

A Tribute
to the Honorary Members of the Sierra Peaks Section:
Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson & Jules Eichorn - Part IV

by *Bill Oliver*
Page 40

*Norman Clyde roping down.
Date and place uncertain.
Courtesy of Dennis Kruska.*

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by Bill Oliver

Tribute Part IV *Adventuring beyond the U.S.*

1935

OK – if we can back up one day, Clair Tappaan Lodge was dedicated on 12/31/34. Located near Norden close to Donner Pass and named for the deceased former Sierra Club president and Los Angeles County judge, the lodge was an instant success with its good year-round access and ample snow. A contingent of UCLA skiers, including Glen Dawson and Louis Turner accompanied by Coach Walt Mosauer, made the long trip north to visit the lodge in December. As noted in “Skiing on the East Side of the Sierra,” by Mosauer in the Sierra Club Bulletin (SCB), 2/36, on their drive home they determined to return north to spend their ten-day, between-semesters school break in the Fales Hot Springs and Mammoth Lakes country.

Meanwhile, the newly-formed Ski Mountaineers of California (refer to Tribute III), were keeping



UCLA Ski team with Coach Walt Mosauer, probably near Bishop Pass, 2/34. Glen Dawson and Dick Jones on far left. Courtesy of Gwen Rinehart.

occupied with meetings and skiing. From the minutes of Meeting #6 on 1/13/35, which took place on the ridge east of Mt. San Antonio (aka Mt. Baldy): “The main reason for this meeting was that of skiing. The business side was nearly neglected and even when once started did not progress smoothly. Dick Jones’ elegant christie to the meeting place was the delight of all present.”

True to their word, the early February school break found Dawson, Mosauer, Turner, Miles Werner and others back in the Bridgeport/Mammoth area. Several mid-day storms led to failed attempts on their planned ski ascents of Mt. Emma, Dunderberg Pk and Mammoth Mtn. Then, finally, success. Quoting from Mosauer’s article:

Glen, Miles and I tackled Mammoth Mtn once more, this time directly from Mammoth, up the east side. As if to compensate us for the preceding hardships and failures, everything seemed in our favor that day. The sky was a deep blue above the radiant slopes, the snow was settled enough to make climbing easy, and even on the summit the temperature and wind were not too uncomfortable. We drank in the glorious view from the peak, and were soon shooting downhill. Glen was the first to run into the huge basin between the summit and the lower, saddled ridge which we had to cross. Using the full width of the slope, he zoomed to the right, did one beautiful downhill turn and shot down and to the left, a tiny black spot – “the fastest molecule alive.” A few seconds later we joined him at the saddle, and dropped over it into another great open slope. Here the snow, somewhat irregular, cost all of us a spill or two, but from then on thrilling straight runs through open woods brought us back, in “nothing flat,” to Mammoth.

“Blizzard Tragedy Told by Frozen Survivor”

As observed in Tribute III, Norman Clyde was also an

avid ski mountaineer. He was passing the winter, often in the company of an occasional climbing companion, William Dulley, at Andrews Camp on the South Fork of Bishop Creek. [This camp no longer exists. The site is near present-day Four Jeffrey Campground.] On Saturday, 6 April, the pair anticipated good weather as they embarked on an extended ski tour over Piute Pass. Norman was hoping that he might possibly get in a climb of nearby Mt. Humphreys. The “good” weather, however, had already delivered fresh snowfall by the time they camped about a mile below the other side of the pass. Heavy snow the next day kept them camp-bound. Picking up the story now as related in an excellent web-published narrative by Harv Galic, an avid Sierra hiker living in Palo Alto. [William Dulley was 36 and held an electrical engineering degree from MIT. Unmarried, he was a Sierra Club member, attending the 1932 High Trip from San Pedro, as well as a member of the Canadian Alpine Club. Dulley was mentioned as a companion of Clyde in Tribute III, when Walt Mosauer and others joined the pair in a ski ascent to Bishop Pass, February ‘34.]



Photo of camp near Bishop Pass, taken by Norman Clyde. Date uncertain. Courtesy of Dennis Kruska.

On Monday morning, April 8, the storm was still raging and nearly three feet of new snow had fallen. They scrapped their plans for further exploration and decided to return. Although Clyde suggested waiting another day, Dulley thought they could negotiate the ten miles back to Andrews Camp without running

undue risks. They started the trip back at 9 o'clock. What happened next is described in a Los Angeles Times article of June 5, 1935. The climb on skis up to Piute Pass [11,428'] through the fresh soft snow was exhausting, but they made it. It was only downhill from there. However, the wind was heavy and snow was falling again. About half a mile below the pass Clyde had to wait because Dulley had fallen behind. When he finally caught up, he didn't complain or show indications that anything was wrong. About a mile farther, Dulley was out of sight again. Clyde waited for him at Piute Lake. This time Dulley said he had had two falls on this section of the trail. They continued together, but as they struck a field with very soft snow, Dulley veered from Clyde's broken trail. Clyde made it to Loch Leven Lake, but by now the wind had doubled in velocity.

“One could not see more than fifty feet and the force of the blizzard was such that at times I had to prop myself on my ski poles to prevent being blown over,” explained Clyde later to a LA Times reporter. Clyde continued slowly, calling his partner frequently, but Dulley was no where in sight. Clyde was still several miles from the relative safety of the Lake Sabrina Road. The blizzard seemed to increase in intensity. It was impossible to go back and search for Dulley. “I figured,” said Clyde to the reporter, “that Dulley, if in trouble, could throw away his heavy pack and follow me without it, or crawl into his sleeping bag and remain until help should come on the following day.” By that time, Clyde was in big trouble himself: cold and wet, exhausted and no longer feeling his fingers and toes. At seven in the evening he stumbled into a miner's cabin near Lake Sabrina, where he spent the night.

The next morning was clear and cold. Clyde went back alone over the trail. At the lower end of Loch Leven Lake he found Dulley's body. An autopsy later disclosed a stroke caused by “high altitude, plus cold and exhaustion.” Frostbites on Clyde's hands didn't last long, but his frozen toes wouldn't heal. Two months later the situation got so bad that Clyde had to travel to Los Angeles and seek medical treatment in a hospital. He was met there by the newspaper reporter, who then retold the story in the article entitled: “Blizzard Tragedy Told by Frozen Survivor.”

A more personal perspective on this sad event is provided by Norman himself in one of his published stories, "A Tragedy in the Sierra Nevada." It appears in "Close Ups of the High Sierra," the 2004 edition by Wynne Benti's Spotted Dog Press. As in many of his writings, Clyde fails to give the year. In summary, Norman cites a lack of confidence in Dulley from the beginning. "To being extremely non-committal, he added a habit of occasional dissimulation and equivorism [*sic*]. His mental reaction always appeared to be very slow." During their desperate descent from Piute Pass, Norman inwardly became "furiously angry" with his companion's erratic behavior. In shirt sleeves and with wet feet himself – "my patience was exhausted."

Additional insights into this incident are provided by Clyde in a letter written to his friend Chester Versteeg on 5/15/35. This appears as Letter No. 6 in "Twenty-five Letters from Norman Clyde, 1923-1964," by Dennis Kruska, 1998, Dawson Books. [This book, reviewed by your author in the Mar-April '99 Sierra Echo, contains an excellent short biography of Clyde.]

Dear Mr. Versteeg,

The unfortunate affair of Mt. Humphreys was a deplorable one. I am really unable to explain it. It seemed reasonable that Bill, who had climbed over some 2500 feet in going over the pass without apparent trouble, should be able to return 500 feet up to it and continue down to the end of the road. Instead he folded up and died from his heart "popping" on him. I broke the way up to the pass, picked the route and continued making the way. However, he did not seem to know enough to follow me, and under such circumstances I do not see that anyone but himself was responsible for the outcome.

I tried to tell a conservative story to the Coroner jury, partly not to disparage him. The appreciation that I got from such a bunch of morons that usually make up local courts was a criticism of my conduct. ... Had I put myself in the same position as Bill did, by violating the most elementary and at the same time the most vital of mountaineering regulations, that of following the leader, I would say that I deserved whatever fate might befall me. Yet what does that mean to a group of

Owens Valley "lunkheads," the dumbest of the dumb, scarcely one of whom would have lasted fifteen minutes in such a raging blizzard. Yet they come forth or rather slink around behind one's back with their cowardly and unreasonable disparagement. Perhaps I have a fight on hand but I will fight the whole valley rather than tolerate such miserable stuff.

Clyde's great disdain for Owens Valley folks is apparent in many of his letters, perhaps going back to his firing as principal of Independence High School in 1928. Probably not understood in the 1930s, it is well established now that advancing hypothermia seriously affects the brain and readily leads to irrational and erratic behavior.

None of the literature on this event mentions an ironic fact that Harv Galic picked up on. April 8, 1935, the day Clyde lost a companion to a blizzard that also came close to killing him, was Norman's 50th birthday!

LA Rock Climbing Section on the Move Up

Meanwhile, down south the LA rock climbers were keeping occupied, especially as regards their scouting efforts for practice sites. The RCS archives, maintained by John Ripley, contain a letter written on 5/8/35 from Jim Smith to chair Art Johnson, working in Bishop at the time. A passing reference is made to a climb of Snow Creek - a very long, gnarly snow route up the north side of Mt. San Jacinto (10,804'). More details on this ascent are found in an 11/17/35 letter from Art to Robert Underhill: "Last spring as late as the 27th and 28th of April we found around 6,000 feet of snow and a little ice with fine neve on the floor of the canyon on slopes of from 20 to perhaps 35 degrees. We climbed about 9,000 feet over 1½ miles of trail and about one mile of brush and rock scramble and then slightly over two miles on the snow, doing the 100 yards across the head of a snow col by flashlight when darkness overtook us about a 100 feet below the summit. This winter and next spring we will probably schedule a few trips into other local spots where we will find steep snow slopes with some rock climbing mixed in." A spring ascent of Snow Creek would become one of the test pieces of the early RCS.

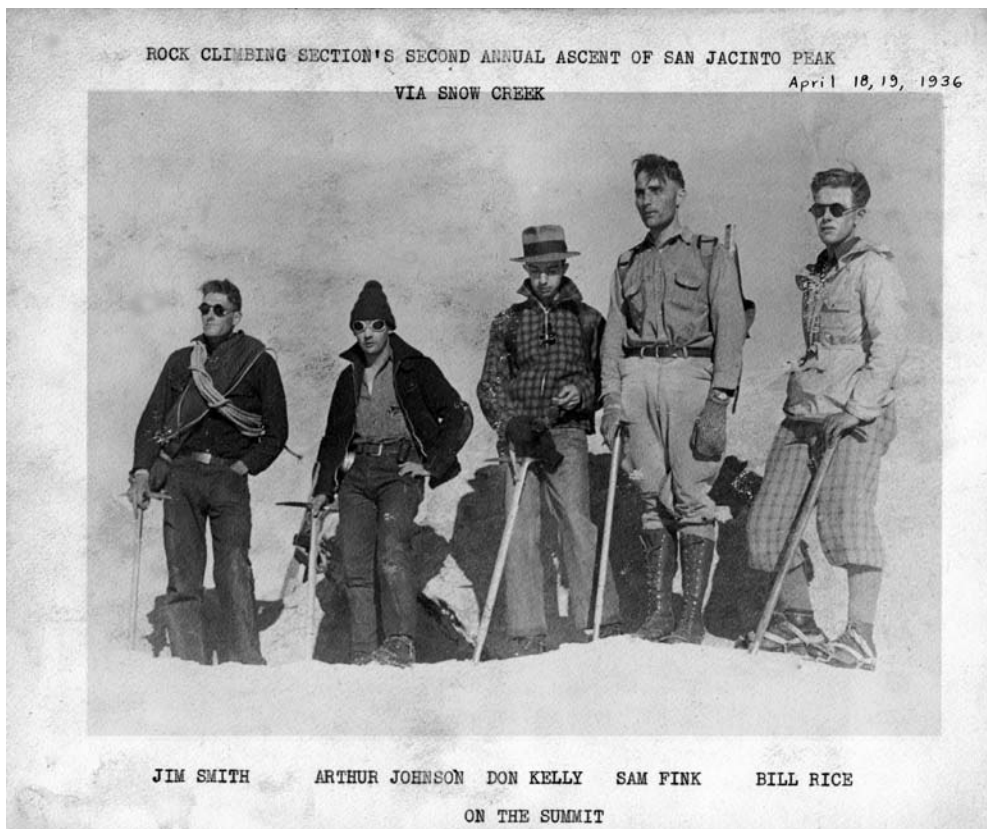


Photo from RCS Archives

[As noted in Tribute II, R.S. (Sam) Fink ascended the Snow Creek route solo on 5/29-30/32, only the second ascent. On 4/18-19/36 he was invited to join a RCS climb of the route led by Jim Smith. A week later he was voted in as an RCS member! Sam then co-led the route on 26-27 September that year with Art Johnson, when there would have been no snow. Then 32, Fink was about 8-10 years older than most of the early members. Although he led no more outings and was not a prominent rock climber, he was active in the RCS for about five years with several trips to Tahquitz. As also noted in Tribute II, Sam was the future SPS member with the earliest citing in the Sierra Club Bulletin. The 2/31 issue has a story he penned: "A Trip to San Bernardino Pk and Mt. San Gorgonio," which occurred June 14-15, 1930. Sam went on to legendary fame in the Hundred Peaks Section, and he was the first to finish their peak list in 1950. He passed away in 1998 at age 94.]

Quoting now from Jim Smith's May 8th letter to Art Johnson:

Last Sunday Glen, Bill Rice and I spent the day at Sumac Cliff above Bee Rock [by Griffith Park Zoo]. I learned more that one day than I have the past month. First, I learned our standard of rock climbing in the So. California Chapter is much below that of the northern chapters, especially the Bay Chapter. Second, we have at Sumac a very good place for a variety of techniques. ... When we arrived at the base of the cliff, Glen pointed to a steep slab face about thirty feet high and suggested that we climb it without an upper belay. Up to half-way a fall would have had no consequences; and since the first half was the difficult

part, it was not a dangerous undertaking. However, be that as it may, the fact remains that Bill and I could not get more than 4 or 5 feet up, even when we were belayed from above. To see the way Glen danced up it, traversed it, and found new routes would make an unobserving person think it easy. Glen consoled us by saying that it was more difficult than C1 at Cragmont [in Berkeley where the SF/RCS practiced], and he was enthusiastic over it as a practice ground. I am going over there sometime this weekend and practice on it until I can make it. [Sumac Rock ended up not becoming a regular practice site.]

In further correspondence from Jim to Art on 6/5/35, there are two significant references: (1) Relating to a recent practice at Eagle Rock, "a fellow named John Mendenhall climbed the face by the usual route." New to the RCS, John with his wife Ruth would later prove to be quite a formidable couple. (2) "Next weekend we are going out to Idyllwild with some others to scout out Lily or Tahquitz Rock. I think there is a lot of possibility for a major climb on it." Well, Jim would prove to be quite the prophet!

Later that June, having just graduated from UCLA, Glen headed east on a Greyhound bus. With stops at Carlsbad Caverns and Great Smokey National Park, he

debarked the bus in Boston. He embarked in early July on an Italian liner that would deliver him to Trieste on the far NE coast of Italy. Then it was on to Munich to connect with German climbers. Thus began his 14-month around-the-globe odyssey that would further his introduction to the world of bookmen and rare books – and lead to a partnership with his father Ernest in Dawson’s Book Shop. Glen would thus miss the Club’s High Trips of 1935 and 1936. However, we could be sure that he would not drift far away from his rock climbing passion.

Mt. Humphreys from the East

By the end of June Norman Clyde’s toes were evidently healed enough that he was able to again pursue his passion for gnarly high Sierra exploits. Based on the fact that he penned four different articles on climbing Mt. Humphreys (13,986’), one might safely assume this was one of his favorite peaks. “The First Ascent of Mt. Humphreys from the East” by Clyde appears in the SCB, 2/36. He approached the SE face of the peak up the South Fork of McGee Creek. From a camp at 10,500’ on 6/29, he set out at an early hour. After awhile, in transferring from snow to rock, he changed from his nailed boots to rubber-soled shoes. Let us now come along with Norman:

... I continued up the precipitous wall until I was almost able to reach over its upper edge. The corner above was rounded and apparently covered with disintegrated granite. A slip would probably result in a fall to the bottom of the pitch, if not to the foot of the mountain. After scanning it carefully I thought, “I am not going to risk breaking my neck to get over that hump,” and returned to the bottom of the pitch.

... After removing my rucksack, I tied it, together with my ice axe, firmly to one end of my hundred-foot alpine rope. The other end of the rope was looped about my waist. I then proceeded to scale one of the crevices, jamming hand, arm and knees deeply into it and wedging them, as I edged and drew myself up in it. At intervals I pulled the rucksack and ice axe up after me, and, after placing them in a niche, continued up the face. When at last I reached the crest, I coiled my rope and, picking up the rucksack and ice axe,

swung across a chimney-like gap and scaled a wall of some twenty-five feet to the top of another pitch in the arête. ... Along this I rapidly picked my way in rubber-soled shoes, across numerous notches, over or around pinnacle after pinnacle. When apparently blocked by the sheer front of one of the latter, a ledge would always very accommodatingly appear leading around it.

... Steady trudging for a few hundred feet brought me to the top of the second-highest summit of the mountain. Westward, beyond a notch, rose the highest, a steep pinnacle several hundred feet in height. Seen from across the notch [at Married Men’s Point], it looked forbiddingly sheer, but I well knew that this was in part due to the foreshortening effect of viewing it from across a depression – that, in fact, it was not so steep as it appeared, and that holds were much more numerous than its apparently sheer front indicated.

After dropping down into the notch, I began a direct escalade up the final pyramid. Its face was, however, precipitous and its steeply inclined, slab-like granite in places had no superfluous holds. In one spot, in particular, as I swung out from under an overhang onto a shoulder, a few more and larger ones would have been appreciated. Soon, however, I swung around a ledge and scrambled to the top of the mountain – a mass of shattered rock tapering to a point only a few feet in diameter. From this narrow and lofty vantage point a most superb view of the Sierra was obtained.

Clyde’s descent via the SE Buttress was nearly as harrowing. He finally returned to camp “elated at having succeeded in attaining the summit of Mt. Humphreys by the formidable and hitherto untrodden east arete and in making the descent by a route for the large part also original.”

[Good photos of Mt. Humphreys may be found in “The High Sierra – Peaks, Passes and Trails,” by R.J. Secor, 2nd Ed, 1999. Secor rates the East Arete at 5.4, naming it the most enjoyable route on the peak.]

Mt. Waddington – 1935

Mt. Waddington (13,177’) was originally labeled Mystery Mountain, based on a very distant observation

of it from Vancouver Island by Don and Phyllis Munday in 1925. (It was officially named in 1928 for a local railroader.) Though of modest means, the pair subsequently mounted several tiny expeditions to climb this very remote peak, the highest in the Coast Range of British Columbia, situated about 180 air miles north of the city of Vancouver.

The cream of the SF/RCS was not content with probing the sheer limits of Yosemite Valley. Bestor Robinson especially was willing to roam far afield, e.g., he organized the June '32 trip to climb El Picacho del Diablo in Baja California, recruiting among others Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson, Dick Jones and Nate Clark (refer to Tribute II). Under Bestor's engaging and enthusiastic leadership the research and discussion on Waddington began in August of 1934. In view of ten failed attempts, and one death, the virgin peak remained the great prize in North American mountaineering. Their research and correspondence led them to believe that the key to success, beyond good luck with the notoriously bad weather, would be their well-honed skills as technical rock climbers.

The strong Sierra Club team departed San Francisco on 21 June, driving non-stop to Vancouver. Two seaplanes deposited the team at the head of Knight Inlet, the mouth of the Franklin River. They now had three weeks to get the job done before their scheduled pickup. There are two published first-hand accounts of this grand venture: "Mt. Waddington – 1935" by Robinson, SCB, 2/36, and "Attempts on Mt. Waddington" by Dick Leonard, Appalachia, 11/35.

Under the overall leadership of Bestor, the team of eight included Jules Eichorn, Dick Leonard, Dave Brower, Jack Riegelhuth, Don Woods and Bob Ratcliff, all of the Sierra Club, plus Bill Loomis of the Harvard Mountaineering Club. Their approach from the southwest involved a grueling trek through muddy fern swamps, mazes of fallen timber and piercing tangles of devils claw. Quoting now from both Robinson (BR) and Leonard (DL).

BR: ... *We stood on Icefall Point and Mt. Waddington, the "Mountain of Mystery," cast her irresistible spell over us. ... As we looked across the upper Franklin*

Glacier, the whole scene was dominated by the imminent presence of the mountain. We now knew the grip which great peaks have on the souls of climbers.

They hauled close to 900 pounds of food and equipment, including 120 pitons and 700 feet of rope, tricouni-nailed boots and rubber-soled shoes, and small duralumin-and-thong snowshoes. Basecamp was established on the Dais Glacier at 7500 feet.

BR: ... *Our sleeping bags were of the large type, capacious enough to hold two or three men. Such an arrangement conserves body heat and reduces loads, but requires turning over by signal and unanimous consent.*

Waiting out storms and avalanching, the team's first attempt was made on 3 July. They got to 11,500', just above the bergschrund at the base of the SW face. Then a swirling snowstorm drove them back. The next clear weather window came on 7 July.

DL: *Above the bergschrund a very hard, thin crust on soft snow made crampons dangerous and step-cutting essential as we advanced slowly to the head of the couloir. At this point a steep rise of thirty feet at an angle of about 70 degrees caused some difficulty. Having driven in the first piton on the southwest face of the peak, Eichorn, properly belayed, cut steps up the four-inch veneer of ice covering the rocks on this pitch. At the head of the pitch another piton was driven into a convenient crack and Robinson and Leonard, with Brower as the leader of the second rope, assembled on a narrow, sloping ledge to survey further possibilities. Leonard took the lead and after a delicate traverse to 12,100 feet on ice-covered ledges only a few inches wide, placed a third piton to protect his advance. At this point ice fragments falling from far above became increasingly numerous. As they shot by with a high-pitched scream, the members of the party upon warning would cling closely to the rocks, keeping their heads well padded and covered. ... All the ledges slope outward at an angle of about 50 degrees with numerous small overhangs breaking at an angle of 140 degrees. The gullies between these ridges and overhangs are dangerously smooth and avalanche-swept. Gathering clouds from the Pacific clearly indicated that there*

would not be time to make the ascent, since we could not expect to spend a night on the face. We turned back and not long after we reached camp the severest storm of the trip set in with snowfall of ten inches during the night.

A route seemed to lead from the south side of the deep notch below us along connecting ledges and up to the very ice feathers that draped the summit. It was a route for pitons and rope traverses; for technical rock climbing. Whether or not it would lead to the ultimate goal, we hoped to find out the following day. We hastily retreated to camp.

There would be no climbing the next day, as a howling blizzard set in at midnight – ending all further attempts.

DL: *In our opinion, the ascent of Mt. Waddington is primarily a question of weather, for although the rock climbing in and of itself is of extreme difficulty, the members of our Sierra Club party have done longer and more difficult climbing on the walls of our own Yosemite Valley. However, there is no peak in the entire Sierra Nevada that entails pure rock climbing as difficult as that presented by the main rock tower of Mt. Waddington. When this fact is complicated by snow and ice on every ledge, by frequent storms, by falling ice from the summit, and finally by the continuous ice feathers above 13,000 feet, encrusting every face, even the overhangs, one wonders whether it is possible.*

Bestor was more sanguine: *The trip had ended but not the spell with which Mt.*

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN, VOL. XXI.

PLATE III.



MOUNT WADDINGTON FROM ICEFALL POINT
Photograph by Richard M. Leonard

The team was now starting to run short on time. For their third attempt, they would establish a high camp below the NW “snow” peak - the true summit being the nearby SE “rock” peak. [The Mundays had previously climbed the snow peak twice, the second time in August '34 with Henry Hall and Hans Fuhrer – yet without success. They pretty much concluded that the summit was simply unattainable, and they gave up all further hope.] On 10 July the Sierra Club team spent most of the day setting up a camp at 12,550’.

BR: *Although it was now after 6:00 pm, five of us could not withstand the temptation to ascend Mt. Waddington’s northwest or snow peak. Using our snowshoes for all of the climb, excepting the final ice tower, we stood or rather hung on the summit slightly over an hour later. As we poked our heads over the knife edge of hard-packed snow which marks the crest, the most stupendous piece of mountain scenery that any of us had seen opened in front of us. Below to the right, the cliffs dropped away with breath-taking abruptness to the Dais Glacier. On the left, equally sheer ice-glazed rocks rose almost perpendicularly thousands of feet from the Tiedemann Glacier. Surmounting it all, clothed in ice feathers rosy in alpenglow, jutted the rock pinnacle, the southeast peak of Mt. Waddington. We knew now why Henry Hall, that globe trotting mountaineer, described it as “surely one of the most remarkable culminating points of any mountain range in the world.”*

Waddington had gripped our souls. We knew we had no choice but to return and try again at the earliest opportunity. ... Provincial Canada's highest peak may soon be climbed, but it will never rank as "an easy day for a lady."

Neither Robinson nor Leonard record an incident found in "Interview with Jules Eichorn, California's Pioneer Rock Climber," by George Sinclair, 1996 (self-published by the author).



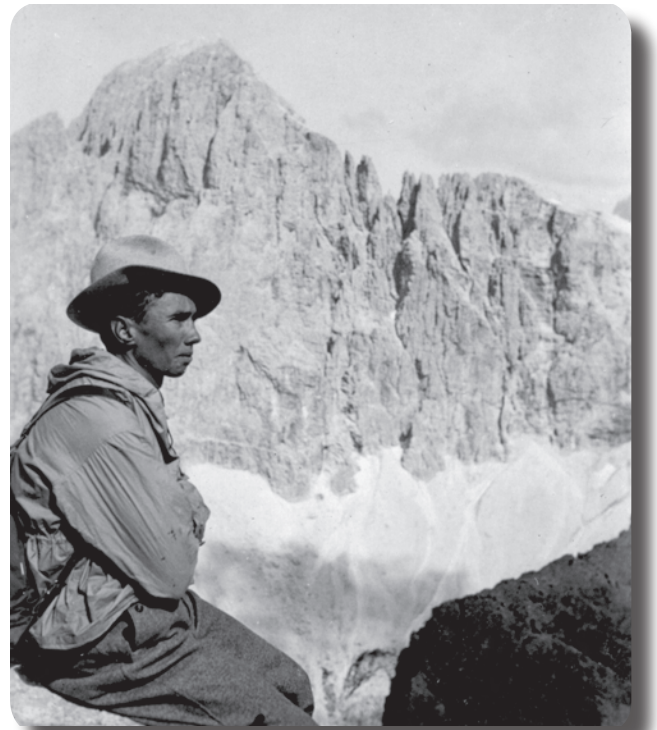
Jules Eichorn, taken by Glen Dawson, 1930 High Trip. Glen Dawson Collection

I almost had an accident with Bestor Robinson one time coming down from Waddington. He was a big, heavysset guy. He weighed about 230 pounds. We had been climbing and we were getting tired, and it was getting late. We knew the route back – it was along a ridge but sloping down very steeply. It just happened that at that time he was leading. It would've been fortunate if I was leading, but I wasn't. He broke a

crevasse open and was just able to reach the other side and save himself. But I, coming from behind, fell right into the crevasse. I went down ten feet or so. I couldn't get out by myself, but luckily I didn't drop my ice axe and he didn't drop his. So we put [linked] our ice axes together and he hauled me out because he was a very strong guy. Some things become very, very lucky escapes. If the crevasse had opened more, I would've fallen down a bit deeper and he wouldn't have been able to reach me with his ice axe. By the time he could have gotten help late in the afternoon, and by the time they got back, why I would've frozen to death. But that's what it's all about.

Adventuring in the Alps

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic in the summer of '35, Glen Dawson (23) was focused on exhilarating climbs in the Alps – bookman studies would just have to wait. This was not Glen's first visit to this legendary alpine world. As noted in Tribute I, he and his father achieved a guided ascent of the Matterhorn in 1928, when he was 16. Glen's narrative of this period appears in the SCB, 2/36: "Climbs in the Wetterstein and the Dolomites."

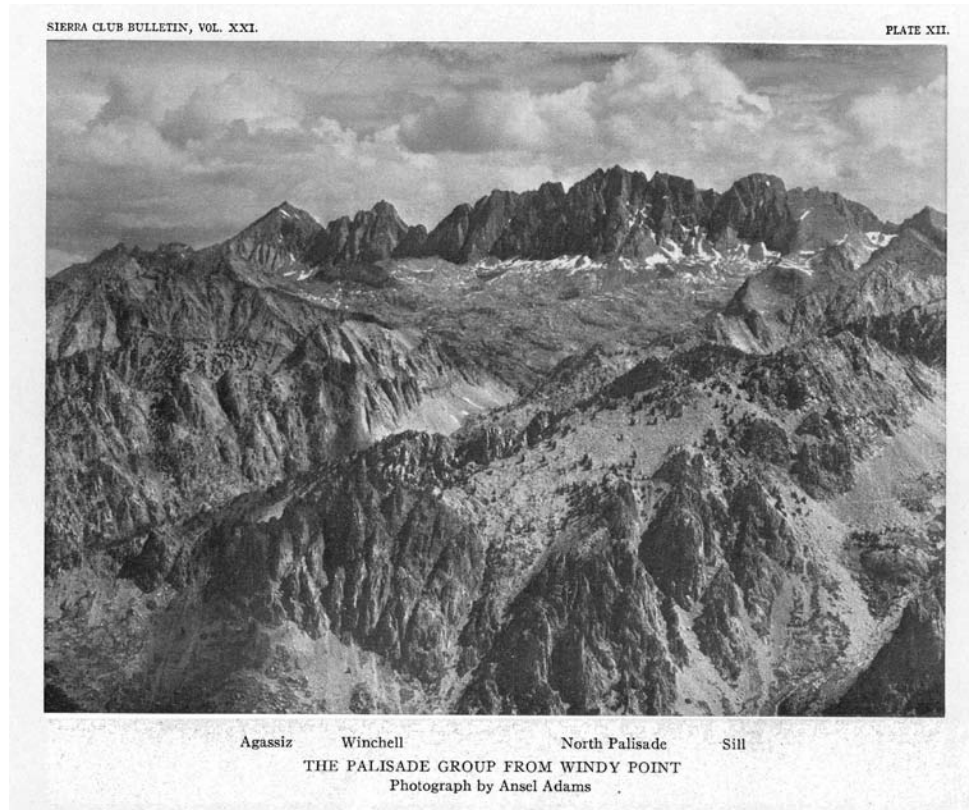


Glen looking at south wall of Marmolata, which he climbed, 1935. Glen Dawson Collection.

The Munich climbers claim to be the world's best, and after my experiences with one of them I am inclined to agree. From July 26 to September 2, I was with thirty-year-old Theo Lesch, expert climber and skier. The Wetterstein, on the southern boundary of Bavaria [with Austria], where we spent the first eight days, is not so high as the Sierra Nevada, but has a number of walls which offer routes of every difficulty. The climbs are divided into six groups: easy, moderately difficult, difficult, very difficult, exceedingly difficult and extremely difficult. In the Wetterstein and Dolomites, with Theo as leader, I made ascents or descents of about thirty different described routes, including at least two in each division. I believe the same classification could be used in the Sierra Nevada. Such climbs as Banner and Barnard would be considered easy. On moderately difficult routes Theo and I often used our rope. Sierra Nevada examples might be Ritter and Russell, while in the third or difficult class I would place Clyde's Minaret and the Middle Palisade. Not counting several short ascents, my only Sierra climbs I definitely consider fourth class are the east face of Mt. Whitney and a traverse of the Three Teeth. My guess is that the Cathedral Spires [which he had not yet climbed] are in the fifth or exceedingly difficult class.

...From the crowded Meillerhutte [hut] on the German-Austrian border, we made the Kubanek-Spindler, the most difficult of the south face routes on the

Musterstein. Several stances in succession have room for only one foot. Pitons are used to secure the belayer as well as for both security and direct aid on the pitches.



The climbing in the Dolomites [in northeastern Italy] is of considerable extent, scattered in a number of groups. With the exception of a few famous peaks the routes are less often made than in the Wetterstein. ... The worst feature of European climbing is the bad weather, at least as compared to the Sierra Nevada. In the Dolomites we always carried a bivouac sack and ski mitts. ... Perhaps the most famous climb we made was on the south wall of the Marmolata (10,970'), the highest peak in the Dolomites. The route is about 2100 feet high, varying in difficulty from fifth grade in some pitches below the first terrace to third grade near the summit.

We went back to the Wetterstein for our last climb, the Schusselkarspitze-Sudwand, a route in the full sixth class, one of the most difficult of the frequently made climbs in the eastern Alps. The wall is 1475 feet high, but one must climb more since about half way up are a series of rope downs and traverses of extreme difficulty before the ascent can continue. ... Like my other Wetterstein climbs, it was probably the first ascent by an American.

The High Trip – 1935

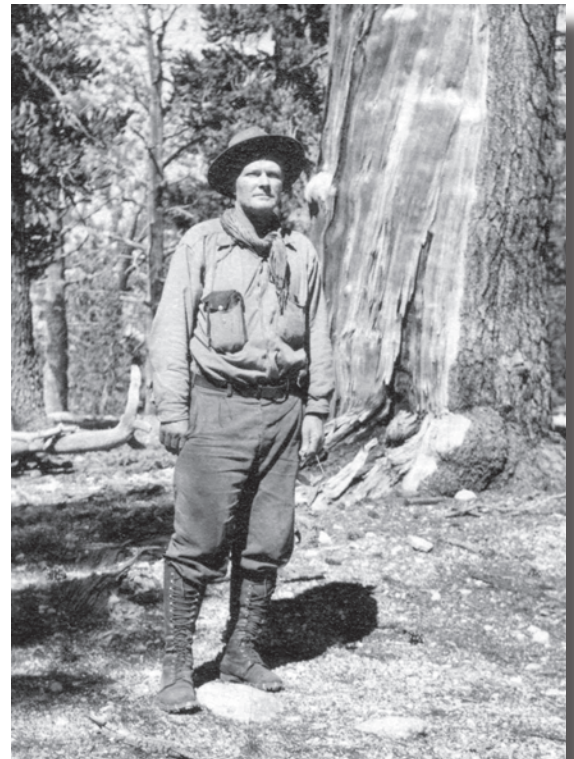
The Club's High Trip this year, running from 6 July – 3 August, would be a return to the Kings River country, i.e., most of it in the basin of the South Fork of the Kings River with the remainder in the southern portion of the basin of the Middle Fork. Commencing and ending at Big Meadow and covering nearly 150 miles, the trip would route through or by Kings River Canyon, Granite Basin, Cartridge Creek, Bench Lake, Woods Lake, Rae Lake, Vidette Meadows, Mt. Brewer and Sphinx Creek.

Certainly the Polemonium Club was significantly emasculated with the cream of the rock climbers now being away in Europe or Canada. In Dawson's absence, Marjory Farquhar (nee Bridge) filled in as chronicler of Mountain Climbing Notes for the SCB, 2/36. Nevertheless, she noted that 82 climbers topped 45 peaks. The only mountaineer cited by name was Norman Clyde, who led a party up Baxter Peak followed by a traverse of the four peaks to the west of it. Young Muir Dawson was back, and Dick Jones was attending his first High Trip.

Rae Lake was the center of a great deal of climbing activity. More than twenty-five persons climbed Fin Dome, and about the same number reached the summit of Mt. Clarence King.



High Trip – 1935. L-R: Frank (Tug) Richardson, Fern Dawson, Muir Dawson and Dick Jones. One of the trip's "Bandanna Days." Courtesy of Fern Dawson Schochat.



Norman Clyde, 7/31/35, HT. Courtesy of Fern Dawson Schochat.

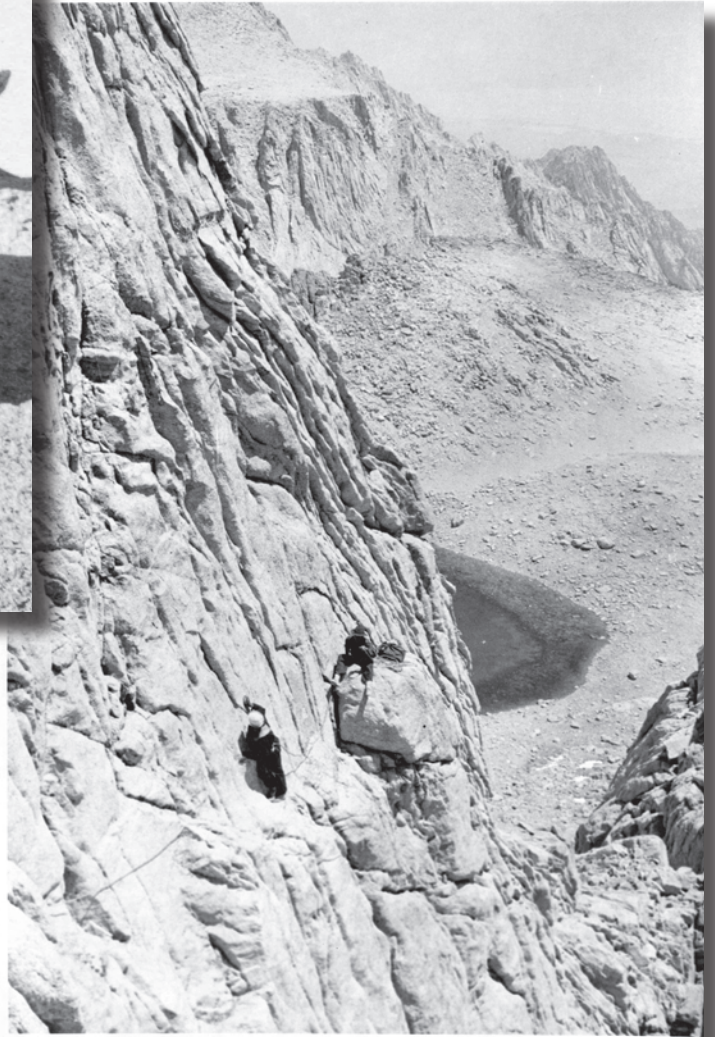
Other ascents were: Dragon Peak, Colored Lady and Rixford. Two parties, of two and four, respectively, climbed a sharp peak between King and Gardiner, for which the name Cotter was appropriately proposed. A party of six climbed Gardiner, reporting a very small number of names in the record for such a fine peak.

...From Sphinx Creek, Palmer Mtn, Avalanche Peak and Brewer were climbed, and The Sphinx was visited. The final point of the last was found to be out of reach lacking rope and pitons and is believed to be unscaled by anyone as yet.

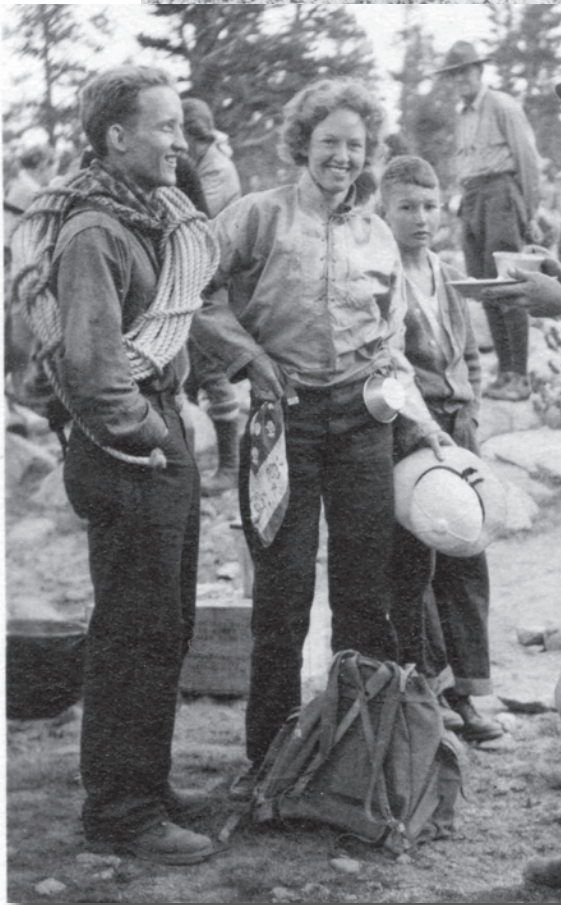
[When this author last visited Fin Dome, 9/94, it still had one of the custom-made, rectangular Sierra Club boxes. Both Cotter and Gardiner were prominent members with Clarence King of the High Sierra Whitney Survey of 1864. The Sphinx was finally scaled by Art Argiewicz and Bob Jacobs when the 1940 High Trip revisited this region. Secor rates it at 5.2.]



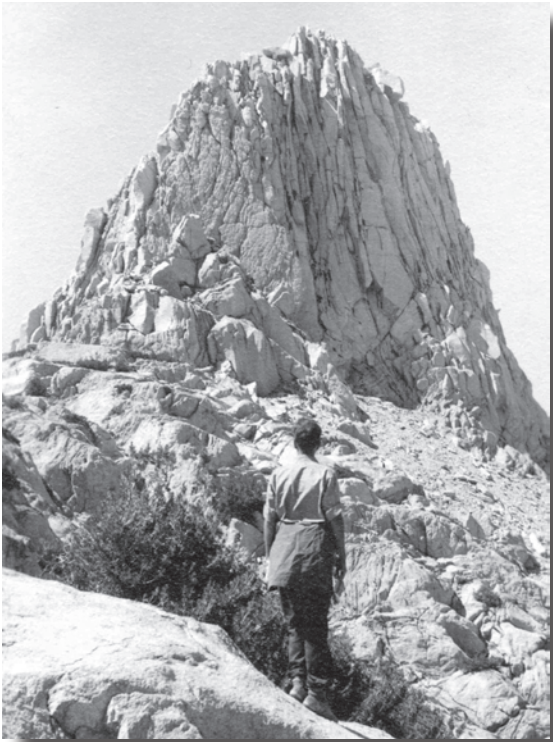
Ken May signing register on Fin Dome, 7/25/35, HT Courtesy of Fern Dawson Schochat.



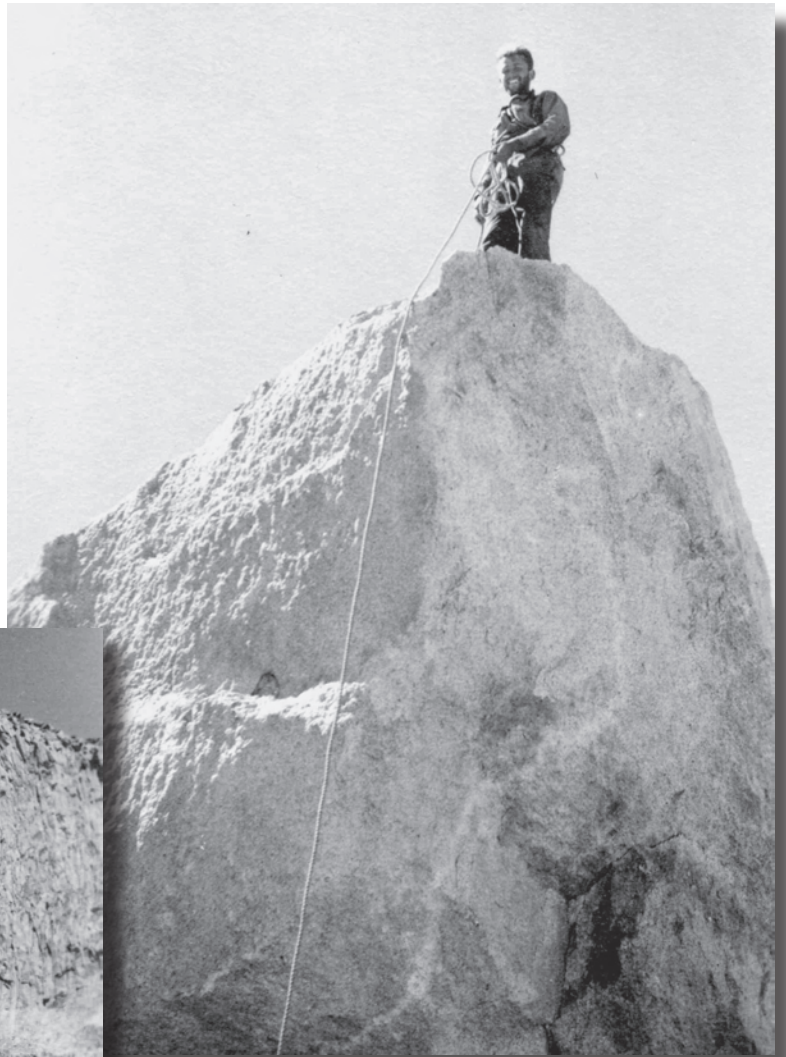
Norman Clyde belaying on Tower Traverse, East Face of Whitney, circa 1935. Courtesy of Dick Beach.



L-R: Dick Jones, Mary Jane Edwards & Muir Dawson, 7/14/35, HT. Courtesy of Fern Dawson Schochat.



Fin Dome, 7/25/35, HT. Courtesy of Fern Dawson Schochat.



Ken May belaying atop Mt. Clarence King, 7/24/35, HT. Courtesy of Fern Dawson Schochat.



Party at base of Mt. King, 7/24/35, HT. Courtesy of Fern Dawson Schochat.

Rock Climbing Sections – North & South

An effort was made by both Jules Eichorn and Art Johnson to have a joint N/S Labor Day trip in '35. In the end the SF folks went back to Yosemite Valley while the LA crew visited the Mt. Whitney region. Details are available in Mountaineering Notes, SCB, 2/36. A sampling from the Valley: on 7 September Jules Eichorn, Boynton Kaiser and Oliver Kehrlein made the third ascent of Washington Column. The next day Oliver joined Ken Adam and Morgan Harris in the fourth ascent of Higher Cathedral Spire. An interesting note from Dick Leonard:

Lost Arrow is the last unclimbed summit around Yosemite Valley. A careful reconnaissance was made this year to ascertain the possibilities of making an ascent. Dave Brower and George Rockwell investigated the possibilities of a route from below. Bestor Robinson, Ken Adam, David Brower and I have all examined it carefully from above. Roping down to the very edge of Yosemite Point, to the closest possible approach to the Arrow, we obtained a view that was terrifying even to those who had climbed the Cathedral Spires. It was unanimously agreed that we would never attempt it. [Well, we'll see how well their unanimity holds!]

The LA/RCS had its heart set on the East Face of Whitney that Labor Day weekend. Of course not just anyone would be allowed on that route. A letter written by Art Johnson to Jim Smith on 8/14/35 listed the following eight members as gnarly enough for the East Face: Howard Koster, Mary Jane Edwards, Jim Smith, Julie Mortimer, Bill Rice, May Pridham, Dick Jones and Art Johnson. Unfortunately, a series of noon-time storms was enough to divert everyone to something less intrepid. In particular, Art and Bill ascended the east face or buttress of Mt. Muir (in spite of noon-time storms). Most of their route had actually been pioneered the preceding July by John Mendenhall and Nelson Nies. [Both variations are pictured in Secor's guide and rated 4th class.]

Well, evidently Jim Smith's June scouting trip to Tahquitz Rock was productive. Let it be noted that on November 10, 1935 the first route on this huge dome was attempted. A 10/3/40 Mugelnoos

(RCS newsletter) history article cited: "*The Trough tried. Cold weather and icy winds combined with poor selection of route to turn back Bill Rice, Nelson Nies and Art Johnson. Can you imagine that!*" [Surely, they'll try again later.]

Mt. San Antonio Ski Hut

Walt Mosauer and the Ski Mountaineers of California did not pass the summer merely shining their boards. Not satisfied with Harwood Lodge as a base of operations on Mt. San Antonio (aka Mt. Baldy), they were determined to build a real ski hut closer to the great east bowl of the peak. New member George Bauwens, originally from Germany and then Washington state, was an expert skier and skilled architect (and USC professor). However, the Forest Service was highly disinclined to grant a use permit to such a small and unknown group. Enter Ernest Dawson, Glen's father and then Sierra Club president, with the grand solution to their dilemma: the Ski Mountaineers should affiliate with the Club. Dawson's offer was handily accepted on 26 September, the Southern California Chapter Executive Committee officially accepted the new section (SMS) - and the Forest Service promptly granted the use permit.

Bauwens and Mosauer chose the site on a small ridge close to Baldy Bowl at 8500 feet. Work began on 5 October – the \$250 cost financed by various fundraisers, raffles and the Chapter. The job would be completed by January – all with volunteer labor and with about ten tons of materials having been carried by trail from 7200 to 8500 feet in 2.5 steep miles via "human pack mules." It could comfortably and warmly accommodate 18 skiers (and various former mules).

Let it be noted that on December 1st Art Johnson and May Pridham led the first RCS trip to Stoney Point, in the far NW corner of the San Fernando Valley. This is the earliest known record of climbing at that location. It would become one of their more popular training sites – and later a backyard also to the likes of Yvon Chouinard and Royal Robbins.

Ski Action

The year begins, appropriately enough, with a ski trip: to the Sierra Club's Parsons Lodge in Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite – 7-15 January. (The lodge was later given to the National Park.) The building had previously been stocked with wood and food for this exploratory trip. The party of five (Jules Eichorn, Beverly Blanks, Boynton Kaiser, Steward Kimball and John Fletcher) had taken eight hours in entering from the east on the road over Tioga Pass. Unfortunately, intermittent stormy weather prevented extensive ski tours or winter climbing, and an attempt on Mt. Lyell was aborted after making a midway camp. Nevertheless, they did establish that the lodge was a suitable base for winter activities.

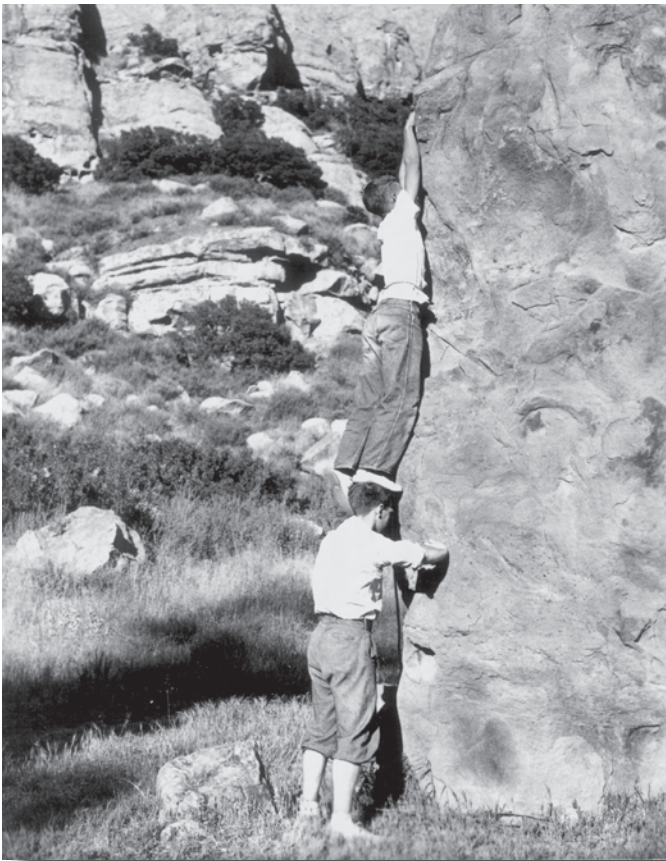
Farther south the Ski Mountaineers' new Baldy Hut was busy every weekend. On March 22nd the SMS sponsored the 2nd Annual San Antonio Downhill & Slalom Championships. The first running was the prior March, co-sponsored then by the Ski Mountaineers of California and the UCLA ski team. It drew ten contestants. Competitors, of course, had to first climb to the 10,064' summit and then start their timed run down the bowl. This event was Southern California's oldest ski race.

Other Climbing Worlds

In 1936, from April well into July, Glen Dawson was avidly engaged in challenging climbs in several foreign lands – as detailed in "Some Other Climbing Worlds," SCB, 2/37.

Climbing is an international sport – similar technique is used everywhere, routes often cross the most sacred boundaries. ... During my recent wanderjahr I spent in all about four months in the mountains, including experiences in three widely separated and very different regions – North Wales [Great Britain], the Caucasus [Soviet Union] and the Japanese Alps.

Glen's snowy Easter holiday was spent climbing



Standard headstand technique: Muir Dawson atop Bill Rice at Stoney Point, 1937. Glen Dawson Collection

We'll close out 1935 by quoting from a letter in the LA/RCS archives. Dated 12/15/35 it was sent by Robert Underhill in response to some queries by Art Johnson. It ended with this P.S.:

"By the way, I have received a couple of letters from a Mr. Chester Versteeg of Los Angeles, who seems to want to take up climbing. I have no idea of course what his capabilities may be, and can only surmise to what category of would-be climbers he may belong. Anyway, I am telling him he ought to get in touch with you."

Mr. Versteeg did become active with the RCS, though he would not limit himself to that section. He is regarded as the founder of the Angeles Chapter's Desert Peaks Section. He led the section's first outing in November 1941, a climb of New York Butte. The DPS was officially recognized in October 1945 – making it the chapter's oldest hiking section.

in North Wales with two companions. He noted that climbing there is a year-round sport and that pitons are taboo.

Our best climb on Idwal was a "severe" – the Tennis Shoe, first made by Noel Odell. British climbs are loosely divided into easys, moderates, difficults, very difficults, severes and very severes. I led very difficults comfortably, but kept a healthy respect for the severes. [So, where does very severe rank among exceedingly difficult and extremely difficult – the German ratings? ☺]

From British climbs to the Caucasus is a big jump, though the ascent of Mt. Elbrus (18,470') the highest peak in Europe, is not difficult. Personally I prefer rock climbing to mountaineering, but it was natural during my two months in the Soviet Union that I found myself in the Caucasus. ... I arrived in early June, definitely out of season even for Elbrus, and waited a week at the 14,00-foot meteorological station with a non-English speaking Communist, without getting suitable weather conditions to go to the top.

By the time I had crossed Siberia [by rail] and had arrived in Japan, it was the middle of July and the season was ideal for climbing.

Connecting with a companion from the Japanese Alpine Club, Glen made several challenging climbs in the Mt Yari and Hodaka group region. Before departing the country he also traversed Fujiyama (12,395') – noting that on the Sunday following his ascent 11,300 persons were on top in a single 24-hr period. "After having climbed in a dozen different countries I can agree with John Muir and Clarence King that our own High Sierra is the finest and most friendly of all. I hope we of the Sierra Club will continue to do our part in the development of a spirit of an international brotherhood of climbers."

RCS – N&S Together

Memorial Day weekend of 1936 marked a major first joint venture to Yosemite Valley by the LA and SF RCS – with members from both sections sharing ropes. Various ascents (or attempts) included Washington Column, Lower Brother and Royal Arches.

Jules Eichorn and Bestor Robinson (with Ken Adam and Morgan Harris) repeated their climb of Lower Cathedral Spire "for photographic purposes."

Back to Waddington!

As promised, Bestor Robinson led a second expedition to Mt. Waddington, hoping this time for good enough weather to achieve the prized first ascent. Of the original eight from '35, only Robinson, Dick Leonard and Jack Riegelhuth were back. Neither Jules Eichorn, still in college, nor Dave Brower could afford the expense. These three veterans were supplemented by Hervey Voge, Raffi Bedayan and Ken Adam – all skilled climbers with the SF/RCS. This gnarly Sierra Club team of six joined forces with four climbers (plus packers this time) from the British Columbia Mountaineering Club. Events of this expedition were detailed by Voge in "Climbs in the Waddington Region – 1936," SCB 2/37.

On July 1st the advance party, including Riegelhuth, Adam and Voge, set off by boat from Vancouver, aiming to pack 1200 pounds of food and gear up the Franklin River and Glacier. The second group landed on 13 July. During the two-day march to their Icefall Point basecamp, they had generally fair weather – which would hold for an amazing ten days!

During this march we were granted a splendid view of the mountain. High above the clouds which draped the lower reaches rose the awful spire of Waddington, silvered with ice, piercing the sky, incomparably white, isolated, ethereal. It was a sight both enthralling and terrifying.

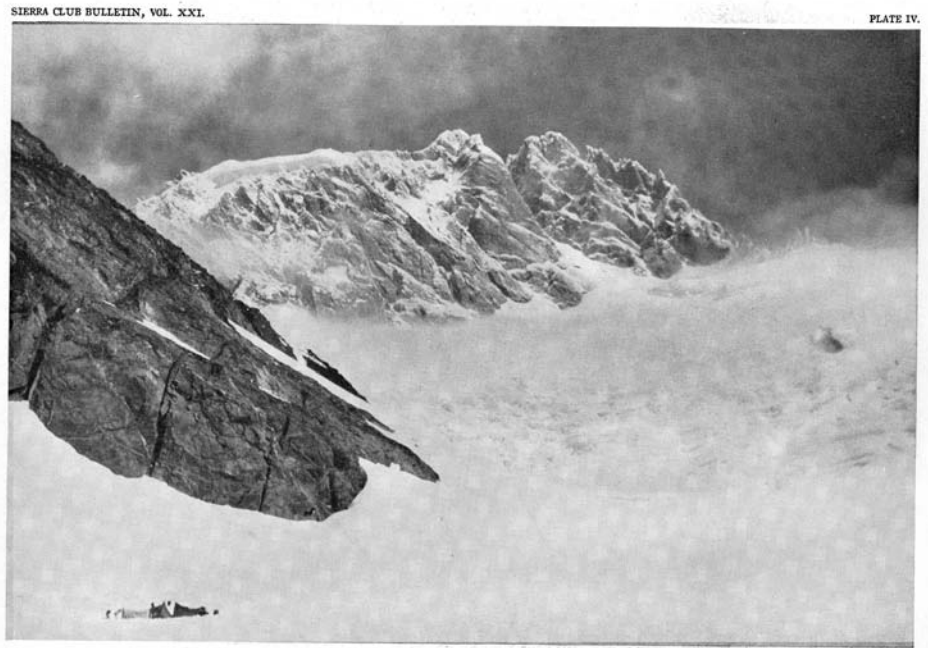
Beside us, in friendly proximity, were camped the members of a rival climbing party: Fritz Wiessner (36), Bill House (23), Elizabeth Woolsey and Alan Willcox. They also had Mt. Waddington as their goal, yet as a matter of courtesy they granted us first chance at the mountain. Our friendly relations with them, typified by many tea parties and long discussions, constituted one of the great pleasures of the trip. Would that all competition could be characterized by such fellowship.

In fact, Wiessner had suddenly aborted his summer

climbing plans and rushed back from Europe when his companions convinced him in a telegraph cable that Waddington could still be theirs. Woolsey and Willcox would be in support of their two-man climbing team.

On 17 July a joint nine-man camp was established on the lower level of the Dais Glacier at about 7500 feet. (The Americans and Canadians then generally climbed separately.) They backed off an attempt the next day when ominous clouds appeared at dawn - though Riegelhuth, Adam and Voge then summited nearby Mt. Jester (~9000') in decent weather. They set off on the 19th at 2:45 am, working their way through the crevasses of the Dais Icefall. It was already 8:00 when they were finally able to organize climbing parties and examine the cliffs of the 2400-foot southwest face.

... A way that appeared promising was seen in a disconnected series of snow ledges running up the south arete. Bestor, Dick, Jack, Ken and I, on two ropes, set out to try this route. ... Staying always on the west side of the arete, we climbed upwards over rock and snow, rejoicing the while to see the mists dissolving. But we were soon involved in a maze of gullies, chutes and buttresses, and the going became increasingly difficult. The snow softened under the blaze of the sun; the rock was more rotten higher up. Yet in spite of these things we found the climbing immensely exhilarating. It was a spiritual pleasure to be up on the mighty peak, and the continuous sense of exposure, due



DAIS GLACIER CAMP AND MOUNT WADDINGTON
Snow Summit at Left Rock Summit at Right
Photograph by Richard M. Leonard

to the great depths and steep smooth slabs below, acted as a stimulus to consciousness. Everywhere the rock rose in perfect arcs, soaring aloft to the overhanging towers above. On all sides was displayed the tremendous strength of the mountain, a strength which we felt reflected in us by our successful progress.

But we were a long way from the top. At 5:30 pm we were about 1400 feet south of the summit and nearly 1000 vertical feet below it. There was no hope of reaching the top that night. We started down, reached the upper level of the glacier at 11:30, and bivouacked there for the night.

Two days later, the 21st, they established a high camp on the upper glacier at 10,700. At 4:00 am the next day Robinson, Riegelhuth, Bedayan and I [plus two Canadians] set out once more on the long diagonal ascent from the south arete. We passed our previous high point at 10:00 and went several hundred feet higher, to the base of a prominent spire. Deep, vertical-walled gullies cut us off on both sides. Further progress would have necessitated a long rope-down, a traverse of steep snow-covered ledges, and difficult rock work. The snow was rapidly softening under a warm sun, while large billowy clouds were forming in the valleys below. We decided that advance would involve too great a risk. At 11:30 the descent commenced, and at 6:00 pm we were back in the high camp.

Meanwhile Fritz Wiessner and Bill House had successfully completed the first ascent of Mt. Waddington.

True to his word, Wiessner had let his rivals go first. But he wasn't going to hang idly around in good weather to give them another free shot. In fact, his and House's ascent by another route had already been achieved shortly before the Sierrans had set out early on the 22nd. Fritz and Bill had left their high camp at 2:45 am, summited at about 4:00 pm, and regained camp at 1:00 am.

Behind this brilliant success of Wiessner and House lay a number of important factors; namely, the wide experience and unquestioned ability of the leader, the speed and relative safety from falling rock possible in a two-man party, their willingness to chance the objective dangers, and the good condition of the mountain and weather. We were filled with admiration of their strategic ascent.

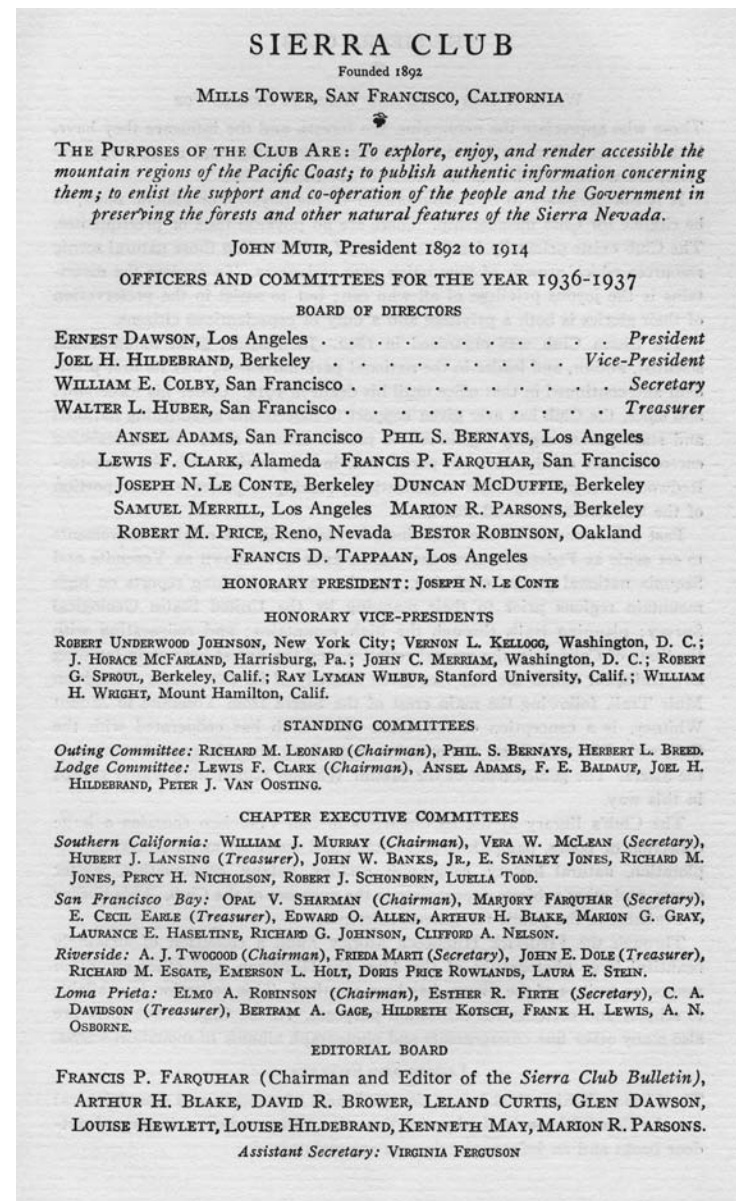
The weather "turned south" for the next two days and the Sierra Club team made no further attempts on Waddington – retreating to their lower camp. Two nearby peaks were climbed. Then on the 25th Robinson, Bedayan and Voge along with one of the packers headed off on an intrepid attempt at the "unclimbed pyramid of Mt. Bell" (11,750'). They summited the second day out, in spite of a painful knee injury sustained by Bestor and threatening weather, at close to 5:00 pm. Managing a high bivouac that night, they made it back to their intermediate camp the next day, having traversed the peak. The following day all parties reunited at the Icefall Point basecamp – then caught their boat back to Vancouver on the 31st.

We had met with both failure and success and had reaped a corresponding reward. Most of all, we had come to love the remote and enchanting glacier-world, and many of us began at once to look forward to another visit to the Coast Range of British Columbia.

Expanded coverage and photos on early Waddington climbs may be found in these three excellent texts: "Climbing in North America," Chris Jones, 1976; "Fifty Classic Climbs of North

America," Steve Roper and Allen Steck, 1979 (they rate Wiessner's South Wall route at Grade V, 5.7); and "Ways to the Sky – A Historical Guide to North American Mountaineering," Andy Selters, 2004.

Later commentators would agree that Fritz Wiessner was simply far more experienced in high alpine climbing – in a class by himself – than the Sierra Club team. In the German climbing tradition of his youth, he was also



SC Officers - 1936 - From the Sierra Club Bulletin, 2/37. Most officers in that period, like John Muir earlier, were mountaineers!

far more bold – not reckless but willing to risk all for a great prize. Fritz went on to an illustrious world-wide climbing career, and he continued to climb in the Gunks (NY) quite late in life. He passed away at 88 in 1988. Note #1. The second ascent of Mt. Waddington was in 1942 by another American team: two lads from Seattle: Fred Beckey (19) and his brother Helmy, just turning 17!

Note #2. The next “Sierra Club” expedition, a team of eight including Allen Steck, ascended Waddington on 7/21/50 – two rope teams converging on the summit by two different routes! [“A Waddington Adventure,” William Long, SCB, 5/51.]

The High Trip – 1936

Meanwhile, much farther south the Club’s High Trip launched out of Giant Forest on 11 July, this time returning to the Kings-Kern Divide area. Jules Eichorn chose to join this trip, and he served on staff as mountaineering guide. The SCB Mountaineering Notes were penned by Kenneth May. In spite of persistent stormy weather, “there were some 575 man-ascents on 65 different peaks, pinnacles or routes, including about 20 new climbs” [and seven 14ers].

Climbers swarmed over the Kaweahs, 26 topped Tyndall, four roped parties bagged Williamson, and Barnard fell to 46 (perhaps too much weight as the peak is no longer a 14er – going from 14,003 to 13,990). May Pridham (LA/RCS) often teamed with Adele van Loben Sels: by themselves they made the first ascent of Whaleback and descended the East Face of Whitney. This same face was led by four parties (eleven climbers) in one day, the leaders being Jules Eichorn, Norman Clyde, May Pridham and Ken May. “The (Fresh-Air) Traverse was judged preferable to the ‘Shaky Leg Crack,’ which involves a two-man stand and pitons for safety.” A total of 162 climbers ascended Whitney by various means and routes. Russell was topped by 32 from the south, and “Clyde led a new route up the arete to the west.” Mt. Jordan was another first ascent with two parties gaining “the interesting southernmost pinnacle.”

“Some Climbs in the Sierra, 1936,” were reported by Bill Rice, SCB, 2/37.

During August several members of the LA/RCS made a number of interesting climbs in the High Sierra. A new route on the North Palisade was made [by Dick Jones and Mary Jane Edwards, rated 5.4] – from Palisade Basin to the top of the “black waterfall” about three chutes north of the LeConte route. Several climbs were made in the Minarets, including a traverse [by Bill Rice and Torcom Bedayan (from SF)] from the Notch to Michael’s and Clyde’s Minarets, with first ascents of Fourth and Fifth Minarets [thus becoming Rice and Bedayan Minarets]. A descent of Disappearing Creek and the Enchanted Gorge was made. Those participating in some part of the trip also included Sophie Rice [Bill’s sister], Muir Dawson, Nelson Nies, Luella Young, John Mendenhall and Robert MacConaghy. Some of the other peaks climbed were: Ritter, Goddard, Middle Palisade, Split Mountain, Thunderbolt, the Three Teeth, the Doodad, and Cleaver and Blacksmith Peaks. So, well ahead of the arrival of the Sierra Peaks Section (1956), the gnarly High Sierra was a regular RCS summer playground.

Tahquitz Discovered

Tahquitz Rock – this huge dome-shaped formation is officially known as Lily Rock (8000+’), but most climbers prefer the Indian name. It is located on the west side of the San Jacinto Mountains, close to the resort village of Idyllwild. Tahquitz Peak (8846’) is adjacent to Lily Rock, and Suicide Rock (7528’), later also a rock climber’s mecca, is located across Strawberry Valley from Tahquitz Rock. (All three summits are on the Angeles Chapter’s Hundred Peaks Section’s peak list.) As noted by Chuck Wilts, future renown RCS member, in his “Climber’s Guide to Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks,” 5th edition, 1974: “Most of the routes on Tahquitz are found on rock faces, with very little chimney or ridge climbing. The routes extend in height to almost 1,000 feet and range in difficulty from easy scrambling to very difficult direct aid climbing.”

[Per “Tahquitz History” in Mugelnoos, #68, 10/3/40.] On 22 August, with better weather than

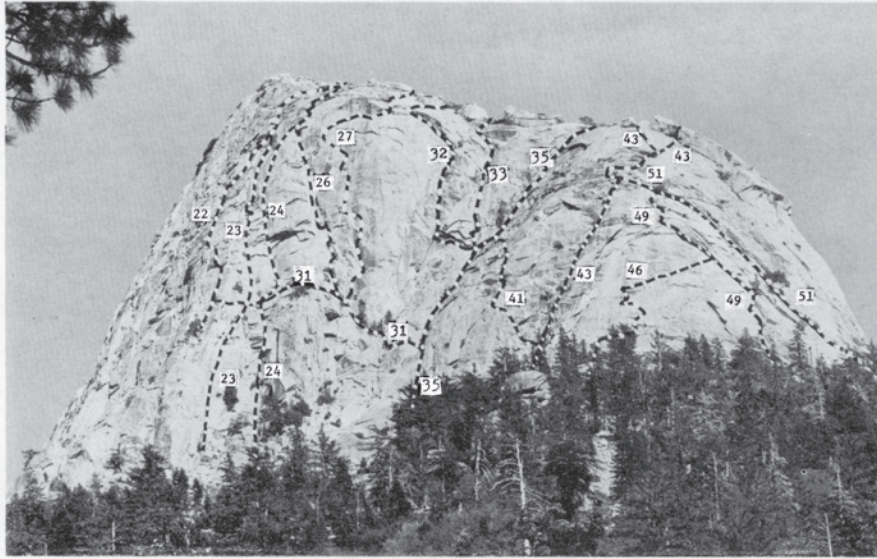
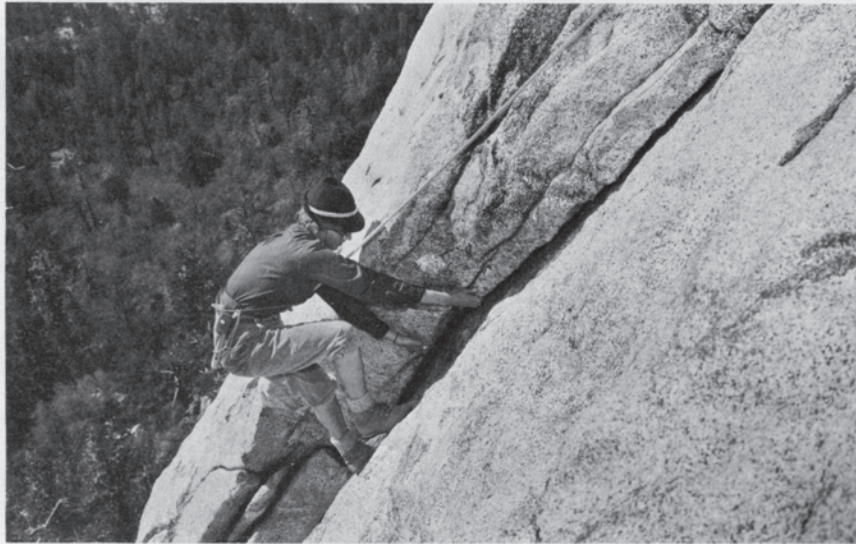


Photo by B. Turney

West side of Tahquitz Rock, from Chuck Wilts' "Climber's Guide to Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks," 1974. #33 – Piton Pooper; #35 – The Trough; #43 – Angel's Fright; #51 – Fingertip Traverse



LIEBACK ON THE FINGERTIP TRAVERSE

Photo by B. Turney

Fingertip Traverse - From Chuck Wilts' guide. Courtesy of Ellen Wilts.

the previous November, Jim Smith completed the first Tahquitz route: the Trough (5.0), a prominent gully. Jim led it, using one piton, with Bob Brinton and Zene Jasaitis. He wrote Art Johnson, "It was surprisingly easy, a good route for beginners." The next day they tried out another route, but did not complete it. On 19 September Jim was back and two rope teams pushed through the Finger-

Tip Traverse (5.3) without trouble, Jim leading Bob followed by Art and Bill Rice. The foursome then descended the Trough halfway to Lunch Ledge (now Pine Tree Ledge) and put two pitons in a promising crack system. The following day Bob and Art climbed the Trough to the ledge and alternating leads "powerhoused" the Piton Pooper. Jim and Bill climbed it later that day – after first completing a fourth new route: Angel's Fright (5.4) (a pun on the old Angel's Flight cable car in Los Angeles). Per Wilts' guide on Piton Pooper: "In the early years at Tahquitz, this route was considered the classic direct aid route, requiring many pitons for a piton ladder on the first pitch – hence the name. The first free ascent (5.7) was made in 1949 by Chuck and Ellen Wilts and Spencer Austin." All four inaugural routes are in the same rough vicinity on the west face of Tahquitz Rock. There would be no new routes for almost a year. Current guidebooks now show well over a hundred routes.

Glen Dawson was back home by mid-August of '36, ending his 14-month "wanderjahr." In a response to RCS chair Art Johnson on 25 August he wrote: "Dear Art: Thank you very much for asking me to be on the RCS

Committee. I am trying to steer clear of committee work, but the rock climbing is so much a part of me that I accept and will attend the meeting Monday.”

Glen joined the RCS for their Labor Day weekend trip to Mt. Whitney, as detailed in his Mountaineering Notes article: “East Face of Whitney and Other Climbs,” SCB, 2/37.

Over Labor Day a group climbed on the east side of Whitney. Norman Clyde, Bob Brinton, Howard Koster and Nelson Nies went up the East Face, 6 September, and left a register near the top with the names of all who have made the climb. Dick Jones, Art Johnson and I attempted a route between the East Face Route and the Mountaineer’s Route [on the East Buttress], but didn’t get very far, chiefly because of fresh snow. Bill, Bob and I found a route up the wall north of Ibex Park, which we called “The Stemwinder” [5.4]. We went on to the peak marked on the USGS [15-min] map “13,301,” but shown by the contours as a thousand feet lower. We also climbed “The Pinnacle” at Pinnacle Pass. [“13,301” is now 12,300’ and named Thor Peak.]

2nd Baldy Ski Hut

By September the SMS folks were surely tired of polishing their boards – and eager to use them before too long. Then one Sunday a fire of

undetermined origin completely destroyed the hut. Per “History of the Ski Mountaineers” on the SMS website [angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt]: “It was truly a great loss and meant doing that task all over again. But this task was undertaken with great enthusiasm almost immediately by an increased number of members, and by the time good skiing arrived in December, a new and larger hut was completed and ready for use on the site of the earlier



Rebuilding Baldy Hut, late 1936. Angeles Chapter Archives

hut.” Fortunately, the first hut had been insured – no doubt contributing to the fact that real burros were used this time to haul up the tons of building materials.

Glen’s Labor Day exploratory climb on the East Buttress of Whitney was a route that had first caught his eye on 8/16/31, during the inaugural climb of the East Face route by Glen, Underhill, Clyde and Eichorn (Refer to Tribute I). Could this new more direct route possibly go?

To be continued:

Tribute Part V
Return to Whitney

Again, special thanks to Glen Dawson and John Ripley for this issue. Glen has an amazing memory and, as custodian of the LA/RCS archives, John has been very generous in sharing this amazing resource. Appreciation for photographs is also expressed to Bob Cates, Dennis Kruska, Ellen Wilts and Gwen Rinehart (Dick Jones’ daughter); and thanks to Dennis Kruska, Harv Galic and George Sinclair for quotes from their works. Sara Danta is such an amazing editor - all authors should be so fortunate!

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Deadline for all submissions is three (3) weeks prior to the publication date.

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