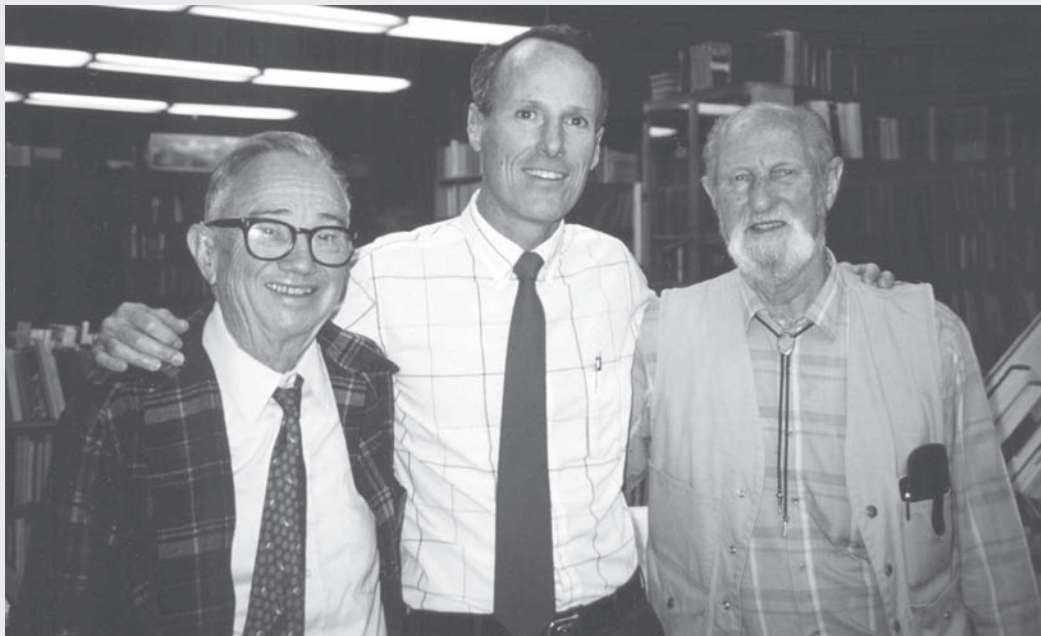


A Tribute
to the Honorary Members of the Sierra Peaks Section:
Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson & Jules Eichorn - Part VI

by Bill Oliver
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Just back from the first ascent of the East Face of Whitney, 8/16/31. L-R: Jules Eichorn, Norman Clyde, Robert Underhill and Glen Dawson. By Francis Farquhar, Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.



At Dawson's Book Shop, 4/20/90. L-R: Glen Dawson, Bill Oliver and Jules Eichorn. Author's collection.



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

by Bill Oliver

Tribute Part VI Passing the Torch

This “Tribute” series was expected to go to three or at most four Parts – and be completed within a couple of years of the first one (Nov-Dec ’89). Well, the reader may have noticed it hasn’t worked out that way. Thanks to everyone for hanging in there anyway – especially Glen Dawson (95)! With mixed feelings, I am committed to concluding the series with this issue, which likely means leaving out some items of interest. OK, minor items of interest!

Backing up at moment into 1938, two overlooked items:

(1) As reported by Glen Dawson in *Mugelnoos* (Noos) #3 (2/09/38):

“THREE ON A ROPE” - A Mugelnoos reporter saw the preview of this picture and ranks it as “four star.” Last autumn members of the Rock Climbing Section worked many weekends before motion picture cameras at Stoney Point and Tahquitz Rock making a Pete Smith short subject. The movie tentatively titled “Three on a Rope” will probably be released by MGM next month. The director has been very slow in coming across with promised honorariums but there is still hope. The rope of experts is composed of Art Johnson, Jim Smith and Bill Rice. In the comedy role is Bob Brinton ably assisted by LaVere Daniels and Howard Koster. The best scene is Bill Rice realistically dodging rocks. The unintentional falls are also well worth seeing.

Amazingly, John Ripley recently discovered this complete ten-minute film gem on the web: <http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title.jsp?stid=400726> [On the right, click: Watch a movie clip; then below the film box click the title.]

The rope of Johnson, Smith and Rice is correctly identified, while the “comedy” team of Brinton, Daniels and Koster are not named, though Brinton is called Herman. Although he assisted in the production, Glen does not appear. The “Climb of Mt. Baldy” starts at San Antonio Falls, but the rest is actually shot at Stoney Pt and Tahquitz. [Right, the hand work on the belays would not pass muster today!]

(2) As noted in Tribute Part V, Norman Clyde was awarded the LA/Rock Climbing Section’s first honorary membership in Oct. ’37. Now we find a 10/25/38 letter from RCS chair Howard Koster to Robert Underhill of the Appalachian Mountain Club:

Dear Dr. Underhill,

Do you remember when you made the first ascent of the East Face of Mt. Whitney in 1931? Maybe you would like to hear what has happened to it since. It was climbed by only a few persons before the summer of ’36, when about twenty climbed it. Then on Labor Day of ’37 five of us made a new route directly up the buttress past the large projecting rock. We call this the Pee Wee Route. Last Labor Day I led a party of eleven over this same route. With the exception of myself, these people had all been climbing for less than one year. Two of them were ladies. Interest in rock climbing has increased greatly in Southern California during the past year.

In view of the work you did several years ago in starting rock climbing in California, we consider you as the grandfather of the Rock Climbing Section. In recognition of your work in mountaineering as well as starting rock climbing in California, we recently elected you an honorary member of the RCS. We are sending one of our badges as a sign of that membership which we hope you will honor us by accepting. Berg Heil!

The 11/21/38 response from Underhill:

Dear Mr. Koster,

Thank you heartily for your letter. It is with very great pleasure indeed that I accept the election as an honorary member of the RCS, and I shall feel honored to make use of the button you send me. You give me far too much credit in the matter of responsibility for starting California climbing; everybody was already just taking to it at that time. I accompanied the Sierra Club on a most enjoyable trip, and we all got going together. But since your climbers have become the best in the United States the privilege of being mentioned in connection with them, whether justifiably or not, is one to be hung on to – which makes me very grateful to you for establishing the relationship in this way.

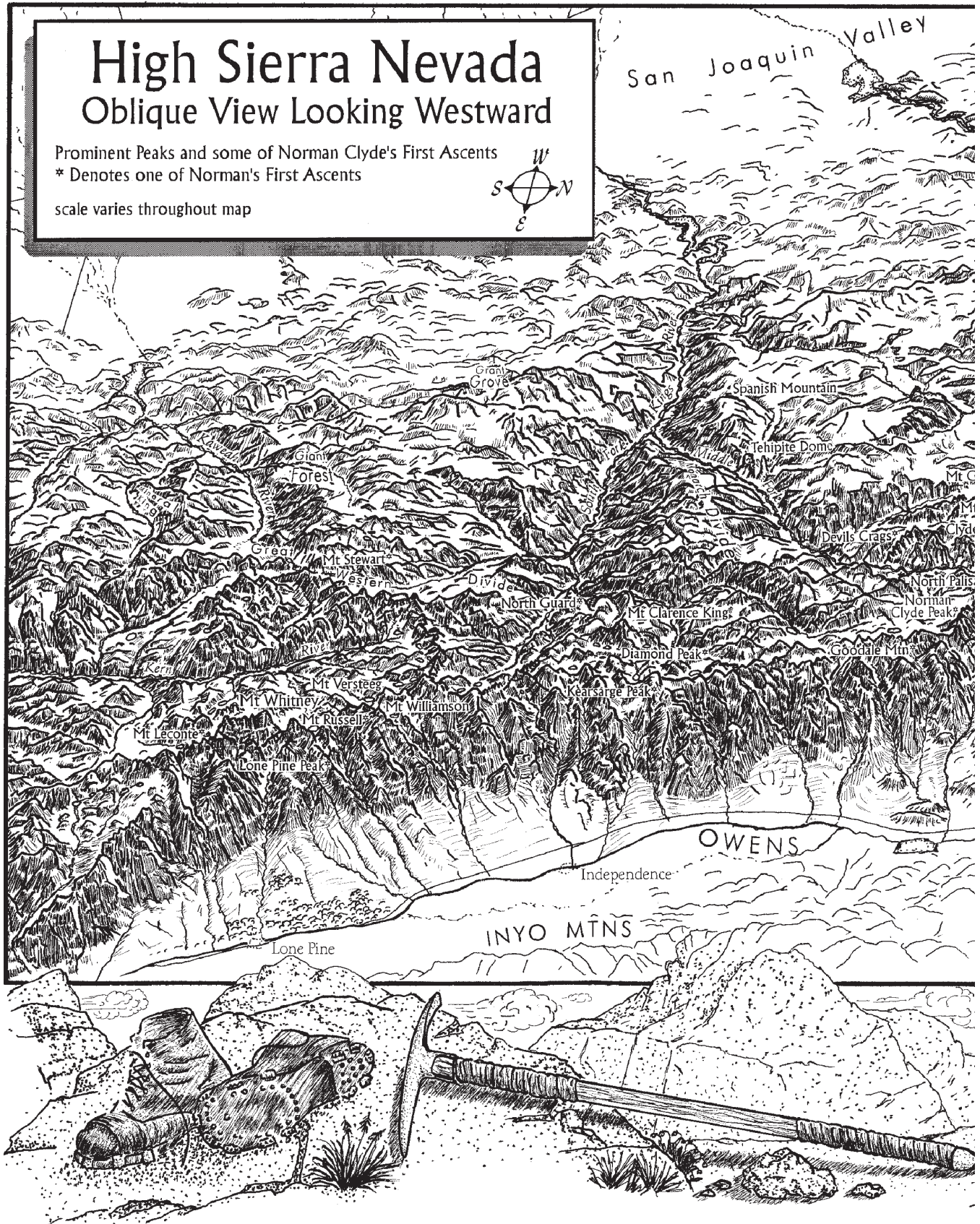
continued on page 32

High Sierra Nevada Oblique View Looking Westward

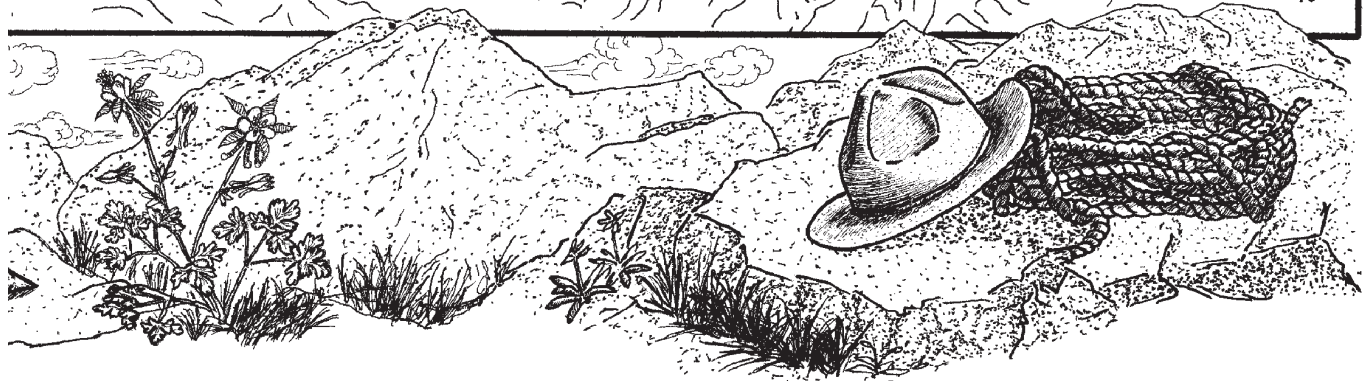
Prominent Peaks and some of Norman Clyde's First Ascents
* Denotes one of Norman's First Ascents



scale varies throughout map



y Mark Bright, appearing in . . .



orman Clyde” by Dennis Kruska.

Whitney east face was lots of fun at the time. You run all over it nowadays and pretty soon it won't figure, but that's the way with all these things. I think at the time we [Clyde, Dawson and Eichorn] all knew it wasn't really very difficult from the technical standpoint; what gave it the thrill was the opening up of the route where everything had looked so unpromising from the foot. But you have so much first-rate stuff that you won't mind Whitney's dropping a peg or two in the classification. Congratulations indeed on your new route, which sounds very much indeed like what these Continental enthusiasts call an "ideal" one – from base to summit by the shortest line possible!

Berg Heil in return, and very best wishes for the prosperity of the RCS.

[A correction to the caption of the Tribute Part V photo: "Norman Clyde spotting lady." It should read: "Norman Clyde belaying Julie Mortimer during 7/25/33 ascent of Devils Crag on the High Trip; taken by Glen Dawson."]

1939

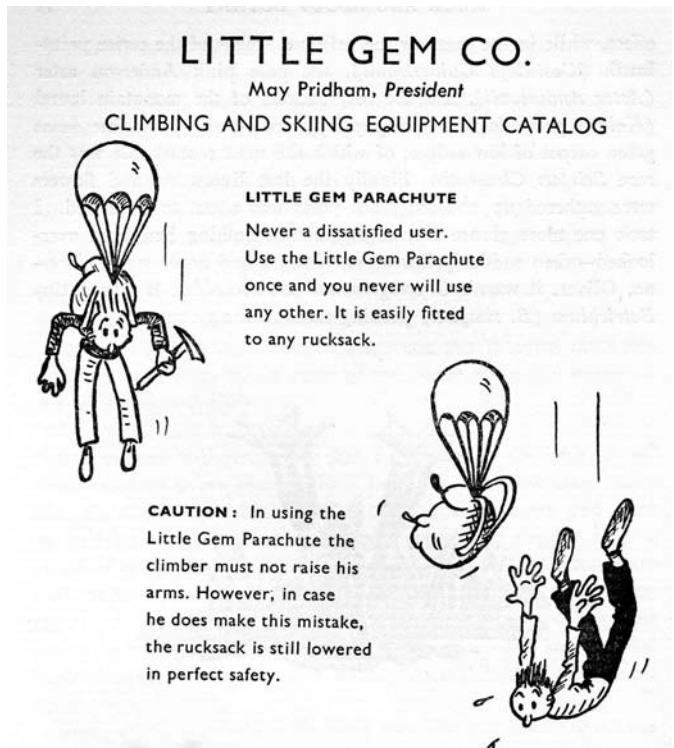
We'll kick off the year with a few items from *Mugelnoos* #32 (2/33/39) relating to activities of the Ski Mountaineering Section (SMS):

"Six avid ice-climbers climbed Telegraph Pk [8985', near Mt. Baldy] with crampons, ice axes and ropes: Don McGeein, Agnes Fair, John Mendenhall, Chet Errett, Carl Jensen and George Wilkens." [Right, we would not refer to this adventure as an "ice-climbing" event today.]

Fundraising for the Keller Peak Ski Hut Annex was well underway, with a current balance of \$254.21. The addition (30' x 15') was urgently needed due to the extreme popularity of the hut (with nearby rope tow), along with the unlikelihood that Forest Service approval for the Mosauer Memorial Lodge on San Gorgonio would happen this year. Work would start in mid-June and wrap up in the fall.

Ongoing Keller "work" parties were not all work: "Thirty-eight Ski Mountaineers competed in a slalom on a fine course laid out my Muir Dawson, in a slalom across the brook west of the ski hut at the Keller Pk workers' party, Feb 12. Prize winners (prizes consisting of torn fragments of slalom flags): Muir Dawson - 58.6 (blue ribbon); Glen Dawson - 1:07.2 (red ribbon); ... 14th Rob Roy McDonald - 1:39.7; ..." [Then 14, Rob Roy would later be active in the SPS until fairly recently. He was voted into the RCS that June.]

Under Ruth Dyar's able editorship, the cartoon and pun-filled *Mugelnoos* regularly came out at two-week



*A sampling of May Pridham's comical artistry, as regularly appeared in the *Mugelnoos* of late '30s – early '40s. Extracted from many appearing in a 2/41 *Sierra Club Bulletin* article.*

intervals. Issue #34 (3/23/39) inaugurated the "Who's Who" feature. #1 was Earl "Fuzz" Merritt, Pomona College basketball and football coach and "an all-around excellent ski instructor." Succeeding issues would highlight: #2 Howard Koster, #3 Mary Jane Edwards, #4 Glen Dawson, ...

Base Camp

In April Ruth Dyar and her sister Joan, along with Olga Schonberg, John Mendenhall, Howard Koster and Glen Warner were busy looking for a large, affordable house to share. All college grads and working, and united in their love of ski mountaineering and also climbing, they were the radical pioneers of their day in communal co-ed living. Confounding the skeptics, especially regarding how all chores were shared equally by both sexes, it became an instant success. Quoting from "Women on the Rocks: Way Back Then," by Ruth Dyar Mendenhall (citation below):

We decided to try out this system of housework: a girl and a fellow would buy food and cook dinner together for one week; a girl and a fellow would wash dinner dishes; and a girl and a fellow would do the cleaning, yard work, household laundry, and everything else. We would have

the same partner for three weeks, then switch partners and start all over. This plan worked so well that we stuck to it, with tradeoffs and variations, for the duration. ... Drop-in guests sometimes seemed a bit startled by in-house arguments about who would stake them to the meal (twenty cents a head). Later we decided we should argue it out in private. ... Our landlady told us from time to time that we took better care of the property, and kept our house neater, than any tenant she ever had. Along with all this virtuosity, domesticity and high jinks, we were living more economically than had seemed possible. About twenty dollars from each of us monthly covered all expenses, rent, food, telephone, newspaper and utilities.

Still existing at 4343 Griffin Ave, in the Highland Park area NE of downtown LA and close to the present-day Pasadena Fwy, "Base Camp" became the unofficial headquarters of the SMS and RCS. It was the scene of many work and play activities - although everyone was usually off skiing or climbing over the weekends. Twenty-to-thirty "Mugelstooges" would typically show up alternate Thursday evenings for the final editing and production of the *Mugelnoos*.

"Women on the Rocks, Way Back Then" was a long essay written by Ruth Mendenhall in October '87, two years before her death. Ten years later it was discovered by Mark Goebel in the bottom of a box of SMS records, and then published in the *Mugelnoos* (Dec. 97 - Jan '98) as: "Women on the Rocks: The Early Years of the SMS & RCS."

Thanks to Mark and others, the SMS website has an amazing History page: <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt/text/history.htm>. Be sure to (1) check out Ruth's complete essay here and (2) take note of the opportunity to buy the "White Horizons" video, which includes the film gem "Walter Mosauer Skiing in San Antonio Cyn, 1932" with

modern narration by Glen Dawson! [Contact Mark; \$22 payable to SMS, includes S&H.]

The reader is reminded that the present period of Part VI, and beyond, is beautifully and insightfully well-covered in "Woman on the Rocks - the Mountaineering Letters of Ruth Dyar Mendenhall," edited by her younger daughter, Valerie Mendenhall Cohen (2006, Spotted Dog Press). A quote here from a letter Ruth wrote to two of her sisters on 5/01/39 following a Mt. San Gorgonio ski weekend: "I don't see how people get along without climbing mountains. What do they do for beauty?"

Spring Adventures

As the holiday fell on a Tuesday, the annual joint RCS (LA and SF) Memorial Day trip to Yosemite attracted only thirty-seven rock climbers, as reported by Dick Leonard in the Mtneering Notes, *Sierra Club Bulletin (SCB)*, 2/40. Still, all the usual routes were climbed, with Washington Column remaining the most popular. Pulpit Rock, a striking pinnacle at the far west end of the Valley, was the current problem of special interest. It was attempted in 1937 by Dave Brower and Morgan Harris. Then this weekend a "still stronger party" of Brower, Dick Leonard and John Dyer also failed. "It was thus conclusively established that, as the Whitney Survey would say, Pulpit Rock was 'forever inaccessible.'" Nevertheless, two days later, Raffi Bedayan, Randolph May (both SF) and Carl Jensen (LA) pulled off the first ascent, to the tongue-in-cheek great dismay of the prior team. Like Higher and Lower Cathedral Spire, the "Tree Route" was rated 6th class, i.e., pitons were used for aid. [Per Steve Roper's "Climber's Guide to

Yosemite Valley" (1964), Tom Frost first led the route free in 1960, rated at 5.8.]

Although still involved with the LA/RCS, Chester Versteeg continued to seek out unclimbed, and often unnamed, peaks in the High Sierra, usually solo. As he wrote in the *SCB* Mtneering Notes (2/40), however, he was also attracted to the higher "desert peaks." In spite of heavy snow higher up, he and a party of three succeeded in placing a Sierra Club register box atop Telescope Pk (11,145) on 22 April. Over the subsequent Memorial Day weekend he led a party of five, in two-and-a-half climbing days, to the summit of White Mtn (14,242). It involved a traverse from the south and down the west. On summit day: "The men soon encountered snow, through which they waded nearly eight miles. Packs averaged about thirty pounds, and the climbers sank ankle-deep at every step, knee-deep hundreds of times, frequently hip-deep." They topped out at 5:10 pm, and then endured a very difficult and arduous long descent. "All agreed upon arrival at camp at 10:30 that this was the hardest day's climb in their lives."



Pals for life: Dick Jones (left) and Glen Dawson, c. 1945. By Ruth Mendenhall, Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

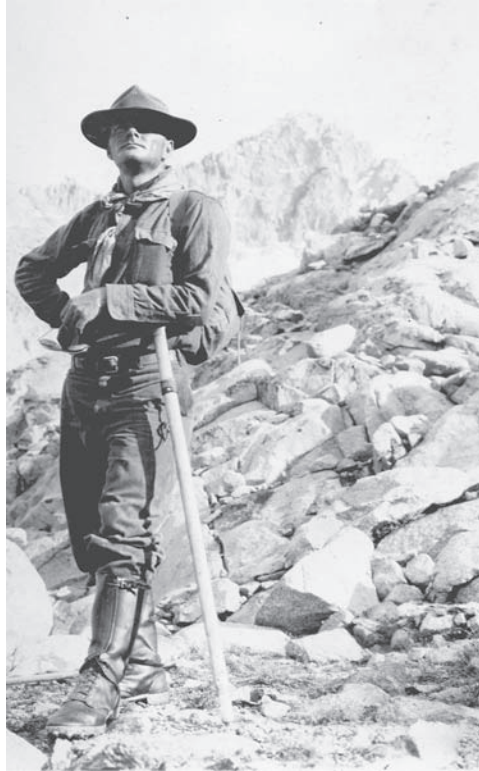
Norman Clyde graduated in the classics from Geneva College in June of 1909. The college was founded in Ohio in 1848 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, then relocated to Beaver Falls, PA in 1880 (35 miles NW of Pittsburg). Clyde's father, a Presbyterian minister, died from pneumonia in 1901 at 46. His widow then moved the family from Brodie, Ontario to Beaver Falls, which was closer to her family. Clyde, the oldest of nine kids, was then 16.

In early June of 1939 Norman (then 54) returned to Beaver Falls, the hometown of both his family and his alma mater, to receive an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Geneva College. [He would later call it an "Onery Degree."] He was cited as "a noted mountaineer-scientist of the West." One of two speakers at the Alumni Dinner preceding the commencement, it was observed that: "Mr. Clyde is a noted mountain climber, having explored mountains from Canada to New Mexico." [That probably should have read Mexico.] There was a brief mention of the award in the *Los Angeles Times* on 1/03/40 by columnist Ed Ainsworth. It misidentified the award as a law degree. [Your author is indebted to Harv Galic for the initial lead here and to Mrs. Kae Kirkwood, Archival Librarian at Geneva College.]

The June '39 *SCB* featured "A Climber's to the High Sierra, Part III - the Palisades." Authored by Hervey Voge and Dave Brower, this installment, as usual, provided a lot of historical background, as well as noting the early ascents, plus route descriptions and a splendid map of the area.

Sidenote: the name of Jules Eichorn does not appear anywhere in the various *SCB* climbing or mountaineering articles for 1939. A look at his personal climbing log reveals no activity in that year, only the single word "ill."

The annual four-week (always designed so that people had the option of attending just the first two or last two weeks) July High Trip returned to the Humphreys Basin area. In the *SCB* (2/40) Dave Brower authored both "Tripping High - 1939" and the relevant Mtneering Notes. There were "well over two hundred, including packers and commissary." Principal climbing leaders were Dick Leonard, Oliver Kehrlein, Dave Brower, Raffi Bedayan, Jack Riegelhuth, Muir Dawson and, of course, Norman Clyde. In two days seventy-six signed the Split Mtn register. The



A dashing young Norman Clyde, c. 1920s. Alice Knapp Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives; also from Dennis Kruska.

Polemonium Club contingent also made ascents of Mt. Darwin, The Hermit, North Pal and Tbolt (two ropes traversing between them), and Devils Crag, among others - totaling nearly 500 man-days of climbing.

The LA/RCS celebrated their July 4th holiday in the Minarets, camping above Lake Ediza. A lengthy account appears in Ruth Dyar's subsequent letter in "Woman on the Rocks." Ruth joined John Mendenhall for a climb up the Underhill-Eichorn route on the E. Buttress of Banner Pk. Having backpacked in that morning, their climb from the base didn't start until 2:00. Encountering tough climbing and hoping to avoid a bivouac, they turned around at 6:00. By 8:00, however, still high and now too dark to continue, it was unavoidable that they would have to bivouac on a ledge. Ruth: "I have sort of vaguely wanted to bivouac on the rocks for a long long time, yet when the time comes, no one would ever bivouac who could do otherwise. I think one must love the rocks very much to sleep on them!" They did manage to get some sleep and finally welcomed the dawn. [Recall, John had a group bivouac the prior July 4th on the RCS climb of N. Pal.] The experience evidently only strengthened their ardor for each other - as their engagement would be announced shortly! [The 9/11/41 Noos would report the successful ascent of this route by Ruth and John over that Labor Day weekend. Although they returned after dark, there was no bivouac!]

This bivouac, as well as details of the Mendenhalls' August



A MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE By Cedric Wright

On the 1939 High Trip, from Sierra Club Bulletin, 2/40

climb of Trader Horn at Tahquitz (the first time a woman had even tried it), is also chronicled by Ruth in an August '40 *Desert Magazine* article: "There's a Technique for Climbing Rocks."

... Climbing is probably the most uncomfortable sport in the world. The mountaineer must admit that he is perpetually too cold or too hot, usually in rapid succession, sleepy, hungry, thirsty and exhausted – and of all discomforts, the bivouac, the enforced night without shelter, is probably the most acute. Still, the most manifestly unpleasant trips are, illogically, those remembered with the keenest pleasure. ... Rock climbers are not "born," but undoubtedly a natural aptitude helps. In a general way, those who have spent a mother-scaring childhood bounding over trees, roofs and fences are those who take most readily to rock climbing. ... With proper experience and equipment we climb with far greater safety than could reasonably be expected of such a sport – a sport which is not easy, but whose rewards are so high as to answer the inevitable "Why do you do it?" Every climb has its own sharp quality of adventure and beauty. ...

Marriages

The first "RCS marriage" united Bill Rice and Lavina Matheny on 11 August. Bill was an early member of the RCS and SMS and a leading climber; Dick Jones was best man. Although not formally a member of either group, Lavina attended trips both near and far. A week later, 8/18, Dick Jones and Adrienne Applewhite were wed; Glen Dawson best man. The latter newly-weds embarked on what was known as the "Mass Honeymoon" – an eight-day backpack from Kearsarge Pass to Whitney Pass with six other members and two mules. The group's arrival at Mt. Whitney coincided with the annual RCS Labor Day weekend. Dick

and Adrienne descended the East Face of Whitney, partly in moonlight! [In July '37 the couple had ascended the E. Face, the only ascent that year.] The Mendenhalls, who would marry on 9/22 (and decamp from Base Camp), established the Pinnacle Ridge Route on Whitney, as described by John in the Mtneering Notes and by Ruth in a "Woman on the Rocks" letter. [This is listed as Third Needle, East Face, Right Side in R.J. Secor's "The High Sierra – Peaks, Passes and Trails," 1999.] Something else happened that Labor Day weekend – on 9/01/39: Nazi Germany invaded Poland; two days later England and France declared war. Events very far away from the High Sierra, but how long before America would be drawn into this unimaginable and all-consuming conflict?

The couples of Chet and Evelyn Errett, Bill and Lavina Rice, and Clyde and Dorothy Nelson were close, and the men often adventured together on ski and rock. The *Mugelnoos* of 9/28/39 noted that "Rock-burners Bill Rice and Clyde Nelson flitted up the Mechanics Route [at



Lavina and Bill Rice on their honeymoon, Shadow Lake, Sierra Nevada, 8/39. Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

Tahquitz], then via the Trough to the Pooper, down the Friction, up the Angels Fryte, and down the Fwikshun again!” On Oct 22nd, the Erretts, the Nelsons and others headed south across the border for a twenty-two day climbing adventure. As reported in the 11/30/39 Noos: “On the recent motor journey through Mexico attended by eleven Ski Mountaineers, Braeme Gigas and Bill Crookston ascended 17,000’ Ixtaccihuatl, and Chet and Evelyn Errett, Bill Crookston and Clyde Nelson climbed to the crater of 17,876’ Popocatepetl (pronounced “Popo”). The crater is a huge hole 1500’ deep with a roaring, boiling green lake in the bottom.” The Mexican volcanoes would later become a popular winter climbing destination.

Having served two years as LA/RCS chair, Howard Koster stepped down in Oct to be succeeded by John Mendenhall. Chet Errett followed Dick Jones as vice-chair.

Shiprock

Recall in Tribute Part V, Glen Dawson, Bob Brinton and Bill Rice traveled to Shiprock, a 1700-ft volcanic plug in the NW corner of New Mexico, early in January 1938. Difficult climbing and cold weather led to a short-lived attempt. A strong contingent from Colorado had pushed fairly high but also failed. In October ’39 this great prize was now the object of a carefully planned assault by a SF/RCS team of Dave Brower, Bestor Robinson, Raffi Bedayan and John Dyer. Dick Leonard had also participated in the detailed planning, but ultimately could not get away. The tale is related by Bestor in both the 2/40 *Sierra Club Bulletin*, “The First Ascent of Shiprock,” and in the 1940 *American Alpine Journal (AAJ)*, “Shiprock.” He noted that theirs was “the thirteenth attempt by white men” – two prior ascents relating to Navaho legend. From the *SCB*:

A list of equipment finally emerged from a plethora of arguments and experiments. It included over one thousand feet of rope, dozens of pitons of varying shapes, thicknesses and lengths, and carabiners of three sizes, including the screw-jawed type for excessive strain. Lastly, and with some concern over the mountaineering ethics of our decision, we included several expansion bolts and stellite-tipped rock drills. We agreed with mountaineering moralists that climbing by the use of expansion bolts was taboo. We did believe, however, that safety knew no restrictive rules and that even expansion bolts were justified in order to secure the firm anchorage that would prevent a serious fall from imperiling the lives



Shiprock. By Cameron Burns from his collection.

of the entire party. ...

Finally perfecting our military preparations, we had decided that the attack would have to be along the lines of methodical siege tactics, instead of the now famous blitzkrieg. In one important particular the military analogy was totally abandoned. There was no general, no captain – not even a lance corporal. The party was deliberately leaderless. The assumption of responsibility for decisions by the entire team does of course take time, but it brings into play the conflict of opinions without the presence of a dominating voice. In the long run, with an experienced party the judgment of such a “composite mind” is more likely to be right than the quick decisions of even a brilliant leader.

Their final route starts on the west side of Shiprock ascending to a prominent notch; then down the Rappel Gully and across the Traverse Pitch; then the Horn, lassoed by Dyer, and finally the summit – achieved on their fourth day (10/12) of climbing, which included a planned high bivouac. Numerous pitons were used for aid and three expansion bolts were placed for protection – the first such use by American climbers, but essential in the absence of good cracks for pitons.

Quoting Robinson’s final paragraph in the *AAJ*:

Let us be tolerant of differences in taste. Let us drop this childish prattle about the immorality of artificial aides. If some climbers really wish to eschew all artificial aides, let them abandon ropes and shoes for surely these are products of a mechanized society. Let them establish a “Nudist Climbing Club” if that is the way they enjoy climbing, and let the rest of us who like our gear and gadgets be tolerant of them as long as they do not actually interfere with our pleasure in climbing. [The debate over bolts continues to this day, by both artificially clothed and nude climbers. ☺]

Ascent details and many photos accompany both of Robinson's articles. Being the seminal climb that it was, other excellent references include: Chris Jones' "Climbing in North America," 1976; and Steve Roper and Allen Steck's "Fifty Classic Climbs of North America," 1979. The latter rate the climb as Grade II, 5.7, A2 – or free at 5.9.

Monument Peak

Also detailed in Tribute Part V was the 10/37 attempt by Glen Dawson and Bob Brinton on unclimbed Monument Pk, a stark desert pinnacle in the Whipple Mtns near Parker Dam. Half-way up they had aborted because the volcanic breccia rock was so dangerously rotten and loose. John Mendenhall, who had also failed in 4/37, was back the end of December for another attempt with the gnarly team of Art Johnson, Ruth Mendenhall and Paul Estes, plus two ground crew. The climb is recorded by John in the *SCB* Mtneering Notes (2/40), by Ruth in a "Woman on the Rocks" letter, and by Art in the April '40 *Desert Magazine*: "First on Top of Monument Peak." Quoting from Art: "If the San Francisco climbers could scale Shiprock – then Southern Californians must uphold their prestige by going to the top of Monument Peak. ... We had no misgivings over the fact that one of the quartet was to be a woman. Ruth Dyar Mendenhall has a long record of climbing achievements to her credit. She is one of the best."

The last 250' of the pinnacle can be approached from a "knife-like" ridge connecting to Copper Mtn. From this starting point the four-person rope was led alternately by John and Art. A "new technique" employed was for each climber to hammer-tap every hand and foothold to sound out the rock. At one point, when two handholds gave way at once, Ruth was momentarily suspended. A hold-less wall was mounted with a two-man stand, and at two o'clock on New Year's Eve the summit was theirs. The Mendenhalls would continue a life-long quest for intrepid first ascents near and far.

1940

OK, a new decade – and time to pick up the pace of our journey with Norman, Glen and Jules through the golden age of Sierra Club mountaineering.

The February 1940 *SCB* featured "Sierras of the South" by Weldon Heald (future founder of the Angeles Chapter's Hundred Peaks Section). "... The Southern



From April 1940 Desert Magazine article: "First on Top of Monument Peak" by Ruth Mendenhall. Shot of summiteers taken before ascent, pinnacle in right rear. L-R: John and Ruth Mendenhall, Art Johnson and Paul Estes; 12/31/39. Angeles Chapter Archives.

Californians have, right at their own back door, seven mountain ranges stretching one after the other in a great arc 250 miles long. Although the [High] Sierra rightly claims our summers, these southern mountains are well worth climbing and exploring in the spring, autumn and winter. ... These seven ranges include Tehachapi, Sierra Pelona, Sierra Madre, San Bernardino, San Jacinto, Santa Rosa and San Diego mountains." Many fascinating details followed. Concluding: "... When Southern Californians realize that Los Angeles and Vienna are the only two cities of over a million population in the entire world which are fortunate enough to have great ranges of mountains at their doorsteps, the Angelenos, like the Viennese, will become proud of their mountain heritage and learn to love, enjoy and understand it."

This issue of the *SCB* also introduced "A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra, Part IV – Yosemite Valley," by Dick Leonard and Dave Brower. Following an excellent historical background, the climbs are organized from Class 1 – "any footgear will do" (e.g., Clouds Rest and Sentinel Dome) to Class 6 – "pitons must be placed for direct aid" (e.g., the Cathedral Spires and Pulpit Rock). There was no map of the valley, however, locating the climbs.

Chet Errett had hopes of making the first Sierra ski crossing through Yosemite National Park. His adventure is reported in the *SCB* (2/41) Mtneering Notes: "Across the Yosemite Sierra on Skis." Chet having recruited Howard Koster and Bob Schenck, the trio set off on the

east side from Silver Lake on 13 March. Upon reaching the notch between Lyell and Maclure: "Dropping packs we attempted to climb Lyell, but had to give up the attempt soon. Ice, snow and wind made climbing too slow, and we were having to rely on handholds, it being impossible to get good footing with ski boots." On their fifth day they made it out to the Glacier Pt Rd and Badger Pass. "We had realized our ambition and, more, had combined the sport of skiing with the winter beauty of high peaks."

Noted in the 6/06/40 Noos: "A stupendous crowd of 46 attended the May 18-19 Tahquitz climb. Numerous ascents were made on established routes. Muir Dawson and Walter Hennies pioneered on the north side. Bob Brinton, Tim Evans, Rob Roy McDonald and Keith Johnson made a new climb (part of it Class 5) on the south side."

High Trip of 1940

Venturing through familiar areas in Sequoia and Kings Cyn, the High Trip had rain the first day and then virtually perfect weather the rest of July. Two hundred seventy-five Club members partook, plus eighty mules and sixteen packers. Of the 275, roughly 1/3 were committed for the four weeks, and 1/3 each for the first two or last two weeks. The climbing leaders included Dick Leonard, Raffi Bedayan, Dave Brower, Norman Clyde, Paul Estes and Neil Ruge. The extended SCB report was authored by Weldon Heald. Arriving at Sixty Lakes Basin: "High country at last! The altitude of 10,500' released our dormant mountaineering energy in an orgy of peak-climbing. Dave Brower's department was the busiest in camp as an offensive was carried out against the surrounding heights." The Mtneering Notes were penned by Bruce Meyer. A new technique "invented by Clyde was the 'tension belay,' necessitated by mass ascents." On July 2nd Kid Peak (11,458) was climbed "from Paradise Valley by a party of 18 led by Clyde and Brower. This was the first mass ascent of the outing and provided a 4500-ft starter. There was no record of a previous ascent." [Sidenote: according to R.J. Secor's "High Sierra" guide, this was Norman's last *first* ascent of an unclimbed peak.] Encompassed within 360 man-ascents: "Much attention was given to the unclimbed peaks in the vicinity and many climbers returned with first ascents, while others came back with news of previous climbs, mostly by Norman Clyde." As a climax to the mountaineering on the outing, Clyde, leading a party of eighteen, "set out to climb three 14ers, Williamson, Tyndall and Barnard, in the space of two days." [Barnard

is no longer a 14er; some also climbed the East Pk of Williamson.]

[Sidenote: not being covered here are the mountaineering exploits also occurring on the Club's annual Knapsack Trips and Base Camp Trips.]

First Yosemite Climbing Ranger

Meanwhile, **Jules Eichorn** and his young family were living in Yosemite Valley for the entire summer. As noted by Dick Leonard in Yosemite Climbing Notes:

The outstanding feature of Yosemite rock climbing this year was the excellent cooperation and contribution of the National Park Service through Supt. Lawrence Merriam. At the time of the annual Memorial Day trip new policies were put into effect recognizing the permanent interest and maturity of the sport. The well known Sierra Club expert on rock climbing, Jules Eichorn, was one of the first new rangers to be appointed by the National Park Service for advice, supervision and rescue work in mountaineering problems arising within Yosemite. The appointment of Jack Riegelhuth, of the SF/RCS, strengthened the Yosemite staff in this respect, although his duties were primarily park protection. ... Among the duties of the mountaineering rangers is assisting in the handling of the new Park Service climbing policy. Formulated through discussions between Sierra Club leaders and Park Service officials, these very simple regulations will be a benefit both to climbers and the ranger staff. All climbers are urged to register for their climbs. ... All good climbers will enjoy talking with a ranger who really knows mountaineering and they need not have any feeling of apprehension, since the regulations do not provide for prohibition of any attempt. ... As an added inducement, a Certificate of Accomplishment is available to each climber at the time he reports his return. This certifies, over the signature of a ranger, that the climber was either observed by the ranger staff to have completed the climb, or that the climber states that he did so.

Your author is indebted to Harv Galic for uncovering this news clipping:

Fresno Bee – Republican Friday, August 2, 1940
Youths Rescued From Half Dome, Yosemite
Mariposa, Aug 2 - Thrilling rescue was effected on the face of Half Dome yesterday afternoon when George O'Gorman, 14, of Hollywood, and two companions, William Warren and David Heiser also of Hollywood, attempted to climb the face of the cliff from Mirror Lake. O'Gorman and Heiser had reached a point 900 feet

above the lake when Heiser slipped and slid eighty feet to a ledge. O’Gorman froze to a narrow foothold and awaited help. Hikers on the Mirror Lake trail realized the predicament of the boys and telephoned for rangers.

Ranger Jules Eichorn, a Sierra Club climber, headed the rescue party that worked up to a point above O’Gorman. Heiser suffered bruises and lacerations from his fall but worked his way along the cliff to reach the rescuers’ ropes. Warren was in safer position on the cliff. The three boys were brought safely to Mirror Lake at about 5 PM. [The story was also reported 3 August in the *LA Times* – “Hollywood Boys Recued from Cliff - Yosemite Rangers Take Trio off Half Dome.”]

Jules would repeat as a Yosemite climbing ranger the summer of 1941. His climbing log for this two-year period reports: “Mountaineering incidental to rescue work as a ranger in Yosemite Nat’l Pk. Starr King; Mt. Conness; Sheep Peak.” His third child, Julie, was born in the Valley that first summer. [Sidenote: She was grateful that he did not name her Yosemite! ☺]

After several consecutive Labor Day trips to Mt. Whitney, in 1940 the LA/RCS ventured to Mt. Humphreys. As noted in the RCS Minutes: “Chair Chet Errett reported that twenty-three attended the Labor Day climb of Mt. Humphreys – some climbing the East Arete, which was the first time since Norman Clyde made its first ascent [as detailed in Tribute Part IV]. One group of six climbed the West Arete and six others climbed the South.”

The **Mendenhalls** were not along on the Humphreys trip. They had spent the latter half of August far away in the Canadian Rockies in the quest of an unclimbed peak. Their adventure was reported in the *SCB* (2/41) Mtneering Notes by John: “Fifth Attempt upon Mt. Confederation,” and in one of Ruth’s longer letters in “Woman on the Rocks.” John’s leading sentence: “East of the confluence of the Athabaska and the Chaba, in the unmapped southern portion of Jasper National Park, rise the rose-colored towers of virgin Mt. Confederation (10,500’).” As noted by Ruth in the subsequent Noos, she and John “carried packs for about 40 miles RT through the unmapped and mostly trail-less wilds of the Atabaska River valley. The attempt was foiled by a collapse in the weather (days of rain, dense fog, some snow). The Rockies are mahvelous mountains!!!” The undaunted pair would make many trips to parts of the Canadian Rockies, and they would achieve the first ascent of Mt. Confederation in 1947! [It’s featured in the 3/48 *SCB*.]

[Sidenote: On 9/11/40, Carleton Shay joined the RCS at

16, with a guiding hand from Paul Estes, and a little later the SMS. He was active for two years, then again from ’48 through ’51. Carleton is a long time SPS member and emblem holder, and he is still on its roster! Paul also joined the SPS.]

In October Chet Errett succeeded John Mendenhall as LA/RCS Chair, with Clyde Nelson as vice chair; both would also be elected to a second term. [John would be re-elected chair in 1958.]



Glen and Mary Helen Dawson enjoying the outdoors, c. 1945. Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

In August Bob Brinton had wed fellow RCSer Agnes Fair. Sadly, the marriage would fail within two years. [Bob would marry RCSer Mary Mies in ’46 for a lasting union.] On Nov. 15 in Pasadena **Glen Dawson** exchanged vows with **Mary Helen Johnston**; Muir Dawson best man. Mary Helen, a Pasadena native, joined the Sierra Club in October ’38 with her friend DeDe Cartwright to learn to ice skate – and that’s how she first met Glen. The ladies soon became active with the SMS. Mary Helen later assisted in the publication of the *Mugelnoos*, and she became a member of the RCS on 7/31/41. [Mary Helen and DeDe were pictured together at the end of Tribute Part V.]

1941

The February ’42 *SCB* highlighted “A Climber’s Guide to the High Sierra, Part V - the Whitney Region.” This time it was an all-LA/RCS effort, the authors being John and Ruth Mendenhall, Art Johnson, Braeme Gigas and Howard Koster. An excellent area map was also included although, as noted later in the Noos, East Face Lake was slightly misplaced. There are six routes for Mt. Whitney itself, not counting variations.

The 8/42 SCB Mtneering Notes record a two-day adventure authored by Clyde Nelson who had teamed with Chet Errett and Bill Rice (a favorite trio): “A Ski Ascent of Mt. Whitney.” From their camp near Consultation Lake, on day two they ascended Whitney Pass. “We followed the trail toward the peak, removing our skis several times in order to obtain footing on the steep, hard coating of snow and ice. Skis were used, with these exceptions, all the way to the summit. ... A perusal of the register showed no previous ascents during the winter.”

The “Yosemite Climbing Notes” for 1941 were penned by Dave Brower. Dave and Morgan Harris did many gnarly climbs, and folks continued to tinker with Lost Arrow Spire. “On Memorial Day weekend Leaning Chimney was climbed the second time by Bob Brinton, Chappel Cranmer, Clyde Nelson and Bill Shand. The third ascent of the NW face of Lower Cathedral Rock was made by Brinton, Nelson, Chet Errett and Glen Dawson.” [Shand, a Cal Tech grad student, arrived in LA in 1940 with an impressive climbing record in the Alps and the Tetons, and he was part of Bradford Washburn’s successful June ‘41 Mt Hayes (13,832) expedition in Alaska. Sidenote: also in ‘41 he and Paul Estes made the first ascent of the Winnedumah Paiute Monument pillar, east of Independence, CA.]

High Trip

This year was the 40th anniversary of the first High Trip. Under the mountaineering leadership of Leonard, Brower, Riegelhuth, Clyde and Raffi Bedayan, the Club returned to the NE Yosemite circuit. Cutting to the quick: as reported in the 8/42 SCB Mtneering Notes by Bruce Meyer, near the end of the trip Norman Clyde (then 56) led “mass ascents” of Matterhorn Peak: 32 climbers on 7/21 and another 19 the next day. The trip then shortly ended and presumably everyone lived happily ever after. Not reported anywhere, however, was the incident that led to:

The Sudden Firing of Norman Clyde!

The story was told by Dick Leonard in 1975 in his oral history interview by Susan Schrepfer. [This was one of the Sierra Club History Series conducted by the Regional Oral History Office of the Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley. Virtually all the major Club leaders were eventually interviewed, including Glen Dawson, Jules Eichorn, the Farquhars, the Mendenhalls, Dave Brower, Art Johnson, etc.]

Question: Did you ever climb with Norman Clyde? Leonard’s response:

Yes, Norman was our guide on Sierra Club High Trips for many years. This is one of the unfortunate things that I think ought to be recorded for the future, since this is history. I had to fire Norman in 1941. He had been our guide in 1937 in Canada on the High Trip, and in 1938, 1939 and 1940. In 1941, he was the dean of all climbers. He had climbed about one thousand peaks in the Sierra, many of them first ascents.

He was a wonderful old man, but a very crochety one. [Couple of examples.] Well, I knew all of those things, but he seemed perfectly safe and sound in his mountaineering, and he was wonderful for several years. But in 1941, he was leading a party of inexperienced people up an easy mountain called Matterhorn Peak. It has a frightening name, but it is an easy climb. For some reason, maybe to give a thrill to his party, Norman took them across a steep snow bank on about a forty-five degree slope.

People forget, although Norman knew it, that if you fall one hundred feet on a forty-five degree ice slope, it’s equal to falling fifty feet over an overhang. ... They were not roped because it was such an easy climb.

The last man was a little bit clumsy, and he broke the final step in the snow and started to slide. He crashed down into the rocks, fractured his pelvis in several places and cut his scalp so badly that it took the doctor that night seventy-six stitches to put his scalp back on; it almost took his scalp off.

Norman was so angry that the man would be so stupid as to do that, that he said, “The hell with him. Let’s go on with the climb.” He was going to go on. (Dick now waving his hands “excitedly,” as noted in the interview.)

Question: Were you there? No, I wasn’t there at the time of the fall. I was on another climb and had taken the day off, but Dave Brower was in charge for the day. Of course, the rest of the party wouldn’t leave the man, so someone came dashing back to camp, and they got a stretcher and brought him back. We always had a doctor on these trips. The doctor, fortunately, was a very skillful surgeon. ... And then the doc had to carry him for two days down to the highway in Tuolumne Meadows to get him to a hospital.

Question: This was on a High Trip? Yes, a Sierra Club High Trip. Norman was our official guide. We were paying him, you see, giving him a free trip and paying him to take people on these climbs. I set up a kind of trial that night, and Dave Brower and I and some of the other experts went over it with Norman, and we fired him

that moment. Most people don't know of this incident, and it shouldn't be published, but it should be recorded for history. Norman, poor soul, was born April 8, 1885, and died December 23, 1972.

[Note: In April '92 Leonard, who passed away the next year, provided your author with written permission to quote this interview.] So, Norman was deceased by the time of this interview. Your author is unaware of any other accounts of this matter by those involved. Let's just note we're only hearing one side of the story. The incident, however, does appear in an excellent and very insightful nine-page section on Norman Clyde in Michael Cohen's "The History of the Sierra Club, 1892-1970," 1988. Cohen relies on the Leonard interview, but he also questioned Dave Brower about it, who believed that "Leonard's memory is flawed." In a personal discussion with your author in 1990, Jules Eichorn said that if he had been there, he doesn't think Clyde would have been fired. [Sidenote: though not a member of the RCS, Mike Cohen was a leading Southern California rock climber in the '60s, and he's the spouse of Valerie Mendenhall Cohen.]

Art Argiewicz reported in the Mtneering Notes on the 1941 Base Camp trip, which was centered in the Minarets/Ritter area. Art notes that a subgroup "enjoyed a day of climbing under the leadership of **Jules Eichorn**. An ascent of Eichorn Pinnacle was made." This would have been during the period that Jules was a Yosemite climbing ranger.

Desert Peaks Section

The 8/42 SCB Mtneering Notes records an action of the Executive Committee of the So. Calif. Chapter in approximately late summer of '41, as

recorded by Chester Versteeg.

The Excom has authorized the creation of an honorary climbing section (no dues, no officers, no meetings) to be known as the Desert Peaks Section, membership in which is attained by the ascent of the following seven eastern Calif. desert peaks, two of which, Waucoba Mtn and New York Butte, require the backpacking of a 24-hr water supply; all are best climbed during the spring and autumn; on four, winter ski climbs can be made. The article then provides some detail on the seven, which are: White Mtn, Waucoba Mtn, Telescope Pk, Maturango Pk, Coso Pk, New York Butte and Cerro Gordo.

The first official outing to attain membership in this section was made to New York Butte on Nov 15-16, under the leadership of Niles Werner. The following members made the climb successfully: Braeme Gigas, Harry Paley, Pat Carmical, Katherine Smith, Freda Walbrecht, Bill Crookston, Carl Durrell, James Tow, Harry Greenhood and Niles Werner. All the peaks of the DPS present marvelous desert panoramas; White Mtn and New York Butte present as fine views of the High Sierra as can be found. ..."



DPS Emblem pin.

Related to winning WW II, the "honorary" section was pretty inactive for a few years. It evidently chose to forsake its honorary status in 1946 when it became a "real" section - with dues, officers and meetings. Even today some may view this change as a regression. ☺

The 8/42 Mtneering Notes also record a "New Route on Mt. Whitney" by John Mendenhall. He and Ruth set off from East Face Lake on 10/11/41 "to attempt the impressive Southeast Face, highest rampart of the peak, which falls in great yellow cliffs to the couloir that separates the highest summit of Whitney from Keeler Needle. ... On descent, it was necessary to rappel down ice on the Mountaineers Route. Many enjoyable variations are possible on the ascent, and the route is especially recommended if one proposes early- or late-season climbing, for the way lies in sunshine almost throughout." This would be the couple's last West Coast climb before heading East in support of the war effort. [The line of the SE Face is shown in a photo of Whitney in Secor's "High Sierra," rated Fifth class.] With Ruth's departure, the *Mugelnoos* would have rotating editors, a tradition that has persisted to this day. On her return after the war, Ruth would head the Noos Editorial Committee for many years.

Picking up again Ruth Mendenhall's long essay "Women on the Rocks: Way Back Then" - the final paragraph:

*The institution of **Base Camp** as a residence and social headquarters for skiers and climbers continued for over two years. Sixteen different people lived there, the maximum at any one time being ten and the minimum six. This number included nine women and seven men. Base Camp was reluctantly disbanded on 6 October 1941 because of the difficulties of keeping up the number of residents; defense work and the draft, higher education and romance were taking their toll. ... World War II scattered our crowd all over the world and changed our lives. But when we returned four years later - the mountains were waiting.*

In addition to the Mendenhalls' union, another Base Camp marriage united Howard Koster and Ruth Merrill. Long time resident Joan Dyar would marry Nate Clark (not a resident) in 1944. [Joan was a younger sister to Ruth; Nate was the younger brother of Lewis – both Clarks would be future Sierra Club presidents.]

As noted in the 12/18/41 issue of the Noos: “The first official migration of southern skiers to the new Ostrander Lake hut in Yosemite will take place over New Year’s. ... From Badger Pass to the hut is a six-mile, up-&-down hill trip across wooded country, not difficult but requiring good condition. Utensils are provided at the hut, which is maintained by the Forest Service. There is no lodge fee.” In the very next issue: “The Pear Lake Ski Cabin has been erected by the N.P.S. for the use of skiers in Sequoia National Park. It is reached by six miles of trail from the Wolverton Ski Area. The cabin is free to the public.” A trip was planned for late Feb.



Summit of Waucoba Mtn, 6/07/42 – the earliest known photo of a DPS outing. L-R: Parker Severson, Fred Johnson, Martin Britt, Harry Paley, Rhoda Goertz, Freda Walbrecht, Chester Versteeg, Jim Tow and Morris Vehon. By Niles Werner, Werner Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

1942

Virtually the whole world was at war now, and most mountaineers before long would be either employed in war production or serving in the armed forces. There would be no Sierra Club High Trip again until 1946 and no Mountaineering Notes. Even beyond the war, there would be no report of Norman Clyde’s exploits in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* until the June ’50 issue.

The 1/08/42 Noos headlined:

On Defense: Ski Mountaineering School. Newly appointed So. Calif. members of the Defense Committee of the Calif. Ski Assoc. are Bob Brinton and Chet Errett. The object of the committee is to develop a large body of ski troopers able to fit the requirements and needs of the U.S. Army. Ski Mountaineers interested in this work are invited to attend the first (and subsequent) meeting of the Committee at Belmont High School, Jan 14, 7:30 PM. A course of instruction has been set up independent of but similar to that prepared in San Francisco. ... Skiers completing the course will be recommended by the Calif. Ski Assoc. to the Army as possessing valuable qualifications. All So. Calif. skiers interested in joining the 87th Infantry Mountain Regiment may enroll for the course.

Subsequent issues reported progress in the Belmont High course. “Bob Brinton and Chet Errett, who are defending the ski slopes for democracy, oppose the ski lift system as a weakener of American manhood.” Over 110 were registered for the six-week course. In late Feb. sixty-one passed the final exam (with ten yet to take it).

The 3/05/42 Noos gave a quick review of the new “Manual of Ski Mountaineering.” Compiled under the auspices of the National Ski Assoc. of America, the content was developed in cooperation with the Army. Edited by Dave Brower, the editorial committee included Lewis Clark, Dick Leonard and Bestor Robinson, plus Southland assistance from Bill Rice and Murray Kirkwood. The 135-page book had very little info on skiing technique, but was heavy on winter camping and general backpacking skills. [The second edition would come out in 1946 – then benefitting from the war experiences of Brower and others.]

A sidenote in the 2 April Noos: “Glen Dawson has been showing friends an interesting Japanese book. It describes an early Japanese ascent of Mt. Whitney and includes, ironically enough, a view of the Sierra scarp from Manzanar!” [The first of ten relocation centers, the Manzanar camp would “intern” over 11,000 residents of Japanese descent, most from LA and most of whom were American citizens - and many of whom would fight in the war with great valor. More info here: <http://www.nps.gov/manz/>]

Noted in the 23 April Noos: “Major Bestor Robinson and 1st Lt. Dick Leonard are on the staff of the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C., having joined the Cold Climate Technical Unit. They deal with climatic problems

from 70 degrees below to 110 degrees above, as well as conditions caused by 200 inches of rain.”

Noted in the 14 May Noos – issue #100: “The first two practice outings of the rock climbing season had a combined attendance of over one hundred persons, the largest in history. With Chet Errett as chair, Dr. Clyde Nelson as vice-chair and Bill Shand as secretary - this should be a history-making summer for local rock climbers. If you can’t go on a long vacation this summer – join the rock climbers’ weekends.”

Noted in the 4 June Noos (edited by Bill Rice): “Several dozen So. Calif. rock climbers invaded Yosemite last weekend (Memorial Day) to battle bears, ants, poison oak, manzanita and piton pitches. Also in the valley were Dave Brower, Raffi Bedayan and other esteemed northerners who have helped make Yosemite a climbing paradise. ... Bill Shand, Bill Rice and Clyde Nelson climbed Pulpit Rock, a short but sweet whanger.” [sic]

The May 23-24 bus trip to Tahquitz included **Chuck Wilts** – his first trip to this gnarly crag. [Chuck, a life-time local, earned his BS at Cal Tech in ’41, his MS in ’42, and was now working on his PhD at the Pasadena campus.] To this day, it is Glen Dawson’s recollection (per email of 2/22/08) that: “Late in my climbing career I was at Tahquitz coiling up my rope when I discovered Chuck Wilts had been waiting all day, and no one had bothered to climb with him. So we took a fast trip up Fingertip Traverse together. I think it was his first on the route and my last.” [Yes, the torch was being passed! The Noos of 16 July would note that Chuck led the Fingertip over the July 4th weekend. Two weeks later he became a RCS member!]

Also noted in the 4 June Noos: “The Clyde Nelsons and Chet Erretts will depart within two weeks for a climbing vacation in Wyoming.” [Mrs. Nelson did not go, but Bill Rice would join the trip.]

“We have had the greatest loss imaginable.”

So led the 25 June *Mugelnoos*. Continuing:
Dr. Clyde Nelson and William Rice were killed instantly June 19 by a fall on the Grand Teton in Wyoming. Clyde Nelson was a brilliant Van Nuys physician, taking a last vacation before becoming an Army doctor. He was thirty-one years old, a civic leader and a careful student of mountaineering. Bill Rice had just received his Ph.D. at UCLA, and had a position teaching history at Occidental College next semester. He would have been twenty-seven years old this summer. His first article in

the Quarterly of the California Historical Society has just been published.

Chet and Evelyn Errett were on the trip to the Tetons, but were not climbing at the time of the accident. They were responsible for the prompt search party. No words can express our sorrow and sympathy for Lavina Rice and Dorothy Nelson. They are carrying on as their husbands would wish. The body of Bill Rice was buried in the frontier town of Jackson, WY, near the Yellowstone and Tetons he loved so well. Clyde Nelson’s body will be buried in Forest Lawn, high on the hill. [Although not identified in the Noos, this piece was written by Glen Dawson.]

The lead sentence in the *LA Times* article: “Caught in a sudden swirling storm which forced their two companions to turn back, two Southland men – a physician and a historian – lost their lives on the icy crags of the Grand Teton National Park, near Jackson, WY, last Friday night, it was learned yesterday. ...” A subsequent news article lead: “The broken bodies of two expert California mountain climbers who met death during an icy, after-dark descent of 13,000-foot Grand Teton Peak, were brought to Jackson today.”

The subsequent Noos (7/16/42) carried a long story by Chet Errett: “To the Members of the Sierra Club of California.”

I am writing this account of the accidental and tragic deaths, while climbing the Grand Teton, of Dr. William Rice and Dr. Clyde Nelson, in order that their wives and their many friends may know of the exact circumstances under which the accident occurred. There have been many conflicting stories printed about the accident and as I have given out no official account to any paper, these were mostly suppositions and not entirely true as to the time and conditions.

A brief summary of Chet’s long account: Rice, Nelson, Chet and Evelyn Errett departed from their Garnet Cyn basecamp at 7:30 am. From the Lower Saddle (with the Middle Teton), they headed up the Grand Teton (13,770’), cutting steps with ice axes. [Although there were some crampons at camp, they apparently were not using any today.] Halfway up they traversed over to the Wall Street ramp, where they stowed their axes, except Clyde kept his. Bill changed from nailed boots to Keds (tennis shoes) for lead climbing now on the Upper Exum route. It was quite cold but not stormy. At 4:30 the summit was not over 300’ above them and “we still had 5.5 hours of good daylight left.” As four on a rope was slow and as “the weather was too cold to make climbing enjoyable,”

the Erretts started back down. However, Bill and Clyde decided to go on and leave a summit register given to Bill by the park ranger. Not expecting to need it the rest of the way up, Clyde gave his ax to Chet.

Bill and Clyde continued up – never to be seen alive again. Part way down the Erretts waited for 1.5 hrs. Then thinking their companions may have changed their minds and come down by the Owen route, Chet and Evelyn descended to Wall Street. But the axes were still there. The Erretts then descended to the Lower Saddle to wait out of the wind and bivied there, assuming their friends were doing the same higher up. The next day Chet sent Evelyn down for help.

The rangers, who discovered the broken roped-up bodies not too far from the Lower Saddle, concluded that “they had both been instantly killed.” Bill still had the register, so they had aborted their ascent. Also, their flashlight was still in a pack and working, so they were most likely moving before dark. In his report, Chet surmised:

At some point before reaching the place [on the Owen route] where they were to cross and get their ice axes, either one or both slipped on the frozen snow or a rolling rock may have knocked them off their feet, and they slid all the way down the couloir, which was filled with numerous projecting rocks. ... I believe that they too had started down before reaching the summit, living up to the name of the excellent mountaineers they were, and to the code of the club to which they belonged. Some simple misfortune overtook them, God alone knows how or why. ... Words will never tell how much they will be missed or our sorrow for their loved ones. May their spirit of good manhood live forever, and their code of mountaineering be carried on by their comrades of the Sierra Club.

Further comments. Today, if perhaps not then, it is considered ill-advised to be roped up on slippery slopes unless a belay or anchor is used. The rope connecting the two men was 80' long, typical of that period. The Tetons had heavier snows than previous winter than normal. This was not Bill Rice's first ascent of the Grand, as he climbed in the Tetons while working at a Yellowstone hotel the summer of '38. The subsequent ranger report claims he “made several ascents of the Grand during 1941.” Clyde Nelson had climbed on Cascade volcanoes in August '40. For sure, neither man was out of his element. Per Errett: “It was Rice's wish that if misfortune should ever overtake him while climbing, that his body be buried as near the scene as possible.” Your author had the pleasure of meeting with Chet Errett at his Hollywood Hills home in 1990, but obtained no new insights. [Chet passed away in '94, just short of 89.]

On 6/28 there was a memorial service for Rice at a church near the UCLA campus. Professor John Caughey's tribute, also printed in a booklet, largely focused on his student's brilliant academic career, but not entirely: “Attracted to the mountains of California, Bill Rice introduced himself to Glen Dawson, who became his steadfast friend and initiated him into the mysteries of mountaineering: skiing and rock climbing. Here was a hobby that meant much to Bill. In it he developed a high degree of expertness. In it he found comradery that was the best he had yet encountered. In it he found friends both warm and firm.”

As noted in Tribute Part IV, on 8/11/36 Bill Rice and Torcom Bedayan (Raffi's brother) climbed Fourth and Fifth Minarets – the pinnacles then becoming Rice and Bedayan Minarets!

The August '42 *SCB* had a note of historical interest by Bill Rice in its Notes section. The June '43 *SCB* would feature a seventeen-page article by Rice, “A Synthesis of Muir Criticism.” Submitted much earlier, it was published without the benefit of his final editing. Both Nelson and Rice were childless at the time of their deaths. However, Mrs. Nelson delivered a daughter, Clydea, on 9 Oct, and Mrs. Rice gave birth to Carolyn on 11 December!

Although there had been occasional broken bones here and there, amazingly, in nearly ten years of extensive high-angle RCS activities by the Los Angeles and San Francisco Chapters, including far off gnarly adventures, there had never been a fatality. The Sierra Club prided itself on being very safety conscious and in its climbers not accepting undue risk. Although the accident was a private trip, the Club's sense of invincibility, such as it may have existed, was shattered forever. Ironically, the August '42 *SCB* featured a fourteen-page article by Morgan Harris: “Safety Last?” This was a rhetorical question. The final sentence in this piece: “Here is an enviable reputation for us to seek: not the most daring mountaineers in the world, but the safest.”

Both Rock Climbing Sections would continue to thrive, but for many it was a time of deep mourning and reflection. Dick Jones, who had once briefly roomed with Rice near UCLA, told your author in 1990 that he and Glen Dawson cried for a week after the accident. It is not a coincidence that before long Dick and Adrienne Jones faded out of rock climbing. In addition to becoming focused on raising children, Dick said that the tragic accident “had taken the fun out of climbing.” Several times Glen has told your author that he and Mary Helen were deeply affected.

RCS records indicate that Glen and Mary Helen attended the 8/15-16 trip to Tahquitz – their last time at this venue. A year later, 8/22/43, Glen the led an Eagle Rock practice session – although remaining a member, this was his last event as a RCS trip leader.

It is finally time now to pick up the pace in this multi-part Tribute narrative - time to begin the “fast forward.”

Glen Dawson at War

A quick summary of Glen Dawson’s war service was provided to your author by Glen in an email on 2/22/08: *I was not drafted until 1943 when I was 31 years old. I took basic training at Camp Hale (Colorado) and took two notable trips, a New Year’s climb of Mts. Elbert and Massive and the Trooper Traverse from near Leadville to Aspen. I taught skiing to two classes, one of medical personnel and one of officers. I became a T/5 or Corporal. I was sent to Seneca Rock in West Virginia but, before doing any teaching of rock climbing, was transferred to Company I, 85th Mt. Infantry, Camp Swift, Texas where I was acting squad leader. Just before going overseas I was transferred to Hdq. Company 85th. to become a clerk to Maj. Kober, Intelligence Officer. Near the end of the war I was sent to a hotel at Gross Glockner in Austria. Instead of teaching there I was briefly in charge of the kitchen supplies of the unit. I was on my way to Japan when the war ended, and I returned to my family and bookselling.*

Hold on - let’s back up a minute. More info is available from *Mugelnoos* entries, which tracked the varied wartime activities of RCS/SMS members, as well as from the *Sierra Club Bulletin* tracking more broadly. A fairly detailed source on Glen’s

service available to your author is “Hurry Up and Wait,” an informative and entertaining autobiographical reminiscence with photos penned by Glen in 2000. It is based on period correspondence plus his selective memory of long-ago events.

... I was involved with Ski Mountaineering classes held at Belmont High School in Los Angeles with Bob Brinton, Chet Errett and others. It was part of a recruitment program of the National Ski Patrol for Mountain Troops. I once figured that I was partially responsible for about forty men going in the Tenth Mtn Division. When my [draft] number finally came up, it was natural for me to also exercise my right to be assigned to [what would



Glen Dawson’s infantry badge, Bronze Star and dog tag. By Bob Cates, his collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

become] the Tenth Mtn Division.

Glen was classified 1-A on 2 May ’43 and inducted that 2 September. He would serve two years. Regarding some of his time at Camp Hale, when he was in the Mountain Training Group: *So far I don’t think I am worth what the Army has spent on me. I have learned to turn out when they want us, with equipment they say, and walk in circles without asking why. ... There is a lot of waste and bungling and waiting, but there is a lot of power being developed here and I suppose someday it will all be put in action somewhere.*

12/30/43: *Just returned from a three-day trip, much of it on skis, climbing both Elbert and Massive, second and third highest peaks in the U.S. - not counting Alaska. The day between climbs was a long haul with rucksacks. Massive was a long cold climb, but I was all fixed up with face mask, parka, double mitts and Bermonti boots. ... Some of the time I was helping break trail and selecting route. There were some seventy on the trip.*

[This event is described in greater detail in Glen’s letter, dated 1/06/44, appearing in the 10/44 SCB. The reader is urged to Google “Trooper Traverse” for info on this cool February ’44 crossing of the Rockies: four days, fifty miles, 33 men – including Glen, Sgt. Paul Petzoldt and Pvt. Fred Beckey!]

4/13/44: *This afternoon we went skiing for the first time this week. We really have a skiing outfit now. ... They are really top notch. I am out-classed on skiing but I seem to be getting along OK.*

May ’44: *Mary Helen and Keith [born March ’43; Karen would be born Oct ’44] had planned to come to live in a house I had rented in Leadville, CO, but instead met me in Petersburg, WV. I was assigned*

as a rock climbing instructor at Camp Seneca at Seneca Rocks. [However, before long Glen was off to Camp Swift, TX, and now part of the 85th Mtn Regiment.]

As a skiing and rock climbing instructor, I had the rank of T/5, Technician Fifth Grade, equivalent to a Corporal. There was really no place for a T/5 in an Infantry Company, but I was made an acting squad leader. ... About this time some general up top decided that we should have gas masks. The ones issued were said to be of World War I vintage. At any rate they were faded heavy cloth bags, beginning to rot. We carried them by a cloth strap around our necks. We were not given instruction in how to use them, even if they were still operable. It has been said there are two ways to do a job: the right way and the Army way.

On 13 January 1945 Glen, now part of the Headquarters Company of the 85th, and his regiment landed in Naples, Italy – then under Allied control. This was his 3rd trip to Europe. On the first, in 1928 at age 16, he and his dad climbed the Matterhorn with guides (cited in Tribute Part I). The second was in 1935 – part of his around-the-world book learning trip (cited in Tribute Part IV).

I was the Clerk for S2 (Intelligence) officer Major Kober of the 85th Mtn Infantry. I was part of the office staff of the regiment. ... The closest I got to a real battle was at Mt. Belvedere. We climbed up a steep muddy trail on a dark night to a hillside farm house. I stayed there overnight with a lot of coming and going. Mostly soldiers going up, but some wounded ones coming down. Later in daylight hours I was assigned to reporting by phone results of air strikes by small planes on the ridge of Mt. Belvedere.

An April 20-24 letter to Mary Helen: *Many new and unpleasant sights, dusty roads, troop movements, dead animals, dead men, burning buildings, prisoners, wounded, battle shocked, supposed rear echelon outfits finding themselves in front of infantry.*” For me the rapid rush across the Po Valley north toward the Alps stopped at Malcesine on the shores of Lake Garda. ... Here on 2 May 1945 we got the news of the surrender of the German Army in Italy. Some of our soldiers celebrated by firing their M1 rifles and machine guns into the air – probably the most dangerous fifteen minutes of my Army career.

In late May Glen’s regiment was moved to Tarcento, near the Yugoslav border. “There was much speculation about going to school, going direct to Asia, or going home for thirty days before going to Japan. ... Another long day I had signed up for a ski trip arranged by Lt. Dave Brower, but instead of skiing I climbed Mt.

Mangart, about 8900’ on the Yugoslavian border.” While in Tarcento, and not having much to do, Glen was able to hitch hike to Berchtesgaden in Germany to briefly visit with his brother Muir. [Muir, who had entered the Army much sooner, had earlier also been involved in the brief Aleutian campaign.]

Before long Glen was assigned to the Gross Glockner Mtneering School near Heiligenblut in Austria. *From nothing to do, I had the most responsibility of any time in the Army. ... My job was not to teach, but as an assistant to Lt. Montague responsible for running the hotel. Counting instructors and students there were 330 men. ... I had a few walks on the glacier but never had time for an ascent of the Gross Glockner. I had to help plan classes and excursions for others.*

It was a long dirty trip by truck and boxcar from Austria to Naples, but with a few days in Florence and a tour of Pompeii. We were told we would have twenty-one days furlough before going to Japan, but we were in New York harbor on VJ day and the war was finally over. I was honorably discharged at Ft. MacArthur on 10 October 1945.

Something not mentioned by Glen in his reminiscence was noted, however, in the 5/10/45 *Mugelnoos*: “Glen Dawson was awarded the Bronze Star for service on Mt. Bevedere, Italy.” In 1996 Glen published privately a miniature book, “Letters to Emily – 1943-45.” This was an entertaining collection of letters from Uncle Glen to his young niece Emily Shochat. Many books have been written about the wartime exploits of the Tenth Mtn Division, for example, “Climb to Conquer” by Peter Shelton, 2003. There would be annual reunions of the Tenth Mtn Division – usually with skiing on Cooper Mtn near the Camp Hale site. However, with so very few 10th veterans left that can travel, the 2007 Reunion in Denver was announced as the last!

[PFC Carleton Shay was also a member the 10th Mtn Division, with an extended period at Camp Hale and as a rock climbing instructor. He served with the 87th Mtn Infantry in Italy as a radio operator. He and Glen, however, never intersected during their war service.]

Jules Eichorn did not serve in the armed forces during WW II. He had a medical disability related to a respiratory condition known as valley fever. **Norman Clyde** was too old to serve – and besides he would be needed to search for downed aircraft in the Sierra and the like.

Not everyone was serving in the military, of course. Many were employed locally in the war industry – like Dick Jones and **Chuck Wilts**. In 1944 Chuck would join with Austin Spencer for the first free (non-aided) ascent of Higher Cathedral Spire (5.8). The next year the duo would put up the classic SE Buttress route (5.6) on Cathedral Peak in Yosemite. That same year he instructed Ellen Beaumont in rock climbing. Chuck and Ellen would wed in June '47 and, like the Mendenhalls, would put up new routes in the Sierra and in Canada. Chuck has the unique distinction of twice serving as RCS Chair ('45-46 & '48-49) and twice as SMS Chair ('55-56 & '63-64). Ellen was SMS Chair '52-53.

Bill Shand also climbed locally during the first half of the war. RCS Chair for '42-43, he edited the first edition of "A Climber's Guide to Tahquitz Rock." The nine pages sold for ten cents. Tragically, it was while driving to Wyoming to climb the Grand Teton, his favorite peak, that Bill died in an auto accident in Nevada on 11 August 1946. In his honor his parents wanted to gift the Sierra Club in an appropriate way. As noted in *Mugelnoos* stories, a serious effort was devoted toward building a hut in the Sierra, then later in the Tetons – but nothing came of it. Finally, the funds were devoted by the Club toward its high sierra guides, and Bill Shand's bio and portrait appeared in many editions.

Hundred Peaks Section

Sidenote - as reported in the 11/01/45 *Mugelnoos*:
NEW MOUNTAIN GAME: "Good morning. Have you made your hundred peaks yet?" This may be a new form of greeting between southern Sierrans soon. Weldon Heald's private peak collecting hobby inspired this **Hundred Peaks Game** that is being started in the So. Calif. Chapter. It can be played by anyone with ambition, strong legs and good lungs – intelligence isn't necessary. The object is to climb 100 So. Calif. mountains over 5000 feet high. Weldon has compiled a list of 176 named "official summits" between the Tehachapi and the Mexican border, and has himself climbed exactly half of these. All who wish to be counted should get in touch with him. The purpose of the game isn't actually "peak grabbing" at all, but to make Sierra Club members more familiar with the wonderful mountain country right at their back doors.

This enterprise was reported in more detail by Weldon in the 12/46 *SCB Mtneering Notes*: "One Hundred Mountain Tops." In it he lists 188 peaks. "Additions are welcome." The Hundred Peaks Game eventually



Ellen and Chuck Wilts atop Mt. Lyell, August 1947. From their collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

became, with a jump-start from Walt Wheelock, the Hundred Peaks Section in 1954. Although he may have reached a hundred, Weldon never completed the list, a feat first achieved by R.S. (Sam) Fink in December '56. The list currently stands at 276 peaks and, according to the HPS website, Mars Bonfire has completed it twelve times, Carleton Shay evidently settling for second place at ten finishes. One of the original listed summits is Dawson Peak (9575'), just NE of Mt. San Antonio in the San Gabriels. It was named by surveyor Don McLain in 1920 for Glen Dawson's father Ernest, a prominent early member of the Sierra Club (and Club President in 1935-37).

A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra

The 8/42 *SCB* produced another in the Club's guide series, "A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra, Part VI - The Evolution Region and the Black Divide," by Dave Brower and Alan Hedden. Recall, the regions covered in Part I - V were: Sawtooth Ridge, Ritter Range, Palisades, Yosemite Valley, and the Whitney Region. Then the 5/51 *SCB* would produce both "Part VII - The Kings-Kern Divide & Adjacent Crest" by Hervey Vogé, and "Part VIII - The Clark Range & Adjacent Peaks" by Dick Leonard. As previously noted, this series formed the basis for all future Sierra climbing guides. For sure, it heavily contributed to the Club's first consolidated guide, the 1954 edition of "Climber's Guide to the High Sierra," edited by Hervey Vogé. The second edition in 1965, also by Vogé, dropped the Yosemite Valley Chapter, as this area was now represented in "A Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley," 1964, edited by Steve Roper (then age 22). The third edition of the high sierra guide listed Vogé

as co-editor, but it was Andy Smatko, the other co-editor (and SPS luminary), who was principally in charge. This union resulted in "A Mountaineer's Guide to the High Sierra," 1972, a work that intentionally omitted all routes above 4th class. Then, in 1972, Steve Roper edited what should probably be considered the 4th edition of "Climber's Guide to the High Sierra." A "totebook" more easily carried in the field, it restored the technical routes. For sure, the continual expansion of new routes made it hard to keep these guides a reasonable size. No one is likely to carry R. J. Secor's "High Sierra" guide in his back pocket! ☺

In May '46 Francis Farquhar stepped down as editor of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, a position he had held for twenty-one years, since 1925. It was under his stewardship that the *Bulletin* became one of the world's leading mountaineering journals. It is no secret that this Tribute series leans very heavily on the *SCB* for material. Francis was succeeded by Dave Brower. As the Club evolved, and as it expanded (the first chapter outside California would be the Atlantic Chapter in 1950), there was over time a shift to an even greater focus on conservation relative to outings, or at least less on gnarly outings. In lieu of mountaineering coverage in the *SCB* (later *Sierra* magazine), starting in 1967 the Club produced *Ascent*, edited by Steve Roper and Allen Steck. Twelve issues of this superb publication appeared through 1984. In 1993 there was "The Best of Ascent," a retrospective. Finally, in 1999, Roper and Steck came out with another issue of *Ascent*, produced this time by the American Alpine Club.

Francis Farquhar, who served on the Sierra Club board from 1924 to '51 (twice as president), went on to write the classic "History of the Sierra Nevada," 1965. He donated his prized mountaineering library, one of the nation's largest private collections, to the UCLA library - with instructions that it be made available to climbers! Soon thereafter, in 1967, he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from the school. Francis died at his home in Berkeley in November 1974. His widow, **Marjory Bridge Farquhar**, one of America's outstanding pioneer women climbers, passed away in January 1999 at 95. [Related to Tribute research, your author was privileged to meet with Marj twice at her Berkeley home: 8/89 and 4/90 – the first time in the company of Jules Eichorn.]

In 1970 the Sierra Club established the Francis P. Farquhar Mountaineering Award, which honors an individual's contribution to mountaineering and enhancement of the

Club's prestige in this field. It was first presented in that year to Norman Clyde and Allen Steck; then in '71 to Dick Leonard, in '72 to Jules Eichorn, in '73 to Glen Dawson, in '74 to Marj Farquhar, in '78 to John & Ruth Mendenhall, in '81 to Sam Fink, in '94 to Randall Danta and Doug Mantle, in '01 to Andy Smatko, and in '03 to Barbara Lilley. A complete list of honorees is available on the Club's website: http://www.sierraclub.org/awards/downloads/award_sr.pdf - (on page 16).

On the 1932 High Trip an unnamed gnarly summit NW of Mt. Brewer was climbed for the first time by Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson and others. In 1989 it officially became **Mt. Francis Farquhar** - 12,893', 3rd class. Per R. J. Secor's "High Sierra" guide, "This is a beautiful peak, and all of its routes are splendid." It is not on the SPS peak list.



Jules Eichorn with Marjory Farquhar at her Berkeley home, August 1989. Author's collection.

High Trips

Right, the Club's High Trips resumed in 1946, but Norman Clyde was no longer a technical guide. Indeed, the annual HT reports in the *SCB* no longer heralded how many hundreds of man-ascents were achieved. Although the Mountaineering Notes resumed with quite gnarly adventures in the Sierra and far beyond, it no longer summarized High Trip climbs. For one thing, the mountaineers and climbers had other and better options, including the Club's knapsack trips. For another, the High Trips were changing, changing in the direction of smaller. Starting in 1946 the High Trips had a max of 125

members, which persisted to 1966. But even that size, and using fewer mules and spread over three two-week periods, still had an undesirable impact. The last “High Trip” was in 1972. It was for two weeks and had special permission to allow fifty participants. Make no mistake, the Sierra Club continues to sustain an elaborate National (and International) Outings program, as evidenced by vast trip listings in *Sierra* magazine. The trips just leave a much smaller footprint now!

Wrapping up a few early LA/RCS stars

Art Johnson passed away in Oct '84 at 78. He was the founding chair of the RCS and served a critical three-year tenure. His first ascents at Tahquitz include four classics: Fingertip Traverse, Piton Pooper, White Maiden's Walkaway and Traitor Horn (1936-38). His climbing career concluded shortly after the war, but not his service to the Sierra Club. In the early '50s Art served a term both as Angeles Chapter Chair and on the Sierra Club board, where he was a strong voice for conservation. He later had a term as Executive Director of the Desert Protection Council. Art's obit in the '85 *AAJ* was penned by John Ripley.



Dick and Adrienne Jones in the mountains, c. 1945. Glen Warner Collection.

Dick Jones left this world on 6/16/95 at 82; followed on 2/22/00 by **Adrienne** at 84. Her passing was noted in the *Los Angeles Times*, as she was a national award-winning author of books for young people (1952-'87). Your author had a wonderful meeting with the couple at their Laguna Niguel home in October '90. They had two children and I am indebted to Gwen Jones Rinehart, whom I met in West LA in Oct. '07, for recollections and climbing-related photos of her parents. She noted that

as a youth Dick had a less than happy home life, and she thinks that her dad felt that Glen Dawson was the best thing that ever happened to him – until Adrienne came along! Close boyhood chums since grammar school, Dick and Glen were also active as youths in the Western Rangers and the Trailfinders, led by Harry James and Carl Sharsmith. Quoting now part of a message to your author from Glen dated 9/07/01:

Dick and I made trips together on foot and by bicycle to the pre-freeway Arroyo Seco, then a wilderness of jungle, streams and lakes to hunt for “water dogs” (salamanders), frogs and snakes. At the Arroyo Seco Recreation Center we took classes in tumbling in which Dick excelled and classes in playing the harmonica. For years Dick entertained us at campfires playing the harmonica. We borrowed my mother's Overland and the two of us, and sometimes with Dick's sister, Rachel (“Sis”), took trips to the seashore, mountains and deserts. [It didn't hurt Dick's climbing that he excelled as a gymnast.]



Adrienne and Dick Jones at their Laguna Niguel home, October 1990. Author's collection.

Gwen found this entry in Dick's high school journal for Sunday, 24 Feb 1929: “Glen, Fern [Glen's sister], Sis and I went to church and then to Santa Monica beach. Glen and I took pictures of seagulls and pelicans. ... I

don't know how I will ever repay Glen for the good times I enjoy being with him." Recall, Dick and Glen shared many gnarly climbs, including first ascents in Zion, the first ascent of the East Buttress of Whitney, and the first ascent of the Mechanics Route at Tahquitz, which Dick led.

In the summer of 2001 Gwen's three boys embarked on a five-day trans-Sierra backpack from Mineral King to Whitney Portal. On August 18, the 62nd anniversary of their grandparents marriage, they scattered Dick and Adrienne's ashes down the East Face of Whitney, a route the young pair long ago had both ascended and descended.

John and Ruth Mendenhall remained quite active in the SMS and RCS for many years after the war, and they climbed extensively in the Sierra, Canada and abroad. Ruth headed the *Mugelnoos* editorial committee until 1978. She or they wrote several books, including "Introduction to Rock and Mountain Climbing" in 1969. In the '70s Ruth served two terms on the American Alpine Club board. In 1961 Ruth and John climbed the Hornli Ridge on the Matterhorn. This effort was preceded in June 1959 by the "first ascent" by Ruth, along with Chuck and Ellen Wilts, of the Matterhorn at Disneyland on its opening day, as recorded in "Woman on the Rocks." They signed the Sierra Club register on the summit and then rapped off. Afterwards the ladies were delighted to shake hands with Vice President and Mrs. Nixon, who had sought them out.

Upon John's retirement in 1978 the couple relocated to Seattle. John passed away there on 7/30/83, three weeks after suffering a stroke while on a climbing trip to the Tetons. Ruth left this world on

3/22/89. John's obit in the 1984 *AAJ* was written by John Ripley; Ruth's in the 1990 *Journal* was penned by her older daughter, Vivian Mendenhall. "Ruth requested that her ashes be scattered near John's at a special spot in the mountains." [Location unknown to your author.]



Chuck Wilts (left) and Royal Robbins at Big Rock, 1977. From Wilts Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

Chuck Wilts went on to an illustrious climbing career (and academic career at Cal Tech). In 1946-47 Chuck and Spencer Austin competed with John Salathe and Anton Nelson to make the first ascent of Lost Arrow Spire, barely losing out. He published the second edition of the "Guide to Tahquitz Rock" in 1956, rating the routes by using what was initially called the Sierra-Wilts Decimal System – but later the Yosemite Decimal System, which name he preferred. There would be six editions, the last three as "Guide to Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks." Chuck died of a heart attack on 3/12/91 while hiking on Echo Mtn in the San Gabriels. His obit in the 1992 *AAJ* was penned by his climbing and life partner, Ellen Wilts. Quoting her: "Chuck had a joy of living, a

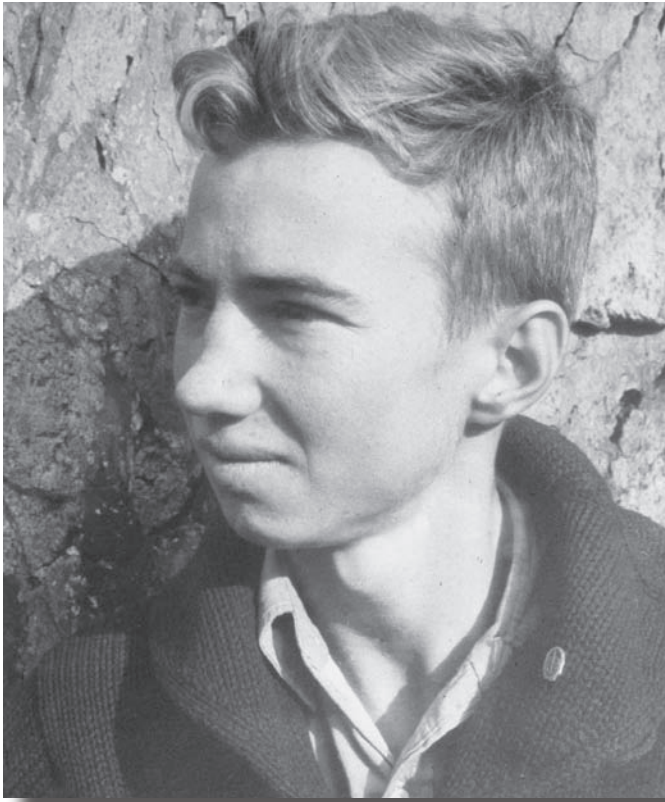
ready smile, a contagious laugh and displayed great enthusiasm for all the activities he undertook. Chuck leaves a record of many achievements and interests, but the one that remained to the end was a lifelong love affair with the wilderness of mountains." [Your author, accompanied by Glen Dawson, had a delightful visit with Ellen in Pasadena in October '07.]

[Your author, accompanied by Glen Dawson, had a delightful visit with Ellen in Pasadena in October '07. Very sad late update: Ellen Wilts passed away 3/04/08 at age 82.]

In 1989, as result of skyrocketing insurance premiums, the Sierra Club could no longer allow technical outings, i.e., those involving ropes and ice axes. This immediately led to the demise of all Rock Climbing Sections. In the south, most RCS members joined the newly-created So. California Mtneering Assoc. (SCMA). When technical climbing was restored a few years later, with greater oversight, the LA and SF RCSs remained dormant, although rock climbing is occasionally conducted by a few chapters around the country. The *Mugelnoos* continues to publish as the newsletter of the Ski Mtneering Section. The February '08 issue is #804. The Sierra Peaks Section, of course, continues to make technical ascents in the High Sierra – keeping alive a mountaineering tradition that extends back to the Club's founder, John Muir, and which had its greatest flowering in the 1930s with youth such as Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn.

Then to now: Glen Dawson

Glen never served as RCS Chair, but he was SMS Chair for the '46-47 year. He and his young family, Susan (his third) born in 1948, went on two Basecamp High Sierra trips. His service on the Sierra Club's Board, begun in 1935 and interrupted by war service,



Glen Dawson on 1929 High Trip, Tuolumne Mdw. By Ansel Adams, Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

ended in 1951. Glen was a Pasadena scout master in the late 50s when his son Keith was a Boy Scout. [SPSer Mark Goebel was also in the troop at that time!]

Recall, Honorary Membership in the LA/RCS went first to Norman Clyde in 1937, then to Robert Underhill the next year. Fast forward to 1976 when the 3rd honor then went to RCSer Royal Robbins; then to Glen Dawson in '77; and to Art Johnson, Ruth & John Mendenhall, and



Glen and Muir Dawson at the Angeles Chapter Banquet, 3/18/00. Author's collection.

Chuck & Ellen Wilts, all in '78.

Glen Dawson is a renowned bookman, with an emphasis in antiquarian books. When his dad Ernest passed away in 1947, brother Muir came on as a full partner in Dawson's Book Shop. The shop's 50th Anniversary was celebrated in 1955. [The Centennial celebration was in 2005!] Glen and Muir's wives, Mary Helen and Agnes, also helped significantly with the business. Many books and series were published, including the Early California Travels Series (50 volumes) and the Baja California Travels Series (50 volumes), and also numerous miniature books. Glen has served in high offices and received numerous high honors related to the book trade and his involvement in historical societies. His eightieth and again his ninetieth (2002) birthday celebrations attracted large audiences of associates and fans. [Your author was privileged to attend the 80th, and also in October 2007 a special dinner in Pasadena upon the publication of "The Dawson 80," a selection of distinguished southern California books made by members of the Book Collectors of Southern California.]



L-R: Glen Dawson, Master of Ceremonies Doug Mantle and John Robinson at SPS 50th Anniversary Banquet, 10/16/05. By Bob Cates, his collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

Glen retired in 1995. When brother Muir passed away in February 2005, his son Michael took over sole ownership of the Book Shop, continuing the Dawson legacy. Glen's wife of 62 years, Mary Helen, left this world in November 2002. The devoted couple's three offspring so far have provided seven grandkids and two great grandkids.

Glen's name endures in the High Sierra as Dawson Minaret (4th class), first climbed by Glen, Jules Eichorn and Dick Jones in August '33 during the search for Walter Starr, Jr.

Glen Dawson attended the SPS's 50th Anniversary

Banquet on 10/15/05. The program consisted of a splendid video of edited interviews with thirty-six SPS climbers, including five founding members, conducted and produced by Dave Sholle. Copies of the complete DVD may be purchased from Dave for \$10 (payable to SPS, includes S&H).

Then to now: Jules Eichorn

[Author's note: for sure, this series suffers in the comparative dearth of material on Jules Eichorn. This results primarily from the fact that Jules did not write articles for the *SCB* or elsewhere on his many exploits, nor did he maintain photo albums during his climbing career. Also, your author did not have access to the archives of the San Francisco Chapter or RCS, should they exist. Sidenote: In the 1994 *American Alpine Journal* Jules wrote the obit for Dick Leonard, who passed away the prior year. Note: The *Journal* is accessible on the web: <http://www.americanalpineclub.org/pages/page/47>]



Jules Eichorn, probably on 1929 High Trip. By Ansel Adams, David Eichorn Collection.

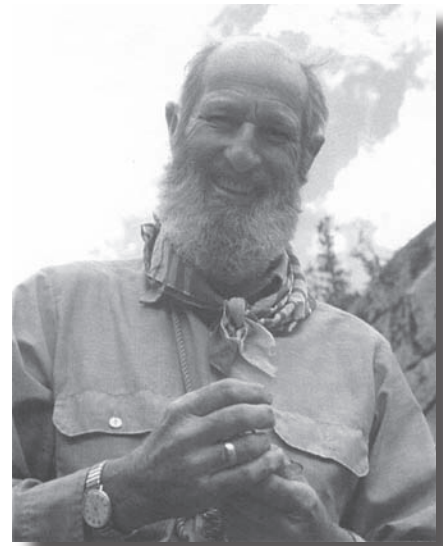
Jules Eichorn and Glen Dawson first met only incidentally when

they climbed Big Kaweah on the 1927 High Trip – both then 15. However, it wasn't until 1930 that they intentionally paired up and went wild (as noted in Tribute Part I). Jules pretty much dropped out of the SF/RCS when his family came along. Following his muse, he had a distinguished thirty-five year career as a high school music teacher, retiring in 1973. And, he continued to adventure in high places. The exact dates are not available to your author, but for many years in the 1950s period Jules engaged Norman Clyde to assist him in taking about a dozen high school boys on month-long summer backpacks into the High Sierra. In 1959 he joined his good friend Smoke Blanchard on a small expedition to Mt. Logan. Quoting now from Jules Eichorn's 1982 interview in the Sierra Club Oral History Project series with the Bancroft Library (published in 1985) regarding this trip:



Jules Eichorn at 18,000' on Mt. McKinley, 1961. Provided to author by Jules Eichorn.

We were camped at 18,000', and I had had a strep infection in February, and this was June, and



Jules Eichorn, c. early-1990s. From his memorial service card, 2000.

it hadn't cleared up completely. I didn't know that. So, since the weather had been good we were backpacking twelve hours a day toward the mountain. I suddenly collapsed and was unconscious for three days - at 18,000'. Fortunately Dr. Nort Benner had penicillin and injected me with probably about 100,000 units. On the third day, I awakened with this cold hand on my fanny, wondering what that was all about. A little bit unusual. I was sort of weak, but in the meantime, four of the party had climbed the highest peak of Mt. Logan and come down, waiting for me to wake up, if I was going to, which I suddenly did. I had something to eat, put on a fifty pound pack, and walked out. I was really amazed to think that I was unconscious all that time

In 1961 Jules joined one of Smoke's trips to McKinley. However, related to altitude acclimatization issues, he did not summit. In the early '70s Jules also occasionally helped Smoke in the latter's role as Director of the Palisades School of Mtneering (PSOM). In the '70s, up to 1977, Jules led several expeditions for



Norman Clyde overseeing pancakes during Jules Eichorn's high school boys Sierra trip, c. 1950s. David Eichorn Collection.

Leo LeBon's Mountain Travel company. These included treks in Nepal, Bhutan, Kashmir, Darjeeling, and to Everest basecamp. He also led a couple of climbing trips to Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya.

Jules became increasingly involved as an environmental activist in the Sierra Club. Having first served as chair of the Loma Prieta Chapter in the late '50s, he served two terms on the Club's board of directors: 1961-67 - a pretty turbulent period for the board. He would remain a staunch environmentalist to the end.

Your author was blessed to be befriended by Jules and his wife Shirley beginning in 1989. Over the next few years I was an overnight guest at their Redwood City home a couple of times, and they mine in Los Angeles. Though in poor health, on 9/07/97, Jules was able to fully participate in the dedication of the Jules M. Eichorn Grove in Big Basin Redwoods State Park in the Santa Cruz Mtns. This gift to posterity was provided by Shirley. Soon after turning 88, on 15 February 2000, Jules passed

away peacefully at home. I was able to make it to the wonderful memorial/celebration service for Jules at the Eichorn Grove on 20 May. Many family members and good friends shared stories, and I was privileged to say a few words about Jules' mountaineering exploits. "A Final Tribute" to Jules Eichorn appeared in the March-April 2000 *Sierra Echo*.

Married three times, his final eighteen years with Shirley, at his death Jules had eleven children and step children, eighteen grandkids and ten great grandkids. His obit in the 2001 *American Alpine Journal* was penned by Glen Dawson with support of Cameron Burns. [Note: the obit for Dave Brower, who passed away on 11/05/00, immediately follows it.] Quoting Glen from his *Echo* tribute contribution:

... Jules and I saw each other on only a few occasions after 1934, but kept in occasional touch by mail and phone. We were linked together by being part of the first ascent party of the East Face of Whitney. We shared the experience of two mountain storms: one on Thunderbolt Peak and one with Ted Waller on Devil's Crags. Jules was taller than I am, expert in music, and expert in camp cookery. We considered ourselves co-leaders, usually climbing with one or two others, but sometimes just the two of us. Jules was always a gentleman, kind and considerate. He climbed with the same verve as he played the piano.

In an 11/06/07 message to your author from Jules' first child, David Eichorn, he wrote:

Scattering my Dad's ashes: The party consisted of my sister Julie and her husband, her son James and his wife, my brother Peter and his wife and their son and daughter, and my wife Jeanette and me. I believe it was August 2003. We walked in to Lake Ediza and camped below the lake. The next day we walked up near Iceberg Lake and found some meadows that were coated with beautiful orange paintbrush, pretty much under Eichorn Minaret. We stood on a bluff facing east and each took handfuls of Dad's ashes and threw them to the winds. It was a special moment for us all. The area was so spectacular. ... Note added by Julie in a separate message: After his ashes were scattered, a number of family members took a cross-country walk to the area above Iceberg Lake. While overlooking the lake we saw a large number of sun dogs - a beautiful sight - and we strongly felt Dad's presence and that he was where he belonged. A sweet memory.

Jules' name endures in the High Sierra as Eichorn Pinnacle (5.4), first climbed by Jules and Glen Dawson on the 1931 High Trip, and Eichorn Minaret (4th class), first topped a week later by our same duo with another lad, Walter Brem.



Norman Clyde in his early '20s, probably while attending Geneva College. Dennis Kruska Collection.

Then to now: Norman Clyde

Author's note: there is a large body of literature available on Norman Clyde – much of it written by Norman himself as a means of support. Much less is available about the man carrying that huge pack. Excellent sources that have biographical material include: "[Norman Clyde of the Sierra Nevada – Rambles Through the Range of Light](#)," twenty-nine essays on the mountains by Norman Clyde, forward by Francis Farquhar, prologue by Jules Eichorn, and a long letter from Smoke Blanchard, Scrimshaw Press, 1971; "[Walking Up & Down in the World - Memories of a Mtn Rambler](#)," by Smoke Blanchard, Sierra Club Books, 1985; "[Close Ups of the High Sierra](#)," by Norman Clyde, originally edited by Walt Wheelock, Spotted Dog Press, 2004; and "[Twenty-five Letters from Norman Clyde, 1923-1964](#)," by Dennis Kruska and dedicated to Glen Dawson, Dawson's Book Shop, 1998.

The first book above was produced by Dave Bohn the year before Clyde's death. Norman was able to



Portrait of Norman Clyde taken at his Baker Creek cabin by SPSer Tom Ross, c. 1960s. Tom Ross Collection.

participate in a special book-signing event at Spellbinder Book Shop in Bishop on 11 December 1971. That evening he was the honored guest at a public dinner at which Jules Eichorn also spoke – and it was the last time Clyde spoke in public. Now an expensive collector's book, it then sold for \$7.50 soft cover and \$15 hard. There is no overlap in the Clyde essays appearing in the first and third books above, although two stories are common in both as variations.

Subsequent to his firing as High Trip mountaineering guide in 1941, Norman does not appear again in the SCB until the June '50 issue. In the Mtneering Notes is a long letter to Dave Brower from Norman dated 3/14/50:

My dear Dave, I received your letter relative to Mtneering Notes for climbs during the past year. I make a number of more or less routine climbs every year, but have not done much original climbing in some time, and last summer did nothing after early July because of an injured foot.

However, together with John Graham, I made a traverse of the

North Palisade, ascending it from the north by the U Notch and descending it by the LeConte Route [on the south]. Probably this was the first time that this has been done. It was, however, an accident – we did not reach the summit sufficiently early to be able to get off the mountain before nightfall by returning by the route through the U Notch. He goes on to talk about the succession of light winters and the resultant impact on the couloirs and glaciers; and he details a climb of Mt. Gayley. ... This affords a rather direct route up Mt. Gayley, a very enjoyable climb, and the summit is perhaps the best vantage point to view the contiguous basins in the head of the North and South Forks of Big Pine Creek. [This first ascent is "West Face, class 3" in R. J. Secor's "[High Sierra](#)" guide.]

Additional extracts from [Jules Eichorn's 1982 Sierra Club interview](#) (cited above):

Norman Clyde was probably the most remarkable mountaineer the



Norman Clyde on way to camp, DPS climb of Mt. Tom, 9/19-20/53. By Frank Bressel, his collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

Sierra Nevada has ever experienced. Knowing him, I'd say that he had complete recall of every handhold and foothold on almost any mountain that we went on – absolutely unbelievable route retention. Of course, he was such a delightful guy beneath his rough exterior, and he didn't have much truck with anybody who was sort of a – what he called a nature-faker – or that sort of thing. ... Yes, his pants were always falling apart because he couldn't go out and buy a pair of pants because he wanted to remain in the mountains. So he had to sew them up himself. People could not understand this; he was living in the mountains. These other people were just visiting the mountains – a big difference. ... I think some of the stories about Norman are exaggerated. One I remember so well – that he was an excellent photographer, but again, many times he'd go in the mountains for such a long time that he would always think, "Well, I'd better have another two cameras so that if something goes wrong with one, I'll have back-ups." He invariably had what he'd call a throw-in-the-lake camera because it wasn't working properly. He was very intolerant of things that didn't work properly – upset about things that were poorly done whether he was cutting wood or any other activity.

Our association spanned some forty-plus years. In that time, I got to know the man under a variety of conditions – some pretty wild, but none in which Clyde was not in complete control of whatever that situation was. If it was a difficult route, his "sixth sense" told him what he could or could not do. Once he made the climb, he seemed never to forget the route. ... Re. "The pack that walks like a man." Norman carried a lot for several reasons. If he was going off for four to six weeks at a time, he expected to use every bit of gear that he packed for everyday living



"SPSers-to-be" on DPS trip to Mt. Tom, 9/19-20/53. L-R: Dick Kenyon, Frank Sanborn (first SPS chair), Conrad Jarabin, ?, Virgil Sisson (front center), ?, ?, Dick Woodward (head), Barbara Lilley and John Wedberg. By Frank Bressel, his collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.



Arrival of Norman Clyde in his '27 Chevy for DPS climb of Mt. Tom, 9/19-20/53. L-R: Dick Kenyon, Freda Walbrecht at door, Norman Clyde in car, Frank Sanborn and Dick Woodward. By Frank Bressel, his collection, Angeles Chapter Archives.

and any emergencies. And since he had virtually no funds with which to buy equipment, he was continually picking up cast-off gear and food. This procedure didn't lighten his load any. ... His guns, or "pistolos" as he affectionately called them, were the best he could get, for he knew the best was none too good in an emergency. Of books, again only the classics – Schiller, Goethe, Dante, the early Greeks – you name it and Norman had studied it.

I could continue on about Clyde's knowledge and abilities concerning so many things – mountain sheep and other fauna, his botanical knowledge, his selection of a "boudoir," but it really isn't necessary. Suffice it to say that he lived closer to the mountains than any other man I knew. It was as if an osmotic effect were taking place: the mountains breathing life into Norman and he reciprocating. Above all, it was the absolute integrity of the man that seemed to be the key to Clyde's greatness. Whether it was climbing a peak, noting a geological phenomenon or taking a picture – that particular trait stood out. He put it all together.

[Your author is indebted to Jerry Keating for details on this next event.] When the desert got too warm in the summer, and before the creation of the SPS, the DPS would lead some Sierra peaks. One, a scheduled climb of Mt. Tom on 9/19-20/53, was notable by Norman Clyde's participation. The leaders were Virgil Sisson and Freda Walbrecht, and apparently Freda asked Clyde along for route guidance. Although Norman did not climb with the group, he joined them on the backpack to camp. Fortunately, Frank Bressel's photos of this event are

preserved. Frank (and others on the outing) would be a founding member of the SPS, and he climbed with the Section as recently as September '07.

Here's a link to well-written article on Clyde from the 1/20/60 *Time Magazine*: "Old Man of the Sierra." <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,826450,00.html>

In the '60s Clyde became something of a fixture on many of the Club's summer knapsack trips. Leading only easy dayhikes, in the evenings he told colorful campfire stories to any who would listen – and many did. As a young teenager Mark Goebel recalls attending some of these trips with his parents and listening to Norman. Mark, however, was not interested in going on any easy hikes!

Norman Clyde and the SPS

Sierra Peaks Section bylaws allow for honorary membership, with the approval of its members. This honor was first bestowed on Norman Clyde when the Section was only five years old. The presentation was made by Chair Jerry Keating at the annual Angeles Chapter Banquet on 19 October 1960. [Unfortunately, your author has been unable to find any photos that may have been taken of this event.] Two days later Clyde sent a hand-written note that has appeared a few times in the *Sierra Echo*: "Dear Sirs: I feel I owe you an apology for not having made a formal acknowledgement of the honor conferred upon me at last Saturday's banquet in the form of a Sierra Peaks Medal. By way of alibi I might urge that for many years I have seldom addressed a public gathering and that occasionally my old head skips a cog or two. You may rest assured that I duly appreciate the honor conferred and that I shall treasure the medal



Norman Clyde, wearing SPS Emblem pin, at the Sierra Club's Diamond Jubilee Banquet, 12/09/67. From the January '68 Sierra Club Bulletin.

received. Yours truly, Norman Clyde."

The June '62 commencement ceremonies at Geneva College again found Norman in Beaver Falls, PA. This time he was one of five alumni to be honored for **Distinguished Service**. As reported in that summer's *Geneva Alumnus*: "Dr. Norman Clyde, '09, Big Pine, CA, is an internationally known mountaineer who has climbed more than one thousand mountains in the Sierra Nevada range. More than 200 first ascents are attributed to him, of which 152 are recorded in the 'Climber's Guide to the Sierra.' Dr. Clyde recently published a climbing guide for the Sierra Nevada mountains entitled 'Close-ups of the High Sierra' and contributed an autographed copy to Geneva's McCartney Library." [Quoted as written. A group photo of the five honorees shows Norman wearing his SPS Emblem pin!]

A few veteran SPS members have provided info to your author on their



SPS Emblem pin.

contacts with Clyde.

On 1/24/08 Gordon MacLeod passed along this story:

I had three personal contacts with Norman Clyde. The first arose as the result of a trip I led to New York Butte in the Inyo Mountains from Long John Canyon. That ascent involved over 5,600 feet of gain, much of it on unconsolidated snow that had fallen some time before. So, on the following day, 4/18/65, I suggested to the climbing group of about a dozen SPSers that we should look up Norman Clyde in Big Pine and have a conversation with him instead of climbing whatever peak had been scheduled. Everyone thought that was a splendid idea. We didn't know where Norman lived in Big Pine, but following leads provided by the locals, we found our way to the Baker Creek Ranch cabin, where he lived as a "caretaker." We followed a local's advice of: "Don't drive in, just climb the gate." Neko Colvins found Norman asleep on a couch in the back of the house. Fortunately, he enjoyed talking with fellow SPSers (he was an Honorary Member of the SPS), and there was plenty of sitting room there in the backyard. He did all of the talking. He was a very fluent speaker and plainly enjoyed story telling - and he did so for a couple of hours. Many of the stories involved body recovery efforts that he led some

years in the past - the most famous of which was the discovery of the body of Walter A. Starr, Jr., who had died as a result of a fall in the Minarets. ... Another story involved the recovery of victims of a US Army bomber that crashed on the eastern side of the Sierra during WWII. The assigned Army personnel were completely unfit for the recovery effort required. So, Norman just hauled the frozen bodies to a nearby chute and shoved them down. As we were leaving, John Thorton, an avid gun enthusiast and later chairman of the SPS, asked Norman where he was standing when he shot the bull's eye out of a target pinned to a tree in the front yard. John suggested a spot along the path - like in "from here?" Norman's reply was: "Why, no ... over there on the front porch," which was about twice as far as John had indicated. [Your author recently met with John Thornton at his home near Denver to borrow some photos he has of Clyde, though not of this 1965 event.]

[Your author is reminded of a conversation he once had with climber Mike Loughman at Rubidoux in April '93. Among several observations about Norman, Mike noted that he was a "dead-eye with the sling shot using ball bearings" (which saved on expensive ammo).]

Three months later, after leading a July 4th SPS climb of Mt. Lyell, Gordon encountered Clyde on the Rush Creek Trail. *I immediately recognized Norman from the "campaign hat" he always wore and the size of his pack with a double-bladed lumberman's ax sticking out of it. He was on his way to join a National Sierra Club outing a couple of miles ahead. He explained that he carried in*

that heavy ax because the Club's axes were "inadequate," and that he was the one designated to cut the firewood, for which he was paid "a small stipend." [Note: Norman was then 80!! Gordon's third personal contact with Clyde was comparatively minor.]

Per very recent email to your author from early DPSer, HPSer and SPSer Fred Johnson: an event of 1/02/68. Fred, living then in Berkeley, learned from Dave Brower that Norman Clyde was coming to town on business. Fred, who had a prior acquaintance with Norman, on the spur of the moment reached him at his motel and invited him over for a family meal. "Norman was neatly dressed and well groomed. He was obviously in good appetite and thoroughly enjoyed Marilyn's home cooking. Although conversation was slow at first, it picked up as the evening progressed. We covered a wide area of his experiences. He was in one of his good moods, no doubt about it."

His health failing in 1971, Norman Clyde spent the last year of his life at the Inyo County Sanitarium just outside Big Pine. Your author is very grateful to SPSer Bob Hartunian for recently (Dec '07) providing his recollection of a story told to him by his old climbing friend Charlie Morphin around 1975. Bob was able to reach Charlie to re-confirm it.

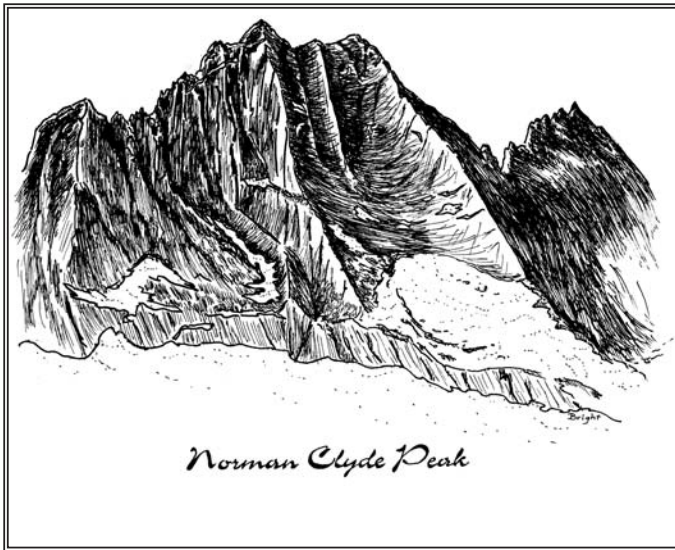
On an October afternoon in 1972, Charlie and his wife were in the Big Pine area looking at fall colors when he remembered that Norman was in a rest home there at age 87. He had lived alone in a cabin for years but time had taken his strength and mental sharpness



Norman Clyde at a Sierra Club Base-camp, July 1970. By Dick Worsfold, Angeles Chapter Archives.

away, so now he rested in a chair on the porch. Charlie found Norman at the home, sitting in the sun with a blanket on his lap and staring away without much movement. He introduced himself, sat down and gradually started asking questions about climbs and his adventures in the Sierra, but Norman would not respond, not even a mumble. He just stared ahead. This was killing Charlie as Norman was his real-life hero and here he was talking to him and being ignored completely.

After twenty minutes of no response, Charlie looked at his wife who wanted to leave and got ready to go. He picked up his jacket and then remembered that in the pocket were some postcards picked up at the Big Pine drug store, and one card had a picture of North Palisade on it. As a last resort, Charlie held the picture in front of Norman's eyes and asked if he remembered the peak? Suddenly, the old man's eyes opened wide and he smiled and



Norman Clyde Pk, drawn by Mark Bright, appearing in "Twenty-five Letters from Norman Clyde" by Dennis Kruska.

Norman began to talk perfectly. He spoke of the first climbs up North Pal, of the route finding with binoculars, of the use of ropes for belay, of rescues he had made, of the friends he climbed with who were gone, the ascents of the East Face of Whitney and on and on continuously for the next two hours. Charlie could not believe how the man opened up and kept talking as if he knew this was his last opportunity to tell about his mountaineering adventures. Charlie later told me he was beside himself for not having a tape recorder to document all the stories from Norman.

As the sun began setting, Norman stopped talking and was taken inside by an attendant. It was the last time he spoke of the Sierra experiences to anyone. I'm glad it was to Charlie.

Bob Hartunian

A couple of months later, on 23 December 1972, Norman, 87, embarked on his last ascent, although he sometimes remarked that it might be a descent. ☺

A fairly brief obit in the '73 AAJ was penned by Thomas Jukes. An excellent web resource on Clyde is found on this site: http://www.owensvalleyhistory.com/norman_clyde/page57.html

NOTE: the Eastern California Museum in Independence will be hosting a special **Norman Clyde Exhibition** later this year – approximately mid-Nov '08 through April '09. As details later become available, they will be posted on its website: <http://www.inyocounty.us/ecmuseum/>

Clyde made the first ascent of Peak 13,956 (now 13,920) solo by its North Face on 6/09/30. He liked the summit well enough to make its second ascent just ten days later by the South Face. The name Norman Clyde Peak was first proposed for this summit in 1939 by Hervey Voge. The name readily stuck but it did not become "official" until Norman finally obliged by dying. The honor of disposing of Clyde's ashes fell to his close buddies Jules Eichorn and Smoke Blanchard. The story is detailed in Smoke's superb chapter devoted to Norman in "Walking Up & Down in the World - Memories of a Mtn Rambler," 1985. [The entire book is a terrific read. Although apparently out-of-print, it is readily available.]

Cutting to the quick, they promoted the rumor that Clyde was buried in Tonopah, NV, as scattering ashes on public lands was then somewhat illegal. They recruited their climbing expedition companion Nort Benner plus Smoke's son Bob (with Smoke's wife Su and Jules' son Peter for basecamp support). The date is not provided but it was likely the following summer that the team set off to summit, you guessed it, Norman Clyde Pk. In concluding "The Aerial Burial," Smoke wrote: "Norman's physical self went up in a little smoke and down in a little wind-blown calcined bone to eventually become a temporary part of the East Clyde Glacier. His spiritual self lives on in his ideas, which some of us will treasure; in the memories his friends will keep and pass on, by mountain stories, to new generations; and in his contribution to mountain lore, which may live as long as men tromp the Sierra."

[Smoke Blanchard, 74, died 6/23/89 in an auto accident on Hwy 395 on the way to his Willow Street home in Bishop. Over 200 (including your author) attended a memorial service late that summer in the nearby Buttermilks. Among many speakers, Jules Eichorn remarked: "Smoke was low key in speech and high key in his relationships." An endearing obit by John Fischer appeared in the 1990 AAJ.]

Concluding the Tribute Series

At last, your author has almost run out of ink – a good time to declare victory and get "Out There" again. The genesis of this series came about in the early spring of 1989. I was then SPS Chair and we were thinking about a program for the Annual December Banquet. I don't recall all the details but I liked history and I or someone came up with the idea of having Glen Dawson – well, then why not Jules Eichorn too! I recall being somewhat surprised to verify that these two esteemed "dinosaurs" were still living. [It didn't hurt that they

were only nineteen in 1931 when making the first ascent of the East Face of Whitney.] And then I was stunned that they each accepted our invitation. My life was changed forever.

I embarked on "Tribute Part I - On the Way to Whitney" [period from Genesis to 1931] to appear in the Nov-Dec Echo handed out at the banquet, 12/13/89. We also needed to get member approval in the fall election to award the honorary memberships - which was not a problem. It ultimately turned out that Jules was unable to attend the banquet due to the flu, but he sent down a quickly-prepared short video. With his brother Muir's help, Glen provided a very insightful and entertaining slide show on early Sierra Club mountaineering. "Part II - Beyond Whitney" [1932-33] appeared in the March-April '92 Echo. In course of that short period I was blessed to be welcomed and befriended by so many amazing people, all of whom also happened to be quite gnarly early climbers. Jules and Glen, in particular, were welcoming beyond belief and very generous in countless ways. [At the banquet Glen presented me with his old Shuster Haus climbing hammer and three pitons, rusty but quite serviceable.]

Part III should have appeared later that year, well then the next, well then the next. Life has a way of filling up one's time. I cannot readily account for the fifteen-year gap before the appearance of "Part III - Development of the Rock Climbing Sections" [1933-34] in the July-Sept '07 issue. I was certain of this, however, that although virtually all my wonderful old friends had one-by-one passed away, including Jules, Glen was still hanging in there. I imagine he may have some additional reasons for doing so, but deep down I knew he was quietly, patiently just waiting on me.



Dick Jones and Nate Clark (far right) observe Bill Oliver pinning SPS Emblem on new Honorary member Glen Dawson at SPS Banquet, 12/89. By Jeff Solomon, author's collection.

OK, then "Part IV - Adventuring Beyond the U.S." [1935-36] in the Oct-Dec '07 Echo; "Part V - Return to Whitney" [1937-38] in the Jan-Mar '08 issue; and finally "Part VI - Passing the Torch" [1939 to present]. A couple of days ago I came across a note a reader had sent me a few years back related to these stories. He said I wrote with "heart." Hmm, I think I write with heart and soul, as I cannot do otherwise. I have a passion for gnarly adventuring and a passion for writing about gnarly adventuring. Thanks to all of you for enduring my passion. And special thanks to my good and generous friend Glen for hanging in there.
Bill

Note: thanks to the fine efforts of webmaster Larry Hoak, all issues of Tribute are available on the SPS website (or soon will be): <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/sps/default.htm>. Click "About us" and scroll down.

Tribute Part VI - Acknowledgments

This issue, like the prior five, would not have been possible without the enduring encouragement and active support of Glen Dawson, John Ripley and Bob Cates - all of the Angeles Chapter History Committee. It's going to be an awkward transition for me no longer to be trading hundreds of emails with these guys - but I'll manage. ☺ Nor would this issue have been possible without the intrepid exploits of Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn - the latter two of whom gifted me with their friendship.

It never ceased to amaze me that virtually everyone I contacted on this long project was unfailingly supportive. For this issue in particular, I gratefully acknowledge: Cameron Burns, Shirley Eichorn DeMartis, David Eichorn, Julie Eichorn, Harv Galic, Mark Goebel, Roberta Harlan of the Eastern California Museum, Bob Hartunian, Fred Johnson, Jerry Keating, Kae Kirkwood of Geneva College Library, Gary Landeck of the American Alpine Club Library, Barbara Lilley, Gordon MacLeod, Gwen Jones Rinehart, Tom Ross, Carleton Shay, John Thornton and Ellen Wilts.

The editors who artfully craft text and pictures into a finished product are the behind-the-scenes heroes of all writers. I'm most grateful to editor Igor Mamedalin for Part I and to Bob Sumner for Part II. Fortunately for me, I was somehow able to retain the world-class services of Sara Danta for Parts III-VI. Sara excels in desktop publishing - and in enduring an always late submitter. All writers should be so amazingly blessed!

The Sierra Echo

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

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