

July, 1965

JULY MEETING: Goose Lake picnic grounds 6:30 PM, everybody bring a stick of wood, appetite, and food. A song fest (in the Eklutna fashion) afterwards.

William

"FRUSTRATION PEAK" (5445') First Ascent June 10-12, 1965

Dave Meyers

(See Vin Hoeman's article Names & Guidebook for correct name of this peak.)

Since the weather appeared to be turning better, Nick Parker, Mike Judd and I set out at noon on the tenth to attempt peak 5445' east of Anchorage.

Arriving at the top of Clark's road at 1:00 PM, we adjusted our packs and set out under scattered clouds. Our trip to the base of O'Malley Peak was not as jerky-stop-and-start as on a previous trip, and it only took us about 5 to 6 hours.

We pitched our two Army mountain tents with the sleeve entrances connected so as to have a continuous 14 foot long tent. As one of the tents had only one entrance, there was some difficulty, as its occupant had to crawl through one tent and into the other.

Having pitched our camp, we decided to practice our rope teamwork on some nearby crags. We finally got to bed that night at 11:30 PM.

The next morning the clouds were broken, rather than scattered. We finally got started at 12:00 noon. The start of our climb was easy, a 600 foot slope to reach one of the forks of S. Fork Campbell Creek, from there on it was up, up, up. Our arrival at the base of the mountain put us at a beautiful site for a Mountain Cabin, level ground, a small lake nearby, above the site a cirque, and three peaks over 5,000 feet.

Now our route went up a rock buttress along the south ridge of the mountain. The bottom of this buttress was fairly easy with scattered pitches of about 10-20 feet high. The top half, however, was more fun. There were three or four fun pitches, and one traverse in our route which was rather touchy, a foothold was beneath a four inch overhang and the handholds were atop the slab forming the overhang.

On top of the buttress there was a choice of two peaks, one of talus and one of snow. We picked the wrong one.

While ascending the ridge of the snow covered peak, we became involved in kicking steps up a 70° snow slope without ice axes. At the top we realized that the other peak was 600 feet higher. (UGH).

The other peak was in dense fog and Nick claimed to have a phobia about climbing in fog, but it was soon to be cured! Up through the clouds we walked, cursing the talus for its terrible walking properties, the clouds for obstructing our view, and the wind (5mph) for not blowing the clouds away.

On the summit we were blessed with a few minutes sunshine and some glimpses of O'Malley Peak, the Organ Mtn group, and Anchorage. Lacking a pencil and paper, we knocked a piton into a convenient summit crack.

Our descent was by the same route excepting we cut out our traverse. On the small snowfield (70'X 30') which we had ascended earlier, a step at the top started a small sun slough avalanche. I politely allowed it to go first. The rest of the descent was uneventful, except that we had to reascend the 600' slope to gain camp, which was reached at 11:30 PM. We promptly collapsed until 10:00 the next morning, when we ate our "supper" of last night for breakfast.

A sleet storm had blown in and today we were in the clouds instead of below them. We still had no wind, this being the third such day. The sleet soaked everything, and we had a wet trip out. On our arrival at the top of Clark's road, who should show up but Dr Wilson in his Land-Rover. He drove us down just in time to connect with our transportation home.

We had been frustrated before on three previous attempts of this peak. Twice by weather and once by mild mountain sickness causing us to decide not to do anything strenuous the next day. This mountain is located in section 30, T12N, R1W, Seward Meridian.

Northward Home

By Vin Hoeman

Other parts of the world are very fine, and one can plan great things anywhere, but the realization of such plans seems easier and more satisfying in Alaska. Some of my plans exploded with my return from Hawaii in May, so I left the nation's capital with others in mind. I visited my remaining southern state highpoints in this order - Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and Nevada. The western ones were of course the more impressive. I tried Montana too, but Granite Peak had too dangerously corniced a knife-edge ridge for a solo climber, so I'll have to return to it.

Alone, I drove the Alcan via Dawson to Eagle, Alaska where I spent a night with 75 year old Armand Hagen who remembers such notables as Judge Wickersham and Hudson Stuck. I also met Mrs. Elizabeth Innes-Taylor who still has and uses the tent Be'more Browne had on McKinley in 1912!

Coming down the Taylor Highway 30 June I stopped at Mile 33 to climb Mt Fairplay, 5545', the highest in this sector of the Tanana Hills traversed by the highway. It was only 42 minutes (aided by mosquitoes who wouldn't let me stop) through beautifully flowering tundra to the top. Water pipets were nesting under tussocks and a Golden Eagle soared overhead. A Hoary Marmot sunned (and soaked as the weather changed) on a rock.

Next day at the head of Matanuska Valley I stopped at the Alaska Communication Station opposite the glacier to climb Lionhead which is what the map calls the rock that is so outstanding from farther upvalley. They don't mind if you park there and it's an easy walk through open brush and over some talus where cones squeak to the top. I went a little more directly and arrived on top less than half an hour from the road. Were it ever clear, there would be a wonderful view up the Matanuska Glacier from the earthquake-cracked brink of a 300' cliff of reasonably solid rock.

NAMES AND GUIDEBOOK

By Vin Hoeman

Our need for a guidebook to Alaska's mountains is acute. Mountains have been misidentified in some recent issues of SCREE. The name we gave to the 7,535' peak up Eagle River was Mt Yukla after Mandenhall, 1898, who says the Indian name for Eagle River was Yukla or Iuklahina. Mt. Williwaw 5,445' was first climbed just last month, not at the earlier time reported in SCREE. I hope to complete field work for the first edition of the Guide to Alaska's Mountains this year and will call a meeting of the Committee on Geographic Names as soon as I return from Mt. Blackburn.

Editors Note:

Vin is presently leading Don Stockard, Alex Bittenbinder, and Ray Draper on a two to three week expedition to Mt Blackburn 13,309 (Alaska's 5th highest) up the Kennicott Glacier. They hope to do the unclimbed E. Ridge of Blackburn and make first ascents of two 14,000' points 5 miles NE of Blackburn.

ALASKA RESCUE GROUP NEWS

ARG stood by for two parties attempting Mount McKinley this year, the Japanese Party led by Yoskito Tsukazaki and The 1965 Miscellaneous Mount McKinley Expedition led by James Hugh Anderson. The Japanese Party is attempting the Italian Route; due to bad weather and other problems the Miscellaneous failed in their attempt.

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