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WASHINGTON ROCK CLIMBERS

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THE BATTLE RANGE, SELKIRKS, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Betty Kauffman

Last year, Norman Brewster, Andy, and I had failed in an attempt to reach this remote group of peaks at the southern extremity of the Selkirks. From the furthest point of our exploration we had faced a splendid view of the range, extending eastward from Fish Creek to the Beaver River. Only two of its peaks (one on either end) had been climbed. Several valiant efforts to reach the main body of the range had been thwarted.

So we stood and plotted various routes across virgin peaks to the highest, Mt. Butters (estimated 10,760 feet.)

This year those plans became reality.

Norman, Andy, and I once more hoisted packboards on our shoulders and left the small town, Beaton, B. C., for a wilderness of deep forests, granite peaks, and glaciers.

The approach was more direct this time, by way of Fish Creek from Beaton to the end of the Battle Range. Eight miles by truck brought us to the last habitation, beyond that we followed a more or less passable trail for twelve miles upstream. Ten miles along the way, a sturdy cabin belonging to the trapper, G. Ray Metzler, provided a haven and base of operations. Beyond the cabin two roaring torrents crossed our path, one of which was to prove precarious on the return journey.

Now from an altitude of 1800 ft. we must leave Fish Creek valley, to ascend the end of the range. We chose a steep, heavily timbered ridge to take us up to 7000 ft. where we established camp I. This choice, a long-standing idea of Norman's, proved very wise. Although it was an uncomfortable climb, due to lack of water, there was no serious underbrush, of the impenetrable Selkirk variety.

Our camp spot lay near timberline, in a sheltered hollow, beside a clear glacial stream.

Our next difficulties evolved from the structure of the land. Battle Range peaks seem to have excellent fortifications in the shape of steep granite ridges, descending from their summits to cliffs in the timber far below. Their side-walls are extremely repellent to back-packers who wish to traverse a peak at a reasonable altitude in order to establish a camp beyond. We counted four such obstacles along the route which finally culminated in Mt. Butters. In two cases we found it necessary to follow steep snow

slopes to a summit and down the other side in order to avoid these buttresses.

The first peak has an estimated altitude of 9500 ft.. On two days we packed loads over this then down a steep glacier to a high pass where we established camp II. The peak belongs to a system known as Battle Mountain. We propose to name it Becwulf and its satellite Mt. Grendel in memory of the mythical battle. We jokingly called its descending glacier, the Billy Whiskers, in honor of two mountain goats who romped on its steep slopes.

Camp II stood on the only spot of green available along our route. There at about 8000 ft. was a tiny heather meadow with a few scrub trees. We praised our good fortune but quivered at the possibilities of exposure in case of storm. The first night in camp brought our apprehension to a climax. A fierce thunderstorm with lashing rains gave a severe test to our large tarpaulin-tent. This spacious light-weight construction had been made by Andy from strips of nylon, sewn on the Bradt's machine. It stood!

Beyond us now we had no hope of finding more campsites. Camp II must serve as the taking off point for Mt. Butters. Two days later we rose early in preparation for the dash. Knowing that the climb would occupy at least the entire long day, we took food and equipment in case of forced bivouac. The early morning sky gave us hope.

First, we were forced to climb a 9500 ft. peak (proposed name, Mt. Drewry, for an early Battle Range explorer). We descended another steep glacier from its summit. Two more peaks we bypassed at about 8000 ft. We propose to name them Faffner, and Escalade. The latter is a precipitous granite wedge which provide a challenge for the most excellent of rock-climbers. We merely smiled and mentioned names of Washington climbers whom we thought more qualified than we. All this traversing brought us to the actual slopes of Mt. Butters. For 2500 ft. upward we plodded on soft steep snow. A short scramble on rock, and finally our much desired goal.- the summit.

From Butters, a puzzle of peaks stretched around us to the distant horizon. Northward, the Selkirk range absorbed our first attentions. The peaks we had climbed or viewed in other years were particularly interesting from this new angle. To the south; our abortive route of last year lay between two magnificent mountains which we have called Scylla and Charibidis, because we could not get by them. Still further south lies a range of fantastic pinnacles (the Badshots) which is also largely unexplored. Westward, we peered toward the dark valley where we knew that Sterling Arnold, Don, and Pete must be toiling; somewhere in that Selkirk forest. We knew then that their difficulties in approaching the Battle Range from that side would be great, if not prohibitive.

To the east, we looked back across granite ribs to the place where we must next lay our heads, camp II. A speedy, not too eventful, retreat brought us home before nightfall.

The path to Beaton was not entirely smooth. We had once more to climb the Billy Whiskers glacier and Mt. Beowulf. Then, after a night at camp I we fought thirst and heavy packs as we descended the wooded ridge.

The reader, I know, is ready for the closing words. We too were weary, as we set our packs down beside Kelky Creek, and drank from its swollen waters. Andy started, without pack, to test the uncertain crossing on logs. Norman busied himself with readjusting my pack.

"Get the gun!" Andy's urgent cry jolted us. A black bear calmly approached Andy from the opposite bank. The crossing would not be wide enough for two. An effort to shoo the bear proved only temporary. Norman tugged on the ropes holding the gun to a packboard. Andy balanced himself over the powerful stream. Now the bear stood a few feet from him. I fearfully watched Norman point the barrel in their direction. A shot sent the bear into the water and back to the woods. He did not reappear.

That night Metzler's cabin satisfied every desire. A leisurely trip brought us to Beaton two days later. Our total time, fifteen days, extremely eventful and satisfying.

U P S A N D D O W N S

Sept. 7

Chris Scoredos

Eleanor Tetge

Ted Sched

Dolores Alley

Billy

Betty

The meeting place failed to function. Chris and Eleanor climbed at Carderock. The others, failing to find them, went on to Greet Falls, Md. The climbing just up river from the fish ladder they report to be disappointing.

Sept. 15

John Reed

John Meenehan

Chris Scoredos

Ted Sched

Arnold Wexler

Joan Price

On the Virginia side of the Potomac Gorge, John Reed and Arnold climbed the Bird's Nest (A-8 or B-11). All of the crew climbed the inside corner, Flatiron section! Also Both Johns went up Laurence's Lest. Joan Price, a beginner, aroused general admiration. Did she really climb a qualifying climb?

Sept. 21.

Dolores Ally

John Reed

Don Hubbard

Betty

Bob Hackman

Arnold Wexler

Billy

Andy Kauffman

Ted Schel

Chris Scoredos

Betty

Joan Price

Chris reports?-- At Echo Cliffs there was some belaying practice after which Chris and John alternately tried leading the slick waterline tension traverse. The water kept getting diluted with climbers so they quit for lunch. After some relaxation on Cowhoof rock (During which John climbed Socrates Downfall -B-8) Chris lead John and Bob dryly across said waterline traverse; then, for a change, they jumped into the river voluntarily.

--And from Don,--While the rest of the group were busy practicing falls and dynamic bellays, Billy and Betty Alley were gathering mushrooms. They collected a surprising number of varieties and a most alarming number of deadly Phalloides. But the find of the day was a colong of Strobilomyces. In the afternoon Bob got off to a good start by doing the Cow Hoof traverse, while Joan in her effort to follow remodeled the climb so completely that perhaps it now stands in the impossible class. This was followed by an assault on Donalds' Ducks. under the wobbly leadership of Hubbard who used enough pitons to climb the Lost Arrow, Arnold, Ted and Dolores completed the traverse while being continually harassed by shouts, echoes and other extraneous noises from the team climbing just up river. Shortly thereafter most of that team came swimming down past the cliffs, and the noises subsided.

* * *

Herb and Jan Conn are now working at Russell's, a hotel at Keesearge, N.H. They report:

"We are only about a mile from Cathedral and White Horse Ledges, but as we have no days off until the end of next month it doesn't really matter.

"We had fun climbing at Ketchikan, and we also got a chance to try various practice climbs around Boston with the A.M.C. They've got some good ones. We saw Jimmy Maxwell and Margerie Hurd. Our attempts to follow Sterling and Chuck's climb upon the Armadillo at Ketchikan has convinced us that the Washington group is tops. Things like that just aren't led in most places."

A leaflet from Camp and Trail Outfitters, 112 Chambers St. N.Y. (7) N.Y. (Phone Barclay 7-5895) lists ice axes \$16.50, Eckenstein 10 point crampons \$16.50, Carbiners \$1.40 to \$2.70, pitons \$.75 to \$1.10, Beaverian and Tricouni nails and hobs \$.01 to \$.05, Nylon ropes \$24.50, also Primus stoves, carbide lamps, tents, etc.

Found in Chris Scoredos' car, a gold bracelet with heart, anchor and cross pendants. Owner may have same by calling No 2076 .

S C H E D U L E

Oct. 12 Bull Run Mt.
Oct. 17 Meeting: Andy Kauffman reports on the Battle Range trip.
Oct. 26 Loudon Cliffs, Harpers Ferry
Nov. 16 Old Rag Mt.
Nov. 27-30 Seneca, Champe and Nelson Rocks
Dec. 14 Herzog Island
Dec. 25-28 Schoolhouse and Hell Hole caves.

Science Illustrated for Sept. gives an outside cover and 12 profusely illustrated pages to Maynard Miller's account of last year's St. Elias expedition "We Lived With Avalanches".

In the Sept. National Geographic Mag., a snapshot of Leo Scott aroused more favorable comment among our friends than the Kodachromes of the eclipse he was in Brasil to photograph.

?

[illegible]

Found in Chloroform and alcohol (with heat).
 Another and more abundant. Other will have seen in Chloroform and alcohol.