



Up-Rope

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

1916 Sunderland Place, N.W. Wash. 6, D.C.

Founded by
Jan and Herb Conn

Price
5 cents per copy

Vol. XI, No. 18

September 10, 1955

COMING EVENTS

- 18 Sept. - Echo Cliffs, Va., or help repair the Cupid's Bower Lean-to with Grant Conway. This is a PATC project and deserves our support.
- 22 Sept. - MEETING at Helen and Chris Scoredos' new home at 8:00 P.M. Their address is 6804 - 32nd St., N.W. - Phone VO 6-2843. Andy Kauffman will speak and show slides of his Cordillera Blanca trip.
- 25 Sept. - Thurmont, Md.
- 2 Oct. - Carderock, Md. Belay practice with "Oscar".
- 8-9 Oct. - Old Rag Mt., Va.
- 16 Oct. - Bull Run Mt., Va.
- 23 Oct. - Great Falls, Va. (opposite the Fish Ladder)
- 30 Oct. - Boucher and Eagle Rocks, Va.
- 6 Nov. - Carderock, Md. Belay practice with "Oscar".
- 12-13 Nov. Debatable weekend.
- 20 Nov. - Great Falls, Md. (Peg's Progress area).
- 27 Nov. - Cupid's Bower Island.
- 4 Dec. - Carderock, Md. Belay practice with "Oscar".
- 11 Dec. - Camp Lewis, Md.
- 18 Dec. - Prospect Rock, Va.
- Dec. 21 Jan - Hermitage Cabin, Pa. (New Year's Eve party).

Portia, ^{as} typist, has gone to Germany with her husband. We apologize for the last issue which, because of her absence, was none too good.

This Issue is done on a Spirit Duplicator Machine by Mr. Herman Hartman of the Rockville Stationery, Inc., and we hope you like it. If it is satisfactory (and we will have our old letterheads printed in the future issues) many more copies of Up-Rope will be printed in this fashion.

THE 1955 CORDILLERA BLANCA EXPEDITION

By Andy Kauffman

It is difficult to describe any newly discovered region from which one has just returned after a splendid and successful journey in any manner other than superlatives. Nor is it easy to condense the experiences of seven adventurous weeks into a few brief paragraphs. Indeed, largely because the events are still fresh in my memory, the shortest complete version I know of our Peruvian expedition requires twelve hours of uninterrupted attention. While UP ROPE deserves such a description, it's requirements compel me to limit the story to it's raw highlights. The reader will, therefore, be spared a subsequent visit to his oculist.

The 1955 Cordillera Blanca Expedition assembled in Caras, Ancash Province, Peru on June 23rd. We were a party of eight: Nick Clinch and Dave Sowles, who had been in the Coast Range with me the previous year, Dave Gagliardo, Bill McMannis, Ray Hoppenon, Hawey Platts, Harold Walton, all from Colorado or Kansas, and myself. In addition, we had four fine porters -- Emilio, Eugenio and Victorino Angeles (brothers) and Juan Pablo Ramiriz -- most of whom had had previous experience with other expeditions.

Our main objective was the summit of North Pucahirca (ca. 20,000 feet) situated on the east side of the great Cordillera Blanca, in a remote area. The peak and it's neighbors were unclimbed at the time.

An advance party consisting of three left Caras on June 24th via the Cuelrada (valley) Santa Cruz to reconnoiter the mountain and find a site for base camp. The main body of the expedition, driving 18 burros and 2 horses, left Yungay two days later via the Cuelrada Yanganuco. After six adventuresome days of traveling, crossing three high passes (between 14,000 and 15,800 feet), we finally rejoined the others at base camp in the Yanajanca valley on the eastern slope of the Cordillera at about 13,000 feet elevation.

Here the supplies were reorganized and the expedition then proceeded to establish Camp I at the edge of the glacier at about 15,700 feet on July 4th. A scouting party consisting of McMannis and myself climbed to 17,500 feet the same day and selected a route up a ridge which led to a high col between North Pucahirca and it's unnamed neighbor to the north. On July 5th, Sowles and I, with light loads, led the others to an exposed snow platform at about 18,000 feet on the ridge where we set up Camp II. On the 6th the entire party occupied Camp II and Sowles and I reconnoitered the ridge for about 400 feet higher. The climbing now became difficult -- some would say severe -- and led close to cornices which did not appear particularly stable. Moreover the weather turned bad and we returned. On the 7th we once more set out along the ridge. Both of us felt, and still do, that it would go. But we also realized that it would be impractical for the whole party. If possible we wanted to get everyone to the top, and some of our party did not seem to have adequate snow and ice experience to climb these slopes safely. We therefore decided to try another route.

On July 8th two reconnaissance parties went out. The one composed of McMannis and Sowles discovered what they thought was a good route up the glacier immediately north of the ridge where Camp II was situated. During the next two days we moved Camp II up this glacier to a heavily crevassed snow basin at 18,400 feet. On July 10th and 11th, Sowles, McMannis, Clinch and Walton worked on the steep slopes above the new Camp II. They cut steps and placed fixed ropes up a 500 foot wall to a col at 19,000 feet. From here they ascended to the base of the base of the shoulder of the peak just north

of North Pucahirca, which we would have to scale in order to reach our objective. Meanwhile the rest of relayed loads with the help of the porters between Camps I and II. On the 11th Sowles and McMannis descended to the lower levels for a well earned rest, while the remaining six settled in Camp II to tackle the mountain.

On the 12th all but Clinch and myself set out to attempt to reach the top. "e remained behind as we felt that six was too large a party for the steep slopes above and because the others seemed extremely anxious to make the first ascent. All day we watched them, Walton and Hoppenon in the lead, cutting steps up the steep flanks to a point where they could approach North Pucahirca. Unfortunately, darkness caught them, and they had to descend and bivouac in a snow cave in a rising storm at about 19,100 feet. On the 13th Nick and I set out as a rescue party at dawn, but were relieved to meet all four at the 19,000 foot col, descending in good shape. They had not climbed North Pucahira, but Walton and Hoppenon climbed its neighbor (ca. 19,750-20,000 feet) which they named Nevado Angeles in honor of the father of the Angeles porters.

On the 14th, the weather having cleared, Nick and I set out at 5:00 AM for the summit; the others were still too weary from their exertions of the 12th to accompany us. We made good time, reaching the high point of the previous party by 9:00. We then crossed some loose powder snow to the col between Angeles and North Pucahirca. From here on we proceeded over extremely steep ice upwards for about 400 feet, cutting many steps; McMannis later measured the slopes with his Buruten compass and claimed the top 160 feet averaged between 60 and 70 degrees. I challenge his accuracy, but agree at least that the sbpes were steep. We stopped about 25 feet below the summit, which consisted of a huge cornice, obviously a frail superstructure on top of the mountain. Then we descended in wind and fog, retraced our steps to the high col and proceeded to climb Nevado Angeles. At 3:00 we started back for camp, which we reached in slightly over an hour thanks largely to the many fixed ropes down which we rappelled "a'la Genevoise".

I went down to Base Camp on the 15th, well satisfied with our success on North Pucahirca and Nevado Angeles. Meanwhile, Sowles and McMannis came up and on the 16th repeated our ascent of North Pucahirca and Nevado Angeles. On the 17th, I met the others in Camp I and on the 18th Sowles and I made a delightful first ascent of a 17,500 foot peak immediately above Camp I.

During the few days remainig, Clinch and Walton conducted a reconnaissance of South Pucahirca, and Sowles, McMannis and I made an abortive attempt on an elusive rock peak of about 17,000 feet north of base camp. The last day or two were spent packing and eating fresh mutton and consuming large quantities of alcoholic beverages, which delighted and inebriated everyone.

We returned to Yangay by a new route, to the north, via Pasacancha and Huallance, thereby making a complete circuit of the northern part of the Cordillera Blanca.

By now most of us had to return to the States. Sowles, Walton and Hoppenon remained and climbed the South Peak of Huascaran (22,200 feet) the highest mountain in Peru.

It was a grand trip!!!

CUPID'S BOWER LEAN-TO

The lean-to on Cupid's Bower Island is in poor repair as a result of the recent hurricane. Grant Conway of the PATC will lead a work trip to rebuild the lean-to on Sunday, September 18th. Since we use this shelter frequently volunteers are in order to help Grant.

UPS AND DOWNS needs material for the next issue. Deadline is 25 September. Mail them in, peoples.

GOOD LINE

"The Mountain Shop", 628 NE Broadway, Portland, Oregon, has a small but well chosen line of mountaineering equipment. They have CHAMONIX ice axes and Italian hand-made NORDICA ski-boots. They also have a locally-made (Canner Shoe Co.) logger's boot with WALD soles which finds wide use in the type of mountaineering encountered in the Cascades and Olympics. The shop will fill mail orders.

UP ROPE, published by the Mountaineering Committee of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1916 Sunderland Place, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.
Editor: John F. Christian
Subscription: \$1.00 for 20 issues.
Send new subscriptions, renewals, and address changes, and make checks payable to:

Dr. William Welsh, Rockville, Maryland - Business Manager.
