, one for Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Miscellaneous. This comprised all the food for six days except for the five or six tins of tuna and hash that were taken along. All the food was taken out of the original containers and repackaged in polyethylene freeze bags, according to meal and to tent. We normally had one cup of cereal and one cup of hot drink for breakfast; jam, cheese, meat, crackers and candy for lunch; and soup, a main course, and hot drink for

dinner. We preferred Minute Rice to Instant Potato and used it exclusively. Lipton's Soup, although lacking in flavor is by far the easiest of the dehydrated soups to use at high altitude. The final weight averaged ten pounds per person per six day menu. We were never hungry, which perhaps is the best indication of whether or not our planning worked.

Part of the success of the menu planning was the result of using the Borde burner and cookset. These handy little stoves are without question the easiest and quickest to start and use of any on the market. They are, however, not adequate for more than two people, lacking the heat to cook food in the larger cooksets.

Our medical supplies included two Ace bandages, splinting materials, disinfectant, empirin-codeine, percadan, and antibiotic. Despite the legal restrictions on their use, we feel that any mountaineering expedition must carry the last two mentioned items, as the use of acromycin on our trip indicates.

# CLIMBING NOTES

## MINARETS

An SAC climbing camp was held in the Minarets June 12-18, 1957, with twelve members participating. Base camp was made under some trees at Lake Ediza which offered the only dry ground in the area. Snow still blanketed the ground around the lake, as well as the approaches to the surrounding peaks. Early starts were necessary to gain altitude while the snow was still frozen. Many ascents were made in the brilliant sunny weather which prevailed during the trip, some of the most important of which were:

Banner Peak, East Face, Class 4 - A party led by Bill Pope arrived at the base of the climb at 9 a.m., but because of continuous roped 4th class pitches (over 20), the two three man ropes did not reach the summit until 8 p.m., just in time to catch the vivid sunset. A roped glissade was made back to camp in the moonlight.

Minarets: Ascents of Waller, Jensen, Turner, Leonard, and Dawson minarets were made by various parties.

## CANADA

In spite of the worst summer weather in years, several SAC parties in addition to the Battle Range group were active in the Rockies and Selkirks during 1957. On August 18, Mary Kay Pottinger, Bill and Ben Pope made the only ascent of the season on Sir Donald via the NW arete. The climb took eighteen hours from the road and was slowed by rain during the descent. The previous day Bill and Ben had done a traverse of the neighboring peaks of Avalanche, Eagle, and Uto. On the 19th, Earl

Cilley and Mike Roberts arrived at Lake O'Hara to attempt Victoria from the west. The ranger bade them a cheery hello and commented that the beautiful day on which they arrived had been only the eighth such since the middle of June. After a night in the hut at Abbot Pass, the party set out for the summit. Arriving at the South Peak, it was discovered that a warm southwest wind of the night before had turned the summit ridge to slush. A reluctant descent was made from this point.

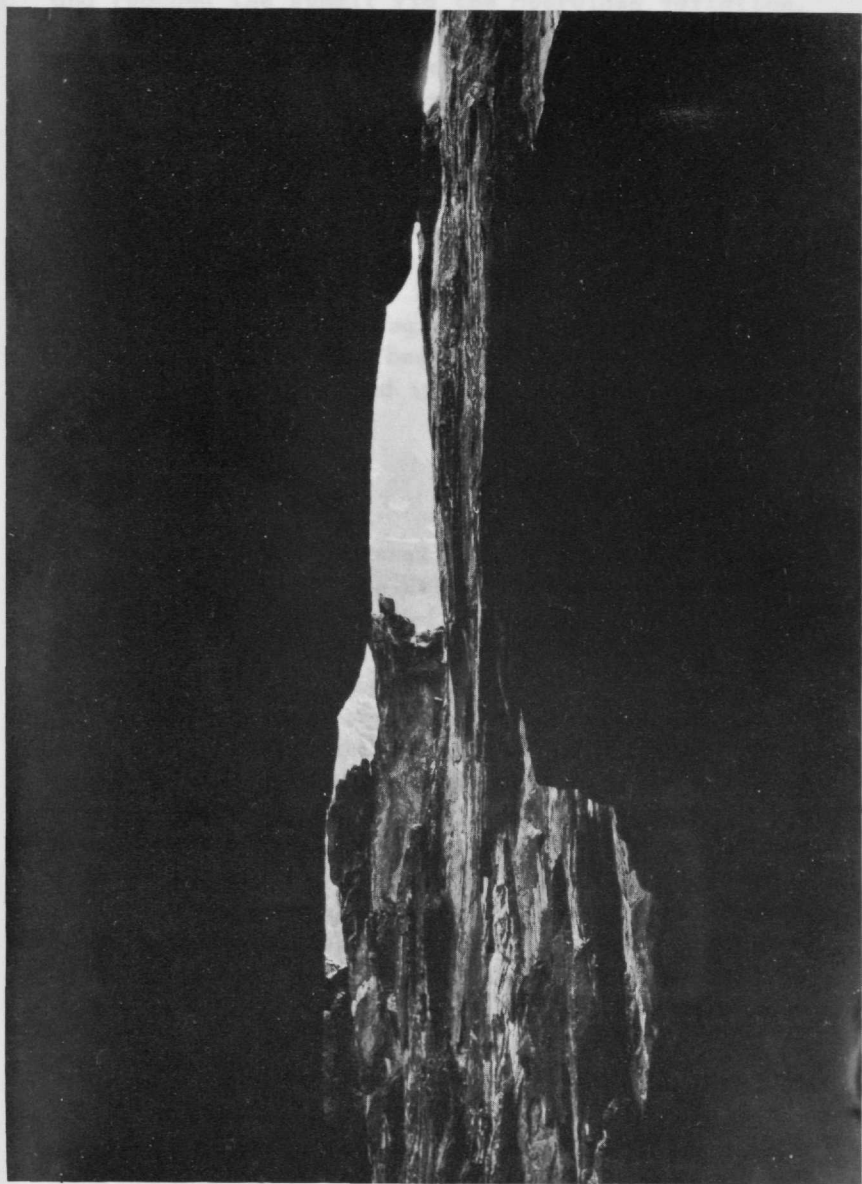
Hoping for better luck in the Selkirks, the intrepid duo took train for Glacier Station, arriving simultaneously with a new storm. The benevolent caretaker of the ACC hut took pity and for the next five days Mike and Earl stared gloomily out at the rain and some ninety wretched Sierra Clubbers attempting to cope with the mud and wet. Finally deciding that Canadian climbing was not 'that' good, they rode back to Golden and began the long trek to fairer climbing country.

Although questioning of the participants brings forth only incoherent mutterings of 'willow wands,' 'whiteout,' and 'ice cave,' it appears that Jack Weicker, Sandy Cole, and Leigh and Irene Ortenburger spent an interesting several weeks on the Columbia Icefield during July and August. Nearly all the attempted ascents were turned back by abominable weather, and on two occasions the group was forced to spend the night out.

## **CASCADES**

The Battle Range party held a preliminary trip over the 4th of July weekend on Mount Rainier. Taking advantage of the warm, sunny weather, they spent one day practicing 6th class climbing and rescue technique on the Nisqually Icefall and the next climbing the mountain via the Ingraham-Emmons Glacier route.

Labor Day saw the ascent of Mount Shuksan by Earl Cilley and Mike Roberts. From an overnight camp at Lake Ann, the party climbed up through the Fisher Chimneys



EAST ARROWHEAD CHIMNEY, YOSEMITE VALLEY. FIRST AND ONLY  
ASCENT BY MARK POWELL AND WARREN HARDING.  
PHOTO BY HENRY KENDALL



and reached the summit via the Hourglass variation, which offered a strenuous, overhanging bergschrund. Winnie's Slide was a good deal steeper than the previous year, when the same party had been on the mountain, and forced step cutting on the way up. Near the top, a manila line was discovered half buried in the ice leading down from the edge of the slope. Not wanting to trust old manila lines, Earl continued to cut higher, until it was discovered that the line was fastened to an iceaxe which had been left buried to the head by a previous party. The summit register subsequently disclosed that a party of sixteen beginners had been up the week before and evidently used it as anchor for a fixed line on the descent.

### YOSEMITE VALLEY

Following upon several highly successful practice climbs, two trips to the Valley were made in November, 1957, in which a variety of climbs were done. Perhaps the most notable of these was Henry Kendall and Hobe DeStaebler's ascent of El Capitan Tree. The fourth recorded party to complete the climb, they encountered no serious difficulty, but were forced to do the 120' free rappel in the dark on  $\frac{1}{4}$ " nylon, which promptly set fire to their rappel patches and provided a warm ride, indeed. On the last trip of Fall Quarter the club encountered some of its usual trouble with the leader-second man ratio, and a party of nine ended up on Lower Cathedral Rock in the rain, while warm and dry kibitzers offered advice from cars parked on the road below. On the previous day, Kendall and DeStaebler had again demonstrated their ambition by attacking the West Arrowhead Chimney successfully. Henry succinctly characterized it as 'long, dry, dirty, and thin.'

The club continues to focus its practice climbs upon preparation for Valley climbing, and the success of this emphasis is easily visible in the climbing records. In addition to the ascents recorded above, there have

been three climbs of the Direct Route, three of Lower Spire, two of Higher Spire, and four of Lower Cathedral Rock--among others--on club trips during the past year.





Hoby DeStaebler on overhanging 1st pitch,  
El Capitan Tree, October, 1957.  
Photo by Ann Davidson