

camp in the Ten Lakes Basin. This camp would connect with May Lake Camp on the one side and would be a day's trip to the Valley on the other side.

WINTER SKI HUTS AND TRAILS

We believe that eventually ski trails of the Sierra will be used in winter by a substantial number of people, substituting skiing for hiking. Judging by the manner in which the sport is growing in California it does not seem too early to study the possibilities of ski touring and winter mountaineering in the Yosemite region.

To show how rapidly touring in winter is developing, the Forest Service is now engaged in working out a system of huts in the New England mountains that will form a chain for the use of winter mountaineers. In the Yosemite Park we believe that the first area to be studied for possibilities for hut touring in winter should be the area south of the Glacier Point road. Our reasons for this are as follows:

1. We already have a skiing center at Badger Pass. If and when the Glacier Point road is kept open, the present main hotel can be kept open at Glacier Point, and there can be constructed dormitories somewhere in that vicinity, and other facilities that not only can be used in winter but in summer as well. It is important in the beginning that any mountaineering in winter be located in an area that is fairly accessible to roads so that searching parties, if needed, can reach the areas with a minimum loss of time. At the present time the only area accessible by road is the area adjoining the Glacier Point-Badger Pass road. Within an hour's travel of the Glacier Point road can be found spectacular mountain skiing country, some of it timber-free. It is believed that a location can be found in the vicinity of Ostrander Lake that would serve as an ideal location for a winter hut and at the same time would serve in summer as a High Sierra Camp. The site for a High Sierra Camp discussed for the vicinity of Royal Arch Lake is also a site that is ideally suited for use as a winter hut. The same applies for the site discussed near Moraine Meadows. It is felt that winter mountaineering in this general region can be developed with a minimum of danger and difficulty.

Consideration should be given to the importance of keeping the Glacier Point road open for the safety of skiers in that region at the present time. It serves to stop skiers who get confused in their direction when descending the north slope and will prevent their becoming lost. The winter view from Glacier Point also has great attraction for park visitors.

In the region suggested as skiing area the winter trails and runs will of course not follow summer trails. The ski trails should be cleared, as are the summer trails, of brush, etc., and it is of the utmost importance that they be properly marked in winter according to the custom prevailing for ski runs. A more detailed report on winter recreation and skiing is being prepared by Hester Robinson.

W. A. STARR, *Chairman,*
High Sierra Trails Committee, Sierra Club.

Mountaineering Notes

THE FIRST ASCENT OF MONUMENT PEAK

BY JOHN D. MENDENEALL

Copper Mountain and its ridges sprawl over the desert of southeastern California like the palm and fingers of an upturned hand. The thumb points skyward, well deserving the name Monument Peak. It is an impressive tower when viewed from any direction, for, at a point 250 feet below the summit, the Monument is but 170 feet thick. The east side plunges downward for almost 1000 feet, and the north and south faces fall for 600 feet. The west wall is connected with Copper Mountain by means of a saddle that joins Monument Peak 250 feet below the summit. Precipitous, overhanging here and there, and evilly loose, the Monument had defied at least two attempts as 1939 drew to a close.

In common with most desert pinnacles, Monument Peak has a relatively modest elevation—only 2446 feet. However, the last 150 feet were more formidable than the average peak of five times its height. April 17, 1937, Lloyd Shaffer and I attempted the peak from the saddle. Taking the obvious—indeed, the sole practicable—route, we traversed out to the left, up into a recess, and back to the right on exposed but easy blocks. After surmounting 120 feet of moderate Class 4 climbing, I decided that the strength of the party was not equal to the task above. Lack of equipment contributed to my decision.

October of the same year witnessed an attack by a much stronger party, Robert K. Brinton and Glen Dawson, Sierra Club members from Los Angeles. Brinton covered forty feet of the bulge that had defeated our attempt. However, the looseness of the rocks supporting their pitons made further progress inadvisable.

It was a serious party that studied the west face of the Monument on the last day of 1939. Arthur B. Johnson and I shared leadership. My wife, Ruth, and Paul Estes composed the remainder of the party. Anticipating a severe battle, we carried 400 feet of rope, thirty pitons, eighteen carabiners, and four hammers.

There was little choice of routes. We were almost definitely committed to turning the loose corner of rock that had defied previous attempts. Conquering this obstacle should place us upon a ledge plastered high on the south face. Above this resting-spot reared an uninviting stretch of plates, smooth and glistening in the desert sun. However, if a frontal attack upon the slabs failed, a detour should turn the difficulty. Once above the level of the plates, an airy but relatively short ascent of loose material should bring the party to the summit.

Feeling that even unstable rock should yield a good piton-anchorage in 200 feet of rope, all four tied into one party, and the conflict began. I led out to the left, up through the recess, and upward to the right. Before long, the rope was snapped in at two pitons left by the Brinton-Dawson party, and I placed

a third piton fifteen feet higher in the loose wall. Descending almost to the level of the shelf occupied by Art, I cautiously edged outward to the right. Every hand- and foot-hold was carefully tapped. Piton four was driven in reasonably sound rock, and I worked directly up a shallow crack to the ledge that was our first objective.

Art joined me, and the next pitch was carefully studied. After some investigation, it was decided to turn the obstacle to the left. Piton five was placed at the east end of the ledge. Secured by Paul's piton belay from the ledge, Art climbed upon my shoulders and ferreted out some hand-holds above. Climbing upward and to the left, he passed around the corner and out of sight. Following extensive "gardening," pitons six and seven were placed. Due to the hazard of falling rocks, Ruth was then brought up to the ledge.

Using Paul's back as a ladder, I was able to join Art after an airy ascent over unsound rock. A short traverse led into an inviting-looking chimney composed of reasonably dependable material. Using piton eight for side-tension, Art emerged from the head of the chimney onto a loose but welcome slope. A minute later, an exultant shout from above announced success.

Ruth gamely made the critical pitch carrying the metal-laden sack, and Paul followed, removing pitons. By two o'clock we were all upon the loose, sloping summit. The view was splendid desert scenery, embracing the lazy Colorado River, distant Arizona ranges, and the nearby cliffs of Copper Mountain.

The lengthening shadow of the Monument became a warning finger, and we roped off the west side from a piton. Due to the possibility of being stunned by loose rocks, each climber was belayed during the first rappel. Before long, the base of the tower was reached and the rope was removed. It was a happy group that descended through the darkness, but we also felt profound respect for the shaft bulking blackly in the star-studded night.

• •

ROCK-CLIMBING IN YOSEMITE

By RICHARD M. LEONARD

Again the Memorial Day trip was a high point of 1939 Sierra climbing. Yosemite's spectacular springtime, combined with perfect weather conditions, produced a very enjoyable trip. Since the holiday was on a Tuesday, only thirty-seven rock-climbers were able to come; nevertheless, a great deal of climbing was accomplished.

Mount Starr King.—On May 28, under the generous leadership of Dorothy Markwad and John Dyer, ten members of the trip were able to enjoy the extensive view from this formerly "inaccessible" summit.

Mount Clark.—Many enjoy general mountaineering and wilder and higher country rather than pure rock-climbing in the valley. Thus on a four-day trip Lester Ferris, Ben Hall, Stephen Hall and Tom Morley ascended Mount Clark from Washburn Lake, and also reached the summit of Mount Starr King on their return.

"The Gunsight."—The lower Cathedral Rocks gully, a V-shaped notch

with the Leaning Tower centered in the sights, has been appropriately named by the Yosemite ranger staff. May 27 and 28, three parties, totaling thirteen persons, ascended to Bridalveil Creek, and three more, namely, Neil Ruge, De Witt Allen, and Ted Sanford, made the ascent of the Leaning Tower, not returning until the search party met them at the road at 10:00 P. M. On May 29 six more enjoyed this easy but sporting climb to a fine lunch spot on Bridalveil Creek.

Grizzly Peak.—On May 27 Neil Ruge with Esther and Hervey Voge, and on May 28 Tom Johnston, Don Woods, Jack Pionteki, Leslie and Fred Toby made the ascent via LeConte Gully.

Lower Brother.—May 27 De Witt Allen, George Dondero, Jim Harkins, Rus Lindsey, and Ted Sanford traversed from east to west, returning at 8:00 P. M.

"Arrowhead."—Attempted May 27 by Don Woods, Walter Hermies, and Bob Baker, who were turned back. Fourth ascent on the 28th, by Fred Kelley, the Ed Koskinens, and Ralph Yearly.

Washington Column.—Still the most popular difficult climb in the valley; the fourteenth ascent was completed this year, with five other climbs to the "Lunch Ledge," May 27, Bob Brinton, Elsie Strand, Carl P. Jensen, Agnes Fair, Spencer Austin; May 28, Dick Jones, Bob Baker, Walter Hermies; November 11, Bob Hansen, Bill Horsfall, Alan Henry, Fritz Lippmann.

Church Tower.—Having repulsed three attempts since the first ascent, in 1935, this spire yielded a second ascent on May 30 to Carl P. Jensen and Spencer Austin.

Glacier Point.—A new route, completed on the first attempt, turned out to be one of the most comfortable and enjoyable climbs in the valley. The route is up the east face, opposite Sierra Point, and follows near the first little stream south of Glacier Point. Shade, running water, and flowers are found all along the way. Climbing is on excellent granite at average angles of sixty-five to seventy degrees, mostly Class 4½ with two Class 5½ pitches. May 28, Dave Brower, Raffi Bedayan, and I made the first ascent in five hours, removing the ten pitons so that it is now just as much fun as ever.

Pulpit Rock.—First attempt 1936, by the capable climbers, Owen Williams and Ethel Mae Hill. Second attempt August 12, 1937, by the very expert team of David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. Third attempt May 27, 1939, by the still stronger party of John Dyer, David R. Brower and Richard M. Leonard. After very careful climbing for a period of five hours only sixty-three feet of climbing had been accomplished and further progress seemed impossible. It was thus conclusively established that, as the Whitney Survey would say, Pulpit Rock was "forever inaccessible."

Nevertheless, two days later, Raffi Bedayan, Carl Jensen, and Randolph May proudly brought back to camp the highest piton of the previous party. To the earlier parties it was clear that the piton could only have been removed by roping down from above it. Although they conceded this, they still refused to believe, after their own failure, that the rope-down had been preceded by an ascent. On July 4 John Dyer broke away from the doubters and claimed a second ascent with Edward Koskinen. As proof, he also exhib-



The Carabiner Sling
Normal position

Rope detail
Held from below

THE CARABINER-PROTECTED ROPE-DOWN Photos by Doris F. Leonard, David R. Brower



ROUTE ON MONUMENT PEAK (Climbers encircled) By Allen Estes