

NORTH AMERICAN NOTES

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MT. McKinley was again, during the summer of 1963, the focal point of the mountaineering activity on the North American continent. Three new routes were made on the mountain.

The East buttress route suggested by one of our American members, H. Bradford Washburn, Jr. in the 1963 issue of the *American Alpine Journal*, was successfully ascended by a party of six made up of four guides from the Grand Teton area, one from Rainier and one from Canada. On April 18-19 they flew in from Talkeetna to a landing spot on the Ruth glacier. The lower part of the route proved much more difficult than they had anticipated but three of them, Lev, Newcomb and Read, pushed through from the high camp and reached the summit on May 25.

Two other parties successfully attempted the North face and completed two new routes on the Wickersham Wall. A Canadian party, under the leadership of Hans Gmoser, climbed a route, which had previously been described by Washburn in the 1947 *American Alpine Journal*, on the right-hand end of the Wall. Three of the party reached the summit on June 13. Somewhat later, a Harvard Mountaineering Club party of seven, under Henry L. Abrons, climbed the centre portion of Wickersham Wall by a buttress which afforded some protection from avalanche danger and provided a much more direct route to the North summit, which they reached on July 16. Three days later they ascended the higher South summit.

A party of three, which had previously climbed Mt. McKinley by the Muldrow glacier route and descended the West buttress route, continued on and climbed Mt. Hunter making not only the second ascent of the main summit but also first ascents of the South and Central peaks.

Mt. Foraker, the second highest peak in the Alaskan range, was successfully attacked by an American group of ten under the leadership of H. Adams Carter. They ascended the South-east ridge as far as a 2,000 ft. rock step. At this point they traversed left on to a hanging glacier overhung by another hanging glacier. After crossing this glacier to a steep, subsidiary ridge, they ascended to the upper glacier where they left two members, Duenwald and Richardson, with a camp at 11,000 ft. These two then moved the camp 600 ft. higher to the top of the ridge, and on the following day, July 7, made the entire climb to the

summit and back, in spite of the fact that the ridge between 13,000 and 15,000 ft. was badly corniced. This is the second ascent of the mountain as well as being a new route.

Mt. St. Elias was attempted by a seven-man group under the leadership of Boyd Everett, Jr. On June 16 the party flew in to attack the unclimbed North face. The next day an earthquake of 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ magnitude on the Richter scale occurred setting off numerous avalanches, the dust from which covered the camp. The continual avalanche activity put any further attempt on the North face out of the question, and they moved their attack to the North-west ridge. On this ridge on June 26 another earthquake hit them as they were descending at the 13,000 ft. level, causing the slope to avalanche 500 ft. below them. By July 2 they had a camp between 14,500 and 15,000 ft. On the following day two members, Everett and Leemets, made an attempt on the summit but were driven back by bad weather, so they were forced to leave in order to be picked up by plane on the 5th.

In Canada one of the most outstanding climbs was an ascent of the South-east face of Mt. Proboscis. The party of four made a three-hour flight in from Watson Lake to the mountain and spent considerable time reconnoitring the face. They spent three days on the wall, the first night in slings and the second two nights under severe storm conditions. This is one of the most difficult and severe climbs ever made so far away from a base of supplies.

Mt. Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies, was the scene of another outstanding ascent. A party of two, Dan Davies and Pat Callis from Seattle, spent two days placing a camp under the North face which they ascended on August 9 under ideal weather conditions. This is an extremely steep, snow and ice face on which they found the snow unconsolidated over ice until they reached the Emperor ridge somewhat below the summit. They returned by the Kain route of the South-east face.

A difficult rock climb was made on the North face of Mt. Slesse in the Chilliwack range of British Columbia by three men from Seattle on August 26-28. They spent two nights on the face, one in slings.

An interesting innovation was made in the summer of 1963 by the Alpine Club of Canada which had a climbing camp on Baffin Island in the Arctic during which some twenty first ascents were made.

In the Sierra Nevada, where a great many extreme rock climbs have been made in the last few years, the climbers have now reached beyond the Yosemite region and on June 2 and 3 of 1963, four men made the first ascent of the South face of Tehipite Dome in Kings Canyon. This sheer wall of exfoliated granite is typical of the more difficult Sierra Nevada rock climbs. In the Yosemite itself there was a new route completed on the North-west face of Half Dome on June 14 requiring four

days of climbing. A week later the same two men made a very difficult new route to the right of Yosemite Falls requiring two and a half days of difficult climbing and the placing of 235 pitons.

That all climbing in the Sierra Nevada is not confined to routes of extreme difficulty is evidenced by the fact that during the Labour Day weekend, some three thousand climbers were on the trail to Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the continental United States, and that about one thousand reached the top.