

NEWS OF THE WASHINGTON ROCK CLIMBERS

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Ups and Downs

Don Hubbard

George Kamm

John Reed

Jane Showacre

Irene Posner

Eleanor Tatge

Sunday May 29, 1949. From the Hot Shoppe Jane's coupe, loaded with three in the front seat and three in the baggage compartment, landed the rock climbers at Great Falls, Maryland. The Park bridges were all crossed safely and prosaically, no one working up determination to reach the Falls by aerial traverse alone. At the Falls Irene was given a rappelling lesson. Then while Don, Jane, and George practiced Prussic knots, John, Eleanor, and Irene roped up for a traverse upstream. Two pitches including a wasps' nest led to the climax of the traverse, a broad horizontal crack which offered John everything his heart desired in the way of handholds and not even so much as gentle pressure for footholds--his feet actually dangled in the air. Eleanor eventually screwed up enough courage to follow. Although Don's team followed John's, the members elected to use the crack as a footwalk and perform a neat feat inchworming themselves down to the belay point. The route proceeded down to stream level, downstream to a high-angle crack, and up to the starting point again. This part of the route Don's team did not follow, preferring to look after their stomachs; John's team were fairly ravenous by the time they ended the last pitch, after 1 o'clock.

After lunch Johnny enthusiastically talked up an aerial traverse for his team across one of the foaming, boiling river gorges to a bare rock island. The first step of setting the ropes required a water traverse. John lassoed a low pointed rock, then swam the torrent hooked between the two ropes by carabiners. He shifted his end of the doubled rope, looping it over the top of the island. Don came down to take charge of the shore end of proceedings; Eleanor, then Irene, Jane, and George made their passage on the aerial highway. Inspired by a