

# The Sierra



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# ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR

All of the proposed Section outings for July through October have been reviewed and approved by the Management Committee and submitted for publication in the Chapter Schedule. Once again the SPS will sponsor a full and varied schedule of activities for the high summer. On behalf of the Management Committee I'd like to thank all the leaders who have made this possible. Also, many thanks to Barbara Cohen, our Outings Chair, for her continuing efforts. Personally, I'm looking forward to another knee-popping year of adventures with the section.

Bill T. Russell has expressed the desire to pass on the job of Mountain Records Chair to a caring person. No sooner had I put out the word when Vi Grasso stepped forward to volunteer her services. So, many thanks to Bill T. for his capable work and a warm welcome to Vi.

I'm pleased to announce that new Section "T"-shirts are in the process of becoming a reality!! Patty Kline has been coordinating the design and production of the shirts and hopes they will be available for sale by May. They will be short sleeved with silk-screened images on the front and back and should cost about \$12.00. Any proceeds from the sale will go to the SPS. Many thanks to Patty for her efforts.

For some time now there has been discussion regarding the revision of designated mountaineers peaks on the SPS List. It has been suggested that, for example, Red Slate Mountain be removed from this status and that Palisade Crest be added. I favor both of these revisions and would like to solicit further comments from the membership. All revisions will be considered for inclusion on the Management Committee election ballot this Fall.

Again, I'd like to thank all of the leaders who are participating in our outings program this climbing season. In light of the continuing insurance restrictions it is vital that the Section maintain a high outings profile. The long-standing tradition of the SPS as a mountaineering organization must continue with the hope that sooner, rather than later, our climbing insurance will be reinstated. The leaders have made a statement: we're still here, we're still interested in the continued success of the Section and we're not going to go away.

*Dave*

## PEAK INDEX

Mt Carillon	Pettit Pk	Tunnabora Pk
Lamont Pk	Mt Reinstein	Volunteer Pk
Carson-Iceberg Wilderness		

COVER: **El Picacho del Diablo Summit Party** (on south summit - north summit in rear), June 16, 1932. L-R: front - Dick Jones and Walter Brem; behind - Norman Clyde, Nate Clark and Glen Dawson. Photo by Bestor Robinson, Nate Clark Collection.

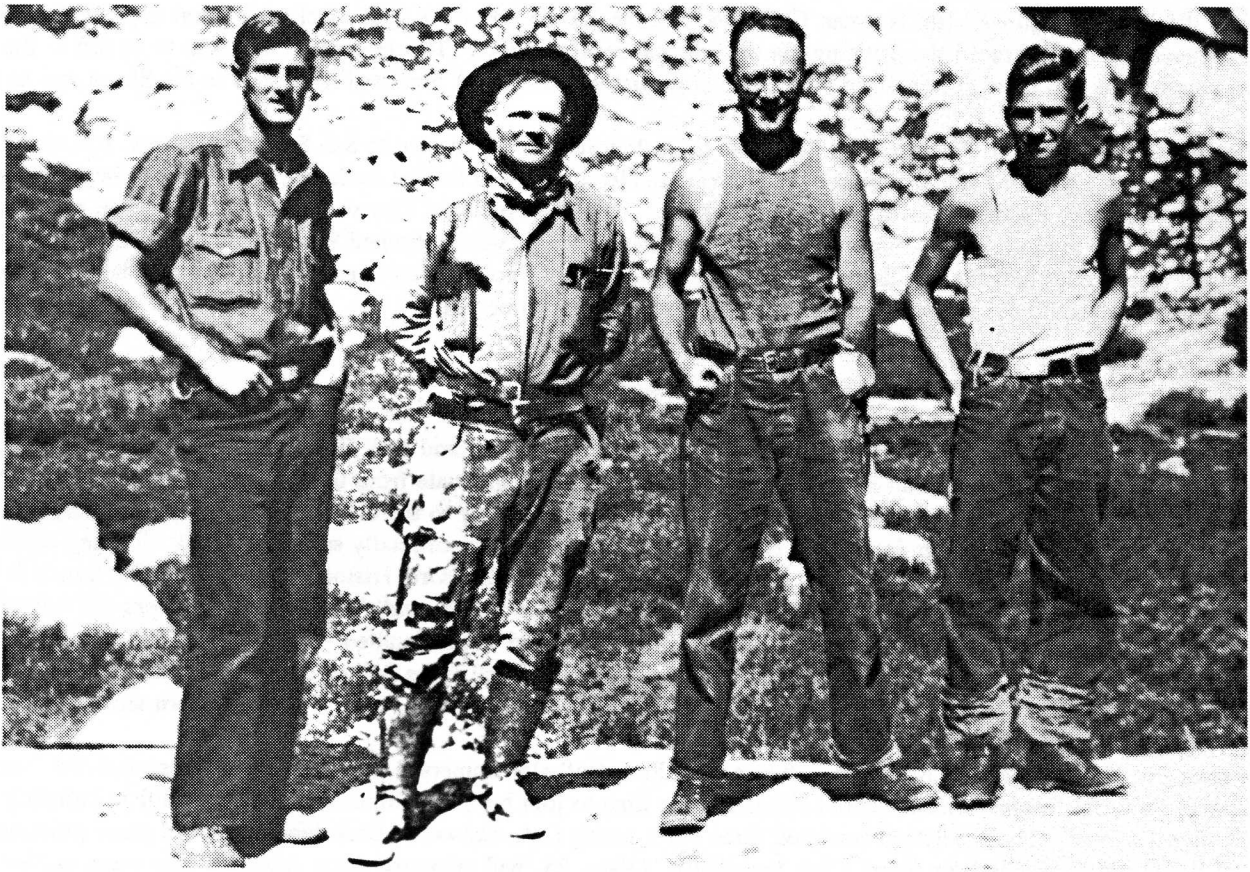
**A Tribute to the Honorary Members of the Sierra Peaks Section -  
Past & Present: \*  
Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn**

**Bill Oliver**

**Part II - Beyond Whitney**

**Over Sixty Years Ago**

Over sixty years ago two nineteen-year-old youths, in the company of a 42-year-old Harvard lecturer and a 46-year-old former high school principal, scaled the East Face of Mt. Whitney in 3-1/4 hours. The peak-filled events leading up to this climactic achievement were chronicled in **Part I - On the Way to Whitney** [*ECHO*, 12/89]. As Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn now celebrate their 80th birthdays in 1992, let us rejoin them and once again peer back to the Golden Age of Sierra Club mountaineering - to a time when the Club numbered only about 2,000 members, when untried mountain routes were yet innumerable, and when the Sierra Nevada was still innocent enough to be entered without regard to permits, quotas or insurance.



**After the East Face, August 16, 1931, L-R: Jules Eichorn, Norman Clyde, Robert L. M. Underhill and Glen Dawson.  
Photo by Francis Farquhar and courtesy of Marjory Farquhar and Chris Jones.**

The August 16, 1931 achievement on Whitney could surely be foreseen by the one who had master-minded it and who awaited the climbers on the summit - Francis P. Farquhar (twice future Sierra Club President). Earlier that same year, as Editor of the *Sierra Club Bulletin (SCB)*, he penned the following "Editorial:"

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\* Honorary membership was bestowed on Norman Clyde at the Angeles Chapter Banquet, October 19, 1960, by SPS Chair Jerry Keating. The honors were extended to Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn at the SPS Banquet of December 13, 1989, at which Glen was the featured speaker. Jules was unexpectedly prevented from appearing due to illness at the time, but he was able to send a video with some of his recollections.

### *The Sport of Mountain-Climbing*

*While it is true that a large proportion of those who visit the High Sierra are not particularly interested in climbing the more difficult peaks; nevertheless, there are many who do enjoy climbing, and doubtless this number will increase. In the early days there were many opportunities for first ascents and other adventures now no longer available; but while today there is scarcely a peak of importance remaining unscathed, that does not mean that the sport is at an end. On the contrary, those who are familiar with the development of mountaineering in other parts of the world can see plainly that there is a vast field in the Sierra as yet untouched. This is the field of rock-climbing. ...*

These sentiments were echoed by Glen Dawson in the February '32 SCB - "Mountaineering Notes:"

*Last summer Sierra climbing took a stride forward. Through the efforts of Francis P. Farquhar and Robert L. M. Underhill the art of correct climbing with a rope was introduced to some of us. The rope is intended for safety and not as a physical aid. Because of the increased safety by the use of the rope, Sierrans can make more difficult climbs. More and more we are becoming interested in new routes and traverses rather than in the ascents of peaks by easy routes.*

Based on his awesome, pioneering Teton and Sierra campaigns, 1931 surely marked the pinnacle of the Harvard lecturer's mountaineering career. Five months later Dr. Robert L. M. Underhill married renowned alpinist Miriam O'Brien, who had pioneered "man-less" climbing in the Alps. Although the couple continued to seek out lofty horizons, he would never again venture among Sierran peaks.

The former high school principal would continue his Sierra exploits for a good many more years - seeking after the solitary summits, and the lost and injured. But Norman Clyde was not the sort to rely on a style of climbing that depended on another's belay, and he never really embraced the dawning era of technical rock climbing. This emerging field was to be left to the likes of 19-year-old youths who still lived at home and who could now wistfully dream of "impossible" routes in the Sierra and in faraway places.

Following their remarkable Palisades and East Face tours de force, Jules returned to San Francisco where, still also dreaming of a career as a pianist, he helped support himself by giving piano lessons. Glen headed back to Los Angeles to begin his freshman year at UCLA as a history major. Less than three months later, over the Memorial Day weekend, the East Face route was again climbed - this time from top to bottom. While on a So. Calif. Chapter outing which climbed Whitney by the trail, Glen Dawson and fellow teenagers Dick Jones and Walter "Bubs" Brem descended the East Face, roping over what would later be called the Shaky Leg Crack. The route would see no more traffic, in either direction, for three years.

## 1932

Enter a young Berkeley resident named Dick Leonard (a future President and now Honorary President of the Sierra Club). Leonard, who had joined the Sierra Club in 1930, was now 23 and soon to graduate from the UCB law school. Although not yet a High Trip participant, or widely known within the Club, he was not a stranger to the Sierra, having topped, among others, Split Mtn, N. Palisade, Darwin and Brewer in 1930. He was now hoping to start an officially sanctioned rock climbing section in the Club. Forty years later, in 1972, Dick was interviewed as part of the Sierra Club Oral History Project [with The Bancroft Library, UCB]. Referring to this period he remarked: *"The Sierra Club was conservative, and the Board of Directors did not approve of rock climbing because they thought it might be dangerous. ..."* Frustrated but undaunted, in March of 1932 Leonard and a few friends inaugurated the Cragmont Climbing Club. Practicing on Cragmont Rock in the Berkeley hills, the club's aim was to promote safe/belayed climbing, in particular holding a leader fall. They were soon abetted by "locals" Jules Eichorn and Bestor Robinson, 34, and it largely drew upon Sierra Club members.

The spring of '32 found Bestor Robinson (a future Club President) also immersed in plans for his attempt on the "unclimbed" loftiest peak in Baja California. Eichorn could not afford the time to join him, but Robinson was successful in enlisting Norman Clyde and Glen Dawson. The latter then recruited three other young L.A. stalwarts: Dick Jones, a friend since grammar school days, Bubs Brem and Nate Clark (a future Club President). [Nate, 25, had relocated from Alameda two years earlier to teach electrical engineering at USC, where he was sometimes mistaken for a student.] They were also joined by a non-climbing friend of Robinson's who would botanize while they mountaineered.

### **El Picacho del Diablo**

Accounts of their Baja adventure were penned by both Clyde ("The Conquest of Lower California's Highest Peak," *Touring Topics*, 9/32) and Robinson ("The Ascent of El Picacho del Diablo," *SCB*, 2/33). The latter begins his narrative by recollecting an event from a hunting trip in the fall of 1930:

*"Es imposible, Señor."*

*This was the opinion of my Indian guide as he stood on the edge of the mighty eastern escarpment of the Sierra San Pedro Martir and pointed to the sharp pyramid of El Picacho del Diablo rising precipitously nearly 10,000 feet from the desert, its cream-colored granite gleaming in the late afternoon sun. Undoubtedly, he inwardly added the comment "loco Americano" when I told him of my desire to climb this 10,500-foot peak [~10,200], the highest in Baja California. Field-glasses failed to reveal even a pretense of a cairn on its summit.*

*This peak bears two strangely contrasting names. To those who view it from the west, its ruggedness and forbidding aspect*

have suggested the name here used, "The Peak of the Devil." Early explorers viewing it from the Gulf of California dubbed it El Cerro de Providencia ("The Mount of Providence"), probably because of its winter crown of snow. [Aka Cerro de la Encantada.]

It was a scene of wild beauty. For many miles north and south the mountains dropped off precipitously to the barren wastes of the San Felipe Desert, forming a fluted wall averaging more than a mile in height. Beyond the fringe of desert lay the blue waters of the Gulf of California, and beyond those waters, in the clear desert atmosphere, more than a hundred miles away, the mountains of Sonora formed a background for nature's picture. ... In the foreground, detached from the main range by a deep chasm, El Picacho del Diablo stood alone, the commanding figure in this masterpiece of nature.

The party of seven arrived at the Meling Ranch (Rancho San José) on June 12th and set off the next morning "with our packs where they belonged - on the backs of mules." (BR) On day two, alas, the group converted to real backpackers, and they made it to their basecamp in La Encantada Meadow, a few miles south of a peak now called Cerro Botella Azul (Blue Bottle).

On day three the six set off early and eager. Let us pick up Robinson's narrative as the party scrambles atop Blue Bottle: ... Here I gazed with admiration on the same view which two years before had inspired this expedition. To the northeast lay the great chasm, known as Cañon [del] Diablo ("Cañon of the Devil"). To the southeast lay the equally deep, but less imposing, Cañon [Teledo]. At our feet the two cañons joined, forming a notch fifteen hundred feet deep, beyond which rose the steep granite walls of El Picacho itself. This was our route. It looked steep, but we were sure we would be back in camp well before supper-time. A light lunch seemed more than adequate.

The descent of the notch and the climb of the precipitous wall opposite were not particularly difficult. We found to our amazement, however, that what seemed to be a single pyramid was in fact a ridge serrated by five deep clefts [notches]. So on we went, contouring on the west side of the pinnacles where possible, but usually finding it necessary to follow the knife-edge up, over, and down. Five times we found it necessary to rope down where the granite cliffs were devoid of holds. The sun was just beginning to set when we completed the passage of the fourth cleft. Our water was low and our lunches reduced to a few crumbs. Apparently there was no water on the mountain. It was obviously foolhardy to attempt the climb at night, and dangerous to continue it the next day without water. Should we go back while there was still time?

Two thousand feet below us a chimney broadened into a gully before dropping precipitously to the bottom of Cañon Diablo. A council of war brought forth a unanimous decision to try for water in the gully; if we found it, to attempt the summit, if not, to get down the precipice into Cañon Diablo by using, if necessary, all three ropes we were carrying. In the cañon we knew there was water. The Goddess of Luck smiled on us, for in the gully, on the brink of the cañon's cliffs, a reflection of a star [spotted by Clark] enabled us to find a small pool which we might otherwise have passed in the darkness. It was cold on the mountain without bedding or sweaters, but a fire helped, and, although we were ravenously hungry, water and the hope of success on the morrow were some alleviation.

To the top the next day was a scramble of two thousand five hundred feet up cliffs and chimneys of granite. At nine o'clock we were on top. The peak, however, had two summits separated by a cleft. There was nothing to do but climb both peaks, and, finding neither cairn nor record of ascent on either peak, we built the usual rock piles on both. ...

Gorged on adventure, the near-famished party now cautiously descended to the bottom of Cañon Diablo, which yielded a lush sylvan wilderness and a thirst-quenching swim. They then wearily bushwhacked their way up to the head of the canyon, reaching the plateau "nearly exhausted" and bivouacking late a second night at the first water they found. The next morning, two days overdue, they finally reclaimed their basecamp - and found a note from Robinson's friend: "Am going to Melings for help. Will telephone for an airplane when I reach San Telmo." According to a 1990 recollection by Dick Jones to this author, Clyde was most eager to overtake their anxious companion lest word get out that Norman Clyde was in trouble and needed to be rescued. While Norman was successfully engaged in this pursuit, "the rest of us had nothing to do but eat, and eat, and eat some more."

Both Clyde's and Robinson's published accounts made magnanimous note of disappointing news. Glen Dawson penned the following footnote to the latter's story in the SCB:

*At the time we felt certain that no one had preceded us on this isolated bit of Lower California. But later we found that Donald McLain, a Los Angeles mapmaker, who was in Lower California alone for seven months in 1911 looking for placer mines, had climbed the mountain. He tells me that in February he left his burro at San Felipe, on the Gulf of California. With a water-bag in his hand, he crossed the desolate distance across the San Felipe Desert and climbed out onto the plateau to an Indian settlement somewhere near Socorro. He rested there two days, and, with a supply of "jerky" and corn-meal, started back the way he had come. From the lower part of Cañon Diablo he followed up the north ridge of the mountain to the top, a less difficult climb than ours. The difficulty of his route lies in getting into the lower part of Cañon Diablo.*

[Mr. McLain (1887-1981), who later named numerous high points in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mtns., was also interviewed by mountain historian John W. Robinson in 1966 and 1971. The latter is convinced of the authenticity of McLain's first ascent. Reference: John W. Robinson, "Camping and Climbing in Baja," La Siesta Press, 1983.]

### The '32 High Trip

Beginning and ending from the west, in Giant Forest, the '32 High Trip would encompass a vast clockwise loop of the Bubbs Creek and Kern River drainages, last visited in 1927. The four-week venture, which began on Saturday, July 9th, re-united Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson and Norman Clyde. That weekend the Club party, 200-strong, camped at Wolverton Creek and took in the local sights, including Moro Rock. The real business began Monday as the High Trippers, trucked to Crescent Meadows, set out on foot up the High Sierra Trail, 199-strong plus a packtrain of 25 or so mules and assorted hired hands and horses. The first day

was one of their longest, 16 miles to Lone Pine Meadow - but Jules Eichorn was not along.

On Sunday Jules and Glen had been climbing on Moro Rock. Concluding this effort, the two were home-free - almost. As they descended a slick granite slab, Jules suddenly went airborne when he tripped on some lichen. Half a century later, in 1982, Jules was interviewed as part of the Sierra Club Oral History Project. Recollecting this episode, he related: "... *It taught all of us the lesson, particularly me, that you never untie your rope until you're finished with the climb. We untied the rope one rope-length from our cars, and because Dawson had bigger feet and was light, he got across. I had smaller feet and was heavier - I didn't get across. I also had a new pair of gum-soled shoes, which I thought were the greatest thing in the world, but it turned out that they were not. ...*

*"In any case, I had dislocated my elbow and sprained my foot and hurt my knee, and scratched myself up pretty bad, and took most of the skin off the ends of my fingers. About three days later, a Sierra Club packer was going in with the mail, and I decided I could ride a horse in with him. Well, riding a horse with a sprained ankle and one hand, when you have never ridden in your life, for more or less a twenty-mile ride - I'm certain I was never so uncomfortable before or since in my life."* [to be continued] Jules would not be counted among the summiteers for the first two weeks!

On the 12th Norman Clyde led a five-man, three-woman team (including Julie Mortimer, Los Angeles, and Alice Carter, Claremont, - probably his favorite High Trip pair) up Triple Divide Peak. Quoting now from Glen Dawson (GD), Mountaineering Notes Editor (SCB, 1933), *"The party, caught by clouds, was unable to return to camp that night, but suffered no severe hardship."*

Heading north over Elizabeth Pass and down Deadman Canyon, the Trippers' next major campsite was along Sphinx Creek. From this vantage point a *"splendid"* peak (12,871), between North Guard and Cross Mtn, was climbed for the first time. Clyde led a foursome: Mortimer, Carter and another lady. Glen Dawson partook in a second group. Although he joined it later, Francis Farquhar was not yet on the trip. *"There was no evidence that it had been climbed before. The highest point is a large slab almost overhanging the steep eastern face."* (GD) Peak 12,871 (now 12,893) would remain unnamed for 57 years. In April of 1989 the U.S. Board on Geographic Names accepted the name Mt. Farquhar - a splendid peak, indeed, for a giant of the Sierra Club and of the Sierra Nevada.

Mt. Brewer yielded to a total of eighteen persons in three groups led by Clyde, Bill Horsfall and Nate Clark. Then it was on to the Vidette Meadow Camp. Several of the Kearsarge Pinnacles were climbed - notably a first ascent by Dawson, Thomas Rawles and Hans Helmut Leschke of *"the most difficult of the group"* (now #8). Among other climbs were East Vidette, Clyde led seven, and Deerhorn, where Bubs Brem and Leschke traversed its twin summits.

As usual, about half the participants ended the High Trip mid-way in the program and were succeeded by those who came for just the latter two weeks. The exchange on this occasion came via Kearsarge Pass. The trip surmounted a difficult obstacle in getting over the newly-built Foresters Pass, at 13,150-feet the highest point on the John Muir Trail beyond Mt. Whitney. Several days of brutal work were necessary to cut a trench through the deep snow drifts so as to allow the vital passage of the packtrain.

On July 23rd sixteen hearty souls topped Junction Peak, this number including Dawson, Clyde, Farquhar and Jules Eichorn - [continued] *"... My knee cleared up and everything came out just fine. In a couple of weeks I was climbing with one arm and it didn't seem to bother me."* It is interesting to note that only eight days ahead of this ascent, Peter Starr (aka Walter Starr, Jr.) made a solo climb of Junction Peak. His notebook observed that *"this peak occupies a preferred position for views in all directions."* Starr, 29, was then heavily engaged in research for his forthcoming "Guide to the John Muir Trail."

The next camp, on Milestone Creek, put many splendid summits at risk - to wit: Thunder, Table, Stanford and Milestone, which was topped by 46. Mt. Whitney loomed hulkingly above them as the assemblage reconvened in Crabtree Meadow. Quite a few members departed after the campfire one night for the lofty summit and the promise of a glorious desert sunrise. A total of 153 topped out that day (not a Club record), many thereby earning the Sierra Club's coveted certificate for having climbed five peaks, anywhere in the world, of 14,000-feet or higher. [See a reduced-size copy of Glen Dawson's certificate in Part I - ECHO, 12/89.] Indeed, on this trip large numbers had also sought out and topped other 14ers: Williamson (13), Tyndall (28), Muir (39) and Barnard (7). [In that era Barnard was listed at 14,003. In later years it somehow shrank by thirteen feet.]

Mt. Russell also fell to two strong forays. This twin-summitted 14er had been climbed for the first time only six years earlier - solo by Norman Clyde. Peter Starr had also soloed it two years before the High Trip. His notes reveal that he had climbed Muir and Whitney the day before. He maxed both summits on Russell, then later in the day Barnard also fell to his determined assault. *"Consider Russell the most thrilling summit of the Whitney group, including Williamson,"* whose apex he had reached the previous year. [Starr notes are taken from "Mountain Records of the Sierra Nevada," compiled by Dick Leonard and the Sierra Club Committee on Mountain Records, 1937.] This time on Russell, Clyde led six, including Farquhar, Mortimer and Carter, by way of the south face, east chute (not a first). Meanwhile, the junior contingent - Eichorn, Dawson, Brem and Leschke - achieved two new routes: up via the south face, west chute and then down by the southwest face, west arete.

Descending the Canyon of the Kern, then west pass Moraine Lake, the High Trippers' next extended camp stay was at Little Five Lakes, opposite the Big Arroyo from the defiant Black Kaweah. Once a popular Club objective (140 in 1916), a grand total of three bothered to climb Mt. Kaweah. The Red Kaweah was topped by Dawson, Eichorn, Clyde, Mortimer, Carter (the latter three for the second time) and two others. Four strong parties were organized for attempts on the Black Kaweah, for which they knapsacked to near its base. Bill Horsfall led three the first day. The following morn witnessed ascents by Clyde's party of eight and Farquhar's of six. These were all by the regular route - the southwest face. Jules, Glen and Brem attempted the southwest ridge - then the only other route, done once before in 1927 - and they pulled it off (in spite of only five good arms!). [A two-part historical review, "Climbing the Black Kaweah," appeared in the Oct and Dec '91 ECHOES.] [Let it be noted that Lewis Clark,

31, assisted Farquhar on the Black Kaweah. An accomplished alpinist, he also participated the year before in the first ascent of Thunderbolt Peak, among many noteworthy climbs. The older brother of Nate Clark, Lewis, too, was a future Club President, and he served on the Board of Directors for 36 years. Lewis Clark passed away at his brother's home March of last year at age 90.

Once past Kaweah Gap, the High Trippers could lazily coast out in two days on the High Sierra Trail to Crescent Meadow, ending another Outing back where they had started four long weeks, and countless splendid memories, before.

### Beyond the High Trip

Although not on the High Trip, Dick Leonard, nevertheless, had another peak-filled, soaring Sierra season. He was actually part of a seven-week-long scientific expedition on which he assisted François Matthes in Yosemite geological studies. Major ascents included Starr King, Whorl, Matterhorn, a first ascent of Eocene Peak in the Sawtooths, Cockscomb and Lyell. In the Minarets he and H. B. Blanks made the first ascent of "East Pinnacle of the Minarets." In view of the fact that the two highest points along this ridge bore the names of their first ascenders, Michael's Minaret and Clyde's Minaret, Francis Farquhar suggested the name Leonard's Minaret. [Recall, Eichorn's Minaret, initially "Third," was first topped by Jules, Glen and Brem traversing from Michael's to Clyde's on the '31 High Trip.]

Over the Labor Day weekend, while a large contingent of So. California Chapter members romped over Whitney and other 14ers, Glen Dawson and Dick Jones climbed Mt. McAdie. Mid-October found Jules Eichorn on Mt. Hoffmann in Yosemite, where he made the first ascent of its western pinnacle - Hoffmann's Thumb. Moving beyond the Sierra, it is worth our noting that the north face of San Jacinto Peak, up Snow Creek, was first climbed on April 16, 1932, by Morgan Leonard and Glenn Rickenbough. Six weeks later, the second ascent was made, solo, by R. S. Fink. This recognition in the '33 SCB was not his first. Two years before reference had been made of another solo So. Cal. high trip - from Forest Home (just west of Forest Falls), up San Bernardino Peak, along the long ridge east to San Gorgonio Mtn, and down by the Vivian Creek Trail. This entry in the 1931 SCB appears to be the earliest by any future regular SPSer. In 1992 Sam Fink continues to climb with the Hundred Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter.

### Birth of the RCS

Late '32 was a little more receptive period in the Sierra Club for Dick Leonard's effort to bring in the Cragmont Climbing Club (CCC). Lewis Clark became chair of the San Francisco Bay Chapter, and was elected to the Club's Board, while Francis Farquhar succeeded Phil Bernays, from Los Angeles, as Club President. Both Clark and Farquhar were by then already members of the CCC. The Rock Climbing Section (RCS) was chartered in November under the auspices of the Committee on Rock Climbing. The Committee consisted of Jules Eichorn, Lewis Clark, Kenneth May, Marjory Bridge and Dick Leonard, Chair. One of Leonard's first actions was to disband the CCC. [The CCC was re-established a couple of years ago when the sudden skyrocketing premium for mountaineering insurance resulted in a ban on roped climbing and ice axe use in the Sierra Club - still in effect at this time.]

### The High Trip of 1933

The eagerly awaited High Trip of '33 would encompass a large loop in northeast Kings Canyon N. P. and would take in the headwaters of the South Fork of the San Joaquin River and the Middle Fork of the Kings River - last visited in 1930. It would begin on the east side of the Sierra at North Lake on July 8th, cross Piute, Muir and Bishop Passes and end at South Lake. It would entail a sustained high level of rock climbing by many of the new generation who had by now invested much time and effort at Cragmont Rock and other cliffs, overcoming their hesitancy on exposed rock and mastering their belaying skills.

By the summer of '33 the impact of the Great Depression was evident as the number of High Trippers halved to 102 for the first two weeks, and only 80 for the second two. The compact size did have its advantages, however. Quoting now from the lengthy Trip Report in the subsequent SCB ("Afoot with the Sierra Club in 1933") by Ethel Boulware (EB): *Quickly fused into a unit, the group functioned contentedly, like a huge family out for a holiday. ... Life thus became a restful affair, approaching, rather closely at times, the state of complete laziness. It was pleasant to find time to chat, to plan an exploring trip, or to arrange a fish-fry, without the constant pressure of hurry, prevalent on some former outings. ... Not the least of the advantages was the wide range of home-sites and the space for privacy, with no 'tenement district' to combat. ... As never before this would be the year of the knapsackers - those who could overcome the temptations of complete laziness and wander off into the high High Country, sometimes for several days. The climbers adept in the use of the rope would make up "The Polemonium Club," aptly named for the sturdy, violet-colored flower common among the highest Sierra crags and crevices (aka Sky Pilot), and its members were particularly entitled to proudly wear a feather in their caps. Details on the peak scrambling were penned by Glen Dawson (GD) for the '34 SCB "Mountaineering Notes."*

Quickly topping Piute Pass enroute to Hutchinson Meadow, the ambitious climbers could look north to their first notable challenge - Mt. Humphreys, at 13,986-feet the loftiest Sierra summit north of the Palisades. Norman Clyde led the peak on two consecutive days - first a party of eight, including Lewis Clark, Leland Curtis (mountaineer and superb illustrator), Julie Mortimer and Helen LeConte, daughter of Joseph N. LeConte. His next gang of eight included Hans Helmut Leschke, John Poindexter, Jack Riegelhuth and Ted Waller. Arriving a week behind schedule to join the Outing, Jules Eichorn and Marjory Bridge also summited Humphreys - a new route involving a traverse from a pinnacle on the southeast ridge. Marj described their adventure in a separate feature in the SCB: *I've had many thrills on the tops of mountains and rare fun and pleasure on the climbs, but this trip of ours was certainly one of the best. We had been 'in town' all winter, and were all tingly with the thought of at last getting a chance to*

climb again, especially the grand old peak we had looked at so longingly from Pilot Knob in 1929. Reverting to EB:

Composed partly of ambitious climbers determined to scale every formidable peak in sight and partly of those out for rest and relaxation, the party soon resolved itself into two sections - the knapsacking mountaineers and the stay-at-homes. While the latter vigorously denied the boastful allegations of one young scamp that "the cream of the camp leaves with the knapsackers," it was none the less true that much of the snap of the campfire departed with them, to be restored upon their return as they entertained with new songs and new parodies concocted in the keen air of the high camps. Judging from their eager faces and their glowing eyes, the knapsackers gained something from their experiences on the mountaintops that their less strenuous companions felt that they missed. Whether it was due to the fun of working and climbing together or to the exhilaration of mastering a peak, the enthusiasm of the knapsackers reached such a point that the stay-at-homes soon became imbued with their spirit and desired the life of the knapsacker, too! ...

A first ascent in The Pinnacles, about two miles west of Hutchinson Meadow, went to Glen Dawson, Neil Ruge and Alfred Weiler when they reached the highest point in the jagged array. Glen also led his sister Fern on a rock climb directly up the steep west side of Pilot Knob. Various climbing parties having "wiped out" [a SPS term] the area, the High Trippers then relocated south and east to Evolution Valley. Several teams were drawn to The Hermit. Clyde led the largest - "twenty-seven, fifteen of whom registered at the top of the summit block." (GD) With the benefit of mule-carried dunnage, an advance climbers' camp was established higher up at Evolution Lake.

First to fall was Mt. Darwin. Led over three days by Lewis Clark, Hans Helmut Leschke and twice by Clyde, a total of twenty-nine claimed this prize. Glen, Bahlah Ballantine and Neil Ruge claimed first-time honors on Peak 13,332, about a half-mile due southeast

of Darwin. Mt. Haeckel had seen few visitors since its first in 1920: Francis Farquhar, Walter Huber and Robert Price. As if to make up for this neglect, it was led by Clyde, Clark and Riegelhuth - putting twenty-two signatures in the newly-placed Club register.

Midway on the long sharp ridge tenuously connecting Mts. Wallace and Powell, overlooking Echo Lake to the north, two granite spires jut proudly skyward. This new challenge attracted a strong party on July 22nd headed by Clyde: Jules Eichorn (now caught up with the High Trip), Ted Waller, Helen LeConte, Julie Mortimer and two others. All climbed the north spire and the first three succeeded on the more difficult southern one. First ascents and unnamed, the appellation Clyde Spires was fittingly bestowed on the pair.

Those along for just the first two weeks now departed over Muir and Bishop Passes, to be succeeded in a few days by a smaller group along for the second half of the Outing. Ahead of this contingent Francis Farquhar and Bill Colby, Club President and Secretary, respectively, arrived to join Vice President Ernest Dawson (Glen's father), already on board, for the official dedication of the Muir Shelter/Hut atop 12,000-foot Muir Pass. The project had been Colby's inspiration when the funds were announced by the donor toward the construction of the John Muir Trail, then well along. Although basically completed in 1930, this was the first subsequent High Trip to arrive at the beehive-shaped structure. Quoting from EB: *Mr. Colby spoke of the world's admiration and love for John Muir. As his work is destined to carry on through the years, so, the hope was expressed, this shelter, dedicated to him, may likewise serve for an untold period of time to offer protection and safety to storm-bound travelers. The particular message carried away was Muir's reply to anxious fears that the need of the Sierra Club might sometime come to an end. "So long as greed and wrong exist in the mountains," was his quick answer, "so long must the fight against these evils be carried on by the Club."* The High Trippers now headed down the Middle Fork of the Kings to its junction with Palisade Creek, a little past Grouse Meadows.

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## The Devils Crag

Events on this defiant dark ridge were described in a separate feature in the SCB by Glen Dawson. Recalling first his earlier climb: *"The Devils Crag looked difficult. They looked even more difficult than we had anticipated, as three of us, Jules Eichorn, John Olmstead, and I stood on the ridge north of Mt. Woodworth on July 23, 1930."* The only successful ascent had been the first - by Charles Michael solo in 1913. The boys followed the latter's route on the southwest face. With respect to the huge X formed by two crossing chimneys/chutes, the route starts in the left leg and continues diagonally into the right. Pausing at the crossing of the X, *"here we found a shoe-lace, possibly one dropped by Norman Clyde on one of his explorations of the mountain. The chimney we followed is all right until near the top, where it becomes less definite and very steep. We went to the left toward the ridge, and in doing so did the most difficult climbing of the trip. The few hundred feet of arete were easy. No one had reached the top since the first ascent of Michael seventeen years before. Three boys not yet of age were very happy."*

*"Three years later, on July 25, 1933, Jules Eichorn and I again viewed the peak with some misgivings. The Devils Crag looked as difficult as ever, and this time we had ten picked climbers from the Sierra Club party, whom we had agreed to lead to the top. ... With Lewis Clark and Hans Helmut Leschke, Jules and I climbed a nearby peak of white rock which contrasts with the prevailing black. ... As Jules and I sat on "White Top," we picked out three possible routes. One was to go down to the base of Michael's chimney and go up that way. Another route was to go along the northwest arete. The third way was to go up Michael's chimney to the junction of the X, thence up the left chute to the arete and along the arete to the summit. Jules agreed to try the arete, so we divided the party into two caravans."*

Leschke led John Poindexter and Ted Waller, taking the new route up the left chimney of the X, and arrived first, placing a new Sierra Club register. Next to summit was Glen up the right chimney with Neil Ruge and Bahlah Ballantine. Then it was Jules, successfully pioneering the northwest arete with Alfred Weiler and Helen LeConte, whose father had named the peak in 1903. This route was seconded by Lewis Clark with Marj Bridge and John Cahill. Jules and Leschke returned by the latter's route of ascent, while Glen departed via the arete and again climbed "White Top." *"The arete has several difficult pitches, but is an ideal route for a large party."* It was followed later in the day by Norman Clyde leading Julie Mortimer and Jack Riegelhuth. *"This Sierra Club party of fifteen, all on top within a short time, constitutes the third ascent of the Devils Crag."*

The next day, while Clyde again climbed DC#1, Glen, Jules and Ted Waller successfully topped Crag #2 and #3 from the east. At this moment the weather, which had been favorable the whole trip, took a decidedly different course. *"With storm clouds rapidly gathering, we went down west in the chimney between Crag No. 2 and Crag No. 3. As it began to sprinkle we traversed to the chimney between the main peak and Crag No. 2. Here we took refuge under a chockstone, expecting that the shower would be over, as usual, in a few minutes. We joked and talked as water began to drip in our shelter. The rain came harder than ever. Suddenly, with a great rushing sound, the steep chimney became filled with a torrent. Dirty water, gravel, and even large rocks, came down in a series of waterfalls. We leaped out from under the chockstone, Jules to one side, Ted and I to the other. In a few moments the water had increased from a trickle which we could catch in our cups to a torrent of alarming proportions. Jules had gone out onto a narrow ledge, where he was soon drenched by water, and, what was more serious, was exposed to falling rocks. The roar of water, the lightning and thunder, and the crashing of avalanches were stupendous, but not very pleasant to us at the time. Soaked with rain and spray, we were so cold that we shook all over every few minutes. We could see snowfields below us blotted out by slowly moving rockslides, and we could see gullies being dug ten feet deep. Individual rocks came down, breaking into pieces on every side. The Devils Crag seemed to be coming apart."*

*"For an hour Jules was forced to stay in an extremely precarious position on a narrow ledge, exposed to falling rocks and threatened with being swept off by the increasing force of the water. At last the storm abated, and Ted was able to pass a rope to Jules and assist him across to our side of the chimney. Slowly we made our way down a few hundred feet of difficult wet rock. It was dusk before we got to timber and a chance to dry out. We tried to get to the Sierra Club camp at Palisade Creek on the Middle Fork of Kings River that night, but our exhaustion was too much even for the promise of food. ..."* Recalling this episode on video at the SPS '89 Banquet, Jules remarked that the hip pockets of his jeans had filled with sand and gravel.

Six days later the Outing passed the Grouse Meadows area again on its way up to Dusy Basin. Jules and Glen took this opportunity to search for and recover most of the gear that had been hastily abandoned in the storm. In the process they also climbed Crag #11, *"a short but interesting climb."* The next day the pair led two ladies and Glen's little brother on a romp up Rambaud Peak, just east of Devils Crag, possibly a first ascent. This appears to be the earliest reference in the SCB to Muir Dawson, then only twelve - it would not be the last.

[The Devils Crag were subsequently renumbered several times. The common scheme now in use counts eleven and translates the pair's climbs of #2, 3, and 11 into not-counted, #2 and 9, respectively. The remaining crags were all topped the following summer by Clyde, David Brower and Hervey Voge. Leschke would go on to climb DC#1 each of the next three years - a record four times not easily matched. (Last summer SPSer R. J. Secor made his fourth ascent.) The historic Sierra Club register placed on the '33 High Trip was unexpectedly rescued by a SPSer late last summer when its very fragile condition was revealed to him. A large segment of the first page was already lost. At the direction of the SPS Management Committee the register was recently sent to the Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley, where it will be treated for preservation and join the extensive Sierra Club Mountain Records Collection. A complete xerox copy of the register was returned to the summit by this author two months after the original removal.]

July 26th also dates the first ascent of Peak 12,778 (now 12,781), just north of the Devils Crag, by Lewis Clark, Marj Bridge, John Poindexter and John Cahill. They aptly came upon the name "Wheel Mountain" *because of the peculiar structure of the summit, which consists of four steep buttresses radiating symmetrically from a hub like the spokes of a wheel. There being no sign*

of a previous ascent, cairns were built on the four buttresses and on the "hub'." GD)

The Outing next relocated east up Palisade Creek a few miles to Deer Meadow - thereby putting Middle Palisade and Split Mtn, both 14ers, at risk to the Polemonium Club climbers. From a knapsack camp between the Palisade Lakes, over a three-day period a total of twenty in several parties topped Split. Lewis Clark (LC) wrote a separate article on Middle Pal for the Mountaineering Notes: *"There is no easy approach to Middle Palisade, either from the ends or by the sides; rather, it is still generally considered the most inaccessible and the most difficult to climb of California's 14,000-ft peaks."* It was summited for the first time, finally, in 1921 by Francis Farquhar and Ansel Hall. Climbing from the west, they made the common error of doing "Disappointment" Peak first. Glen and Jules had climbed Middle Pal during the 1930 High Trip. Over three days now twenty-two names were added to the Middle Pal register, including Farquhar's and those of an independent party of three Stanford students. One of this latter group was a young man from Pasadena, Howard Gates. [A future member of the Angeles Chapter's RCS and Ski Mountaineering Section, Howard helped in the construction of the San Antonio Ski Hut. He passed away only a few months ago.]

Peak 13,956 (now 13,855), less than a half-mile northwest of Middle Pal, had first been climbed by Norman Clyde on June 9, 1930, from the glacier side. Only ten days later he summited a second time - from the southwest. Jules and Glen now were keen to explore a daring new route to Middle Pal. They first achieved the ascent of Peak 13,956. *"From this peak they followed the ridge toward the main peak of Middle Palisade, turning several minor pinnacles enroute, but climbing the big black gendarme about midway, on which they found no previous ascent. They continued up the ridge southeasterly to the main peak and descended by the usual route."* (LC) Norman Clyde was to climb Peak 13,956 many times as it was one of his favorites. He is still there - his ashes lie scattered from its hallowed summit - Norman Clyde Peak.

On July 29, 1933, as Lewis Clark was guiding up Split Mtn and Clyde and Farquhar were leading parties on Middle Pal, a 30-year-old attorney in San Francisco completed packing for a High Sierra vacation. Pete Starr left that evening and headed over Tioga Road in Yosemite. After several years and many trips on the John Muir Trail, and many solo climbs, he was now close to completing the draft of his Guide to the John Muir Trail and the High Sierra Region.

Having "cleaned out" another area, the Outing now set about the business of circling back up the Middle Fork and relocating to their final encampment, which would be in Dusy Basin. Again, the knapsackers would use artificial aid (mules) in getting their advance climbers' camp established a couple days ahead of the arrival of the stay-at-homes. The Polemonium Club's final frenzy would be directed at North Palisade and its near neighbors. On August 2nd Clyde guided eleven to the North Pal register. A separate foursome of Lewis Clark, Ted Waller, Julie Mortimer and Jack Riegelhuth also summited and then carefully continued eastward, past the U-Notch, as far as the register on Mt. Sill. (The reverse traverse, Sill to North Pal, had been achieved by Jules, Glen, John Olmstead and Charles Dodge on the '30 High Trip. Both traverses are thought to have topped another 14er en route - Polemonium Peak.) The next day ten more crowded atop North Pal. Among them was Helen LeConte, 28, whose father, J. N. LeConte, first claimed this prize in 1903 with James Hutchinson and James Moffitt. Describing this grand peak in the subsequent SCB, she wrote in part: *"In recent years there has been a tendency among some of the younger climbers to consider North Palisade an easy ascent, one very much overrated by early climbers. This is all easy enough to say after the pioneering has been done and the routes have been picked out and described in great detail. Perhaps if it were not for the monuments in the chimney marking the presence of the little ledge, inexperienced people might miss it altogether, and then the climb would not be so easy. It seems to me that the very simplicity of the climb is one of its greatest beauties. The ledge is such a clever way of solving the difficulties. As for those who enjoy climbing of great difficulty there are endless possibilities for new routes. The fact remains that from every standpoint - from that of altitude, of awe-inspiring beauty, of climbing interest, of everything desirable in a mountain - North Palisade is certainly one of the finest in the Sierra."* The Outing's final 14er also fell that day to Clyde, John Poindexter and Philip von Lubkin. The pinnacle on Thunderbolt had seen no traffic since Jules' electrifying experience of August 13, 1931.

The High Trip ended on schedule at South Lake on Saturday, August 5th. Over the weekend every one scrambled back to their mundane other lives - Jules to San Francisco and Glen to Los Angeles. Not quite everyone, however. Norman Clyde's life was in the mountains. Also still in the High Sierra was Pete Starr, camped near Lake Ediza - below Mt. Ritter and close to the Minarets. ...

The '33 High Trip was like none of the thirty-one that preceded it. Although the terrain had been covered several times before, never before had so many knapsacking mountaineers dominated the Trip - and the peaks. The skills honed and the experience daringly won in the High Sierra would soon be brought to bear in an area of the Sierra where everything that could be climbed had already been climbed - Yosemite Valley. Before closing, let us hear once again from a passage in the Ethel Boulware narrative:

*"If any old-timer has entertained pessimistic doubts of the continued existence of the Sierra Club, let him count the number of young people signing up for the outings, let him watch them taking eager instruction in rock climbing, and swarming, as never before up difficult peaks, and his conclusions may be radically changed. Yesterday, with the undue familiarity of youth, it was 'North Pal' that drew them; today, without a rest, it was another, equally fascinating. With a pocketful of ascents to their credit at the end of the summer, with their unbounded energy and enthusiasm, the presence of these youngsters on the outings indicates a cheerful and healthy outlook for the growth of the Club."*



Emblem Pin to Honorary SPSer, December Banquet, 1989. L-R: Bill Oliver, Glen Dawson, Dick Jones and Nathan Clark.  
Photo by Jeff Solomon.

#### Grateful Acknowledgments

This work was inspired and patiently nourished by many - most notably Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn, but also by Nate Clark, Marj Farquhar and Dick Jones. All have given generously and warmly of their time and recollections.

Special thanks are also extended to John W. Robinson and John Ripley; the staff, The Arkel Erb Memorial Mountaineering Collection, Malibu Public Library; Ms. Lauren Lassleben, Sierra Club Archivist, The Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley; and David S. Zeidberg, Head, Special Collections (The Francis P. Farquhar Collection of Mountaineering Literature), UCLA Library.

Additional reference: Norman Clyde, "El Picacho del Diablo, the Conquest of Lower California's Highest Peak, 1932 & 1937," Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, 1975. (No. 36 in Baja California Travels Series.)

#### SPS T-SHIRTS COMING

Soon we will have new SPS t-shirts for sale. They will be in 3 colors: light grey (called heather), light turquoise, and yellow. A new design on the front is in the making. As an added extra, the entire SPS list (by geographic area) will appear on the back. To the left of each peak will be a square box in which to check off the peaks you have done with a laundry marker pen. Credit goes to Wynne Benti, who is doing the excellent art work for us.

I hope to be selling these by the June meeting. They will also be available by mail with more detail to appear in the next ECHO.

Patty Kline, SPS T-shirt Chair

#### Leisure Trip Update

Good News: Rick Jali has stepped forward as one willing to coordinate this activity. He can be reached at P. O. Box 1717, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546; (619) 934-8430. More SPSers interested in Leisure Trips: Gail Hanna, David Erickson and Mary Sue Miller. Go for it!