

FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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GUADALUPE PEAK FROM THE NORTH
Wallace W. Adams

Texas is a large State, and its vast reaches fall into such simple categories as north Texas, east Texas, south Texas, and west Texas. The latter covers an area 300 miles across in nearly any direction. For the most part, west Texas is flat, llano country virtually devoid of vegetation or relief. Elevations range from 3800 feet at El Paso to 1000 feet far downstream on the Rio Grande at Del Rio. Because the cities and towns are located in the flat areas, less adventuresome west Texans are unaware of the many mountain ranges which break the terrible monotony of this arid flatland. To be sure, the Chisos Mountains rising to 7800 feet in Big Bend National Park are becoming known, but there are other ranges whose names are unfamiliar to most people: the Davis Mountains, reaching 8382 feet, west of Fort Davis; the Sierra Vieja, south of Marfa, culminating in massive Chinati Peak, 7730 feet; and the Franklins, just north of El Paso. These are a few of the west Texas ranges and with the exception of the Franklins, are igneous in origin, with internal and external lava flows now exposed in impressive palisades.

The highest point in the state of Texas is Guadalupe Peak, which is found in the Guadalupe Mountains. The southern portion of this north-south trending range is composed of a huge elongate carbonate bank or reef not unlike the modern Great Barrier Reef of Australia, elevated and with its adjacent beds removed. Guadalupe Peak itself lies fortuitously at the extreme southern end of the range, where it can easily be seen from the excellent highway connecting Carlsbad, N. Mex. with Van Horn, Tex. It is not often climbed. Its summit elevation of 8751 feet is 3500 feet above a starting point to the south at the mouth of Guadalupe Canyon, and 3000 feet above the intersection of the somewhat longer east ridge route with the Carlsbad highway.

Guadalupe Peak is connected to the main part of the range to the north by a steep though non-technical north ridge. This account deals with the ascent of Guadalupe Peak via its north ridge, which the author has made three times in the past five years.

A devoted climber moving to west Texas might well despair of finding suitable weekend outings. For extremely rugged terrain, unusual fauna and flora and a first-rate two-day workout backpacking and scrambling, however, the north-south traverse of the southern Guadalupe is a worthwhile effort.

Fall by choice and necessity is the best time for this hike. The summer months bring heat which doubles water consumption. In late fall and early winter, hunters may be a problem; being mistaken for a hunter may also be a problem on the privately owned portion of the hike. By January the spring winds commence and they are formidable indeed.

A daylight departure is necessary the first day. Food, sleeping bags, a tarp to guard against the frost and water for two full days of backpacking must be taken. The first hour is deceptively easy, along the water course of South McKittrick Canyon, amid the scarlet maples and oaks of November. Here can be seen Texas' only trout streams. But the easy trail walking ends when the second of two primitive huts, the so-called

Grisham-Hunter lodge as shown on the topographic map, is reached. (The older Pratt stone huts can be seen a little downstream in the mouth of the canyon). Just past the Hunter hut easy valley-pounding gives way abruptly to the ascent of a very steep ridge on the remnant of a poor trail which just beats bushwhacking. Twenty five hundred feet are gained in short order here, and one wonders alternately why he burdened himself with two quarts of water per day and if that will be enough. Once on top of the ridge, no semblance of a man-made trail remains for the rest of the trip. But by this time loose rocks, cacti and other thorny plants and oakbrush are already a way of life. In the fall, the scarce madrona tree, a relative of the eucalyptus, can be seen on the upper ridges. The madrona produces large numbers of pea size velvety crimson berries which contrast against its waxy dark green leaves. The remainder of the route the first day heads southwestward on the ridge which parallels and lies north of South McKittrick Canyon. The canyon route itself will not go, at least for backpackers, since cliffs hundreds of feet high close in vertically on deep pools of water. As afternoon wears on - and the hikers wear out - the ridge disintegrates and the route follows uneasy traverses over steep slopes and rocky ledges toward the headwaters of the South McKittrick drainage. Camp is made in one of its many contributing gullies at around 7500 feet, some 12 miles from the start, as close as possible to the steep east slopes of the Guadalupe backbone.

The true remoteness of this range is well appreciated by the tired hikers around the fire. Extremely rough terrain, little water and no trails - all add up to country into which few men have ventured.

The second day an early departure is again required, and temperatures in the low twenties can be expected in November. But lighter loads the second morning help aching shoulders and feet up the first slopes of the day, some 750 feet to gain a ridge of 8250 feet. For the first time Guadalupe Peak can now be seen, far to the south. Between it and the hikers lie three other peaks all above 8500 feet - Bush, Bartlett and Shumard. To the north the 12000 foot Sacramentos glisten under fall snows.

The first day numerous mule deer are seen grazing on the mountainsides; on the second, elk are seen - elk, in Texas! But with increasing elevation comes awareness of the tremendous dissection this range has suffered by the erosion of huge transverse canyons. One thousand feet of the elevation must be lost and then regained not once but three times during the second day.

For those having the strength and time, side scrambles up Bush, Bartlett or Shumard may be made. These high points along the Guadalupe range, like Guadalupe Peak itself, lie on the west fault scarp and give an unlimited view to the west into the face of an always strong west wind. The final climb of the day is a 300 foot scramble up the narrow, steep north ridge of Guadalupe Peak. Although not common, snow is occasionally seen here as early as November.

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Dear Art,

Since I couldn't start work until Nov. 1, I thought it a good idea to get some fresh air and went to Austria. Annaliese showed me around in Vienna and on the weekend we went into the mountains with several of her friends.

A week later I took a backpacking trip by myself. There aren't too many people out on week days so late in the season. The Hochschwab is a beautiful area. The people in the village tried to keep me from going, but I found two men starting out on the same trail. It was a very cold day and in the early afternoon it began to snow. We reached the hut where we had planned to have some hot soup for lunch. Then the fog came in, and it would have been dangerous to continue. We stayed in the hut (1600 m) which was in a valley between two ridges. The easiest way out would have been down a valley to the east, approximately a half day's walk to the nearest village. If you step down you hardly can go wrong, except for stepping in a brook or river, or stumbling over a stone; but as long as you are descending, you have to get there.

Thinking that you can always do that, I decided to see what the next morning would bring. I couldn't sleep because of the cold and the wind roaring around the hut even though I was fully clothed and under five blankets. Only at day break did I doze for a couple of hours. That meant a late start. The others were ready to go when I woke up. At eight it was still freezing outside and the wind swept through the valley like an icicle. But the sky was blue, and the sun started to climb the horizon, making the white world into a crystal one.

Up Rope

UP ROPE is the Newsletter of the PATC Mountaineering Section, founded by Jan and Herb Conn in 1944. Publication is on the last Wednesday of each calendar month at PATC Headquarters. Deadline for submitted material is the next to last Wednesday of the month preceding an issue. Material for inclusion, comments or questions on editorial policy should be directed to EDITOR, UP ROPE, c/o PATC, 1718 N Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036. Subscription rates are \$1.50 per year. New subscriptions and changes of address should be directed to Business Manager, UP ROPE, etc.

After an hour we came to the point where the man went up to the north and I would go to the southwest. The Trawiesattle and Eisgruben would bring me to another valley. The higher I went, the more wind. I tried to make myself small in order not to catch so much wind, I could scarcely keep on my feet. On the right the precipice grinned at me and the rocks on the left stared at me and seemed to say, "They told you not to go by yourself." I got a little shakey; it would be at least until Saturday before someone would go the trail: four days! When I reached the Eisengraben (Ice mine) it felt like the coldest place on earth. It helped that the trail was marked well and finally I could start going down. I found a spot out of the wind, in the sun, and between high alpen rose bushes to warm up a little and to have breakfast. Three chamois, that didn't expect anybody, came by at 10 feet distance. The Trawiese Valley is one of the most beautiful valleys that I saw. And so I took all the time to enjoy it. The next hut had an unkind sign, "On vacation," on the door. In a weak moment I chose for civilization instead of climbing another 2700 feet. In the first inn I had a beer. "Beer?" asked the old woman that waited on me while her voice slid into a high pitch. She lifted her head on her 90° angle back to peer at me. I was ready to change my order, afraid that I had offended the local rules, but she shuffled away and came back with a two quart bottle.

For the next few days I kept to the foothills, because of the warmth, and last but not least, because of the fall colors that I wouldn't find at home.

It rained when I came back to Holland, the sun didn't show for weeks. Amsterdam isn't a bad city, but living conditions aren't what I was used to. People at work are very serious; I am working in a research lab for the Netherlands Cancer Hospital. And it is, of course, serious.

While I am here I enjoy the city, and all that there is to see. But I miss the sun and the Sunday outings. Not for too long I hope as I plan to be back in August.

I visited the Dutch Alpine Club last week and will attend their monthly slide shows (America next time!). There is a weekend scheduled to the Ardennes, this spring.

Anybody planning to visit Europe? I would love to show them Amsterdam.

Els Litjens
Amsterdam

Dear Editor:

I'm in the Navy, after a quick enlistment hastened infinitely by a draft notice. I'm going through nine weeks of boot camp at Great Lakes, Ill., about 30 miles north of Chicago. Life here is hell. Nothing but senseless restrictions and trivialities of precision. We have four towels but can't use any; we dry ourselves on our washclothes! About the only thrill we get is writing letters home.

I sure hope your weather has been better than ours. A rock climber could never exist up here; the weather's too frustrating. We've had about four sunny days since January 3. At least the food's easy to get used to after eating PATC-inspired meals for some time.

I'm starved for news of the Club so if anyone cares to drop me a line my address until March 7 is:

Hill, Michael L. SR B225607
Company No. 008
Recruit Training Command
Great Lakes, Ill. 60088

INSURANCE ?
Richard Sideman

I am conducting an inquiry into the possibilities of Club insurance on injuries which may occur on Club trips. There is no Club experience which I am aware of in this area. Nor is there anything to suggest that the chance of injury to climbers has increased or will increase in the future. Nevertheless, this surely is an area which is worth exploring.

For example, what do we do if a non member is injured on a Club trip and collects personal medical insurance - and his insurance company wants to get back its payments? Similarly, what happens if a member is a minor who gets injured, and his family wants recompense for its expenses?

One answer to both problems is for the Club to carry group accident insurance. A signed waiver by all members would also be advisable.

However, I want to ask the readers of UP ROPE for their comments. Does anyone know of suits (or threatened suits) which have been brought against a climbing or sporting organization? What was the result? Is there any other organization which has faced this problem? What did it do? Your remarks and suggestions would be most appreciated.

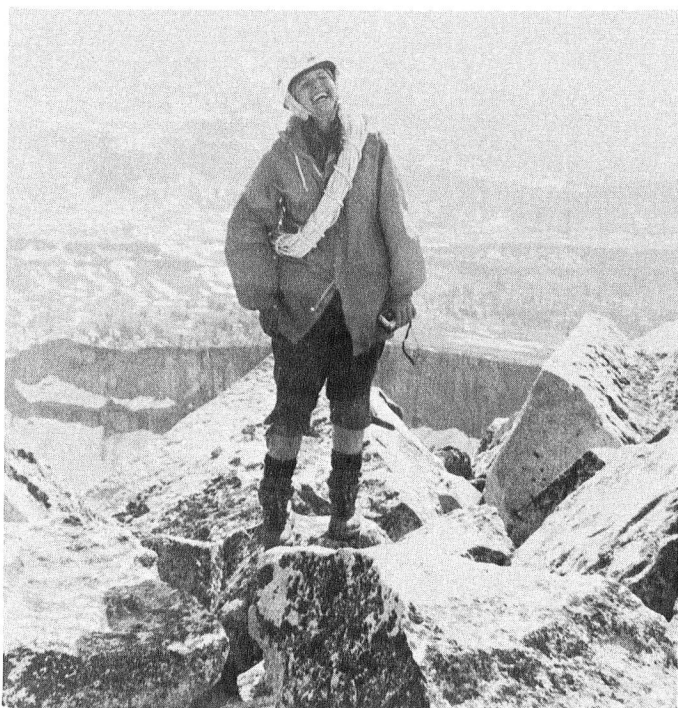
Hanging Around

Greenland Gap
Jan. 19

Chuck Sproull - Trip Reporter

The weather that weekend had not been conducive to gung-ho climbing so on Sunday, six of us - Bob and Kate Adams, Jim and Jack Rucker, Art Wilder, and myself - drove up from Seneca just to have a look at the rocks. However, as we began climbing up the 800 foot boulder field towards the central buttress of the north arch, we did not forget our ropes and hardware. Jack and I took turns leading up an obvious crack in the right in inside corner of the buttress and Art lead Bob up the face 100 yards further to the right while Kate and Jim built a rock-warming blaze (plenty of fire wood there).

Both climbs were of medium difficulty (5.4-5.5). The 200-250 foot high cliff is almost entirely vertical to overhanging and is composed of hard sandstone dissected by large, blocky fractures. Most of the cracks are incipient, but there are sufficient places for protection. There are also a lot of loose blocks which, if cleared, would yield a worthwhile area to set up new and challenging climbs.



Happiness is...

Great Falls
Feb. 9

Don Schaefer - Trip Leader
Al Goldberg
Bob and Kate Adams
Mark Carpenter
Late arrival:
Sallie Greenwood
Bill and Billy Thomas

Chuck Sproull
George Cook
Chris Buckingham
Mary Eldridge

June Lehman

We should have stayed in bed. Despite snow on the ground and in the air, we trudged into Echo Cliffs. A few of us made an effort to climb, despite wet snowy rock, and Mark actually got up Socrate's Downfall. On the whole, we got more exercise by throwing snowballs at Mary.

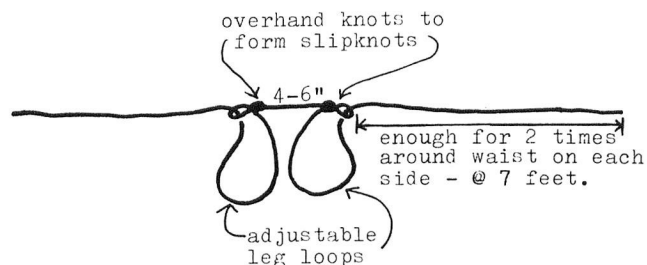
Kate Adams took a 15 foot fall while traversing on a snowy ledge to the base of the climbing rocks. Fortunately she was not seriously injured. She walked out shortly after the fall with Bob and Chris.

Touhey-time came very early.

Techniques & Technology

Within the past year many people have asked me for instructions on how to tie the modified Swami Belt which I have found so successful. I have modified the basic Swami Belt as described by John Armitage in the September, 1964, "Summit", to include two slip knots instead of stationary knots, thus allowing the leg loops to be adjustable. This is an improvement in two ways: the wearer can adjust the loops to desired tensions according to needs or the amount of clothing he wears and, if it is necessary to hang in the belt on tension or after a fall, the slip knots allow the tension of the webbing to equalize around the legs and pelvic area. About 18-20 feet of webbing is needed.

Tom McCrumm
Reference:
"Summit" Sept., 1964, p. 29



LOOK WHO'S HERE!!!!!!

The Mountaineering Section elected Mr. Joe Donohue, of Mohonk, to honorary membership in the Section. Joe has been most kind to Washington climbers who have spent weekends on Mohonk property at the Shawangunks.

Joe has been known to join us for some modest social events. Also, it was at Joe's ski area, Bontique, that snurfing came into its own. It was mainly through Joe's good offices with Mr. Daniel Smiley that we were granted permission to use the Chauffer's Cottage at Lake Mohonk.

Mr. Donohue, welcome to the climbing fraternity.

CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

Date	Place	Leader
Mar. 2	Carderock Training	Bob Robinson (356-4584)
Mar. 8-9	Little Devils Stairs	Don Schaefer (521-5326)
Mar. 11	PATC Headquarters Meeting, 8:00 PM	Program: Nepal by T. McCrumm
Mar. 15-16	Seneca Rocks	Roger Hammill (439-5751)
Mar. 29-30	Little Stony Man	Bob Adams (292-1340)
Apr. 6	Great Falls, Md. Training	Lanny Hughey (530-0007)
Apr. 9	PATC Headquarters Meeting, 8:00 PM	Program: First Aid by Drs. Hackett
Apr. 12-13	Bull Run Mountain	June Lehman (JA2-0105)

Trip Leaders are reminded of their responsibility to arrange for a report and, if a leader is unable to make his assigned trip, to appoint a substitute leader.

Carderock, Md.

From the Washington Beltway, take the last exit in Maryland before the Cabin John Bridge (or first after bridge if coming from Virginia) toward Great Falls and Carderock (note signs). Go 1 mile to Carderock sign, bear right, go left over overpass, under canal in tunnel, and right to the last parking lot. The rocks are at the end of the blocked off road and past the rest rooms.

Little Devils Stairs, Va.

Take I 66 and Rt. 211 to Thornton Gap in the Shenandoah National Park. Drive north on Skyline Drive passing both Elkwallow and Mathews Arms campgrounds. Park at the Little Hogback Overlook (not Hogback Mountain Overlook). Walk north on the Skyline Drive about 200 yards until reaching the Jinney Grey Fire Road on the right hand side of the road. Follow the fire road for approximately 1 mile until reaching a 4 way trail intersection. Take the left hand (blue-blazed) trail. This trail may be difficult to follow due to the large number of blown down trees. After .35 miles cross a stream. Leave the trail and bushwhack east, following the stream's flow, and gaining approximately 50 feet of altitude. Cross a talus slope towards its bottom edge. After about .25 miles a rocky couloir will block all progress. The

major cliffs are down the couloir and to the left.

Seneca Rocks, W. Va.

From the Beltway take I 66 to Gainesville and bear right onto Rt. 55 to Moorefield, W. Va. Turn left on U.S. 220 to Petersburg, where one turns right onto W.Va. 4 and 28. Go 22 miles to Mouth of Seneca.

Little Stony Man, Va.

From the Beltway take I 66 west to Gainesville, go straight onto U.S. 211 through Warrenton to Shenandoah National Park. Get on Skyline Drive going south and park at the Little Stony Man parking lot. Hike .8 miles up the trail.

Great Falls, Md.

Follow directions to Carderock exit. Pass the Carderock exit and turn left onto McArthur Boulevard. Go approximately 4 miles to the Great Falls parking lot. Walk left (downriver).

Bull Run Mountain, Va.

From the Beltway take I 66 to Gainesville and bear right onto Rt. 55 west. One mile past Haymarket turn right (note sign to Skyline Caverns). Turn left at T-intersection at Antioch (4.5 miles from Haymarket). Parking place is on the left 1/2 mile past county line where a steep dirt jeep road goes left. Follow jeep road until an old rusty steam shovel appears on left. Climb bank on right and get on faintly white-blazed trail. Trail follows edge of quarry awhile and then turns right into woods and up to mountain crest. Climbing area is at second good view.

NOTICES

Weddings:

Tom Evans and Vivian Orms, Dec. 13

Found:

Six carabiners and some sling material by Bob Robinson, at Touhey's

Guadalupe Peak, cont.

The highest point in Texas is marked by a gleaming five foot pylon of stainless steel located on top of Guadalupe by American Airlines. From here a vast new panorama unfolds, including the Delaware Mountains and the Sierra Diablos to the south and the Huecos and the white salt flats to the west. To the north the Guadalupe are now but a jumble of sharp ridges and deep canyons. Enjoyment of the summit views, however, is cut short by the vicious west wind. Always anticlimactic, the descent of Guadalupe Peak becomes downright painful to knees unaccustomed to 7000 feet of descent in one day. But the cars can be seen far below - and it is hoped they can be reached by dark.

Two days and nights away from the office: that is the hiatus from civilization. The stiff legs and sore shoulders will be forgotten, but not the personal discovery of a mountain wilderness not soon dominated by man.

Up Rope

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