

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

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Vol. 1, No. 10

\$2.00 per year

July, 1959

MEETING, AUGUST 3, 1959

The next meeting of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska will be on Monday, August 3rd at 8 p.m. in the Willow Park Recreation Hall, located at 9th and Fairbanks Streets. Members are asked to consider whether the first Monday of the month is the best day for MCA meetings. Keith Hart will show color slides.

CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Bold Mountain: Johnny Johnston, home ph. 54016. August 2nd, 1959
All persons wanting to make this trip contact
Johnny (54016 or 70251) by Friday, July 31st.
You'll need a lunch, sweater and wind parka, ice ax will
be handy, but not necessary. We'll need a 4-wheel drive jeep.

Mountain behind O'Malley Road: *Gregg Erickson* August 9th, 1959
42234

Rock Climbing in Talkeetnas: Rod Wilson, home ph. 26153 August 16th, 1959

Tahnetta Pass: Duane Luedtke, bus. ph. 45101 August 23rd, 1959

THE VALDEZ GLACIER EXPEDITION by Charles Warren.

The DC-3 taxied to the end of the main runway at Anchorage International Airport and after a brief engine warm-up Cordova Airlines' 10 a.m. flight was on its way to the coastal town of Valdez. On board this aircraft were three men starting summer vacations which had been many months in the planning. Their intentions and anticipations were as big as the mountains over which they were now flying, for it was to such challenging mountains as these they were headed. The Valdez Glacier Expedition was underway.

The persons flying to Valdez were Dr. Lawrence Nielsen of North Wilbraham, Mass., the expedition's leader on his sixth trip to Alaska for the purpose of mountain climbing and/or glacier research; Ralph Marron of Albuquerque, N.M.; and myself from Elmendorf AFB. The fourth member of the party was now in Valdez after hitch-hiking up from Harvard University from which he had just graduated. He was Boyd Everett of Winnetka, Ill.

The purpose of the expedition was twofold: first to climb a few of the peaks around the Valdez Glacier which so far have remained unclimbed, and second to retrace the historic route the gold miners used in crossing the Valdez and Klutina glaciers which from 1898 to 1900 was the only means of entry to Alaska's interior goldfields from the port of Valdez.

This 15th day of June was bright and warm. We immediately purchased our food supply and a bit of equipment. Since we would be flown to the higher portion of the glacier and the heavy back-packing would be generally downhill, we did not limit our rations to dehydrated and lightweight foods. Canned vegetables, meats and fruits were indeed welcome treats at the main camps after a day or more on a side trip or a summit climb. A corrugated aluminum roofing sheet, 2' x 6' was improvised into a sled by which we would transport our food and equipment while above the snow-line. We planned to be on the ice for about 2 weeks. Two tents were used. The "Logan" was pure comfort compared to sleeping in Larry's small, two-man German tent. Two primus stoves and five gallons of kerosene proved to be adequate but kept us very busy when snow had to be melted.

On June 18, our pilot, Layton Bennett of Haines, arrived with his Super Cub, employing a ski-wheel landing gear. Early the next morning he started to shuttle the four of us plus equipment to the pass between the Valdez and Klutina glaciers. We established camp at 5,000 ft. nearly 20 miles up the glacier. The sun was bright and very warm so we pitched a tent and rested until evening. By then the snow had formed a crust which made sledding feasible. Before long we were four miles and halfway up the upper arm of the Valdez glacier which is about a mile wide in this area. We set up Camp I on mid-glacier between the mountain walls, the peaks of which are about 9000' high. These are the highest mountains in the immediate area. The north slopes were greatly corniced and somewhat glaciated while the south slopes have a goodly amount of exposed rock.

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Next morning we started out on the longest, highest and most difficult ascent of the trip. Snowshoeing four miles farther we came to the head of the Valdez and had a splendid view of the high mountains to the west. On almost all of our roped climbs we used two ropes and tied into them by a means which effectively made us into a single rope.

As we moved off the snow covered glacier and onto the mountain proper we quickly noticed the type of rock we would be dealing with - the seemingly inescapable rotten rock. Our route was, more or less, along a ridge which had a precipice on one side and an avalanche slope on the other. By 7 p.m. we were at the summit eating chocolate and raisins while viewing the multitude of mountains in all directions. Larry had forgotten his altimeter when leaving the snowshoes and pack at the col, but the elevation here was around 9,500 ft. Since some belaying was done on the up-climb, we realized it would be a long, slow descent. With enough of Alaska's midnight sun we had no trouble climbing down the rest of the night and at 7 a.m. we were back on the glacier and an hour later in our sleeping bags at camp.

We made another first ascent from camp 2 and another from base camp. Our seventh day on the ice was spent on a six mile trek down the Klutina Glacier. This is a surprisingly "smooth" glacier, i.e. very little difficulty encountered in traveling as there are few crevasses of significant size. Below the snow line we found many relics left by the prospectors of '98 such as old snow shoes, shovels, parts of snowshoes, tents, etc. We also found many more such relics below the pass on the Valdez where the miners stayed in small tent towns to rest before and after taking their sleds, laden with supplies, over the pass.

Where the second branch glacier meets the Valdez we established Camp IV and from here made a round-about but successful climb of a 6900' peak. Since our expedition was so far from help we didn't dare take uncalled risks. Towards the end of our trip we succeeded in getting to the old Ramsay-Rutherford gold mine. Before the 1930's the mine was supplied by horses which sledged and packed loads up the glacier, then followed a trail along the mountainside for several miles to the mine. In 1928 they discontinued use of the pack-horses and had supplies flown in as the ice level had dropped so far that it left the rock slopes much too steep for the horses. We knew, from talking to a past owner of the mine and a pioneer of the area, that the ice met the horse trail at a horse stable. We located the remains of this old building at an altimeter reading of 1,720 feet. The elevation of the ice below this point is now 1,430 ft.

On Friday, July 3, we made the final march off the ice, two weeks exactly since we were flown up. The weather had been excellent which is unusual for the Chugach Mountains. The expedition was a success and its members thoroughly enjoyed it. Larry Nielsen is now writing a story describing our adventure in greater detail which he hopes will be accepted by a leading magazine. There are many peaks in this area, although not high by Alaskan standards, which offer a tremendous challenge to any mountaineer.

RAVEN PEAKS by Rod Wilson

Three 6,000 ft. peaks at the head of Raven Glacier near Girdwood were climbed by a group led by Paul Crews on June 28, 1959.

Seven of the party, Paul, Paul, Jr. and David Crews, Jackie Cote, Lois Willard, Helga Bading and Joe Hill camped at the Girdwood Mine the previous night and were joined early next morning (in time for breakfast) by Joe and Norm Pichler, Wayne Rhoades and Rod Wilson.

From the mine the Seward-Old Knik Mail Trail was followed for a short distance and then abandoned to cross a ridge to Raven Glacier. We roped up and proceeded without crampons on the snow covered glacier to the upper western corner of the glacier. At this point Jackie Cote decided to cool her heels on the glacier and make friends with a curious goat while the others, led by Helga and Paul, kicked their way up a long steep snow slope to the first of 3 peaks, where a cairn built by Hans Metz and Mat Nitsch a week before was found. We then traversed eastward on a ridge to a second snowy summit where a small cairn was built. Then down into a pass between Raven Glacier and the huge Eagle River Glacier area and up a rocky ridge to the easternmost and highest (we think) of the Raven Peaks where a large cairn was admirably constructed by the energetic Crews boys to house a club register can.

A long glissade followed by a descent down a steep slope on 4 ropes end-to-end (to avoid falling into a crevasse at the bottom) brought us again to the glacier and Jackie. Then back to the mine, weary after 12 hours of walking, but pleased with the fine weather, good company, and the superb views of the Chugach.

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SURVEY FOR CLUB CABIN

by John H. Johnston

Personnel: Jon Gardey, Duane Luedtke, Joe Hill, John Johnston
 Leave Parking Lot 7.30 p.m., July 8th - arrive parking lot 11 p.m. July 8th, 1959

Walked up and down Byron Stream. Determined best place to cross was near Portage Lake. Followed lake shore and moraine around to point just before where center-line of ridge joins lake. At this point we struck up through brush for about 200 feet and started up fairly steep hill. After about 100 feet of this, the hill became steep enough to require climbing with handholes. We searched several localities for safe and easy passes through this area, but found none. Another pass about 300 feet farther around the lake shore was surveyed from a distance but not approached.

The entire area consists of rock covered with moss and alders. Many boulders offer steep climbing faces of 15 to 20 ft. high. All holds slope down and are moss covered. Rock is extremely slippery when wet. In the area we attempted, there is almost a solid ring of these high boulders at about 1000 ft. level. The rain and darkness made looking useless so we came off and started down at about 10:15 p.m.

So far, we can recommend that the trail start at the Lake Lodge and follow the moraine and lake shore as far as possible. From there, it appears that extended dynamite work is necessary to make a trail of the easy hiking type. Further reconnaissance is required to determine the amount and appropriateness of this.

Will also recommend that the next trip be made so a full day can be utilized. Take waders or extra pants, shoes and socks. Would also say that a rope would be useful in a place or two and a definite advantage in coming down --- also sling line as all the alders slope down and out.

BASHFUL PEAK (8050 ft., July 17th to 19th) by Helga Bading.

"I think you're nuts" was our pilot's remark as he climbed into the plane and roared away. We wholeheartedly agreed. The weather was lousy, the forecast even worse. Heavy clouds threatened to break loose any minute.

It was 8 p.m. Friday when we got under way at the south end of Eklutna Lake to hike up the valley (no name) towards Bashful. This peak has been on my list for more than a year. Jerry Nelson used to go up that valley in an attempt to reach the peak believed to be the highest this side of Lake George. He called it "Bashful" as it hides behind another tall mountain.

We were five -- Paul Crews, Johnny Johnston, Rod Wilson, Gregg Erickson and me. Two hours fast march along and through the creek and alderbrush took us to the foot of the mountain. It also took the skin off our toes as we had to wear tennis shoes to wade the water. It was dark when we built camp and hit the sack.

Saturday at 4 a.m. was reveille. Miraculously it had not rained. Bashful was very bashful under a cloud. Above us a steep slope was covered with luscious alderbrush. Two beautiful waterfalls - side by side - tumbled down the rocks. At 5.30 am we shouldered the packs and headed up that slope. Two hours later we reached a high valley basin north of the mountain. In the middle of this "rubble" we dumped camp and by 8:30 were ready to start the "assault." It was still cloudy but off and on we could see part of the ridge leading towards the peak. At least we hoped it did. Climbing was pleasant and when we reached the west ridge of the mountain we were 5000' high. We kept track of our progress by Johnny's altimeter.

To our left (north) we saw Bald Mountain appearing as the clouds slowly moved away. To the south we saw another high mountain and a tremendous hanging glacier. It appeared quite high ... its peak hidden by clouds so we couldn't tell ... but we hoped it wouldn't be higher than Bashful. Rod fittingly called it "Baleful", so that's how it'll be known from now on. We progressed well up the west ridge in new snow and rotten rocks. When we reached a steep, snow filled gully we roped up. I dashed ahead but found I couldn't lift my legs over the piles of loose snow. Paul and Johnny could, though. Rod, Gregg and I skirted the gully to our left and presently found ourselves crawling over ice-covered rock, staring straight down to our camp on the moraine ... a drop of 4000 ft.

We reached the top of something in the fog. Was it the peak? The altimeter said no. Suddenly it cleared and above us rose the peak of Bashful gorgeously outlined against blue skies. We climbed on. At 3:30 pm we reached the peak. It is about the size of a pancake. The five of us barely fitted. Altimeter reading: 8050 ft. We found neither a cairn nor beer cans, so we are sure we can claim a "First" on this one. By now the clouds had moved entirely and we enjoyed a tremendous view towards Mt. Marcus Baker, Witherspoon, Goode, etc. We also had a good look at "Old Baleful". It appeared to be lower. The map says its 8020 ft. It was very cold and an icy wind blew. With frozen gloves we built a cairn (trying not to push each other off the peak) and left a bright red register can with the data of the climb in it.

Our descent to camp took 4½ hours. It had been a long climb and we began to

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and soup. The evening was perfect ... calm and clear and still. We saw numerous
 the grassy slopes.
 lay morning we basked in sunshine, happy about the perfect climb. At 11 we
 off the moraine. We sat in the flower dotted meadows and studied the valley
 up to a huge snowfield in the Eagle Glacier area. In hot sunshine we walked to
 e. Gregg and Rod decided to walk it all the way. We other three stayed with the
 o catch the plane, and Johnny and I received a lesson on how to make a fire by
 two sticks together. It takes about an hour! I learned one lesson ... matches
 derful. And so is mountain climbing.

RCSeve
 TEAM

An organizational meeting was held on July 14th. A telephoning pyramid was
 shed. Training is held at the rocks every Thursday. All climbers interested
 ited to contact Johnnie Johnston. Eric Barnes has donated a new climbing
 the team. This rope is not to be used for practise.

INDIAN HOUSE MOUNTAIN

Horn and Joe Pichler, Joe Hill and Hans Metz climbed that mountain behind Indian
 on July 19. They feel a better route could have been taken, as the bush was
 lo. These climbers rated the trip as an easy one suitable for a hiker.

6,600- 30 AREA

Hans Metz, Mat and Karin Nitsch, and Werner Kannhausser climbed two peaks in the
 ed area .. Summit (6500 ft.) and Goat (6003) approximately a week before the
 ineering Club scoled the three Raven peaks. The Daily Times printed some excellent
 raphs by Mat Nitsch of this climb in the June 23rd edition.

IN NOTES

McKinley. On June 19th, four members of the Mt. McKinley South Face Expedition
 the summit. The final climb was made from a camp established at 16,800 feet on the
 of the south face. This camp was the eighth in a series set up in 12 days from the
 ft. level of Kahiltna Glacier. The members of the party felt that the unparalleled
 weather of the first days of the expedition made possible the difficult rock and
 limb of the 10,000 ft. south face. The route required 4000 ft. of fixed rope. Because
 d weather after the return from the summit, the group traversed off the south face
 the west buttress at 16,000 ft and descended by that route. The party included:
 Corbet of Jackson, Wyo; Pete Sinclair, Norfolk, Conn; Jacke Breitenbach, Seattle,
 (leader) and Bill Buckingham, Jackson, Wyo.

ogan. Seven climbers (Jules Eichorn; Dr. Norton Benner, Richard Kauffman; - all
 of Hillsborough, Calif; William Blanchard, Bishop, Calif; Clarence LeBell,
 dy, Mass; and David Bohn, Portland, Ore.) led by Major William Hackett of Ft.
 e, Va. ascended Mount Logan (19,850 ft.) in June. The party was landed on Quintino
 a Glacier at the 9000 ft. level and started up the mountain on June 11. It established
 i camps along the route to the summit. The climbers tested several items of cold
 or equipment for the Army in temperatures which ranged from 20 to 30 degrees below
 at the summit. Hackett and Blanchard climbed both peaks of the mountain which are
 100 feet different in elevation. This was the fourth successful ascent of Mount
 o.

Mount Griggs: The United States Board on Geographic Names has changed the name
 he highest peak in the Katmai section of the Aleutian Range from Knife Peak to
 t Griggs. The 7600 ft. mountain will honor Dr. Robert F. Griggs, professor of
 ogy at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Griggs started an exhaustive survey of the
 al National Monument country in 1951 leading six National Geographic Society
 ditions into the area.

it all. Glad we managed to crowd it all on four pages. With so much climbing
 ing on, maybe we'll have to print SCREE more often?!

e you at the meeting on August 3rd. Bring some cookies along and we'll brew some
 ffee to go with them.