



THE SUMMIT CROWN OF OLD RAG MOUNTAINS AS SEEN FROM THE SOUTH

Editors

Founders

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The Summit Crown of Old Rag

This sketch looks toward the summit (behind the rocks at S) from near the fire tower. At the extreme right, and up the slope is a readily accessible rock with a 20 ft. practice lay-back crack at "L". The abrasive nature of the granite and its slight overhang are its chief points of interest. To its right is an outside corner, the friction portion "F" of which is reached by a fingertip traverse upward to the right. The break in the rock 6 ft. further to the right offers no particular difficulty.

The next point of interest is Donald's traverse "T" which has two features to recommend it. Its photogenic nature results from the nearly vertical profile of the wall it leads to. The other feature is recognized by the climber as he nears the end of the traverse. This traverse begins with a short vertical jamb crack (often by-passed by using the easy broken rock around the corner to the left) and continues across a pair of vertical seams. (The second of these seams is used to reach this traverse from above.) The visible part of the traverse ends 12 ft. or so beyond, below a rounded shelf occupied by a large boulder. The leader should, however, feel low and to the left for footing on which to continue. There he finds a concealed crack on which to diagonal upward. It is permissible after he has scrambled up beside the boulder to a good belay position to allow the rest of the team to think temporarily that the route does continue directly up to him. It can be climbed. This puts the team at the bottom of a gulley-like chimney "G" and at the right end of a (generally) horizontal band "B", each of which may, with discretion, be used as a thoroughfare.

*** IMPORTANT MEETING ON JANUARY 24--SEE LAST PAGE ***

The Summit Crown of Old Rag (cont'd)

This same spot can be reached from directly below. Starting at "M" one can easily scramble to the top of a small boulder on a shelf. From this position one can get his hands into the bottom of a mummy crack. High footing on the right puts one into this crack which is quite easy except for a slight overhang at the top. Even there one has no difficulty after locating a good handhold over the top.

It is customary to continue from here, not to the right up the chimney "G", but to the left to Clark's chimney "C". The bottom of this chimney may be reached by moving up and to the left, either laboriously up the tight-fitting crack, or airily up the finger traverse above it. The latter is easier as Geraldine demonstrated in a premarital trip up this route with Fitzhugh. Once in the chimney, one climbs easily to its top. An airy catwalk leads a few feet to the left into a crack opening to the top of the mountain. Bill Shockley demonstrated that the following members of the rope team could be brought straight up without the use of this catwalk. The climbing is more difficult and another advantage lies in the ease with which a fallen climber may be retrieved from the chimney as compared to the face under the catwalk.

An easy route of access to band "B" from below is indicated at "A". This band terminates at its left end below a cave (below letter "V"), one can thus easily reach the cave from below. Ten or twelve feet back in the cavern one can climb the finger holds at its apex. With considerable help from the feet one easily proceeds back to the entrance and mounts the shelf above it. Following this shelf to the left beyond the field of the sketch one easily scrambles to the top.

At the extreme left is shown the rocky side of the north west ridge. Let's go and concentrate on it some week end. Paul Bradt.

* * *

UPS AND DOWNS

Climbing for the 1948 Season Officially Opened!

Although New Year's day was wet and cold, two intrepid climbers braved the weather to spend some of the day climbing.

Finding Arnold had already left, John Meenehan and Chris Scoredos traveled to Carderock in hopes of getting some climbing in. After climbing Ronnie's Leap and the Beginner's Crack in the cold, driving rain, the climbers returned to Washington and to their New Year Day's dinners, satisfied that the first day of the year had not found the climbers neglecting their favorite sport!

January 4, 1948

Jack Wilson
Francis Bittinger
John Meenehan
Pim Karcher

Ken Karcher
William C. Sumer
Chris G. Scoredos
Jane Showacre

The Rockclimbers drove to the point just beyond the Model Basin and parked their cars near the underpass. On arriving they found the canal frozen so they skated to Carderock. While Francis, Chris and William continued on the canal to the earthen dam, the rest of the group continued to skate near the path leading to the rocks.

The climbers soon lost interest in skating and started climbing on a face downstream from the Beginner's crack which they climbed in many different ways. Later John Meenehan made a first ascent of a corner now called Meenehan's Corner. After lunch the group climbed on and near the Jackknife climb. One particular face downstream from the Jackknife was found interesting by both the men and women. A visit was then made to the Crossover and the group then returned to the canal. While preparing for more ice skating they were joined by Ted and Kay Schad, Elliot Amidon and Judson Gross, and several of their friends. The group ice skated down the canal to a point opposite to where the cars were parked and here more ice skating and sliding was enjoyed.

Ups and Downs (cont'd)

January 11, 1948

John Meenehan
Jane Showacre
Donald Hubbard
Clara Scholtz
Howard Watkins
Margaret Crawford
Eleanor Browning

Jean Sawers
Walter Rheinheimer
Jack Wilson and daughter
John Reed
Chris Scoredos
Eric Scoredos
Helen Scoredos

The water was cold, in fact its icy surface made an ideal highway of the canal to the rocks at Carderock. While some of the group continued ice skating Donald Hubbard took Margaret, Eleanor, Jean and Walter to the rocks where he instructed them in the use of the rope, various climbing knots, rappelling and climbing. The girls and Walter enjoyed their morning session under the instructorship of Don.

In the afternoon the group was joined by John Reed, Helen and Eric Scoredos. Eric watched from his papoose carrier while climbing continued near the Jackknife. Later in the day Walter, Jane and Helen climbed the Jackknife. Chris and John Reed made an unsuccessful attempt of the inverted staircase which had been climbed successfully in the past by Herb Conn and Chris.

CAVING AND CLIMBING

by John Meenehan

Schoolhouse Cave is the pride and joy of the National Speleological Society but it is particularly the domain of the Rockclimbers by right of conquest.

Way back in 1939 a church hiking group had acquired an interest in the exploration of caves and had formed "The Speological Society of the District of Columbia". This group tracked down rumors of a large cave near Macksville, W. Va. and during a week-end trip to the area entered Schoolhouse Cave and managed to put one man down as far as the Cascade Slope. This was not at all a mean achievement for an untrained group in a large, potentially dangerous, cave as the cave was known long before the Civil War and no one seems to have penetrated past the Jumping-Off Place.

The resultant publicity of this trip in the Washington Star started a chain of events that led to the formation of the National Speleological Society and, more to the point, to the exploration of Schoolhouse Cave by the Washington Rockclimbers.

This exploration is something that can be appreciated only by non-climbers who are actually in the cave. I think it is safe to say that without the Rockclimbers the back areas of the cave would never have been discovered. The Main Room of the cave turned into a week end playground where obstacles were only excuses to make long, spectacular climbs. The famous Angel Roast traverse was made after it was found that the overhanging Judgment Seat blocked progress at the far end of the room.

Interesting as Schoolhouse is however, it is not the only cave that involves climbing. Near Petersburg, W. Va., Elkhorn Mountain Cave has a nearly perpendicular entrance of 113 feet. This has never been climbed but it might go as the passage is a steep chute over a number of ledges. As a further inducement to visit the cave, it is a most beautiful one with unusual formations.

Near Charlottesville, Va. is located Gibson's Hole with a steep sinkhole leading to a tiny platform at the edge of a lake. This is crossed by rubber boat or by swimming, (BRrrr), and at the opposite side the walls of the cave rise sheer for 50 feet to an extensive network of passages. These are not fully explored as few people have made the climb.

Down in Chattanooga, Tennessee is the Ruby Falls Commercial Cave in Lookout Mountain, 400 feet down in the mountain is a huge room with a lofty ceiling; at the far end of this room a sizable stream issues from a hole in the overhanging wall about 85 feet above the floor. The stream has

Caving and Climbing (cont'd)

never been explored although the owner of the cave in 1941 offered to pay the expenses of any climbers who were willing to attempt the climb.

Heavily travelled as Mammoth Cave is, guides have shown me openings in some of the domes they claimed have never been entered, though they didn't impress me as being difficult to reach.

But always we come back to Schoolhouse Cave, in our own backyard, where several expeditions each year enter the cave in hopes of finding new passages. Our best hope of this is in a device that is now being used experimentally by the N. S. S. to explore beneath the ground by means of electrical currents put into the earth. On a surveyed field by taking hundreds of readings and making some rather intricate calculations, the existence of cavities can be discovered. Schoolhouse is definitely on the list for such electrical exploration and we await the results with interest.

NEWS

Sally Chamberlin writes from Switzerland "We went skiing this morning and my bum leg held up fine. It was such a relief, but I'm still scared to let myself go the way I used to last year. Tonight we're going to a Christmas play given at the school in the next village by some school children. It will be in German but should be fun just the same. It will make Christmas seem more like Christmas to see the play. Give my regards to all the rock climbers."

* * *

Betty and Andy Kauffman's new address is 1864 Ingleside Terrace, N.W.

* * *

We hear from Laurence Curl who now lives at 2715 Benvenue Avenue, Berkeley, California. "Have been having a wonderful time here hiking or climbing mountains almost every Saturday, Sunday and holiday since I've been here. The coast ranges on the whole are a lot less cliffy than most of the mountains near Washington. But, oh boy, Yosemite! I went on a 4-day solo camping trip out there in October. Such cliffs, and so many of them! I even got up in the high country around 10,000 feet. The Sierra seems to have plenty of exposed rock, but the Yosemite valley cliffs are just unbelievable."

"A few notes on Sierra rock climbing: They use a standing belay seldom and then it is a hip and not a shoulder belay. A test is required before every belayed climb. They teach the butterfly as a middleman's knot."

*		*
*	There will be a meeting on Saturday,	*
*	January 24, at 8:00 O'clock, P.M.	*
*	at the home of Alvin Peterson,	*
*	3345 Tennyson Street, N.W., Telephone,	*
*	OR 2080. Barring unforeseen events the	*
*	French film, "Dare Devil's of the Alps."	*
*	will be shown since all necessary steps	*
*	have been taken to secure said film.	*
*	This film shows the first ascent of the	*
*	"Devil's Needles" adjoining Mount Blanc	*
*	Its showing in other places has been	*
*	received with tremendous enthusiasm.	*
*		*
*		*

The climber