



NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING COMMITTEE

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Rock Spring Shelter, Dec. 6-7 - Those interested contact Peg Keister, OL-2078 or OL-1400 (Code 179), ext. 2011 for transportation. Commissary individual or by cars.

MONASHEE MOUNTAINS -- 1952, by Arnold Wexler

Before this trip the Monashee Mountains were just a name to me. Somewhere east of the Cariboos and north of the Solkirks there existed an ethereal collection of peaks which had an appealing name, Mountains of Peace (Monashees in Gaelic). The map of British Columbia did not help much in giving one a better conception of this range, for just where the interesting high country should be, the map showed a beautiful expanse of white. Some of us had previously had a tantalizing view of the white pyramid of Mt. Albreda, at the northern end of the range, on looking to the East from the Cariboo Mountains in 1949. It was enough to stimulate an interest if not a mental determination that someday, sometime, we would look more closely at this country.

This summer, after plans for a more ambitious expedition into Coast Range failed to materialize, we turned our attention to this blank spot on the map. So it was that Sterling Hondricks, Donald Hubbard and I formed a team of aging and creaking individuals and limped our way up Moonbeam Creek to the northern end of the alpine section of the Monashee Range. Not wishing to overtax our aching muscles with heavy loads, we arranged for a chartered plane to fly supplies and equipment over the mountains and to drop these at two suitable locations.

On the morning of July 22, we flew from Kamloops, British Columbia, in a 1928 Junkers float plane, up the North Thompson River, across the mountains, made our drops, visually surveyed the area from aloft, selected a suitable way into the country and then returned to our base.

The following day, after making special arrangements with the Canadian National Railroad to discharge us at the thriving metropolis of Gossnell, we set out on the last mechanized lap of our journey. From Gossnell (just a signpost along the railroad track) we bushed up Moonbeam Creek to a base camp at timberline within the shadow of Mt. Lomprière. The actual travel time was roughly a day and a half with an extra day spent in dehydrating men, clothes and equipment after an encounter with a little dampness. Fortunately, this was our only serious bit of unfavorable weather, and, although we subsequently saw rain and clouds in the distance, we usually were able to avoid any serious moisture.

Our first order of business, after entrenching ourselves on the mountain slope, was to recover some supplies from our northernmost air drop. This we did in one day of hectic meandering and plowing through snow on the Pyramid-Serpentine Névé, searching and probing in mist and clouds which limited visibility to one rope length. We had dropped 14 bundles over a one-half mile area, and, much to our amazement, we recovered all fourteen. Just as we had assembled our drops into a cache the mist lifted and we viewed, with interest and delight, the unfolding scenery. It is interesting to note that if we had had good visibility, this day-long, drawn-out operation could have been accomplished in two hours.

The following day, we made our first ascent. We climbed a peak to our north which was reputed to be the highest in the range. It was an easy climb up a rocky ridge to a lower summit, down to a col, and up a snow slope to the main summit. We christened the mountain Dominion Peak; it had an elevation circa 10,200. To the south, however, we could see higher peaks, so these we immediately put on our agenda.

Our next climb entailed an attempt on Mt. Menashee which appeared to be the highest summit in our immediate cluster of mountains. The only problem in reaching the top (circa 10,350) was a bergschrund followed by a 50-foot, 50-degree pitch of soft avalanching snow on bare ice. From the top of Menashee, we saw a fine peak to our immediate north. Since the day was still young, we decided to traverse across to it. There were some nasty pitches of slabby, loose rock, but these we soon passed and attained the summit. On the top, we found a natural cairn which out-colossaled anything ever built by Colossal Enterprises. It was a gigantic rock formation so like a ceremonial Japanese gate that we christened this peak Mt. Torri.

On the first of August, we set out on a cross-country jaunt to see if we could reach Mt. Hallam, some 25 to 30 miles to the south. Three days later, after crossing a succession of ridges and valleys, cols and streams, we dragged ourselves up to the snout of Foster Glacier, which drains the northern slopes of Hallam Massif. The less said about the bush and the back-packing the better. We had our usual share of the arduous of cross country mountain travel and the necessary low-level evils that go along with high peaks, snow and ice.

The next day, we set out to climb Hallam. Across the glacier was interposed an interesting icefall. We devised a route up the true right edge to the upper catchment area. To get to Hallam, we found it necessary to traverse two intervening peaks, Mt. Deception and Mt. Milton. Except for the descent from Milton to the Milton-Hallam col, the climbing was relatively easy. This descent, however, had its moments of intense concentration as we worked our way down some loose, disintegrating steep schist, which to the south dropped some 2000 feet to a big cirque area. Some steep-looking summit slabs on Hallam resolved themselves into a simple rock scramble, and we were on top.

After our Hallam climb, we retraced our steps to our Moonbeam Creek base camp, stopping halfway at Pancake Flats to ascend Mt. Pancake. This was our more interesting rock climb.

On August 11, on our way across the Pyramid-Serpentine Névé, we took time out to climb Mt. Lemprière. This was just a walkup some snow slopes. On the top, we found the remains of a camp which a survey party had left in 1939. Scattered about were bedroom slippers, torn trousers, used up batteries, tin cans, pots, pans, candles and a conglomeration of odds and ends which must have taken a fantastic amount of effort and energy to backpack up to the top. The next day, we started our trek down Moonbeam Creek and the following morning we emerged along the railroad track in the North Thompson Valley to pick up a train back to civilization.

In all, we made eight ascents, seven of which were first ascents and one, Mt. Lemprière, a third ascent.

2 November, Great Falls, Md.

Jim Bullard	Sven Nissen-Meyer	Chris Scoredos
John Christian	Johnnie Reed	Pat Shaw
Walter Goodhue	Ann Remington	Jane Showacre
Shirley Jackson	Bruce Remington	Bob Stevens
Jerry Jankowitz	Galwyn Remington	Bill Weiss
Peg Keister	Hans Scholtens	Arnold Wexler
Elria Nissen-Meyer	Joseph Schwartzburg	Jim Willard

The first order of business for the day was belay practice for the beginners on the face near Sturgeon's Struggle. Meanwhile Ann and Jim Bullard tackled the Great Falls bulge--Jerry's lack of success was attributed to the excessive weight of his boots, but there were rumors that it was more likely due to lead in the pants. Johnnie and Sven climbed the Red Overhang -- Sven didn't seem to think that it would be climbed, but was apparently convinced when he climbed it.

After lunch Jane took John Christian and Hans scrambling in the next gully toward the river while Johnnie, Peg and Walter teamed up on Peg's Progress. Jerry continued to vent his wrath on the Bulge, this time leading it as a tension climb with the three Remingtons on his rope.

Arnold demonstrated that the Little Handhold That Isn't There is and then sat smirking at the top while Johnnie scrambled feebly around the bottom and finally ended up dangling in the rope making apologetic remarks about "too much work on the Overhang, etc".

Later Johnnie and Peg nailed up the face just upstream from the Little Handhold with enough hardware to sink a small battleship in order to give a team of beginners some practice in roped climbing.

The group broke up early, a number going over to impose on Shirley's hospitality for dinner.

J.W.

11 November, Bull Run Mountain

Bill Komper	Myrtle Sahn	Paris Trail
John Brehm	Gerry Morgan	Hans Scholtens
John Christian	Elria Nissen-Meyer	Chris Scoredos
Shirley Jackson	Sven Nissen-Meyer	Eric Scoredos
Jerry Jankowitz	Johnnie Reed	Jane Showacre
Peg Keister	Michael Sahn	Dorothy Trail
Kim Massie	Frank Sauber	Robin-Ellen Trail

The October draught had run over a little into November, and the Virginia hills were in a state closely resembling gunpowder. Peg made the supreme sacrifice and left her cigarettes in the car at the base of the mountain.

On arriving at the top, some of the climbers made for two cracks opposite Zeus' Throne. Johnnie led one, and was followed by a number of others, including Sven, a visitor to the States from Norway. Jerry led the other crack and was followed up it by Gerry and Johnnie.

Following lunch, the group moved down away to the Overhang, which shortly thereafter resembled an elevator, with numerous folk going up and down it. Those going up it included Jerry, Sven, Hans, John Brehm, Jane, John Christian, and Bill Komper. Peg and Gerry were among those going down. This, incidentally, was Hans' first "A" climb.

The BIG NEWS OF THE DAY was made shortly afterward, when the group moved around the corner to Charlie's Crack. This horrible combination of greased barber pole and vertical ice-skating rink was mastered by Jerry (now enjoying Uncle Sam's hospitality), who actually made it look easy. Appearances were deceptive, however, as various others found to their dismay.

The climbers enjoyed an audience at times, as various groups of hikers went by. These included the Capital Hiking Club and a Boy Scout Explorers Patrol.

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Peg and Johnnie took Michael and Myrtle over a tour of the rocks comprising Zeus' Throne. Bill, Paris and Frank followed the same route later.

The group broke up late in the afternoon and headed back toward Washington, with a brief stop for eats at a roadside restaurant. G.M.

16 November, Great Falls, Virginia

Dick Bradley
John Brehm
Jean Burnstad
Donna Campbell
Betty Cole
Jack Deasy

Larry Heilprin
Shirley Jackson
George Kamm
Peg Keister
Bill Kemper
Alice Marshall

Louise Marshall
Tommy Marshall
Johnnie Reed
Katherine Sanford
Bob Stevens
Arnold Wexler

After the much-needed rain Saturday, Sunday dawned with a heavy fog but every indication of turning into an acceptable climbing day. While the rocks were still a bit moist, we rigged a jump for belay practice, with Arnold coaching at the top and Johnnie doing his usual good job as a dummy. This procedure occupied most of the morning, but graduates of the belaying school congregated at the Reverse Chimney before lunch. Johnnie and Arnold demonstrated how easy this climb is; Dick, a beginner shod in smooth-soled boots, also made light work of it; George and Tommy made it after some struggle; Jean, Peg, John Brehm, and Alice climbed like mad to overcome their one-foot-up-two-foot-down tendency and finally made it to the bottom again.

Lunch was a leisurely affair in the warm sunshine. When we could be prodded into action again, we moved down to the Flatiron. This spot has great strategic value, as it affords a fine rapnel, and those in the know usually neglect to mention that there is no way out except by climbing one of two routes, one a B climb, the other a not-too-easy C. Eventually, we got nearly everybody down. Arnold, Jean, John, Dick, Johnnie, George, Alice, Tommy, Peg, Bob and Bill all made it up again via the Inside Corner (or Straddle Chimney). Betty and Jack, both out for the first time, found the going a bit tough and made good progress on the outside corner, but finally gave us a chance to practice our rescue methods when they showed a preference for a loop ladder for completion of the climb. On the Inside Corner, Arnold heard so many remarks of the general nature of "Throw it back!", "Cut the rope!", that he jumped off just short of the top. His belayer made the mistake of catching him and letting him recover. What she should have done was well illustrated by Arnold himself, when his belay was tested by Johnnie. The latter got a super dynamic belay all the way to the bottom and had to do the climb all over again.

Having thus spent ourselves and most of the day on two climbs, we were ready for rest and nourishment. The homeless ones gathered at Arnold's for supper and a showing of his local climbing pictures.

P.K.