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Hervey Voge, editor
1954
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**Warning:** This guidebook is for historical reference only. Routes and terrain may have changed since this guide was written in 1954. Bring and use an up-to-date guidebook instead, such as R. J. Secor’s *The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, and Trails (2009).*

A guidebook is not a substitute for mountaineering skill, nor can it make climbing safe for those who do not practice the principles of safety. It is urged that inexperienced climbers avail themselves of the instruction and training given by the Sierra Club or other organizations before attempting difficult ascents.

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About the Editor
Hervey Harper Voge was born June 29, 1910. He earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from University of California, then received a chemistry fellowship in 1935 from the National Academy of Sciences. Voge was a Sierra Club member and mountaineer and started climbing in the early 1930s while he was a student at Berkeley, California. Voge made first ascents of multiple peaks, including Washington Column from below. He climbed with other well-known area climbers of the day, including David Brower, Norman Clyde, Bestor Robinson, Dick Leonard, and Jules Eichorn. Fellow student David Brower joined the Sierra Club in 1933 at the suggestion of Voge. In 1934, Voge and Brower traversed the High Sierra from Kearsarge Pass area to Yosemite, climbing 59 peaks in 69 days. Voge named two peaks, Norman Clyde Peak and Muriel Peak. While climbing peaks, he made a effort to preserve peak registers and record first ascents.

Dr. Voge lived in Berkeley, California. He married and had at least one daughter, Tamara. Professionally, Voge was a chemical engineer for Shell Development. His work includes heading a team that developed a rocket fuel for use in the vacuum of outer space. Voge was issued 25 US patents for his research work. He died in the Caribbean Islands on June 20, 1990.

Bibliographical Information


Climbing in California’s High Sierras offers a combination of satisfactions. Here are cliffs difficult enough to challenge the most intrepid sixth-class climber; lofty, isolated peaks that stimulate the spirit of exploration.
and adventure; and a timberline wilderness country with off-trail beauty spots seldom visited and completely unspoiled. Those who wish to try the climbs or visit their peaks will find this book useful, for it describes routes worked out by several generations of climbers and explorers. These who wish to seek out unknown climbs or peaks will also find the book helpful, for it tells what has already been done and some of what remains to be tried.

The Guide covers the High Sierra Region from Bond Pass on the northern boundary of Yosemite National Park to Army Pass south of Mount Whitney. Included are rock climbs of the famous Yosemite Valley, which has attracted devotees for over twenty years. Most of the Yosemite climbs are of fifth and sixth class difficulty and require special equipment and careful training. But many peaks of the High Sierra can be climbed by hikers without technical skill, and the Guide has not neglected the interests of these.

Routes on some 450 named peaks and over 300 unnamed summits are described, together with dates of first ascent and the names of the first climbers, when known. This material, along with early history, advice on approaches and camping, and some description of topography, is organized on the basis of seventeen different climbing areas.

Trails, passes, and cross-country routes are also discussed — information of real value to those who desire to see the Sierra from somewhat lower elevations than the summits of the peaks. Knapsackers who wish to set off across country with supplies on their backs will find material here for many trips.

Authors of the Guide are twenty-two climbers of varied experience. Compilation of the Guide started in 1937 when Richard M. Leonard, later president of the Sierra Club, collected all records for High Sierra Peaks. Since then numerous well-known climbers have participated. The present Guide was edited by Hervey Voge, who has known the Sierra for their past twenty years. Once he spent ten weeks in the mountains with David R. Brower, now executive director of the Club, during the course of which they personally inspected some 90 routes. Her and the other authors have visited many parts of the world, but have always found variety, challenge, or inspiration in the Sierra.
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William Shand, Jr.

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William Shand, Jr.

WILLIAM SHAND, JR., was born October 5, 1918, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, second son of William and Dorothy (Schaeffer) Shand. After attending Franklin and Marshall Academy and Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, from which he was graduated second in his class, he entered Princeton University with the class of 1940. His many achievements in college were climaxed by his graduation as valedictorian of the class, with highest honors in chemistry. After receiving the freshman First Honors Prize, Bill went on to win the Wood Legacy Prize, the McCay Prize in Chemistry, and a Phi Betar Kappa key in his junior year. He
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was a member of the Princeton Quadrangle Club, and found time for the varsity cross-country squad and the varsity swimming team, the German Club, and the Experiment in International Living. It was during the summers of 1935, 1937, and 1938 in Europe with the latter organization that his interest in mountain climbing was aroused.

After graduation, Bill entered the Graduate School of the California Institute of Technology as a fellow in the department of chemistry. During the war, he performed research with the Office of Scientific Research and Development for the Army in Panama in 1944, and in the South Pacific and the Philippines in 1945. After the war, he returned to California Institute of Technology, where he received his Ph.D. in physical chemistry in June 1946. He was appointed an instructor in molecular physics at the University of California, Berkeley, on July 1, 1946.

An enthusiastic mountain climber, Bill was a member of the Sierra Club, The American Alpine Club, and the Swiss Alpine Club. In the summer of 1938, he climbed the thirteen highest peaks in Switzerland. He was a member of the party, headed by Bradford Washburn, which first scaled Mount Hayes in Alaska in 1941. With Dr. Ben Ferris, her later in the same year ascended a then unnamed peak near Mount Hayes, which had never before been climbed; later the peak was officially named Mount Shand in his memory. The Canadian government has similarly named a peak after him in the Coast Mountains of British Columbia. Bill’s unrealized ambition was to take part in an expedition to K-2, in the Himalaya.

In addition to his great enthusiasm for mountaineering, Bill showed an unusual ability in rock climbing. His friends in the Sierra Club reported that he was a most capable rock climber during his years with the club and frequently undertook difficult ascents at Tahquitz Rock, in southern California, in Yosemite Valley, and in other places in the Sierra. His natural abilities and personality made him a popular leader in the rock climbing and mountaineering activities of the Southern Californian Chapter of the Sierra Club. Bill’s favorite mountain was the Grand Teton in Wyoming, which he ascended several times. It was while driving alone to repeat an ascent of this peak that he met his death in a collision in Nevada on August 11, 1946.

Publication of this work was made possible through a gift to the Sierra Club from Bill’s parents as a memorial to him, with the hope that many young climbers may benefit from the information contained herein.

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Preface

THIS VOLUME represents the culmination of an effort begun in 1933 when the Sierra Club Committee on Mountain Records started the collection of information on the ascents that had been made in the High Sierra. The project was soon enlarged with the ultimate aim of publishing a guidebook to Sierra climbs. Eight separate regions were described in a series of articles published in the Sierra Club Bulletin over the period 1937 to 1951, and these have now been corrected and combined with new material to make this volume. It is to be noted, however, that the project cannot be considered complete or final because many omissions have undoubtedly been made and there is certainly to be additional material in the future as new generations of climbers seek out novel routes and unclimbed pinnacles. Therefore the compilers of this guide, now constituting the Sierra Club Mountaineering Committee, will welcome any additions or corrections. For omissions committed because of ignorance we can only offer our sincerest apologies, and shall gently suggest that in the future these climbs can be recorded if we are informed of them.

Mr. and Mrs. William Shand of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, have particularly aided this project through the William Shand Fund contributed in memory of their son, William Shand, Jr., who lost his life in an automobile accident en route to the Tetons in 1946. His parents’ generosity has made possible the publication of the Climber’s Guide in the present form.

Many members of the Sierra Club have contributed to the material in his guide. The patience and ingenuity of the authors of the various sections in correlating heterogeneous bits of information have been invaluable. Others who deserve special mention are: Arthur H. Blake, chairman of the Committee on Mountain Records during the period when many sections of the Guide were compiled; David R. Brower, who throughout has contributed leadership and advice; Norman Clyde, who supplied much material in the region from Mammoth Pass to Kearsarge Pass from his personal notes; Richard M. Leonard, who in 1937 compiled the “Mountain Records of the Sierra Nevada,” which listed all peaks and all known ascents (up to the first five); Gene Hammel and Allen P. Steck, who for successive periods organized and directed work on the Guide; and Walter Starr, who had the “Mountain Records of the Sierra Nevada” and the climbing notes of Walter Starr, Jr., mimeographed for distribution to those who were active in climbing and might make further contributions.

Still others who have helped in various ways are: Kenneth Adam, Ansel Adams, Marjorie Borland, Chispa Chamberlain, Jack Davis, Glenn Dawson, Betty De Coe, Marjorie Dunmire, Jules Eichorn, Joan Firey,
Samuel W. French, Morgan Harris, Mary Houston, Elizabeth Klevesahl, Jim Koontz, Oscar Krupp, Norvill LaVene, R. G. Meisenheimer, L. Bruce Meyer, Howard Parker, Fernando Penalosa, Bill and Ellen Phillips, A. J. Reyman, William Rice, Ed Roper, Ned Robinson, Ruth Shapero, Jack Sturgeon, Denese Summitt, Chester Versteeg, Suzier Voge, Dale Webster, Laurie Williams, and Owen Williams. Among these A. J. Reyman and Chester Versteeg have been particularly active in climbing peaks for which no information was available and particularly helpful in sending in records from summit registers. The contributions of all are gratefully acknowledged.

Since it is hoped that revised editions of the Guide will be published in the future, climbers are asked to send in additions and corrections. These should be addressed to the Mountaineering Committee, Sierra Club, 1050 Mills Tower, 220 Bush Street, San Francisco 4, California.

Especially desired are records of first ascents and of new routes, either based on personal experience or copied from summit registers. We urge all climbers to carry pencils and notebooks so that details regarding routes and landmarks can be entered on the spot. For new routes, starting points, general orientation of route (compass direction from the summit), and a reasonable amount of detail are desirable. This will make identification of routes much more certain than it is in many of the descriptions in this guide.

There are still many minor peaks of the Sierra for which no records are available. For the most part these peaks have not even been listed here. Those who harbor a desire to tread rocks which have never before felt the presence of man may wish to seek out such peaks. Others will find the same satisfaction of pioneering in making new and perhaps more difficult routes on nonvirgin peaks.

H. V.
Sixteen Photographs

Mount Winchell

Ansel Adams
The Climber's Sierra

SIXTEEN PHOTOGRAPHS

THE THREE TEETH

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Ansel Adams
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Introduction

Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada of California is a sport that offers an especially attractive combination of satisfactions. There are many precipitous cliffs and jagged peaks to challenge the climber, including many possible routes that have not yet been attempted. There is the High Sierra timberline country, an area unexcelled in natural beauty, with thousands of streams and lakes, and a parklike quality that often permits the climber to go cross country without need of a trail. There is a summer climate seldom rivaled in mountainous areas, which nearly guarantees fair weather for both camping and climbing. There is an unspoiled wilderness, yet any peak can be reached in two days from the nearest roadhead. Lower down, in Yosemite Valley and elsewhere, there are readily accessible granite cliffs where rock climbers can find routes as difficult and demanding as any that have yet been ascended. Some idea of the Sierra terrain is given by the photographs included in this volume, but the climber will have to go out into the real mountains to experience the special Sierra charm.

It is the purpose of this guidebook to supply brief descriptions of the routes of ascent for the High Sierra peaks and for certain cliffs in Yosemite Valley and Kings Canyon. An attempt has been made to include all novel ascents, and thus the guide is also a compilation of mountain records. In this introduction something is said about the area covered, the general nature of Sierra climbing, the classification system used, the method of describing routes, and necessary safety precautions. For other information the reader may wish to consult some of the books listed in the References and maps section at the end of this volume.
Introduction

Area Covered

THE GENERAL area covered is the Sierra Nevada between Bondr Pass on the north and Army and Franklin passes on the south. Usually only peaks above 10,000 feet elevation are included, but a notable exception is made for the Yosemite Valley, where many rock climbs for points 6,000 to 9,000 feet in elevation are described. Throughout, peaks and climbs have been selected on the basis of interest to the climber or because of their prominence in a region, rather than by specific definition in terms of a minimum of so many hundreds of feet above the nearest saddle. This choice has been arbitrary and has left out many small peaks which may ultimately attract attention. On the other hand, the peaks included are quite numerous, and many are listed which can be very easily climbed.

The whole area is subdivided into sections marked off by the major passes across the Sierra Crest, as shown in Sketches 1 and 2. Dividing lines between sections follow water courses, with a few exceptions such as the Tioga Pass Road. Within sections there are certain areas which, because of their isolation or because of their accessibility from a single base, or because of unusual attractiveness for climbers, have come to be considered as units. Such, for instance, are the Sawtooth Ridge, the Palisades, and the Evolution Region. These areas are treated separately within the major sections. For each such area there are usually given a brief description, some history of the climbing, routes of access, information on campsites, a listing of passes and knapsack routes, and the routes and records for the peaks. In some sections general information for the individual areas is given only at the head.

Sketch maps are included for a few sections. These show certain features or routes not on the topographic maps of the U.S. Geological Survey, but are not intended as substitutes for the latter. Every climber will need the topographic maps to aid in identification of peaks and finding of routes. The Sierra region of interest has been completely mapped on a scale of 1:125,000. The maps are listed in the bibliography. Larger sheets made up of the above show the areas of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Yosemite National Park and thus cover much of the High Sierra. Climbers should be warned against possible errors in all of these old maps.
Recently, publication of a new series of maps, on a scale of 1:62,500, and based on stereophotographic aerial surveys, has been started by the U.S. Geological Survey. These new maps are more reliable than the old ones and show much more detail. Unfortunately only a small portion of the total High Sierra region has so far been covered by the new maps, but within a few years all will have been.

The existence of two sets of maps poses certain problems in making a guidebook which is of necessity based on names and elevations shown on the maps. For most places the elevations shown on the two sets of maps differ, yet for unnamed peaks the elevations serve as primary identification, being followed by the distance in miles from...
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Sketch 1. Northern Areas

Area Covered
Sketch 2. Southern Areas

r r r r nearby named feature. In many places an exact elevation is given for a certain peak on one set of maps, but not on the other. Because of these difficulties, because the records compiled by the Sierra Club were all based on the old maps, and because the new maps will not be complete for several years, it has been decided to show both old and new elevations, when available, for all peaks. Elevations from the new maps are followed by \( n \); thus North Palisade, 14,254; 14,242\( n \). When an exact elevation is not given on a map, the
elevation for the last contour liner is written in the guide, followed by a plus sign to indicate the unknown additional elevation. Some of the new elevations have been taken from advance sheets of the new maps, and it is possible that discrepancies will appear when they are published.
Climbing in the Sierra is largely rock climbing, although some steep snow and even ice may be encountered. The rock is chiefly granite and is quite firm compared to that of many mountains. This granite tends to fracture on planes at right angles, producing cubical or rectangular blocks and horizontal ledges well suited to climbing. Metamorphic rocks of various qualities are found in certain small regions, particularly in the Kaweahs, near Rae Lakes, the Black Divide, Convict Lake, and in the Minarets. With a few exceptions the metamorphic rocks are also fairly sound. Loose rock must be guarded against, however, and particularly in gullies or chutes will the climber meet loose rock which must be trod with care. The high
Sierra Peaks have been deeply carved by glaciers in the past. Steep glacial cirques, common on north and east sides, sometimes have overhanging upper edges or are bordered by sharp arêtes. Avalanche chutes cut by winter snow slides are their most notable additional characteristic of the peaks.

The easier routes up peaks are commonly chutes or ridges, since their faces are generally more difficult. In almost all ascents an approach must be made over intermediate terrain where one thousand feet or more of talus, broken shelves, snow slope, or meadow are ascended. Their actual climbing may then involve one to two thousand feet of rock, snow or ice. It is always interesting, while passing over the intermediate terrain, to choose the best route of approach, which will depend to some extent on the personal tastes of the climbers. In May or June the approach may be entirely over snowfields, while in August or September it is more likely to be over talus.

There are dozens of small glaciers remaining in the Sierra, but they are usually hidden under the northeast faces of peaks and are not major geographical features. Except for the bergschrunds that separate their moving glaciers from the fixed rock and ice above, there are no crevasses of consequence. The hazards of the glaciers are largely those of steep ice and snow, although sometimes a certain amount of difficulty is met in crossing a bergschrund. The largest Sierra glacier, the Palisader Glacier, is quite flat, and may be crossed without difficulty. Steep snow is fairly frequent, especially early in the season, but the late-summer climber can often avoid all snow.

Annual and seasonal variations can cause a considerable variation in the difficulty of climbs. A chute which is ascended by easy rocks on summer may be filled with steep ice and snow in another year. Or a feasible snow slope may be replaced by a rather difficult rock climb. No attempt has been made in this Guide to judge all such variations and the climber should not be too surprised if a supposed class 3 climber actually turns out to be class 4 or 5.

Weather in the Sierra is quite dependable, and summer storms, when they occur at all, are usually mild. Furthermore, storms most often come in the afternoon. Thus a cloudless morning sky will sometimes be transformed by noon or mid-afternoon into a region of towering cumulus clouds and a little later lightning and rain may develop. Because of this it is well to start and finish a climb early in the day. Occasionally the thunderstorms are quite violent, and then the climber should take pains to remain well off summits and ridges, where lightning may strike. Chutes or couloirs are also to be avoided, for rain or hail can loosen dangerous barrages of falling rock. Since such storms are usually rather brief it is well to wait them out in some safe place rather than to try to proceed in spite of weather. In late May and in June there may be general storms of the type characteristic of the California winter climate. These will bring rain or snow in moderate amounts, but they will pass in a few days. July and August are normally fair except for infrequent thunderstorms. In September or October the first fall storms may be expected. These, like those of June, are usually brief and are followed by fair weather, so that foot travel in the High Sierra is often quite possible in September, October, and November. It sometimes happens, however, that quite heavy storms bringing much snow strike in the fall.
Equipment needed in the Sierra depends largely upon the type of climbing to be done. All climbers will want sturdy pants, a strong shirt, a sweater, windproof jacket, and a hat. Rock climbers will bring a 120 foot nylon climbing rope, a 200 foot Manila rappel rope, slings, pitons, carabiners, and a hammer. Those who go early in the season or who visit the Palisades, the north face of Darwin, the Minarets, the Sawtooth Ridge, and other areas likely to require crossing steep snow and ice, will need ice axes and boots suitable for snow work. There is seldom enough hard snow or ice to justify carrying crampons. Footwear depends somewhat on individual taste. Formerly nails were used on snow and a change to light rubber-soled shoes was made for dry rock. At present, stout leather boots with rubber-cleated soles are the preferred all-around footwear. Those who plan to avoid snow can use sneakers or shoes with composition soles, but the Bramani, Vibram, or other lug-type cleated soles are generally better even if snow and wet rock are never crossed.
**Introduction**

**Safety Precautions**

Essentially, safety results from the judgment and competence of the climbers. Without these, rules or warnings are futile. Therefore it is most important that every climbing party should be aware of its abilities and limitations and should not attempt ascents beyond its power. The only safe way for a climber to develop ability and judgment is in prolonged practice climbing within a few feet of level ground or with an upper belay, and later on, in actual climbs with experienced persons. This guidebook is in no sense a substitute for such experience, and it is strongly urged that climbers limit themselves to class 1 or class 2 climbs until they have had opportunity to gain experience with competent climbers. Even on class 1 and class 2 climbs there are possible hazards, and all climbers are urged to refrain from attempting anything they are not confident of successfully completing. In mountaineering it is a sign of competence to retreat if the weather turns bad, if the party proves too weak, or if the route proves to be more difficult than expected. An adequate margin of safety should always be maintained.

The chief hazards in climbing are:

1. Falling off because of loss of balance or loss of grip.

2. Falling off because of loose rock, as when a handhold or foothold breaks.

3. Being struck by falling rock from above.

4. Slipping on steep snow or ice.

5. Being struck by or carried down by an avalanche of snow.
Hazard 1 is commonly recognized, and is the chief justification for the need of practice climbing. A competent leader knows his limits and is not at all likely to fall for these reasons.* In the event that a fall does occur, proper rope technique offers a strong secondary defense against serious injury.† Hazard 2 is a very real one and must be constantly guarded against. Especially dangerous is the rare but quite possible occasion when a large block, perhaps one to ten feet in size, is pulled loose by the leader. Many serious accidents have resulted from such an event. Falling rock, listed as hazard 3, may result from natural causes or from actions of a member of a climbing party. Natural rock falls are rather rare in the Sierra and do not constitute an intolerable risk except under certain circumstances, as in a chute when there is heavy rainfall or much melting snow and ice. On the other hand, knocking down off rocks by climbers is very common, and the hazard thereby created must be minimized by (a) avoiding whenever possible (and it usually is!) knocking or throwing down any rocks, (b) keeping the party spread out horizontally when this is feasible, or staying close together so that the velocity reached by a falling rock will be low, or staying in a sheltered spot while waiting or belaying, and (c) by calling out rock! whenever a rock is accidentally loosened.r

* For an excellent discussion see the article by Morgan Harris, “Safety Last?” SCB, 1942, 65-74.r

† See “Belaying the Leader,” by R. M. Leonard and Arnold Wexler, SCB, 1946, 68-90 (available as reprint).r

Snow or ice is chiefly dangerous because the climber may slip and slide onto rocks below, even though the snow is not especially steep. Since so much Sierra climbing is on rock, both footgear and experience are often ill-adapted to deal with this hazard. Furthermore it is not always possible to avoid crossing such slopes. When they are crossed good steps should be kicked or cut and the rope should be used for belaying.r

Snow avalanches are uncommon in the summer but they may occur when snow lies on smooth slabs or when there is a steep slope of wet snow. Warm afternoons are the most dangerous times. Experience is the prerequisite for judging the safety of a snow slope.r

In the above paragraph a few hints on safety have been given with the hope that they will help the users of this Guide to avoid trouble. These brief remarks are not intended to supply instruction, for, as noted elsewhere, this can best be obtained from organized groups. Those desiring information in print should consult one or more of the following:r

Manual of Ski Mountaineering, David R. Brower, editor, University of California Press, 1947. Three excellent chapters on climbing techniques are included.r
General safety rules—Safety comes primarily from a state of mind and cannot be insured by the blind observance of any number of commandments. A few rules, however, help to build safety consciousness. Some valuable ones are:

1. A climbing party of three or more is best. Two is tolerable if nearby support knows of the plans of the climbers. Solo mountaineering exposes the climber to very grave risks and may work unnecessary hardships on friends or would-be rescuers.

2. Climbers should at all times carry adequate clothing, food, and equipment.

3. The rope should be used on all exposed places. (This assumes an knowledge of rope management.) The leader should never refuse a belay if any member of the party requests it.

4. The party should be kept together. All must agree to obey the leader or the majority rule.

5. Climbers should never attempt anything beyond their ability and knowledge. Physical and mental condition at the time of the climb must be considered.

6. Judgment should not be swayed by desire when a retreat or an easier route is necessary. No climb is worth the deliberate risk of life.
Introduction

Route Descriptions

ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS in this Guide are mostly rather general and will require a considerable amount of route-finding ability from any climbers who follow them. In some, only the direction of approach is given, while in others, the entry merely constitutes a record that the peak has been climbed. For many climbs no more is needed, but in other descriptions, particularly for prominent peaks, ultimate further elaboration is desirable, and it is hoped that users will supply this.

Information has come from personal experience of the authors and their friends, from summit registers, from letters sent in to the Mountaineering Committee (formerly the Committee on Mountain Records), and from articles in the Sierra Club Bulletin and the Sierra Club Baser Camps' mimeographed books. This information is incomplete and it is certain that many ascents worthy of record are not included. A climbing party may thus ascend a peak for which no record is available and still find a cairn on the summit. An effort has been made to limit the term “first ascent” to those cases where climbers stated that no cairn was found, but even this may be in error as cairns can be destroyed by storms or may not have been erected in the first place. Sardine cans and other human artifacts constitute fairly good proof of previous ascents and have been found when no cairns were evident. The priority of ascent of a new route up a peak is even harder to certify, and it is quite possible that some injustices have been done.

Conventions followed in describing routes should be mentioned. The basic location of a route is given by compass direction from the summit, for example, north face, west ridge, etc. Actions of the climber are stated for him as though he were advancing (usually toward the summit) in the general direction of the route; thus he may be told to turn left or right. For added certainty the compass bearing of his new line of advance is sometimes given. For example, directions may call for a traverse to the left (N). Since route descriptions are not detailed, they should not be taken too literally. If the description says: “Follow the west ridge to the summit,” the climber should remember that the best route may actually involve a number of small deviations to one side or the other of the ridge, and that it is up to him to find these rather than to stick stubbornly to the ridge in difficult places. Actually on most routes a considerable number of variations will be possible, and many variations may be of about the same difficulty.
Times of ascent are given rather rarely. They should be considered as rough estimates, since the time for a given ascent will vary markedly, depending on the skill, speed, and condition of the party.

"Ducks" made up of two or three stones stacked vertically have been placed by various persons to mark routes on peaks and along knapsack routes. These are sometimes useful, but should usually be viewed with skepticism. Many ducks have little significance. Some may lead to poorer routes. The climber who encounters ducks does not usually know what the builder of the duck had in mind, and it is better for the climber to judge the situation himself than to follow blindly a series of ducks. Sometimes a duck is built to mark the right (or the wrong) chute for descent from a ridge. It is the feeling of the editor that climbers who know their business will rarely need a duck to find the return route. If a duck is built for such a purpose it is usually best to destroy it on return. The building of ducks, except in a few exceptional places, should probably be discouraged.

Terms commonly used in the Guide have been roughly defined as follows:

- **Gully**—the broadest and lowest angle of depression that grooves the mountainside.
- **Chute**—steeper than a gully, and often subject to recurrent avalanches of rock or snow.
- **Couloir**—a chute which has or is likely to have ice or snow.
- **Chimney**—a steep, narrow chute with approximately parallel walls.
- **Crack**—a narrow separation between rock faces varying from about one foot to two or three millimeters.
- **Face**—a steep side of a mountain, which may vary from a slope of about 40° to a vertical cliff.
- **Slope**—a side of a mountain gentler than a face.
- **Ridge**—a high divide extending out from a peak.
Arête—a narrow, steep ridge.

Summit—the highest point of a peak.

Pass—the lowest or most convenient point at which a long ridge can be crossed.

Col—a high, steep pass. A rounded col is often called a saddle.

Notch—about the same as col.

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Classification of Climbs

The classification system employed in this Guide essentially tells the equipment required for a safe ascent by a competent party. The system does not presume to measure actual physical difficulty. The climbing leader should avail himself of the information conveyed by the class number so that he may more capably judge the ascents he might wish to undertake and what equipment he will need. In the last analysis, however, it is the leader’s judgment that will indicate to him which class or particular lead will be; that is to say, he will decide when to rope up and when to use pitons for protection or direct aid. His decisions will be influenced by weather and other seasonal variations, the capacities of his companions, and, of course, his own climbing skill and experience. It should be noted that greater climbing skill is often required for class 4 and class 5 ascents than for those of the class 6 category. No one should attempt a climb unless properly equipped and prepared by experience to meet the requirements for a safe ascent. The classification system is as follows:

- **Class 1.** Hiking. Any sturdy footgear will do.
- **Class 2.** Proper footgear is necessary, such as rubber lugs, nails, or composition soles.
- **Class 3.** Ropes should be available. There will generally be some exposed climbing requiring use of the hands. Occasional belays are suggested for less experienced climbers.
- **Class 4.** Ropes and careful belays must be used for safety. Pitons are desirable for anchoring belayers.
Class 5. Pitons should be placed above the belayer by the leader as he proceeds.

Class 6. Pitons or bolts must be placed for direct aid.
Bond Pass to Tioga Pass

NORTHWARD from Tioga Pass and Tuolumne Meadows peaks of the High Sierra diminish rapidly in elevation and, with a few notable exceptions, in ruggedness as well. Nevertheless this northern portion of Yosemite National Park, and the region to the east, contain much of interest to climbers. The Sawtooth Ridge, which is described as a separate area following these introductory remarks, is outstanding for its clean granite climbs and its accessibility from the east. The other peaks are scattered in a mountain area of quiet charm, and are listed in alphabetical order in the second subdivision of this section.

Many of the peaks may be climbed without encountering technical difficulties, merely by following the routes dictated by an inspection of the topographic map or the mountain itself. There remain, however, a few summits which are best approached by specific routes; and there exist peaks which by virtue of their more impressive faces might bluff wary mountaineers out of enjoyable ascents.

Approaches and Campsites

The central part of the Bond Pass-Tioga Pass area is not often approached from the west, probably as a result of the distance which must be covered and the less exciting terrain which lies along the route. All three of the other directions provide easy and popular routes of entry.

From the north trails leading southward from the Sonora Pass highway start at Kennedy Meadow and at Leavitt Meadows. The Leavitt Meadows route follows the Walker River for several miles before trending southwest and crossing an unnamed pass at the eastern end of Dorothy Lake. The better-defined Relief Valley Trail starts at Kennedyr Meadow, and joins the other route at Dorothy Lake after entering the park by way of Bond Pass. Either trail may be hiked to its crossing of the park boundary in a matter of two or three days. A newly completed temporary mining road (closed) leads from the Sonora Pass road to Bond Pass. Campgrounds have been established at Kennedy and Leavitt meadows, and stock is available.
The eastern approaches consist of secondary roads leading in short, steep trails. Campsites and stock are available at some road ends, and in general trail systems lead into the park. The Robinson Creek route does not provide a trail, and bushwhacking is necessary between Barney and Peeler lakes. The approaches to the Sawtooth Ridge are described separately for that area.

The southern routes start from the Tioga Pass road. From Tuolumne Meadows and Snow Flat, trails lead to Glen Aulin and thence northward. Or, from a point near White Wolf a trail descends into the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne at Pate Valley; and then, after 3,500 vertical feet of switchbacks, leads north over easy country to Benson and Smedberg lakes.

The major trails in the northern Yosemite Sierra area are fairly well shown on the USGS sheet of Yosemite National Park, and several routes within the area are described in detail in Starr’s Guide to the John Muir Trail. A few days of hiking on these trails should indicate to most hikers what sort of terrain difficulties may be encountered in the region and how the trail system will cope with them. Only a few passes reach heights of more than 10,000 feet, and the meadows and valley floors lie between the 6,000- and 9,000-foot levels. The trails are for the most part well constructed, and although they follow considered routes along the paths of least resistance, cross-country knapsack routes are often open to hikers not hindered by the limitations imposed by stock. It is well to seek advance information, however. The traveler who inspects the map and can imagine no reason for the lack of a direct trail connection between Waterwheel Falls and Matterhorn Canyon can quickly if not easily find the reason for the longer route followed by the trail. But hiking through some areas in which the contour lines indicate no topographic obstacles is neither unreasonable nor difficult even if no trails exist. For example, a recent Sierra Club knapsack party crossed from Matterhorn Canyon to Spiller Creek Canyon by the unnamed pass north of Whorl Mountain and later left Spiller Creek by a pass north of Spiller Lake which led to the plateau west of Camiaca Peak. These passes were easy class 3.

Campsites are plentiful throughout the area, particularly along lake shores (Tilden Lake, Benson Lake), and in the major canyons (Virginia Creek, Matterhorn Canyon), and only at the most popular campsites is a shortage of grass or wood likely.
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http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/bond_pass_to_tioga_pass.html

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Approaches and Campsites
THE SLENDER PINNACLES and narrow arêtes of the Sawtooth Ridge form a portion of the northeast boundary of Yosemite National Park. The main peaks are shown on the U.S. Geological Survey map (Bridgeport Quadrangle) and on the map of the Yosemite National Park, but the accompanying Sketch 3 must be consulted for more complete detail and for names not shown on the official maps. Although the peaks are only from 11,400 to 12,281 feet in elevation, nevertheless they constitute one of the most interesting and difficult climbing regions.

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Bond Pass to Tioga Pass

The Sawtooth Ridge

Richard M. Leonard (1937) and Hervey Voge (1953)

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The region may be reached from the south by good trail from Tuolumne Meadows to campsites below Whorl Mountain, in Matterhorn Canyon at 9,600 feet, and north of the Finger Peaks, in Slider Canyon, at 10,000 feet elevation. However, the peaks are more accessible from the north, via Bridgeport and Twin Lakes. By a climb from their road of only 3,000 feet in three miles, without trail, a fine campsite can be reached at an altitude of 10,000 feet near a glacial lakelet on their east branch of Blacksmith Creek. Good camping is available on the west branch of the same creek. Campsites are also to be found on the headwaters of Horse Creek at somewhat higher elevations, and these sites are closer to the Three Teeth and the peaks to the southeast.

Although Matterhorn Peak was climbed in 1899, most other points seemed too difficult until modern methods of rock climbing were introduced in the summer of 1931. With the application of a new technique all major points have now been ascended. There are, however, several minor summits yet unclimbed, and many fine new routes still to be made.

Principal Passes

Polemonium Pass. Class 3. This is the deep notch between the Doodadr and the Dragtooth. The southwest side is class 2, and presents no difficulties. On the northeast a very broad, steep chute descends to their glacier. For 500 vertical feet the slope is 45° or over. When this is snow-covered in the spring and early summer it offers an attractive mountaineer’s route for crossing the ridge, with steep snow the only problem. Later in the season bare ice and a bergschrund may make this northeast side more difficult.

Col de Doodad. East chimney, south to north. Class 4; 200-foot reserve rope required, ice axe useful. This pass was first used July 2, 1933, by Henry Beers, Bestor Robinson, and Richard M. Leonard. It is their most convenient route from Slide Canyon to the northeast face of their central portion of the ridge. The approach from Slide Canyon is up easy scree to the lowest and most prominent gap between the Three Teeth and the Doodad. The 45° couloir on the north is usually snow-filled in the upper half and is bare disintegrating granite in the lower part. From the col, rappel down the snow 200 feet to a ledge. Traverse 10 feet horizontally left to the head of a dry disintegrating chimney. From there rappel 90 feet to a steel spike driven into a crack in their right (NE) wall at the head of a steep 60-foot drop to the glacier. A third rappel brings one to the head of the glacier.

Col de Doodad. West chimney, north to south. Class 3. From their northeast ascend a moderate 35° gully close against the East Tooth. Follow this gully left (SE) under an overhanging block to the crest of the ridge. Thence, drop to the right (SW) 30 feet over moderately hard climbing to a platform, then to the left (SE) to a chockstone at the head of a short steep chimney. Climb down this chimney to their scree gully on the south side of the Col de Doodad. This route is much easier from north to south than the East Chimney and is somewhat easier from south to north, but should be attempted in the latter direction only by those experienced in route finding as it is poorly defined from the Slide Canyon side.
Glacier Col. Class 2; ice axe advisable. The ascent of this pass between Cleaver Peak and Blacksmith Peak is over moderate scree and benches from Slide Canyon and 40° snow and glacier on the north. It is probably the least difficult pass across the Sawtooth Ridge.

Cleaver Notch. Class 2. First used July 2, 1933, on the first ascent of the Three Teeth. It is the most practical route across the exceedingly sharp arête of the Cleaver. The notch is crossed at its southern edge, only 30 feet above the glacial benches on either side.

Hawk’s Head Notch. This notch is on the arête about 100 yards north of Blacksmith Peak just short of the sharp minor pinnacle with the overhanging summit known as the Hawk’s Head. The eastern approach is moderate, but on the west very difficult crack climbing may be required; details are not available.

Routes on the Peaks

Twin Peaks (12,314)

Early records are not available. The saddle between the two peaks may be reached from the north or the south, and both peaks may be readily climbed from this saddle. Class 2 to 3.

Matterhorn Peak (12,281)

Route 1. South face. Class 2. First ascent 1899 by M. R. Dempster, J. S. Hutchinson, Lincoln Hutchinson, Charles A. Noble. This peak, the highest point of the Sawtooth Ridge, offers the most extensive view in the region. There is an easy route from near Burro Pass up the broad scree gully on the center of the southwest face.

Route 2. Northwest face. Class 3. First ascent July 20, 1931, by Walter Brem, Glen Dawson, and Jules Eichorn. Proceed from Matterhorn canyon to the notch between the Dragtooth and the Matterhorn Peak, and climb up a gully, or the face, to the summit.

The Dragtooth (12,150)
Route 1. South face. Class 2. First ascent July 20, 1931, by Walter Brem, Glen Dawson, and Jules Eichorn. Nearly any portion of the south face will be found practicable.

Route 2. North face. Class 4. First ascent July 16, 1941, by J. C. Southard and Hervey Voge. From the Dragtooth Glacier ascend the steep snow slope below the north face to a point about 100 feet to the left (E) of the main chute that comes down the north face. This chute is just east of the massive northwest buttress. Leave the snow by ledges leading up to the left, and follow these ledges to a less prominent chute that lies about 200 feet east of the main chute. Climb this chute for about 200 feet and then cross over to the right to the main chute. Climb up the left (E) side of the main chute to within 100 feet of the summit ridge, and then ascend a 75-foot chimney which leads to the ridge about 50 feet northwest of the summit.


The Doodad (11,700)

Class 4. First ascent July 7, 1934, by Kenneth May, Howard Twining. Several routes varying from difficult to very difficult, are possible up the south face to the 25-foot granite cube which forms the summit and which overhangs on all sides. The final climb is up a crack on the southeast corner. On September 7, 1936, Carl Jensen made a traverse by descending the more difficult crack on the northwest corner. There is another route on the southwest corner.

The Three Teeth (11,750)

Route 1. Traverse northwest to southeast. Class 4; rappel rope required. First ascent July 2, 1933, by Henry Beers, Bestor Robinson, and Richard M. Leonard. (See “Three Teeth of Sawtooth Ridge,” SCB, 1934, 31-33.) The route is up a series of ledges in a broad depression on the center of the northeast face of the West Tooth. Several variations are possible at the start. About one-third of the way up, traverse diagonally upward to the right (SW) to less difficult ledges leading upward to the sawblade. Follow the arête back to the left (SE) to the tunnel beneath the summit block. Climb to the northwest out of the tunnel, and then up the northwest face of the block to the summit of the West Tooth.

From a point at the southeast end of the tunnel rappel 75 feet toward the Middle Tooth to a 3-foot ledge. Climb downward toward Slider Canyon 100 feet along steeply sloping ledges and cracks. Traverse back northeast to the West Notch. Ascend a chimney rising from the notch toward the summit of the Middle Tooth. Follow this chimney about 200 feet until easier face climbing appears on the left (NE). Traverse this
face diagonally right (SE), cross the chimney about 50 feet below the summit, and then by good holds on the face to the right of the chimney climb to the summit of the Middle Tooth.

r r

r The route down to the East Notch follows a short chimney near the northeast end of the summit, then steep cracks to the head of the larger chimney a short distance below the notch on the Slide Canyon side. Traverse southeast 75 feet along ledges on the Slide Canyon face off the East Tooth to a narrow steep chimney up the face. Climb the chimney to a chockstone, then traverse to the right (SE) a few feet on small holds out of the chimney to a parallel crack. Follow this crack to the summit of the East Tooth.

r r

r From the summit follow the Slide Canyon side of the southeast arête down over steep, exposed and very difficult climbing. About half-way down this arête a pinnacle about 20 feet high will be encountered. This can be passed by direct attack and a rappel down a steep chimney on the opposite (SE), side to less difficult climbing leading to the Col de Doodad. A better route is to turn right at the Pinnacle and descend the southwest face over progressively easier climbing to the Slide Canyon base of the Middle Tooth.

r r

r Route 2. Traverse southeast to northwest. Class 5. First ascent July 25, 1934, by Glen Dawson and Jack Riegelhuth. From a short distance below the Col de Doodad, on the Slide Canyon side, ascend the short chimney with the overhanging chockstone leading to the arête and the west chimney of the Col de Doodad. Follow the arête to the base of the tall pinnacle. Pass this on the left by crawling through a remarkable tunnel on the southwest, to more difficult climbing leading back to the southeast arête. Thence by Route 1 to the summit of the East Tooth. A more obvious route is from the Slide Canyon base of the Middle Tooth to the tall pinnacle on the southeast arête of the East Tooth and thence to the summit.

r r

r Traverse the Middle Tooth by Route 1, thence to the base of the rappel on the West Tooth. The angle of the next 75 feet is about 80° highly exposed. The holds are rather unsound. Protected by pitons, the ascent is made up thin cracks and narrow ledges to the tunnel, thence by Route 1 to the summit of the West Tooth. Route i may then be followed to the base on the northeast, or various routes hereinafter described may be used for rappelling the Slide Canyon face.

r r

r Route 3. The Middle Tooth from the north. Class 4; ice axe required. First ascent July 2, 1933, by Lewis F. Clark, Richard G. Johnson, Oliver Kehrlein, and Randolph May. From the northeast, ascend the steep snow couloir leading toward the West Notch. One hundred feet above a chockstone leave the snow and traverse diagonally back northeast on a ledge on the left (SE) wall. When snow is low some difficulty may be experienced in getting on the ledge. After traversing the ledge fairly well onto the face, ascend a prominent chimney and ledges upward to the right (SW) to a point on Route 1 in the chimney rising from the West Notch. Follow Route 1 to the summit.

r r

r Route 4. The West Tooth from the southwest. Class 5. First ascent July 23, 1941, by David R. Brower, L. Bruce Meyer, and Art Argiewicz. From the scree slope at the base of the West Notch, on the Slide Canyon
side, begin climbing up the left (W) shoulder, working diagonally toward a ledge at the top of the lowest and first chimney. From this point a delicate fingertip traverse is necessary to cross the top of the chimney to another scree chute directly above the lower chimney. After ascending the chimney to about 30 feet below its mouth one must work back (SW) and to the left (W) over an easy ledge. After working over this ledge a short distance, ascend the chimney above by swinging around a flake to the left (W) and above the ledge and then using cross pressure in the chimney. At the top of this chimney work to the left (W) and then up the southwest face to the prominent vertical face of the West Tooth. From here the summit is reached as in the last part of Route 2.

Route 5. West Notch from the glacier. Class 4 to 5. In 1949 Oscar Cook, Joe Firey, Larry Taylor, and Jack Hansen ascended the couloir or chimney leading to the West Notch from the northeast. From the notch traverse directly out to the right on a hand ledge ending in a chimney which leads straight up to the end of the tunnel.

Rappel Routes. Class 5 to 6; 200-foot rappel rope required. By the user of many pitons nearly any route is probably possible. It is well, however, to mention certain routes that have actually been used. Slider Canyon can be reached from the northwest arete of the West Tooth near the junction with the Sawblades by a series of four rappels involving the use of one piton. It is also possible to rappel from the Westr Tooth toward the Middle Tooth by Route 1 and thence by three more rappels along the southeast buttress to Slide Canyon. The last rappel from a piton on a ledge, is 105 feet, most of it overhanging. From the West Notch it is practicable to rappel the north chimney to the glacier, though the last rappel is about 125 feet. A successful rappel route from the Middle Tooth to Slide Canyon by the great southeast chimney from the East Notch has been followed. Another route down from the Middler Tooth, to the north base, proceeds from the lower end of the chimney on the northwest face, the upper part of which forms a portion of Route 3. About half of the last rappel is overhanging. A severe route, not recommended, goes down the north face of the East Tooth from the East Notch; it involves the use of pitons, and slings to sit in as one of the intermediate stances.

The Sawblade (11,600)

Traverse south to north. Class 4; rappel rope useful. First ascent July 25, 1934, by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge. From Slide Canyon the route proceeds up steep climbing to the notch just west of the tall pinnacle on the northwest arete of the West Tooth. An attempt to traverse this portion of the Sawblade to the West Tooth was blocked by the pinnacle which could not be turned. Descent was made to the northeast.

Cleaver Peak (11,850)

Route 1. Southwest face. Class 3. First ascent July 3, 1933, by Henryr Beers and Oliver Kehrlein. From Glacier Col climb on to the southwest face and traverse diagonally upward to the left (N) to a broadr depression on the northwest face. Follow this to the summit.

Route 3. South face. Class 5. Ascended August 6, 1950, by M. L. Wader and F. Chrisholm. Ascend a chute (easy class 4) facing Burro Pass until within about 150 feet of the notch separating Cleaver Peak from the Sawblade. Here a large block leans against Cleaver Peak. (By climbing under this block one reaches the notch southeast of Cleaver Peak.) Turn left at the lower side of the block and ascend the south side of Cleaver Peak. Several interesting fifth class pitches.

Blacksmith Peak (11,850)

Route 1. Southwest face. Class 3. First ascent July 3, 1933, by Bestor Robinson and Richard M. Leonard. Go up a prominent gully on the southwest face to its head among the four summit pinnacles. The highest is on the northwest end. The register is on the flat-topped pinnacle third from the highest.

Route 2. The north gully. Class 5; pitons required. First ascent September 8, 1936, by Bestor Robinson and Carl Jensen. From the base of the north arête ascend a steeply sloping ledge on the Cleaver Glacier side diagonally upward toward the south. About 200 feet above the talus the ledge ends against a vertical face. Traverse to the right (W) and protected by several pitons climb about 20 feet of face on small holds to the large north gully. Ascend this gully to its head among the summit pinnacles. On the first ascent (1933) the peak was traversed from south to north by rappelling from the lower end of the north gully.

Eocene Peak (11,555; 1 NW of Blacksmith Peak)

Class 3. First ascent July 16, 1932, by Herbert B. Blanks and Richard M. Leonard. A ropeless ascent may be made of the southwest slopes of this fragment of the ancient Eocene landscape. The final pinnacle rising 50 feet above the plateau may require ropes for inexperienced climbers.

Other peaks and ridges

There are many minor pinnacles and sharp ridges in the Sawtooth area that offer enjoyable climbing. These are not listed in detail. Many have been climbed, while others have yet to be visited. Worthy of mention are...
The Cleaver, including Spiral peak at the lower end, the ridger running north of Blacksmith Peak, the ridge north of Eocene Peak, and the northeast side of the ridge between Twin Peaks and Matterhorn Peak.

References


Photographs: SCB, 1900, pl. 23; 1934, 46-47 (Dragtooth, Three Teeth from the north); 1935, 110-111 (Blacksmith Peak; Three Teeth from the south).

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Next: Tioga Pass to Mammoth Pass • Contents • Previous: Sawtooth Ridge
Bond Pass to Tioga Pass

Bond to Tioga Pass—Other Peaks

Robert L. Swift and David A. Nelson

Acker Peak (10,918)

The first ascent was made July 28, 1945, by A. J. Reyman who climbed the east side from the saddle above Kerrick Meadow. Class 2.

Bath Mountain (10,560)

Glen Dawson and John Cahill made the first ascent July 30, 1934.

Bigelow Peak (10,510)

First ascent in 1927 by Allan M. Starr, Ralph Minor, and Sherman Chickering. The peak may be climbed from Bond Pass or by traversing from Kendrick Peak. Class 1.

Black Mountain (11,794)
First ascents in 1905-1909 by A. H. Sylvester, G. R. Davis and P. Chapman, topographers of the USGS. The second ascent was made by Howard Sloan on June 17, 1931, from Trumbull Lake via Cooney Lake and northeast slope. Class 2. (SCB, 1932, 120.)

Camiaca Peak (11,751)

First ascent was made in 1917 by Walter L. Huber. The peak is accessible from Summit Lake near Virginia Pass. Class 2.

Center Mountain (11,220)

First ascent in 1905 by members of the survey party who placed Boundary Mark No. 87. Second ascent was made on July 28, 1914, by Robert Batyer, Leland Day, Herman Sayers, and George Kenney. The easiest route is found on the south slope. Class 1.

Cirque Mountain (10,739)

No information is available.

Chittenden Peak (10,133)

First ascent August 29, 1894, by Lt. N. F. McClure. The easiest route is from the east. Class 2.

Colby Mountain (9,616)

Climbed by John Muir in September 1871. The ascent is an easy walk from Ten Lakes Trail by the south ridge and affords a good view of Tuolumne Canyon. Class 1.
First recorded ascent by Glen Dawson and party in 1929. Class 2.

**Mount Conness (12,556)**

This mountain was first climbed by Clarence King and James T. Gardiner on September 1, 1866. Many ascents have been made since then by various routes, three of which are given below. (*SCB*, 1945, 94. Photographs: *SCB*, 1918, 292, 369; 1933, 70-71; 1935, 62-63; 1949, 86-87.)

**Route 1. Young Lakes.** Class 2. This is the most popular route and is essentially that of the trail shown on the topographic map. Follow the south fork of Conness Creek to a point just past a group of boggy ponds shown on the map as a lake. Then go north up the scree slopes to a valley on a large plateau, up this valley to the ridge above the glacier, and then west on this ridge via a trail to the summit.

**Route 2. McCabe Lakes.** Class 3. From the saddle east of the upper-most lake follow the narrow crest southeasterly. Turn a shoulder to the southeast by traversing diagonally upward to the crest. Follow the crest southward to the top of the mountain.

**Route 3. Glacier.** Class 3. From southwest shore of Saddlebag Lake go up the glacier valley and cirque between the east ridges of Conness and North Peak to the glacier. Traverse the glacier in the direction of a pronounced depression in the east ridge of Conness, then climb up over steep slopes of loose rock to the ridge at the foot of the summit. Follow the trail from there to the summit.

**Craig Peak (11,041)**

Though apparently climbed in July 1911 the first known ascent was that made by John Dyer in 1938. The peak is a class 2 traverse from either north or south, but reaching the northern ridge from Tower Peak involves class 3 climbing. (*SCB*, 1942, 126.)

**Crown Point (11,355)**

A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge
First ascent was made in 1905 by Geo. R. Davis, A. H. Sylvester, and Pearson Chapman of the USGS. It is an easy ascent from Snow Lake or immediately to the south, or from Peeler Lake. Class 2. (SCB, 1951, 31. Photographs: SCB, 1923, 451; 1924, 93.)

Doghead Peak (11,000+)

Climbed before 1911 by H. C. Bradley. A very good view is afforded from this peak which can be easily climbed by following up Wilson Creek. Class 2. (SCB, 1911, 136.)

Double Rock (9,850+)

Both summits, on the rim of Tuolumne Canyon, were climbed on July 18, 1934, by Glen Dawson, Joel Hildebrand, Milton Hildebrand, Dorothy Morris, May Pridham, and David Parish.

Dunderberg Peak (12,374)

The first ascent was made in 1878 by Lt. M. M. Macomb and party of the Wheeler Survey. The peak is composed of steep, broken rock but presents no technical difficulties. Class 2. A spring ascent was made on April 10, 1936 by Robert Brinton and Walter Mosauer. (SCB, 1932, 120; 1937, 108.)

Eagle Peak (11,825)

First ascent in September 1905 by Geo. R. Davis, A. H. Sylvester, and Pearson Chapman, topographers of the USGS. Approaches are the same as for Hennerville and Robinson peaks. Class 2.

Ehrnbeck Peak (11,194)

First ascent on July 27, 1945, by A. J. Reyman. The climb was started from the saddle north of Wells Peak and the ridge between Stubblefield and Thompson canyons. Class 2. Another route is by the West Walker River and the northeast ridge. Class 3.
Epidote Peak (10,950+)

Climbed by several Sierra Club members in 1917. Class 2.

Excelsior Mountain (12,440)

Ascended by Howard Sloan on June 13, 1931, by way of the pass at the head of Virginia Creek.

Finger Peaks (11,491)

First ascent on July 19, 1931, by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, and Walter Brem, who climbed the east peak from the lake below Burror Pass. It is lower than the peak to the west, which was climbed later. The climb to the lower peak direct from the lake has several difficult pitches. Class 3. On July 25, 1934, the fingers were traversed from west to east by Lewis Clark, Allan MacRae, and Carl Scheerer. (SCB, 1932, 113-114.)

Forsyth Peak (11,140)

The first ascent was made by Rene Kast, Don Hersey, Paul Hersey, Al Teakle, Harry Tenney, Jr., Arthur Evans, and Leon Casou, on July 10, 1937. The original route led up from the south, but the west slope is also easy. Class 2. On August 23, 1953, Le Roy Johnson, Fred Schaub, and Ken Hondsinger climbed the north ridge from Dorothy Lake. Class 3.

Gabbro Peak (11,022)

This peak may be climbed from East Lake or the Virginia Pass trail. Class 2.

Grand Mountain (9,400+)

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Bond to Tioga Pass—Other Peaks
Climbed by John Muir in September 1871. It is an easy walk by their south slope.

Grey Butte (11,333)

The first known ascent was made by Howard Twining in August 1934. A trail passes a short distance east of the peak. Class 2.

Grouse Mountain (10,764)

First recorded ascent by Le Roy Johnson, Fred Schaub, and Ken Hondsinger August 18, 1953, via the east face. Class 3.

Hanna Mountain (11,489)

No information is available.

Hennerville Peak (11,754)

First recorded ascent was made August 8, 1946, by Ken Crowley, R. Dickey, Jr., Ken Hargreaves, and H. Watty, who climbed from Barney Lake. Once the four thousand feet of talus have been overcome, all their peaks of the Buckeye Ridge may be traversed easily. Class 2.

Mount Hoffmann (10,921)

The first ascent was made by J. D. Whitney, Wm. H. Brewer, and Chas. F. Hoffmann, members of the Whitney Survey, June 24, 1863. Their peak is a popular climb and is easily climbed by south slopes after approaching from May Lake or the Tioga Pass Road. It may be climbed by the north slope and west ridge from a branch of Yosemite Creek. Class 2. (Photographs: SCB, 1912, 151; 1915, 292; 1923, 386.)
Hoffmann Thumb. The first ascent of the western pinnacle was made by Jules Eichorn October 16, 1932. The route lies on the face away from the summit of the main peak and consists of a single pitch on steep loose rock. Class 5. On July 20, 1934, Muir Dawson made the first ascent of the upper side of the pinnacle, using an upper belay. (SCB, 1935, 105. Photographs: SCB, 1923, 386; 1935, 105, 110-111.)

Hooper Peak (9,562)

No information is available.

Kendrick Peak (10,346)

First recorded ascent was made by A. J. Reyman July 25, 1945, who traversed south from Bond Pass via Bigelow Peak. A shorter and easier route starts from Jack Main Canyon. Class 2.

Kettle Peak (11,040)

First ascent in August 1948 by William Dunmire and R. L. Swift from the pass between Big Slide and Little Slide canyons. Class 2.

Keyes Peak (11,051)

First ascent on September 1, 1942, by A. J. Reyman. An easy route may be found starting from Tilden Lake. Class 2.

Leevining Peak (11,691)

No information is available.
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*Lembert Dome (9,400+)*

This is a very popular viewpoint. The first ascent is unrecorded. (Photographs: SCB, 1908, 235; 1911, 1; 1915, 225, 293; 1923, 411; 1931, p1.)

*Route 1. North slope.* Class 1. The Dog Lake trail takes one practically to the summit.

*Route 2. East or south slope.* Class 2 and class 3.

*Route 3. West face.* Class 5. First ascent by the west face was made in August 1951 by Dorothy Dern, Philip L. Dern, Alfred R. Dole, H. Stewart Kimball, and Richard Leonard. The route follows a wide class 2 ledge on the west face climbing gradually to the south to a smooth, slightly overhanging buttress at the junction with the south face. One or two pitons are necessary at this point for protection in about fifteen feet of climbing to gentler slopes above.

*Michie Peak (10,339)*

May be climbed from either Twin Lakes or Jack Main Canyon. Class 2.

*Mono Dome (10,612)*

No information is available.

*Monument Ridge (11,752; 11,800+)*

Though early ascents may have been made by prospectors, the first recorded ascent of the highest point was made by A. J. Reyman September 10, 1946. The ridge may be reached from West Lake or Green Laker or from Cattle Creek and Crater Crest. Class 2.
North Peak (12,256)

First ascent was made on June 26, 1937, by Bill Blanchard, Hubertr North, and Gary Leech from Saddlebag Lake. Class 2. (Photographs: SCB, 1933, 70, 71; 1949, 86-87.)

Page Peaks (11,000+)

The climb is a long pull over scree if started from the cirque west of East Lake or the gully between Page Peaks and Epidote Peak. The approach from Virginia Pass is shorter and may be preferred. Class 2.

Pettit Peak (10,775)

Climbed by Lewis F. Clark and Virginia Greever on August 1, 1934, at which time a cairn was found indicating an earlier ascent. It is an easy traverse from Regulation Peak and can also be traversed from West Peak. Class 2.

Piute Mountain (10,489)

First ascent July 27, 1911, by Francis P. Farquhar, James Rennie, and Frank Bumstead. An easy ascent may be made by the Bear Valley trail. Class 2. A more difficult route would be by the north chute.

Polly Dome (9,786)

Climbed on June 16, 1896, by Theodore S. Solomons with four girls.

Price Peak (10,603)

The first ascent was made July 28, 1945, by A. J. Reyman on a traverser from Acker Peak and connecting ridges. Another route would be up the west slope from Thompson Canyon. Class 2.
Quarry Peak (11,162)


Ragged Peak (10,858)

First ascent was made on July 6, 1863, by William H. Brewer and Charles Hoffmann. The usual route is by the saddle, west shoulder, through scree and talus to the top. Class 2. On August 25, 1939, Boynton r Kaiser led a Sierra Club party up the northwest face. Class 4. A class 5 route has been made on the northwest side by Warren Harding. (Photograph: SCB, 1918, 286; 1932, 15.)

Red Peak (11,968)

First ascent by Kenneth May and Howard Twining July 3, 1934. Class (Photograph: SCB, 1935, 62-63.)

Regulation Peak (10,500+)

First known ascent was made in 1921 by R. A. Chase. The peak is an easy climb from the trail. Traverses may be made to the adjoining summits of West, Volunteer, and Pettit peaks. Class 2. (Photographs: SCB, 1910, 151; 1915, 257.)

Richardson Peak (9,845)

First ascent was made July 18, 1928, by Allan M. Starr and Ralph Minor. Class 2.

Robinson Peak (10,823)
Although circumstances of the first ascents are not known they were probably made by members of the 1905-1909 survey and by various sheepherders. The first recorded ascent was made August 22, 1946, by K. Hargreaves, H. F. Watty, R. F. Dickey, Jr., and Ken Crowley from Twin Lakes. The northerly approach from Buckeye Creek and Eagle Creek would appear to be better. Class 2.

Saurian Crest (11,065)

First ascent on September 7, 1938, by John Dyer. Long talus slopes extend to within a few feet of the summits, which require a short bit of scrambling. Class 3. (SCB, 1942, 126. Photographs: SCB, 1912, 157; 1942, 79.)

Sheep Peak (11,852)

First ascent July 1, 1934, by Kenneth May and Howard Twining. Class 2.

Shepherd Crest (11,860; 12,001)

First ascent was made by Herbert B. Blanks, Kenneth May, and Elliot Sawyer July 13, 1933, via one of the steep avalanche chutes from the south. Class 2. The class 3 northeast ridge was climbed by W. Rylandr Hill and Charles W. Chesterman on July 5, 1941. (Photographs: SCB, 1918, 288; 1933, 70, 71; 1949, 86. Interesting articles on “Little Lost Valley of Shepherd Crest” appear in SCB, 1933, 68-80, and 1949, 82-86.)

Slide Mountain (11,092)

Climbed by Norman Clyde in 1921. A trail leads over the top of the peak.

Snow Peak (10,933)

The first known ascent was made by John Dyer in 1938. The southern slope of the mountain is easily climbed from Tilden Lake. Class 2.
Stanton Peak (11,666)

First ascent was made during a blizzard May 31, 1934, by Richard G. Johnson, Kenneth May, and Howard Twining. Class 2.

Suicide Ridge (10,050+)

First ascent by Glen Dawson and John Cahill May 31, 1934. Class 2.

Tioga Crest (11,900+)

No information is available.

Tioga Peak (11,532; 11,513n)

No information is available.

Tower Peak (11,704)

The first ascent was made from the north “without any difficulty” in 1870 by C. F. Hoffmann, W. A. Goodyear, and Alfred Craven after earlier unsuccessful attempts by Goddard, King, and Gardiner. From the saddle northwest of the peak and directly above Mary Lake a ridger is followed to a staircase gully which leads to the summit. Class 3. Class 4 routes involving roped climbing have been made on the west facer and on the side leading toward Craig Peak. The southeast chute into Stubblefield Canyon has been used for descent. (SCB, 1927, 419; 1942, 126. Photographs: SCB, 1912, 155, 157; 1942, 79.)

Tuolumne Peak (10,875)

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Bond to Tioga Pass—Other Peaks
A cairn was found on the summit when the first recorded ascent was made by Richard M. Leonard and Sierra Club party on July 9, 1932.

Victoria Peak (11,732)

First recorded ascent on September 8, 1946, by A. J. Reyman. The peak is one of the Buckeye Ridge group, all of which may be approached from either north or south. Class 2.

Volunteer Peak (10,503)

First ascent was made in 1895 by Lts. H. C. Benson and McBride. An easy ascent can be made from the south. Class 2. Traverses may be made to or from West, Regulation, and Pettit peaks.

Walker Mountain (11,572)

No information is available.

Mount Warren (12,337; 12,327n)

First ascent by Mr. Wackenreyder prior to 1868. Class 2.

Wells Peak (11,071)

First ascent was made on July 27, 1945, by A. J. Reyman from the saddle between Wells and Ehrnbeck peaks by the north ridge. Class 2.

West Peak (10,510)
First known ascent July 17, 1931, by Kenneth May and Gus Smith. The peak is commonly approached by a traverse from Volunteer and Pettit peaks. Class 2.

White Mountain (11,850+)

Climbed in 1917 by Walter L. Huber. Class 2.

Whorl Mountain (12,050)

From near the head of Matterhorn Canyon several practicable gullies lead to the main north-south ridge. (SCB, 1934, 99. Photograph: SCB, 1935, 62-63.)


North Peak (11,950+). First ascent by Ralph A. Chase and Sierra Club party July 17, 1921.

Middle Peak (12,050). First ascent by Herbert B. Blanks, Kenneth May, and Elliot Sawyer July 9, 1933, on a class 4 route.

Wildcat Point (9,400+)

Climbed by F. P. Farquhar and Mr. Wells on July 21, 1911.
Tioga Pass to Mammoth Pass

THE SOUTHERN PORTION of Yosemite National Park, and the Mount Dana-Minarets Wilderness Area of the adjacent National Forests, which together make up the section from Tioga Pass to Mammoth Pass, constitute a very popular area for climbers because of its varied terrain and the ready accessibility. Good roads lead to Yosemite Valley, Tioga Pass, and Minaret Summit, on the boundaries of this section. Descriptions of history, trail approaches, and topography are given in the individual areas, which are arranged as follows:

Yosemite Valley. The climbs are listed in geographical order, starting at the northwest corner of the valley.

The Cathedral Range and Eastward. This includes the Sierra Crest from Tioga Pass to Donohue Pass. The peaks are arranged in geographical order, from north to south, first in the Cathedral Ranger and then in the crest.

The Clark Range and Adjacent Peaks. This area, like that from Bondr Pass to Tioga Pass, but unlike all others, has been arranged in alphabetical order.

The Minarets and the Ritter Range. Here again a north-south description of the peaks is given.

It has been indicated in Sketch 1 that the Main Crest from Island Pass to Mammoth Pass is not considered in The Guide. Since there is very little possibility for real climbing in this short section of the crest, this omission will not be regretted by many.
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/tioga_pass_to_mammoth_pass.html

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Next: Cathedral Range • Contents • Previous: Tioga Pass to Mammoth Pass
Yosemite Valley

Richard M. Leonard and David R. Brower (1940), and William W. Dunmire (1953)

Yosemite Valley offers one of the finest localities in America for a sport that has made the Kaisergebirge and the Dolomites internationally famous—concentrated rock climbing. Long enjoyed throughout the world as complete in and of itself, this sport does not require attainment of high summits, but tends to emphasize route finding, whether on summits, walls, or aretes. For that reason Yosemite has been a mecca for pure rock climbing for many years, more perhaps than any other region in the country.

Even in those prehistoric days before the discovery of the incomparable valley, there were legendary rock-climbing exploits. Such was the first descent to the base of the Lost Arrow. The Indian maiden, Tee-hee-neh, rappelled on lodgepole saplings joined with deer thongs to recover the lifeless body of her lover, Kos-soo-kah. By means of thongs and the strong arms of other members of the tribe, they were brought back to the rim of the valley, where Tee-hee-neh perished in grief. This legend is reported in many different sources; Hutchings, in 1886, stated the height of the rappel to be 203 feet, a truly remarkable rock-climbing achievement.

It was not until 1833 that the white man is known to have seen Yosemite Valley. From reports published long before the later and widely publicized discovery of the valley, we learn that Joseph Reddeford Walkerr and party came from the vicinity of Bridgeport, perhaps over Virginia Pass and along the divide between the Tuolumne and the Merced rivers to the valley rim. There they marveled at waterfalls over “lofty precipices . . . more than a mile high.” The first rock-climbing attempt by white men was soon stopped by difficulty, for “on making several attempts we found it utterly impossible for a man to descend.”
In 1851, however, Yosemite Valley was really made known to the world, when the Mariposa Battalion, organized by harassed settlers of the foothills, trailed Indians to their stronghold in Ahwahnee—“deep, grassy valley.”

[Editor’s note: Ahwahnee does not mean “deep, grassy valley.” Ahwahnee means “mouth” because the valley walls resemble a gaping bear’s mouth. For details see the article “Origin of the Word Yosemite.”—dea]

Yosemite soon became a source of attraction for tourists from all over the world. One of the earliest to arrive was James M. Hutchings, who first came to the valley in 1855. Throughout the early history of the valley he was interested in attempting to climb every point around the valley.

John Muir first came to the Sierra in 1868. Through him more than any other man has the beauty of the region been made known to the entire world. His climbs in Yosemite Valley and the High Sierra, many of them the earliest of which we have knowledge, place him among the pioneers of California mountaineering. His Sunnyside Bench, east of the lip of Lower Yosemite Fall, is still one of the untrammeled beauty spots of the valley. His early exploration of the Tenaya Canyon led to route finding in the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne. He made the first ascents of Cathedral Peak and Mount Ritter, and was first to traverse under the Lost Arrow along Fern Ledge, beneath the crashing power of the Upper Yosemite Fall.

In early October of 1864 Clarence King, assisted by Richard Cotter, fresh from a victory over Mount Tyndall, made the first serious topographical and geological reconnaissance of the Yosemite Valley. On this survey they climbed practically every summit on a circuit of the rim of the valley. This circuit included only the easier points, such as El Capitan, Eagle Peak, Yosemite Point, North Dome, Basket Dome, Mount Watkins, Sentinel Dome and the Cathedral Rocks. Any summits which were much beyond this standard of difficulty seemed to them completely beyond the range of human ability. In 1865 the California Geological Survey wrote concerning Mount Starr King and Mount Broderick, “Their summits are absolutely inaccessible”; and of Half Dome, “it is a crest of granite rising to the height of 4,737 feet above the valley, perfectly inaccessible, being probably the only one of all the prominent points about the Yosemite, which never has been, and never will be trodden by human foot.”

Spurred by this challenge James M. Hutchings and two others made the first recorded attempt on Half Dome in 1869, but were stopped at a saddle east of the Dome. After at least two intervening attempts the Scotch carpenter and trail builder, George G. Anderson, finally engineered his way to the top on October 12, 1875.

Inspired by the success on Half Dome, adventurous climbers turned their attention to Mount Starr King, the “extremely steep, bare, inaccessible cone of granite” referred to by Whitney in his Yosemite Guider Book. George B. Bayley and E. S. Schuyler made the ascent in August, 1876, somewhat to the dismay of Anderson,
Hutchings, and J. B. Lembert, who, using a different route, a year later found the summit monuments built by the first party. Bayley was one of the most remarkable climbers of the time. In 1876 Muir recorded that “Mounts Shasta, Whitney, Lyell, Dana, and the Obelisk (Mount Clark) already have felt hisr foot; and years ago he made desperate efforts to ascend the South Dome (Half Dome), eager for the first honors.” Later he was distinguished by an early ascent of Cathedral Peak, and an ascent of Mount Rainier during which he was seriously injured by a fall into a crevasse, recoveringr only to be killed in a city elevator.

After the great ascents of the “inaccessible” summits of Yosemite, there r was a period of quiet in the climbing history, for everything seemed to have been done. Hutchings had claimed the ascent of all Yosemite points, except Grizzly Peak and the Cathedral Spires, and a climber of another generation came forward in 1885 to make the ascent of Grizzly Peak. He was Charles A. Bailey, who later became an enthusiastic member of the Sierra Club, locating, climbing, and naming Sierra Pointr for the club.

Since it now appeared that all major summits in the Yosemite region had been climbed, there was a long gap in the climbing history, broken only by the exploratory routes of a few outstanding climbers of the period. Those whose climbs are best known are S. L. Foster, Joseph N. LeConte, Charles and Enid Michael, William Kat, and Ralph S. Griswold. Foster was best known for his canyoneering in the Merced and Tenaya canyons beginning in 1909. LeConte has been remembered through the description of his ascent of the gully on Grizzly Peak, which permits a route to the Diving Board on Half Dome. He also wrote of several other interesting “scrambles about Yosemite” of nearly three decades ago. It has been said of the Michaels that they climbed everything that did not require pitons. The same description might apply to Kat and Griswold. All have been so modest that it is possible we may never know the true history of the interesting routes which they have pioneered. For, wherever a young rock climber attempts a “new route,” he is quite likely to find a cairn or other indication that someone has been there many years before him.

Again it seemed that nothing more could be done. However, in the early thirties, a new phase of rock climbing was growing, based on development of modern technique in Europe. In the summer of 1931, Robert L. M. Underhill, the leading American exponent of the use and management of the rope in rock work, interested Californians in this phase of climbing. It has been mentioned that some very remarkable climbing was done without the knowledge of this safety technique; but the early climbers who have discussed the matter agree that their climbing frequently involved unjustifiable hazard. Moreover, it was clear to all of them that they could not attempt routes of very high angle and small holds. Thus the introduction of a new type of climbing, combined with the protection of pitoncraft, again opened a new field.

It was not until September 2, 1933, that the first rock climbing section of the Sierra Club felt competent to make organized attempts upon the spectacular unclimbed faces and spires of Yosemite. Although as long ago as 1886 Hutchings, in reporting the relatively easy ascent of Grizzly Peak, claimed that the last “unclimbed summit” of Yosemite had been ascended, nevertheless the Cathedral Spires, the Church Tower, the Arrowhead, Split Pinnacle, Pulpit Rock, Watkins Pinnacles, and the Lost Arrow still stood forth without even an attempt ever having been recorded against them. In addition to these summits there was a field, practically unexplored, of route finding on faces, arêtes, gullies, and chimneys. Among these may be mentioned Washington Column, Royal Arches, Panorama Cliff, Glacier Point, Yosemite Point Couloir, Cathedral Chimney, and the arête of the Lower Brother. Ropes, pitons, and trained experience in their use.
were the keys to these ascents, which were later to become so popular. Climbers, profiting by the achievements of their predecessors, added still more ascents to the growing list of Yosemite routes.

But there was a further challenge. The higher cliffs and arêtes, hitherto neglected, beckoned to the new generations of climbers. These longer and severe climbs were not easily judged, but it was obvious that they would demand the utmost in skill and aggressiveness. And so, during the middle forties, as in the Dolomites a decade previously, a tradition of direct-aid climbing began in which many pitons were used, together with expansion bolts when no suitable cracks were to be found. With this new tradition came the direct ascent of the Lost Arrow inr 1947, a success born of dogged determination and great physical endurance, and requiring five consecutive days on the rocks. Still other difficult ascents followed, such as the four-day climb of the north wall of Sentinel Rock, and the three-day climb of the El Capitan Buttress. These severe climbs stand in a class of their own, and the traffic on them is likely to remain light. There are still many routes of apparent moderate difficulty that have not been tried. Also, the climbs first done twenty years ago are popular today and will doubtless remain so in the future.

Worthy of mention is the first direct ascent of the north face of the Cimar Grande (Grosse Zinne), which was accomplished in August, 1933, by three Italian guides using 200 meters of rope, 150 meters of slings, 90 pitons, andr 40 carabiners.

Topography and its Relation to Climbing

Yosemite Valley is now just a few hours from San Francisco and Los Angeles. Campsites are excellently provided for by the National Park Service and need no further details. Accommodations of all types are provided by the concessionaire.

The geology of Yosemite has been under consideration, ever since its discovery, by eminent scientists throughout the world. Of the early conflicting theories, those of John Muir have best stood the test of time and study. These were amplified in detailed studies by François E. Matthes (see References and Maps). Yosemite Valley seems to have had a greater variety of granitic intrusions than most of the Sierran Nevada. This, together with the prominence of master joints, has amplified the effect of erosion. Upon long-continued and alternate sculpturer by running water and glacial action, the valley was deepened to essentially its present form. This geomorphological history has produced smooth faces of high angle with holds widely spaced but exceptionally firm. While loose hand or footholds must be expected occasionally, rock as sound for climbing is seldom found. The scarcity of talus piles under the high cliffs is clear evidence of this. On the other hand, their infrequency of large holds tends to emphasize precise balance climbing, frequently requiring long leads on minute holds. For this reason plenty of rope should be available; at least 120 feet between climbers, plusr 200 feet of rappel rope with ample material for slings. As will be indicated hereafter, pitons are definitely advisable on most climbs, and are essential on many. Most climbers will prefer, wherever possible, to avoid using pitons as direct aid. No party, however, should hesitate to use pitons for safety as frequently as desired even though not specifically recommended by this Guide. The best footgear is rubber. There seems to be no necessity for nails, at least in summer. In common with the rest of The Range of Light,
the weather in summer need rarely be considered as a factor in climbing. In general, the altitude is so low and camp so close that no protection against weather need be arranged. Nevertheless, since friction holds play such an important part in climbing on these smooth walls, retreat in case of rain must be adequately planned.

A very useful topographic map of the Yosemite Valley may be purchased at the Government Center or at certain stores in large cities. This is the Yosemite Valley sheet, published by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1938, with a scale of 1:24,000.

Registration with the National Park Service

The Park Officers request that all parties register with the National Park Service at the Office of the Chief Ranger at Park Headquarters in Yosemite Valley before attempting any climbs, and that they check in at the same place after completing a climb. There are many reasons for this request, chief among them these: Rangers wish to counsel with inexperienced climbers about undertaking ascents which might seriously endanger their lives. They need to know which of the inevitable reports of people stranded on cliffs need not concern them. And they will know, from the registration, where to look for climbers who do not return.

The National Park Service has asked mountaineering clubs for help in judging the qualifications of climbers who sign out for climbs in Yosemite Valley. Park officers request that at least one qualified leader, or the equivalent, be included in every climbing party. This requirement is sound, since the recovery of accident victims is a duty of the Park Rangers, and because a segment of public opinion holds the National Park Service responsible for the prevention of climbing accidents. Several of the rock-climbing sections of the Sierra Club, and some other mountaineering organizations, use the qualified-leader system, under which qualified leaders are selected on the basis of climbing experience, judgment, and ability to manage a climbing party. Each organization submits to the National Park Service a list of persons qualified to act as leaders, and when club climbs are scheduled only parties containing qualified leaders are permitted to go out. Climbers not connected with clubs employing the qualified-leader system must demonstrate to park rangers that they have a capable and experienced leader.

Routes and Records

The Yosemite Valley climbs are arranged in geographical order, starting at the west end of the north side of the valley and working around in a clockwise direction. Sketch 4 shows the approximate locations of some of the climbs in the valley.

Kat Pinnacle (3,950)
Class 6. First ascent November to, 1940, by DeWitt Allen, Torcomr Bedayan, and Robin Hansen. This pinnacle is on the north wall ofr Merced Canyon, a mile below the Coulterville Road-All-Year Highwayr junction, and about midway between the two roads. From the cliff northr of the pinnacle a rope is thrown over
the tree just below the platformr supporting the overhanging summit block. Anchored from below, ther rope is
crossed with carabiner protection; this is the only practicabler means of passing the 90-foot shaft, which is
overhanging on all sides.r From a three-man stand below a large crack on the west side of ther r

Key to Sketch 4.

Yosemite Valley
summit block, several pitons are placed for direct aid, and the climber proceeds directly to the summit.

An alternate route (Dick Irvin and Dave Hammack) traverses left (E) from the Tyrolean tree along the north side, and then back (W) on a higher ledge. From the northwest corner of the upper ledge pitons are placed for direct aid under and across an overhang. Then a class 5 gully leads to the top.

El Capitan Gully (7,500)
Class 3. First recorded ascent June 5, 1905, by J. C. Staats, who continued the climb to the rim to get help after Charles A. Bailey had fallen 400 feet to his death. This, the western of the two gullies between El Capitan and Ribbon Fall, does not involve any real climbing problems until the steep upper 500 feet.

K-P Pinnacle (6,200)
Class 6. First ascent May 30, 1941, by Ted Knoll and Jack Pionteki. This is the second highest pinnacle west of El Capitan between El Capitan Gully and Chimney. The route involves a two-hour bushwack and some class 4 climbing to reach the base of an open chimney, which is surmounted by direct aid. Cross an exposed 4-foot cleft and climb to the 2- by 4-foot summit.
El Capitan (6,750)

West chimney. Class 6. First ascent October 9, 10, 1937, by Ethel Maer Hill, Gordon Patten, and Owen Williams. From the toe of El Capitan follow up along the base of the cliffs (W) to the chimney clearly shown on the map. Chockstones are responsible for seven overhangs which present the principal difficulty. From the notch (6,600) a rappel brings one to the class 4 climbing of the main gully leading to the summit plateau. The initial climb took two days and 18 pitons; a third of their pitons were used for direct aid.

Tree traverse. Class 6. First ascent March 1952 by William Dunmire, Will Siri, Allen Steck, and Robert Swift. From the valley floor this extraordinary pine appears to grow out of the granite wall one-quarter mile east of the main El Capitan abutment and 350 feet above the talus. The overhanging route begins below and to the east of the tree via a ladder of expansion bolts and pitons which have been left by previous parties. After the first 110-foot pitch (average angle 110°), class 4 and 5 pitches lead west to the tree. With an early start the climb can be made in one day. (SCB, 1952, 93-94.)

East buttress. Class 6. First ascent June 1, 1953, in three days by Will Siri, Bill Long, Bill Unsoeld, and Allen Steck. The buttress forms the eastern edge of the unbroken southern wall of El Capitan. The approach is the same as for the Tree Traverse, only upon reaching the foot of the wall traverse right (E) to the foot of the arete and ascend a class 6 chimney 110 feet to a scrub oak. Climb up (class 4) to the foot of a 60-foot wall which can be climbed on its steep left (W) side by user of sound holds and one piton for protection. Traverse slightly left and upward over easy ground to base of open chimney leading to the nose directly on the arete. Ascend directly to nose (class 4-5). From this platform two class 6 leads, on perhaps the steepest portion of the buttress, and a short class 5 pitch lead to some small ledges (site of second bivouac). The wall to the right of these ledges was ascended (class 6) in two leads to a large ledge. Traverse right a few feet and climb a short 5-foot chimney to the final 70-foot lead up a steep broken wall (class 5-6). Several attempts were made here, the chimney farthest to the right (E) offering the best route. The two final days of the ascent were during rainy weather; other ascents could be made in two days, or possibly one day.

Split Pinnacle (5,100)

Class 6. First ascent May 28, 1938, by Raffi Bedayan, Muir Dawson, Richard M. Leonard, and Jack Riegelhuth. Follow the west fork of Eagle Creek to the 5,000-foot contour and circle back to the southwest corner of the West Pinnacle. An easy upward traverse on the valley side of the West Pinnacle, past its class 3 summit, brings one to an ample ledge beneath the 25-foot, 117° summit pitch. A shoulder-stand and three well-placed pitons with slings enable the leader to grasp excellent hidden holds on the edge of a ledge on the extreme left. User minute transient footholds and pull up onto the ledge, from which the summit is easily reached. This pinnacle is one of the most popular short climbs in the valley.
Lower Brother (5,900)

Michael’s Ledge. Class 4. First recorded ascent in the twenties or earlier by Charles W. Michael. From the south base a broad tree and brush-covered ledge spirals high up the east face, and may be easily followed to a point swept by recent rock avalanches from the Middler Brother. From here the ascent over scree-covered ledges and slabs to the arête which forms the summit is exposed enough to require consecutive roped climbing.

West face—north corner. Class 5. First ascent October 21, 1934, by H. B. Blanks, Boynton Kaiser, and Elliot Sawyer. Although the average angle is not high, the rounded character of the holds, polished by winter avalanches, and the ten-foot overhanging steps make this a good climb. The route follows closely the angle formed by the intersection of the Lower and Middle Brothers, and the problem is mainly one of friction. Bypass difficult sections of the corner on the right (S).

West face—middle. Class 5. First ascent April 22, 1952, by Donald Goodrich and Gary Lundberg. Follow the first ledge leading from the angle between the Middle and Lower Brothers to the right past a tree to its far end; here a delicate pitch leads around and up a corner onto a large slanting slab. Continue south on ledges for about 100 feet and work up toward the vertical wall that divides the face. Surmount this wall and climb up several pitches more to the summit.

Southwest arête. Class 5. First ascent July 15, 1937, by David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. Ascend Eagle Creek until 300 feet below the prominent black chimney in an angle of the west face. Traverse (SE) on a broad tree-covered ledge, where a moderately difficult crack leads up the west face about 30 feet. From here a delicate friction traverse leads to the left (N) where a shelf, a short chimney, and easy pitches continue straight up over smooth mossy cracks in unsound rock; then traverse right (E) across a smooth gully to a broad ledge. Ascent of a 50-foot friction pitch, slanting upward (E) brings one to the base of an open chimney almost holdless, chimney at an angle of about 70°. From the top the chimney a short traverse (W) leads to the broken south edge of the upper west face. From here easy climbing leads to the summit.

Another class 5 route on the south arête starts from about 300 feet up Michael’s Ledge. Here a much smaller ledge leading diagonally upward and to the left (W) should be followed out on to the south face. An ascent directly upward from the tree where the upper end of the ledge terminates brings the climber to an alcove. From here a narrow 50° chimney opening higher up leads eastward. At the end of this chimney another open chimney leads directly upward. Several pitches in this chimney bring the climber to the upper granite slabs wherer climbing may be done continuously to the summit. There are several variations of this route.

The several routes on the Lower Brother are among the most popular one-day ascents in the valley.
Middle Brother (6,850)

West face. Class 4. First ascent either by Charles W. Michael in the twenties or by Ralph S. Griswold and William Kat in the early thirties. Follow Eagle Creek to about 5,850, then climb out to the right and up steep slabs to the arete. The lower point overlooking the Lower Brother should probably be considered the summit of this sloping ridge.

From Michael’s Ledge. Class 4. First ascent June 2, 1951, by Ronald R. Hahn, David Hammack, Anton Nelson, and John Salathé. Follow Michael’s Ledge (see Lower Brother for description) clear on around (NE) past the Lower Brother and through dense brush to a point where the angle of the headwall is quite low. There are many tree-covered ledges that lead toward the summit of the Middle Brother. Their climb is minimum class 4.

Southwest arete. Class 5. First ascent May 30, 1941, by David R. Brower, Morgan Harris. See Lower Brother climbs for the routes to the notch between Middle and Lower Brother. From just west of the notch traverse diagonally upward and to the right on class 4 rocks for about 50 feet, then climb straight up for another pitch. Since the face rises sharply in holdless cracks, a traverse horizontally to the left (W) a few feet around a little nose is advisable; then ascend about 15 feet over smooth holds to a small ledge. On the first ascent a shoulder-stand enabled the climbers to overcome the bulging overhang above. Beyond lies a little alcove under a big block overhang which looks impossible from below. However, just under the overhang, holds permit a traverser to the right (E) around the block to the ridge. Exposed scrambling leadsr to the indefinite summit of the Middle Brother.

Southwest arete—variation. Class 6. First ascent May 1950, by Nickr Clinch, David Harrah, Sherman Lehman, and John Mowat. From the crest of Lower Brother traverse left (W) for two rope lengths. Climb up a short overhanging chimney and a steep slab to a pine seen from the Lower Brother. Continue up slabs, past a small platform, to an alcove. Work right to a flat ledge, around a corner, and up an easy crack to a broad, sloping ledge. Walk down and to the left on the ledge tor where a smooth overhang intervenes. So far, all parties have used a direct-aid piton or two to cross the overhang. On the far side work up and around the corner of the south face to the west face. Climb up the arete for several hundred feet, then proceed in a scree gully and cross onto the south face. A thin horizontal ledge leads to where the west face may be regained. Work across flat ledges in the face to an easy gully leading to the summit.

At least one ascent of the Middle Brother has been made via the southwest aretes of the Lower and Middle Brothers. This combination of routes requires efficient teamwork if it is to be accomplished in a day.

Eagle Peak (7,773)
From Camp 4. Class 6. First ascent early June, 1952, by Ron Hayes and Jon Lindbergh. From the top of the talus directly above Camp 4, walk (W) toward the large clump of trees on the prominent ledge. The climb, a long chimney, begins just to the east of the trees. It presents the only ascending route in the area which appears climbable without extreme difficulties. Climb up through a tree and into the chimney. The route continues up a series of increasingly difficult secondary chimneys to a final overhanging mossy chimney which requires many direct-aid pitons. Above, one more pitch and a long bushwhack lead to Eagler Peak and the trail.

Rixon's Pinnacle (4,600)

Class 6. First ascent August, 1948 by Charles and Ellen Wilts. This is the 400-foot remnant of an exfoliation slab against the vertical south face of the Middle Brother. The first pitch is 150-feet long (two ropes were used on the first ascent) and leads to a prominent tree. Above, a short, difficult Mummery crack is climbed to a small ledge, and an open chimney continues farther. An easier class 6 pitch ends at the second tree, from which point several varied pitches lead to the summit. The original ascent took two days and required about 60 pitons (SCB, 1949, 148-149).

Lower Yosemite Fall (4,420)

West side. Class 4. First ascent September 13, 1942, by Alan M. Hedden and L. Bruce Meyer. From the bridle-path bridge follow the creek and talus up the left (W) side of the fall as far as possible. At the head of the talus a crack leads over flake-like rocks up to a ledge 40 feet above the talus. At this point ascend a small crack leading to the right to some bushes, then continue upward to a large fir tree. Proceed left around an overhanging rock and then vertically to a ledge. Climb to the right and continue right on another ledge a few feet lower. The route then leads upward to a tree clump, right around a nose, and up a grass-covered ledge leading to the top of the fall. The rock on this climb is generally insecure, so care should be taken not to dislodge rocks onto tourists who might climb to the talus below.

Gorge traverse (between upper and lower falls). Class 5. Low water only. First ascent by Dave Hammack and George Larimore, 1950. From the top of Lower Yosemite Fall an easy walk on the west side of the creek for several hundred feet follows. The first major cascade is passed to the left (W) until progress is blocked; then traverse right to the brink of this fall. The route then follows a steep granite slope to the left of the creek to a point about 75 feet above it where progress is blocked by a 15-foot overhang, which may be climbed beside a tree on the somewhat broken face. From here it is easy going to the base of the Upper Fall.

Sunnyside Bench (4,420)
Waterfall route. Class 4. First ascent July 22, 1935, by David R. Brower and William W. Van Voorhis. On the right (E) side of the stream a short distance above the Lower Yosemite Fall bridge easy cracks and ledges lead to the right (E) to a small platform about 40 feet above the stream. From here the route ascends vertically through a shallower chimney and up a difficult friction slab to the tree-covered ledge.

South face route. Class 4. First ascent unknown. About 50 yards east of the Lower Yosemite Fall horse trail bridge, just above the Lost Arrow Loop Trail, a deep chimney leads upward and to the east. The route follows this chimney to a large ledge leading to the right (S) of the chimney. From the ledge work out onto the south face and up a 70° crack on the otherwise smooth granite. The crack ends at Sunnysider Bench. The top of Lower Yosemite Fall may be reached by traversing on the ledge around the corner to the left (W). The south face may be superior to the waterfall route during high water.

Although Sunnyside Bench may be climbed by a brushy class 3 route starting from behind Government Center and traversing west (first ascent unknown), the two more direct routes are preferred by climbers and are among the most popular short day ascents in the valley. In later summer the basin above the fall provides a remarkable swimming pool.

Lost Arrow (6,875)

First Error (6,050). Class 6. First ascent May 29, 1937, by David R. Brower and Richard M. Leonard. Since the Lost Arrow, just west of the benchmark at Yosemite Point was facetiously named the “Last Error,” its two ledges and its notch are appropriately called First, Second, and Third errors, respectively. The route to the first ledge leads between a 70° buttress and the 85° face on small holds, highly polished and rounded by water and avalanches. Ascent in the main couloir to a point level with the First Error can be made without direct aid, and a rope traverser to the ledge is possible.

Second Error (6,450). Class 6. First ascent by Anton Nelson and John Salathé, July 4, 1947. A 400-foot, 80° chimney leads from the First Error to this ledge. Many direct-aid pitons are necessary. Time from base is about two days.

Third Error (6,750). Class 6. Reached by John Salathé in August 1946 by a descent from the rim of the valley (SCB, 1947, 2, 3).

Last Error (6,875). Class 6. First ascent September 2, 1946, by Jack Arnold and Anton Nelson, who prusiked up a rope thrown over the summit, and Fritz Lippmann, who came via the Tyrolean traverser which
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A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

was set up (SCB, 1947, 1-10). First direct ascent from the base, by Anton Nelson and John Salathé, September 3, 1947. The route follows the long chimney via the first and second errors. The ascent was accomplished in five days and required much preparation (SCB, 1948, 103-108).

Yosemite Point Buttress (6,935)

Class 6. First ascent July 1952 by Allen Steck and Robert Swift. The granite buttress forming the southeast wall of Yosemite Point can be divided into two parts: the pedestal and the steep face immediately above it. Climb the Yosemite Point Couloir until in line with the broken ledges and chimneys which form the right-hand side and, partly, the face of the pedestal; then aim for the large pine tree visible several hundred feet above. From the tree work upward via class 6 cracks and chimneys to the top of the pedestal, which affords an ample bivouac spot if the climb cannot be completed in one day. Above, an obvious class 6 route continues upward and to the left, then right to a sandy ledge. Several more pitches of varying difficulty lead finally to the summit. Several one-day ascents of the pedestal have been made, but the only complete ascent of the buttress thus far required two days. (SCB, 1952, 91-93.)

Yosemite Point Couloir (7,250)

Class 6. First ascent June 8, 1938, by Torcom Bedayan, David Brower, and Morgan Harris. This is the prominent gully between Yosemite Point and Castle Cliffs. Its full length may be ascended from the valley floor, at the incinerator behind Government Center, or the lower half may be bypassed with the Arrowhead approach route. Difficulties begin shortly above the halfway mark with a 30-foot, 55° slab of polished granite which may be ascended directly or may be passed on a more exposed route to the right. The next problem, a large chockstone, is overcome by starting some 50 feet below on the east wall and climbing to a narrow, scree-covered ledge, from whose upper end it is possible either to rope-traverse to the top of the chockstone or climb upward. Farther up the couloir a second chockstone may be climbed directly, and a third may be passed by a four-sided chimney behind it. Here the couloir floor rapidly steepens and narrows. From the top of the narrow chimney ascend the 45° polished granite to an overhang above, which may be climbed class 5. From this point the couloir opens out, and it is but a scramble to the valley rim. The couloir is a long day climb. (SCB, 1939, 63-68.)

Castle Cliffs (6,750)

Class 5. First ascent May 29, 1940, by David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. Follow the usual route toward the Arrowhead (which see). From the main gully below and west of the Arrowhead traverse gradually upward (W) through brush and class 2 scrambling to the last arête before Yosemite Point Couloir. The route leads up this arête some 300 feet, ending after a long bushwhack near the head of the Yosemite Point Couloir. Time for the first ascent was six hours.
West Arrowhead Chimney (6,800)

Class 6. First ascent December 7, 1941, by Torcom Bedayan and Fritz Lippmann. The large gully immediately west of the Arrowhead terminates in a dark, massive chimney blocked by room-sized chockstones. From an alcove above the first chockstone work up a class 6 crack formed by the huge chockstone and the left (W) wall of the chimney. Higher up the fourth and very difficult chockstone is climbed around its right side. Where the chimney opens up about 300 feet below the last chockstone, climb up onto the left wall of the cleft and traverse upward and to the right on friction holds to the top of the chimney (direct aid will be required). From this point the remainder of the climb is over easy terrain to the rim of the valley. This difficult climb requires a full day. (SCB, 1942, 134-136.)

Arrowhead (5,800)

South arête. Class 5. First ascent September 5, 1937, by David R. Brower and Richard M. Leonard. This is a spire in Castle Cliffs prominent from Yosemite Lodge. Follow the old Indian Canyon Trail (startsr behind the incinerator on the stub road just east of the postoffice) for about 1,200 vertical feet to a point where the trail is about to pass northeast of the Arrowhead. Leave the trail and traverse diagonally upward to the left (NW) over class 2 and 3 forested ledges around the south buttress of the Arrowhead to the deep cleft just west of the pinnacle; this is the West Arrowhead Chimney. Traverse a horizontal ledger back to the right (SE) to a tall Douglas fir at the base of the sharp arête which is followed to the summit. Most of the route is at a high angle but on enjoyably deep holds. Rappel via the route of ascent orr into the gully below West Arrowhead Chimney, making the first rappelr to the notch. The greatest difficulty on this climb seems to be findingr where to start the rope work.

East face. Class 5. First ascent December 1946 by Fritz Lippmann andr Anton Nelson. Proceed up the gully at the foot of the deep East Arrowhead Chimney to a horizontal tree-covered ledge on the left (W) sider of the chimney. The first pitch, and the most difficult, leads directly up from the ledge in a high-angle open chimney on the east-facing wall; this open chimney narrows down to a closed chimney which leads to ther south arête, where the usual route (one pitch) is followed to the summit. Either Arrowhead route is an all-day ascent and provides some ofr the most enjoyable climbing in the valley.

Royal Arches (5,400)

Class 6. First ascent October 9, 1936, by Kenneth Adam, W. Kennethr Davis, and Morgan Harris. Plan for an all-day ascent. This is one of ther most enjoyable routes in the valley, providing all varieties and difficulties of climbing technique. Proceed along the trail a little beyond ther base of the Royal Arch Cascade, head up toward the wall, and climbr a moderate class a crack. Traverse diagonally upward to the right (E)r along the steps of a broad ledge, then up a steep, open chimney, veryr smooth and difficult. From a broad sandy ledge a short friction leadr brings one to easier pitches, where small ledges may be ascended untilr they give out on a
smooth face. Here, a rope traverse to the left (W) leads to a narrow ledge, which widens out during an 80-foot traverser to the west. A jutting rib interrupts the ledge and is passed by another rope-traverse from a small tree above. This brings one to the Rotten Log, bridging a wide chasm. From the top of the log climb directly upward, keeping generally to the left. A few hundred feet of moderater climbing brings one to the final friction traverse, which leads over (left) to the Jungle, or source of the Royal Arch Cascade. Descent tor the valley floor can be made by rappel if one is careful to follow ther route used for the ascent, or by traversing along the rim of the valleyr (E) to North Dome gully (see Washington Column). It is possibler to avoid use of the Rotten Log by a class 6 lead upward and to the left of the trunk.

Washington Column (5,912)

Lunch Ledge (5,000). Class 4. First ascent September 2, 1933, byr Jules M. Eichorn, Richard M. Leonard, Bestor Robinson, and Herveyr Voge. From the base of the chimney separating the Column from ther Arches, traverse right around the corner onto the 65° face. Follow ar series of ledges and cracks of difficult class 4 climbing diagonally upward to the right (NE) to a drop-off, where a cairn will be found. This pointr is about 800 feet above the talus and 400 feet to the right (E) of ther starting point. From here climb directly up 75° cracks and chimneys, r interrupted by oak-grown ledges, for a distance of about 200 feet. Ther final vertical crack, known as Riegelhuth Chimney, leads to a rather small chimney, or therr face horizontally about 50 feet to the left (W). This is the Lunch Ledger and is at the end of the class 4 climbing. The routes split here and arer class 5 above. Many climbers enjoy the excellent climbing to this point with almost unexcelled rappelling as a climax; the Lunch Ledge andr the routes above are undoubtedly the most popular roped climbs inr the valley.

Piton traverse. Class 5. First ascent May 31, 1935, by Morgan Harris, Richard M. Leonard, and jack Riegelhuth. At the west end of ther Lunch Ledge traverse diagonally upward to the left (W) on an avalanche-polished 65° face with very small and rounded holds. Pitonsr should be placed for protection but are not needed for direct aid. Atr the top of this 75-foot pitch climb upward and somewhat to the right tor small chimney. From its top enter the main gully west of the columnr and continue via the gully to the brush covered sand slopes leading tor the summit. The only impediment in the gully is a short waterfall whichr may cause considerable difficulty in the wet season. This is the easiestr of the routes leading upward from the Lunch Ledge.

Fat Man Chimney. Class 5. First ascent May 26, 1934, by Virginiar Greever, Randolph May, and Bestor Robinson. Directly from the Lunchr Ledge ascend the chimney which leads diagonally upward and to ther right. The chimney is on a 70° face and the upper portion is onlyr 15 inches wide and of a crumbling nature. From the top continue diagonally to the right into a specious alcove. From this traverse horizontally back to the left (W) for 200 to 300 feet and continue on intor the main gully.

Direct route. Class 5. First ascent August 17, 1940, by DeWitt Allen, John Dyer, and Robin Hansen. From the alcove above Fat Man Chimneyr traverse right (E) around the corner and up a friction pitch to the baser of a small scree slope. This leads to a spectacular chimney, prominentr from the valley floor, which is 200 feet
high and divided in two sections. From deep within the chimney proceed directly up and either behind various chockstones or out toward the front to the second half which is relatively open and which steepens near the top. From here work left (W) and then ascend a small chimney to a large platform. Continue left around the corner, then ascend another chimney into a cave and out its window. Continue up on the scree to the base of the final cliff. From the base work onto a sloping alcove by using a large embedded flake. After gaining a second ledge, cross an open chimney and traverse upward (E) to a tree-covered platform. Climb up a short cleft, then halfway up a right-angle chimney. At this point traverse (W) across a smooth face to the summit slope of the Column. This route is considerably longer than the other two routes above the Lunch Ledge.

The descent from Washington Column is best made by contouring from the summit (E) into the gully across from the Column and following down the gully to easy ledges and scree slopes which lead toward Tenaya Creek. The final cliffs may be by-passed by going to the right (W).

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*Dinner Ledge (5,250).* Class 6. First ascent April 30, 1952, by Daver Dows and Don Goodrich. From Indian Caves climb talus until just under the vertical upper face of the Column and just east of the region of great overhangs. Work to the left (W) along a grassy bench as far as possible and up loose rock ledges to the left. A foot-wide, eight-foot high crack leads toward a large flat ledge with small trees, about 100 feet higher, and a class 6 pitch proceeds up the left side of three cracks to a large pine. From here varied climbing continues to the Dinner Ledge, which is the top of a buttress, and the highest ledge of the south face of the Column.

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*Watkins Gully (6,750)*

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Class 6. First ascent September 1946 by Robin Hansen, Fritz Lippmann, and Rolf Pundt. Approach the deep gully immediately west of Mount Watkins from the east up a prominent ramp directly below the Watkins Pinnacles, pass through a unique tunnel, and attain the gully proper via a delicate pitch. From here there is not much chance of getting off route as the gully walls are nearly unbroken and vertical. The main obstacles are overhanging chockstones, one of which requires direct aid. Water in the gully will increase difficulties considerably. This is an all-day climb.

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*Watkins Pinnacles*

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These pinnacles jut out from the southwest shoulder of Mount Watkins, and are best seen from the Snow Creek trail just below the falls. After climbing to the summit of Mount Watkins descend the southwest shoulder until fixed ropes become advisable. A 300-foot rappel from a tree brings one to another tree on the edge of the south face overlooking the notch which separates the pinnacles from the wall. Rappel from this point into the notch. Enough rope should be carried so that these last two rappels may be left as fixed ropes. One short pitch from the notch leads to the saddle between the pinnacles from which point ascents of the Upper and Middle Pinnacles can be easily made. Pitons are necessary on the Upper Pinnacle. Thus far the lowest pinnacle, about 150 feet below the notch, has repeatedly turned back attempts to reach its summit. Its walls are overhanging and quite smooth. One or two expansion bolts have already been placed.

**Tenaya Canyon (4,000—8,000)**

Class 3. First recorded traverse 1866, by Joseph Farrel, Alfred Jessup, and Mr. Stegman. Although a traverse of the canyon involves no difficult climbing, the problem of route finding arises often. Ropes should be carried, but are not always needed.

**High water routes.** At Inner Gorge (opposite Quarter Domes) ascend either side of the canyon until about 250 feet above the stream. From his point work eastward and traverse diagonally down into Lost Valley at the upper end of the gorge. Routes involving talus, smooth granite, and brush may be discerned alongside Pyweack Fall, at the head of Lost Valley. These lead to Waterwheel Valley, and no further difficulty is encountered on the way to Tenaya Lake. The south side of the canyon has perhaps more brush than the north throughout the climb.

**Low water.** The low water traverse of Tenaya Canyon, which can be made in late August or September, should appeal more to rock climbers since there is more rock-climbing and less bushwhacking. From the lower end of the Inner Gorge, the course of the stream may be followed to the first waterfall where the stream divides around a chockstone. Below this a detour to the left (N) is made, and a scree-covered ledge some 50 feet above the stream is followed until well past the fall. Returning once again to a point on the stream marked by a split rock through which lies the only easy route, climb approximately 150 feet above on brush-covered slopes until it is possible to continue eastward into lower Lost Valley over a series of narrow, exposed ledges, including Initial Ledge, which bears the dates of the annual trips made by S. L. Foster, from 1909 to 1937.

**Clouds Rest (9,929)**

North face. Class 5. First Ascent August 16, 1952, by Jack Davis and Dick Long. From Mirror Lake follow Tenaya Creek for about a mile. Gradually work upward and eastward toward the north face making use of a series of gullies and ledges and arriving at a point about three quarters of a mile west of the summit and several hundred feet below the south rim. Some bushwhacking and one or two class 4 pitches will be encountered. Here is a junction of routes: one leading (SW) to the Quarter Domes, the other continuing left...
A considerable distance to the north face via a large class 2 ledge until the route is blocked by a great couloir. A series of ledges of varying difficulty circumvents the couloir and terminates at the top of a large sloping face. From here there seem to be several easy routes leading to the rim slightly west of the summit. This is definitely an all-day climb.

Quarter Domes (8,276)

From Tenaya Canyon. West of the Domes. Class 2. First ascent June 11, 1939, by R. S. Griswold, C. A. Harwell, and Julian Howard. From 500 feet above the mouth of the Tenaya Creek Inner Gorge (see Tenaya Canyon) a broad ledge ascends 1,200 feet to the southwest, terminating in a gully heading just west of the Domes. When free of snow, the route is a moderate climb, complicated principally by dense brush. The first ascent began within the Gorge.

From Tenaya Canyon. East of the Domes. Class 4. First ascent August 16, 1952, by Norman Goldstein and George Mandatory. From Mirror Lake follow the Clouds Rest-North Face route to the route junction. From here a prominent class 2 ledge with a 20° slope leads right (SW) directly to the rim, emerging about a half mile from the trail to Clouds Rest via flat country. The Domes are passed on the right.

Ahwiyah Point (6,925)

From the west. Class 3. First ascent obscure, probably by Charles W. Michael. First recorded ascent, September 3, 1933, Richard G. Johnson, Jack Riegelhuth, and Hervey Voge, who climbed from Mirror Lake. It is most easily climbed from above.

Northeast gully. Class 3. First recorded ascent, August 5, 1937, David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. Correct route finding is essential. Ascend avalanche debris below the gully to easy slabs leading to a 30-foot waterfall. Pass this over easy ledges to the left (E) and enter the gully proper, from which point it is impossible to leave the route. The ascent is greatly complicated by water in the early season.

Diving Board (7,500)

From Little Yosemite. Class 2. First ascent unknown but probably early. From Lost Lake proceed through brush toward the 7,000-foot mark on the map at the base (SW) of Half Dome. An easy route can be worked out near the right (E) end of an intricate maze of ledges separated by 45° massive granite slopes. If the lucky ledge is found, a horizontal traverse (W) will bring one to easy sand slopes. Follow these, as directly as...
convenient, to the base of the Dome and skirt their cliffs to avoid brush. This route is usually too intricate to find when going toward Little Yosemite. Unless the party is equipped with a rappel rope, it is safer to plow through heavy brush and skirt the cliffs on the west.

From Mirror Lake. Class 3. First ascent by Charles W. Michael prior to 1927. Follow the Mirror Lake-Half Dome route as far as the greater face of Half Dome. Until July in a normal year an ice axe is advisable in ascending the 400-foot, 40° snow couloir below the west end of the overhang. At the head of the couloir traverse upward on a 6-foot, sloping, scree-covered ledge overhanging 1,000 feet of space.

West Buttress. Class 4. First ascent May 29, 1938, by Kenneth D. Adam and W. Kenneth Davis. Starting from Mirror Lake ascend a brush-covered gully for 2,500 feet. Above, climb the broken face of the West Buttress to the Diving Board. There are probably several possible routes here.

Half Dome (8,852)

From Mirror Lake. Class 3. First ascent unknown. The initial barrier is a 200-foot cliff stretching along the entire base. This can be passed by an easy gully at the west end. After reaching the ledge on top of the cliff, traverse east to polished, massive granite at an angle of 35° to 40° rising west of the water course. The principal problem is to avoid brush without getting onto rock of too high an angle. At the base of the great face there is an easy route eastward to the Clouds Rest saddle. There is water at the base of this face in all seasons. After reaching the saddle the Dome may be climbed by means of the trail and cable.

By trail and cable. Class 2. First ascent October 12, 1875, by George G. Anderson. From Nevada Fall a trail leads up to the east side of Half Dome, where parallel cables at waist height are placed in the summer season and greatly facilitate the ascent of the east slope of the dome. The history of this route is interesting. After three attempts by other parties, Anderson was able to make the ascent by drilling holes for iron spikes. A detailed account of a somewhat later climb has been given (SCB, 1946, 1-9). The present one-inch steel cables, with wooden foot rests placed at ten-foot intervals on the 46° slope, make the 450-foot climb up the dome entirely safe for those not troubled by height. Rubber soles are essential.

Without the cable. Class 4. First ascent in 1931 by Judd Boynton, Warren Loose, and Eldon Dryer. This is purely a problem of adequate friction on the 46°, moderately rough granite. Ascents have been made on both sides of the cable.

Southwest face. Class 6. First ascent October 13-14, 1946, by Anton Nelson and John Salathé. The route starts at the base of the converging vertical breaks in the west face just to the right of the two conspicuous pines about 100 feet up. Three hundred feet up one encounters a crack running straight up 300 more feet, without feasible alternatives, almost to the great overhang which circumscribes the climb on the left (N). From the top of this crack rope-traverse 25 feet to the right and climb up another crack that contains a deep
diagonal overhang which is passed on the right. Above, friction work on easier slabs brings one to the summit. Descend either by the cable or rappel somewhat north of the climbing route. The first ascent took 20 hours and used 150 pitons (SCB, 1946, 120-121).

LeConte Gully (5,925)

Class 4. This is the gully just north of Grizzly Peak. It was probably climbed by Hutchings as early as 1869 in an attempt on Half Dome. It is class 2 all the way except for one 25-foot pitch. Follow the Sierra Point trail until it definitely leaves the gully and turns south. Follow up the broad gully on easy scree for about 750 vertical feet above the trail. Here a 100-foot, 45° pitch can be passed on a rock-garden ledge on the right (S). This leads to a pocket out of which one climbs the short class 4 pitch at the upper left (N) corner to easy climbing above.

Grizzly Peak (6,219)

From Little Yosemite. Class 2. First ascent 1885, by Charles A. Bailey. From Little Yosemite proceed to the notch at the head of LeConte Gully (see route to Diving Board). Follow the south side of the ridge to the summit.

South arête.

Class 3. Two gullies ascend the south wall of Grizzly Peak. The easternmost and most precipitously walled of these is class 5. The west side of the arête between them, partly covered with brush, may more easily be ascended to the first notch east of Grizzly Peak. To approach this route, leave the Vernal Fall trail below its junction with the abandoned Anderson trail.

Southwest arête.

Class 4. First ascent unknown. Take the trail to Sierra Point. From there ascend a minor gully, a short rock pitch, and ledges to the arête. Follow the arête, turning right or left where it becomes difficult, to the summit.

West face.

Class 5. First ascent June 1942, by Dick Houston and Ralph McColm. Follow the Sierra Point trail until level with Sierra Point and then proceed left (NE) over brushy ledges until a point is reached where further traversing would involve difficult climbing. From this point easy climbing up several open chimneys and through thick brush brings one to the crux of the climb, a large open chimney 150 feet long and requiring pitons for protection. Easy climbing then leads to the summit. Several routes are possible on this broken face and they provide good climbing in the sun for cold days.

South gully.

Class 5. First ascent June 7, 1938, by David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. The abandoned Anderson Trail to Vernal Fall may be followed high into the talus below the south gully, the easternmost...
of the two gullies ascending the south wall. Ascend 250 feet, zigzagging over oblique, intersecting ledge planes. Just west of the gully wherer the ledges run out, rope-traverse down and east to a narrow ledger which continues its narrowing course to the northeast, returning at an angle of 40° to the gully. The lead becomes increasingly exposed as one nears the gully. The gully may be ascended without difficulty to a cave, which is passed on a smooth, high-angle face to the right. The upper gully rapidly opens out into easier climbing at a diminishing angle, but parties should remain roped until well past the apparent exposure. Ar moderate scramble brings one to the second notch east of Grizzly Peak, where the usual ducked route west of the summit ridge may be followed to the top. Any of the Grizzly Peak routes can be completed in half a day.

Mount Broderick (6,705)

Class 3. First ascent obscure, but probably by James M. Hutchings before 1869. A friction climb up the smooth granite on the northeastr ridge. A rope is sometimes needed on one pitch.

Mount Starr King (9,081)

Northeast side. Class 4. First ascent August 1876 by George B. Bayley and E. S. Schuyler. From the top of 30° slabs at the northeast base of the dome traverse diagonally upward to the right (W) on 43° rougher granite for 40 feet to a stance on a small ledge. Climb directly up, following a grass-filled two-inch crack, and proceed along and over the edges of two-foot exfoliation shells to the summit.

Southeast saddle. Class 4 (minimum). First ascent August 23, 1877, by George G. Anderson, James M. Hutchings, and J. B. Lemert. An easier route than from the northeast, but still requiring care in friction climbing along and over exfoliation shells. In climbing trend gradually to the left (W).

Panorama Cliff (6,250)

Class 5. First ascent October 12, 1936, by David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. From the Nevada Fall trail at the base of Grizzly Peak an immense diagonal trout-shaped scar may be discerned as the source of one of the largest recent Panorama Cliff rocksides. The route follows, with slight variation, a line drawn from the highest talus of the north face of the cliff, passing immediately above the scar, and continuing upward and to the right (SW) into the broken and forested upper face. The first pitch leads to the shelf with a large Douglas fir. From here continue upward and to the right. One should be on the lookout for larger loose blocks when climbing above the scar. From here it is possible that a number of routes may be followed. Although the brush and dr scree slopes may not seem to require consecutive climbing, the considerable exposure justifies it. This is one of the longest one-day climbs in the valley.
Illilouette Fall (5,816)

West side. Class 4. First ascent probably by Charles W. Michael in his twenties. First recorded ascent September 3, 1933, by Marjory Bridge, Lewis F. Clark, and William Horsfall. There is probably more than one feasible route up the broken face west of the fall.

Glacier Point (6,750)

East face. Class 5. First ascent May 28, 1939, by Raffi Bedayan, David R. Brower, and Richard M. Leonard. This route follows close to their first watercourse south of Glacier Point, directly opposite Sierra Point. From the Fish Hatchery follow the pipe line road to the settling basin. Turn right and follow a small stream to the cliffs. A chimney just to the left (S) of the stream constitutes the route all the way. Once the first high-angle diagonal chimney is passed, the route abounds in bomb-proof belay positions and well-watered rock gardens (in season).

Glacier Point Terrace (5,500)

Class 5. First ascent June 24, 1937, by David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. From an elevation of about 4,800 feet on the Ledge Trail traverse diagonally (E) along a broken connecting ledge under the great overhang toward the terrace that forms the ultimate base of the Firefall. The east end of the traverse is quite exposed and should be well protected. A small tree serves as a splendid belay for a final delicate traverse ending in an open chimney that leads to the terrace. It is interesting here to observe the variety of debris that has come over the cliff through the ages. Several attempts to leave the terrace by an upper route have so far been blocked by difficulty and have been subject to the gratuitous hazard of falling miscellany dropped by tourists on Glacier Point — golf balls, fountain pens, beer cans, and rocks. Ther rocks can be heard but not seen as they pass by.

Potato Masher (5,750)

Class 5. Rappel rope necessary. First ascent July 28, 1951, by J. Georger Maring, Don Currey, Don Sorensen, and John Marten. From the switchbacks of the Glacier Point Four Mile Trail between the 5,500- and 6,000-foot contours, an easy traverse eastward brings one to a notch above a short arête (contour circle 5,750) lying nearly due north of Union Point. This arête culminates to the north in the Masher, separated by its col from two other pinnacles forming the crest. The first pinnacle is passed on the left (W) in easy climbing which brings one to a lofty amphitheater south of and below the second pinnacle, which is passed...
to the east. From the north side of its summit rappel 40 feet to a chock-stone platform at the base of the col leaving the rappel in place for their return. A class 5 route lies up the southeast corner of the Masher; all other sides overhang. On the return the second pinnacle is easily regained via the fixed rope. Time for the original ascent was three hours.

Sentinel Rock (7,000)

South notch. Class 3. First ascent obscure, but it was a popular touristr ascent by 1870. Approach on the Four Mile Trail and ascend the gully heading in the notch just south of the summit.

Circular Staircase. Class 5. First ascent May 1940 by David Brower and Morgan Harris. Traverse over from the Four Mile Trail on easy scree-covered ledges to the Tree Ledge directly under the north face. Descend an exposed route 70 feet to the broad, sloping ledge crossing the west face of the massif. Follow the ledge to within 50 yards of its terminus in a watercourse and ascend 150 feet. There follows a 120-foot lead requiring pitons up a shallow chimney to the next broad ledge. A traverse back to the watercourse connects with an open gully leading to the notch behind the summit. Ascend through brush to the top.

Northeast bowl. Class 6. First ascent June 12, 1948, by Anton Nelson and John Salathé. From tree ledges below the north wall traverse around and down into the bowl. The route consists of vertical cracks and open chimneys, starting near the middle of the bowl and working toward the left (E) side. One emerges on top of the ridge through a needle’s-eye at the top of an overhanging chimney, followed by a very rotten chimney and a second needle’s-eye. Relative to Yosemite standards, rock on this climb is rotten in the extreme; therefore, the route is advisable only for the cautious, experienced climber. It would be a poor place to be benighted.

North face. Class 6. First ascent June 30 through July 4, 1950, by John Salathé and Allen Steck. (SCB, 1951, I-5.) The wall can be divided into parts of somewhat equal distance: Tree Ledge to the top of the prominent buttress, and from the latter to the summit. Route of first ascent leads up right (W) side of the buttress to the tree-studded ledges of its top (two days). Continue up the headwall with aid of expansion bolts for a full rope length and traverse left (E) into steep cracks beneath the Great Chimney (one day). Follow this chimney for the remaining distance (about 500 feet) to the summit (one and one-half days). Other ascents should require less time as the expansion bolts were left in place.

Lost Brother (6,625)

Class 5. First ascent July 27, 1941, by David R. Brower and L. Brucer Meyer. The semi-isolated buttress across the valley from the Three Brothers and well up Taft Arête is known as the Lost Brother. Ther best
approach is to ascend the avalanche gully heading between Taft Arête and Taft Point to a point in line with the Lower Cathedral Rockr and the massive white-scarred overhang on the north face of the Lost Brother, and thence contour east to the base of the broad, sloping brush-and-tree-covered ledge under the white overhang; ascend this ledge to the highest point readily accessible at its eastern end. Here the first pitch involves a shoulder stand and leads up a narrow crack to the top of a 30-foot block. Two fine chimneys and some intervening cracks bring the climber to the Douglas fir ledge 600 feet below the top. From its southern end a higher alcove may be reached, and finally the notch in Taft Arête, by climbing an exposed face, an open chimney, and an easy ledge. The summit is attained by proceeding directly from the notch.

Phantom Pinnacle (5,900)

Class 6. First ascent September 9-10, 1950, by William W. Dunmirer and Robert L. Swift. This 400-foot shaft lies on the south side of the Cathedral Spires Buttress and is therefore hidden from most view spots in the valley. The climb from the base is made on the upper side and ascends the vertical cracks formed where the pinnacle makes a right angle with the cliff; the route is obvious to the notch. From the notch cross above the chockstone and ascend to the summit on the northeastern side of the spire. The first ascent took two days of climbing.

Harris’s Hangover (6,250)

Class 6. This is the northeast chimney of the Spires Buttress. First ascent August 13-14, 1949, by Oscar A. Cook, William W. Dunmire, and Robert L. Swift. A prominent chimney divides the sheer buttress immediately southeast of Cathedral Spires. The ascent is made entirely within this chimney and involves a series of overhanging chockstones. The largest of these, several hundred feet up the chimney and clearly visible from the valley floor, requires direct-aid pitons and should be climbed on the right-hand (W) wall, from a start deep inside the chimney. Beyond this chockstone the difficulties lessen considerably. The first ascent took 12 hours. This is an excellent climb for hot weather; the entire route is in shade.

Church Tower (5,500)

From the southwest notch. Class 5. First ascent May 30, 1941, by Bill Horsfall, Dick Houston, Ed Koskinen, and Newton McCready. Ascend the broad talus chute east of the Church Tower to the base of the notch between it and the Lower Cathedral Spire. Climb the broken face to the right (E) of the notch to a short chimney and traverse farther right (E) to a large tree. Attain the east arête via a short, deep chimney and continue along the arête, crossing a deep notch to the small summit tower, which may be climbed from the north over a smooth 50° face or by circling farther right north around the tower to the back (W) side. This is the shorter and easier of the two very popular class 5 routes on the Church Tower.
**East arête.** Class 5. First ascent October 12, 1935, by Kenneth Adam, Olive Dyer, and Morgan Harris. Several hundred feet below and to the right (NE) of the notch (see above) an easy tree-covered ledge leads right to the northeast corner. From here ascend a 60-foot open chimney, the most difficult pitch on the climb. Walk along a “rue de bicyclette” on the southeast side of the steep arête just below the crest to a larger tree where the southwest-notch route is joined. Descend from the summit by rappelling to the notch.

**North wall.** Class 6. First ascent June 1, 1946, by Dewitt Allen, Fritz Lippmann, Anton Nelson and John Salathé. Start at the highest talus just under the north side of the overhanging summit block and work up to the left (E) toward the northeast ridge. Proceed upward on the east side of the north face by means of a piton ladder or a long and exposed open chimney. Above, the climbing is mainly class 4 and 5 until a junction is made with the original route to the summit along the east arête.

**Lower Cathedral Spire (5,903)**

**Main Ledge.** Class 4. First ascent November 4, 1933, by Jules M. Eichorn, Richard M. Leonard, and Bestor Robinson. Ascend talus chutes east of the Spire to a point about 150 feet down from the notch between the Spires. Starting here, at a large tree, climb through brush and trees onto a small ledge which leads to a shallow chimney dropping sharply to the right (S). Climb straight up the left (W) buttress of the chimney about 40 feet and traverse to the left (W) past an airy step. From here a 200-foot open chimney leads up to the main ledge. There are at least two other variations in the lower part of this climb. One starts higher and closer to the notch on a difficult 75° face, while the other starts lower down from the notch in an open chimney. Above the Main Ledger difficulty increases considerably, but the climb that far is enjoyable and instructive for its own sake.

**Right-hand Traverse.** Maximum class 5. First ascent May 30, 1948, by Raffi Bedayn, Paul Estes, Jerry Ganopole, and Roy Gorin. This variation may be used as an alternative to a direct ascent of the Flake. It minimizes the amount of direct aid necessary, substituting difficult class 5 climbing. From the east end of the Main Ledge at the base of the Flake Pitch traverse down and right, using a sling in a piton for support until the rock itself again provides adequate holds. The traverse ends at a small shelf twenty feet east of the starting point. From here the exposed route leads directly up on small holds, but is fortunately provided with cracks for protection by pitons. Two long pitches above its inception, this variation joins the following route on the wide ledge above the Flake.

Descent from the Spire involves an overhanging toy-foot rappel over the Flake, so a check of rope length is important. Average time of ascent for either route is about 6 hours.

**Flake Pitch.** Class 6. First ascent August 25, 1934, by Jules M. Eichorn, Richard M. Leonard, and Bestor Robinson. (SCB, 1935, 107.) From the right-hand (E) end of the Main Ledge a huge granite flake can be discerned directly above. From a shoulder-stand ascend the 83° face tor just under and to the left (W) of the
Flake. The usual technique is to lasso the horn of the Flake with sling rope, anchor the sling rope to carabiners, and mount the Flake using the fixed rope. Care should be taken in placement of pitons to avoid rope drag, and for this reason, the double-rope technique is preferable. Above, traverse the wide ledge around the corner to the right (E) into a chimney which leads upward. Continue to the summit via easy pitches. The Flake has been ascended at least once without lassoing the horn.

**Higher Cathedral Spire (6,114)**

**Southwest face.** Maximum class 5. First ascent April 15, 1934, by Jules M. Eichorn, Richard M. Leonard, and Bestor Robinson. *(SCB, 1934, r 34-37.)* The flood channel near the Cathedral Rocks will be found an easier approach than the forest. Starting from upper scree slopes south of the Spire, climb a short crack to the wide ledge known as First Base. There a difficult overhang 20 feet above the belayer must be surmounted in an open chimney, and a delicate traverse left (W) is required around the corner to the Bathtubs, remarkable solution pockets on a 77° face. A further traverse of about 15 feet to the left (N) brings one to an expansion bolt to protect a difficult step into a high-angle crack on the west face. Follow this crack diagonally upward to an alcove known as Second Base. Above this rope-traverse around the corner to the left (N), and then climb up another chimney on excellent holds. From 20 feet higher another traverse to the left onto the north face brings one to Third Base. Follow this prominent ledge (right) south around the west and south (or north and east) faces to an easy chimney up the summit block on the southeast corner. Although direct aid has been used with two of the pitches on most ascents, the Higher Spire has been climbed several times entirely class 5. Average time of ascent is most of a day.

**South face.** Class 6. First ascent August 18, 1948, by Fletcher Hoyt, William Hoyt, and Allen Steck. From First Base the route leads to the right in a delicate traverse and then upward in a broken chimney and over a bulging chockstone. Around farther to the right is a thin ledge which provides an easy route to a welcome platform 25 feet above. From the platform a class 6 crack leads upward to the left, ending below a flake, directly over and 150 feet above the First Base ledge. Ascent off the easy chimney between the flake and the wall brings one to the ledger leading to the base of the Rotten Chimney (Second Base). The south face route, however, follows a vertical crack 15 feet to the right (E) of the base of the talus notch. At the top of this difficult 80-foot crack, a traverse on tension enables the leader to reach a break in the vertical face which ends in a sloping shelf. From here a short closed chimney leads to another ledge and a 45° trough ends at the base of the summit block. The first and only ascent to date took a full day and used 41 pitons, 34 for direct aid.

**Cathedral Chimney (6,300)**

Class 5. First ascent October 11, 1936, by David R. Brower and Morgan Harris. Moderate continuous climbing leads up the floor of the spectacular broad chimney between the two highest Cathedral Rocks to the base of a 150-foot, 70° pitch in the upper portion of the gully. This may be climbed by ascending the face a few feet to the right (N) then traversing left to easier rocks. Continue for several hundred feet to an overhanging chockstone, which, when dry, may be climbed with the aid of a small tree growing near the top.
A more difficult variation, over smooth slabs to the right (N) of the chockstone, has been used in the early season, when the chockstone becomes a miniature waterfall. The rest of the gully is easy.

Penny Pinnacle (5,000)

Class 5. First ascent April 1946 by Torcom Bedayan and Fritz Lippmann. Approach the pinnacle attached to the lower east face of Middler Cathedral Rock via the talus gully to the south. Two pitches are required to reach the notch, and a shoulder stand is helpful to get onto the ledge leading to the summit pitch.

Middle Cathedral Rock (6,551)

Kat Walk. Class 4. First ascent September 1929 by Ralph S. Griswold. Moderate continuous climbing leads up the great chimney between the two higher Rocks to a 70-foot cliff. From the base of this cliff follow a brush-covered ledge out on the face to the right (NE) for several hundred feet, thence up steep ledges and pitches to the summit. Descent via this route or, more easily, by the Gunsight. To reach the Gunsight descend (W) to Bridalveil Creek, keeping to the left (S) of the smooth slabs, until an easy traverse right (N) can be made to the Gunsight notch.

Northwest buttress. Class 5. First ascent April 18, 1953, by Jack Davis, Marjorie Dunmire, William Dunmire, Richard Houston, Richard Long, and Dale Webster. From the top of the Gunsight (see below) a notch may be discerned on the Middle Cathedral Rock skyline below and to the right (W) of the summit. The route generally follows a line of several trees up the broken face to this notch. Above and about 100 yards southeast of the Gunsight notch a brushy crack leads to a large Douglas fir. From here continue directly upward several hundred feet until alongside of a vertical open chimney on the right. Lack of holds may require the use of a direct-aid piton in one place below the chimney. Traverse right (S) into the chimney, ascend it, and continue upward to easy scrambling leading to the summit. The ascent can be made in part of a day.

Gunsight (5,200)

Class 4. First ascent obscure and probably early. This gully lies between the Middle and Lower Cathedral Rocks. The large chockstone near the top is best passed to the left (S) on sound, angular holds; a rope is desirable here. The Gunsight gully offers an interesting short rock scramble to attractive lunch spots on Bridalveil Creek above their fall and to climbs on Middle Cathedral Rock or the Leaning Tower.
Lower Cathedral Rock (5,610)

*Northwest face*—Overhang bypass. Class 5. First ascent June 1, 1952, by William Dunmire, Richard Long, William Long, and Edward Robbins. Two overhanging blocks within 100 feet of each other may be discerned part way up on the northwest face. For both routes, roped climbing starts from below the easternmost of the two overhangs. From the highway on the east side of Bridalveil Creek work up forested class 2 ledges to a gully heading diagonally upward and to the left (E). This gully may be ascended to just below the 160° overhang extending 8 feet from the face. A short, touchy traverse left of the overhang leads to a 45° chimney veering eastward. At the top of the chimney climb upward from a bushy ledge and then right (W) on a new ledge. Wherer the ledge terminates, ascend the partly broken but very exposed face. Above, traverse left again into an open gully which overhangs above. Friction climbing in the gully leads to an alcove on the right side. This alcove can also be attained by ascending a short open chimney just before reaching the gully, but this variation seems to require a direct-aid piton. From above the alcove continue via an easy pitch or two to ther tree-covered slopes above.

*Northwest face*—Overhang route. Class 6. First ascent September 7, 1935, by Doris F. Leonard, Richard M. Leonard, and Bestor Robinson. Follow the route described above to below the 160° overhang. From a half-inch ledge on a 70° face immediately under the overhang ar shoulder-stand (with pitons supporting the second man) enables ther leader to ascend a vertical chimney to the right of the overhang to ar cave beneath a second overhang 15 feet above the second man. Traverse to the right (W) on almost inadequate holds and reach a large platform above the upper overhang. Enjoyable climbing at 85° on remarkably fine holds then brings one to an easy walk to the summit. Either of the two northwest face routes can be accomplished in partr of a day. Descend via the Gunsight.

Leaning Tower (5,863)

*Class 4. First ascent probably by Charles W. Michael, date unknown.* Approaching Bridalveil Creek by the Gunsight (or any of the morer difficult routes leading to the top of the fall), traverse over moderater friction climbing to the notch south of the Leaning Tower. From herer friction climbing continues over varied routes to the summit, with ther higher angle of the slope indicating use of the rope in consecutive climbing.

Leaning Chimney (5,675)

*Class 5. First ascent October 13, 1940, by Kenneth D. Adam, David R. Brower, Morgan Harris, Richard M. Leonard, and Carl Rosberg.* This is a spectacular chimney, blocked by overhanging chockstones, due south of the Leaning Tower. From the Bridalveil Fall parking area ascendr 1,000 feet of class 1 climbing to the head of the amphitheater west ofr the Tower. By a 30-foot narrow chimney leading upward to the right (W), or by talus around a buttress further to the west, tree-covered ledges are reached leading easily back, eastward, and upward 500 feet or more into the Leaning Chimney and to the first big chockstone. Thisr can be passed by a
lead on the high-angle north wall. Easy climbing continues to the next series of chockstones marking the summit of the chimney. Here the route is on the south wall. A small overhang with exceptionally good holds is the crux of the pitch; above this a tunnel through additional chockstones ends at the notch above the chimney. Easy bushwhacking leads to Bridalveil Creek, only 750 feet below. Their first ascent took three hours.

Stanford Point (6,659)

Class 5. First ascent September 5, 1942, by David R. Brower, Morgan Harris, Alan Hedden, and L. Bruce Meyer. Climb to the top of the talus immediately beneath Stanford Point and proceed 200 feet higher on a series of easy ledges to an overhanging crack at the east end of the top ledge. Surmount this overhang and reach a less steep brushy section that leads to the broad ledge which is conspicuous from below. The route generally follows this ledge to its upper (E) end where it breaks off into the gully east of Stanford Point. Climb up the face, using several chimneys and a short traverse (W) to a shallow gully with a diagonal upward return, until the top of a minor buttress is reached from where a route into the main gully is visible. Delicate and exposed climbing is involved in reaching the gully, but from here scrambling leads to the valley rim and Pohono Trail.

Pulpit Rock (4,195)

Class 6. First ascent May 29, 1939, by Raffi Bedayan, Carl Jensen, and Randolph May. The topmost branch (which leans toward the rock) of a large tree at the southeast corner enables the climber to make a traverse toward the notch of the Pulpit. Advance vertically up the broken face until the cave underneath a huge overhang is reached. Direct aid is necessary to overcome the rounded 70° face and reach an overhanging gully. Climb out of this gully toward the notch, descending upon an ar broad ledge and along this to a large platform seen from below. From here the summit is reached by climbing a three-inch crack on a 400 face. Care should be taken with loose rocks throughout the climb.

Another route on Pulpit Rock proceeds directly up from the notch to a sloping, curved shelf. From here traverse up and to the left (W) to a narrow ledge, continue farther left some 15 feet, and ascend diagonally up and to the right via a piton ladder. At the top of this pitch it is easy scrambling to the summit by the original route.

The Rostrum (4,500)

Class 5. First ascent October 12, 1941, by Kenneth Adam, David R. Brower, Richard M. Leonard, and Rolf Pundt. This is a detached platform on the south wall of the Merced Canyon 174 miles west of Pulpit Rock.
and is reached by descending Turtleback Dome from the Wawonar Road, 1 mile west of the Tunnel. Rappel from the canyon rim to the large granite blocks of the intervening notch, then climb over smaller holds just to the right (NE) of the notch and above an 800-foot drop to the talus. The exposure warrants the use of a piton here. The return from the notch to the rim is made by a series of rock-plant covered ledges to the right (SW).

References

Text: SCB, 1934, 98; 1935, 107; 1936, 96; 1937, 106; 1938, 115; 1939, 128; 1940, 118; 1941, 135; 1942, 132; 1946, 118; 1948, 121, 127; 1949, 147; 1950, 124; 1952, 88, 91.

Photographs: See the books on Yosemite listed in the References, as well as many of the SCB references cited above.

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Tioga Pass to Mammoth Pass

The Cathedral Range and Eastward

Edward S. Robbins and Alfred W. Baxter, Jr.

BETWEEN MOUNT LYELL and the Tioga Road the Sierra Nevadan has two crests: the Cathedral Range running in a northwesterly direction from Mount Lyell to Cathedral Peak, and to the east of this ther higher true crest from Mount Lyell to Mount Dana. Almost all this arear lies within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park and is easily accessible by good trails. Most of the peaks can be climbed in a single dayr from the Tioga Road.

The Cathedral Range forms the divide between the upper basins of two of the most spectacular river courses in the Sierra, the Tuolumner and the Merced. The general aspect of the range differs from that of other climbing areas in the High Sierra, for forests of lodgepole piner and mountain hemlock often extend high on the shoulders of the peaks, and an abundance of nearby lakes and subalpine meadows create a friendly sort of beauty when contrasted with the spectacular expanses of rock and ice found in the higher mountain areas to the south. Ther beautifully castellated peaks of the northern part of the range provide a number of short but popular rock climbs. While there are no larger permanent snowfields, fine practice slopes for snow work can be found in early summer, around Budd Lake and elsewhere. This range isr largely granite.

The main crest of the Sierra in this region is considerably higher than the Cathedral Range. In common with most peaks of the range, the main peaks have easy routes for ascent from the west. The first ascent of Mount Gibbs was on horseback. There are a few small glaciers on their northern and eastern sides, the best known being on Lyell, Dana, and Kuna. It was on the Maclure lobe of Lyell Glacier that John Muir made the measurements first proving the existence of glaciers in ther Sierra. In the Mount Lyell region the rock is Half Dome quartz monzonite, but farther north much of the rock is volcanic and sedimentary;r Parker, Dana, and Gibbs especially are composed of the original rockr that once formed a thick roof over the Sierra.
History

This is one portion of the Sierra where the climbing history should mention the original Indian inhabitants. The Mono and Yosemite Indians had a trading area in the vicinity of Tuolumne Pass, and François E. Matthes found a bow high on the slopes of Parsons Peak. White men who first entered the area, under the leadership of Joseph Reddefield Walker in 1833, traveled along the western extension of the Cathedral Range. In 1863, the California Geological Survey, led by Josiah Dwight Whitney, made several ascents, including one of Mount Dana. Their group attempted to climb Mount Lyell, but they were stopped 600 feet short of the summit, which they regarded as inaccessible. Gold was found east of the crest in 1852, and several mines were established, one at the head of Bloody Canyon. Mining equipment was carried by pack train across the Mono Pass Trail until 1882, when the Tioga Road was opened by a private company.

All the main peaks of these areas have now been ascended, the last being those in the Echo Peak group and on Matthes Crest.

Approaches and Campsites

The Tioga Road, usually open from late June until November, makes this area easily accessible from east or west. For the backpacker, trails into the area include several from Yosemite Valley, including the Tenaya Lake Trail, the Sunrise and Soda Springs Trail by way of Littler Yosemite, and the Merced Lake Trail combined with either the Babcock Lake Trail or the Vogelsang Pass Trail. From the south a trail leads from Agnew Meadow via Thousand Island Lake over Donohue Pass. From the east a trail may be followed from Walker Lake up Bloodyr Canyon and over Mono Pass. Another trail goes from Silver Lake up Rush Creek where it joins the Parker Pass Trail and, higher, the John Muir Trail, leading to Donohue Pass.

There is a lodge, store, garage, ranger station, and automobile camping in Tuolumne Meadows. Fine camping areas may be found at Budd Lake, Cathedral Lake, the head of Lyell Fork of the Tuolumne, on the Lyell Fork of the Merced, Vogelsang Lake, and in many other places. Plans to camp at sites within the park other than those maintained by the Park Service, as well as all plans for climbing in the park, should be checked with the rangers in advance.

The Cathedral Range (North to South)

Fairview Dome (9,737)
First ascent July 4, 1863, by William H. Brewer and Charles F. Hoffmann. The east face is class 3.

Tenaya Peak (10,700)

The south slopes are class 2, and have been climbed on skis.

Cathedral Peak (10,933)

The first ascent was made by John Muir in September 1869, probably by Route 1.

Route 1. East slope and west face. Class 3 except for the summit pitch, which is class 4. Three fourths of a mile north of Budd Lake on the Budd Creek Trail, go west and ascend a broad talus slope to a shallow notch on the ridge. Descend on the west side of this notch and follow a series of ledges to the broken rock north of the ridge between the summit and the west peak. Climb a series of ledges to a sloping ledge just below the summit block. A wide sloping crack goes up to the west of the summit block. From here traverse eastward to a mantelshelf and climb to the summit.

Route 2. West face. Class 3 with one class 4 pitch. Leave the Sunriser Trail from a point about a half mile north of Lower Cathedral Lake and climb talus and slabs of the west face to a point opposite and just below the notch on the ridge between the summit and the west peak. Scramble up over blocks and slabs to the sloping ledge just below the summit block. Follow Router to the summit.

Route 3. South face. Class 4. From the south ascend the talus chute toward the main chimney to the west of the summit, as high as possible. Then traverse to the left to the base of the chimney proper. Ascend the chimney for about 125 feet, then traverse to the right and upwards to a ledge just below the crest and east of the west peak. Climb to the ridge and follow Router to the summit.

Route 4. Southeast buttress. Class 5. First ascent by Charles Wilts and Spencer Austin. Follow the broad southeast buttress of Cathedral Peak. The climb is long as well as difficult in comparison with other climbs in this area, involving almost 500 feet on 60° to 70° slabs. Other routes on the south face and the southeast buttress offer the most interesting possibilities for new routes of class 5 to 6 difficulty on Cathedral Peak.
Route 5. Northeast face. Class 5. Climbed by Frank Tarver and Gordon Petrequin July 1953. Start about 100 yards to the right of the lowest point on the northeast side of the southeast buttress. Ascend to the ridge which rises on the left and follow it to the summit.

Eichorn’s Pinnacle (the prominent pinnacle below and west of Cathedral’s west peak). Class 4. First ascent July 24, 1931, by Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn. From the notch between the pinnacle and the west peak, descend a short distance on the north, traverse out onto the side facing Cathedral Lake, and climb to the top.

Cockscomb Peak (11,100+)

First ascent by Lipman and Chamberlain in 1914. Second ascent by Jules Eichorn and Glen Dawson in 1931, by the west face. There are various class 4 and 5 routes.

West face. Class 4. From the northwest corner of the peak ascend on the west face to a large flat ledge exposed to the east. From here traverse to the south by the west face to a wide cleft. The summit is the knife-edge east of this cleft which is a few inches higher than the large block to the west.

Unicorn Peak (10,849)

From the north, this peak appears to be a single spire on a ridge; however there are three pinnacles, of which the north one is the truer summit. There are many possible routes on the west face, and the poorly defined north arête, many of class 5 difficulty. The first ascent was by the northeast face by Francis P. Farquhar and James Rennie in 1911. Twenty years later, with Farquhar, Robert L. M. Underhill introduced the use of modern rope management to the Sierra on the north face.

For a class 3 route from Elizabeth Lake, ascend to the notch between the north and middle pinnacles and follow the arête to the summit.

Echo Ridge (11,100+)

This is the prominent summit between the Cockscomb and Echo Peaks.
Route 1. West ridge. Class 2. From Budd Lake go up to the col between Echo Ridge and Echo Peaks, and from there scramble east to the summit.

Route 2. North face and east ridge. Class 4. First ascent by Joe Firey, Peter Hoessly, Ron Hahn, and Ed Robbins in 1949. From the east end of Budd Lake ascend talus to the base of the eastern chimney on the cliff at the base of the north face. Two or three pitches lead onto the broad east ridge. Ascend to and traverse the ridge from this point, or proceed along the north face (class 3) to a notch, cross to the south face and traverse west until beneath the peak at the north end of the ridge, and then scramble to the top. Some of the rock on the north face is rather rotten.

Echo Peaks (11,000+)

This group of pinnacles west of Echo Ridge can be approached from Budd Lake or Upper Cathedral Lake. The numbering is indicated on Sketch 5, which lists the most prominent nine.
Route 2. West face. Class 4. Ascend the west face to the notch between Peaks 1 and 2, and follow the east side of the ridge to the summit.

Peak 2. East face. Class 3. Ascend the east face to the notch between Peaks 1 and 2. Follow the ridge south to the summit.

Peak 3. This, the highest of the Echo Peaks, was climbed July 7, 1931, by Norman Clyde and Carl Sharsmith.

Route 1. East face. Class 4. Ascend the gully on the east face to the notch between Peaks 2 and 3. Follow the ridge south to the summit.

Route 2. West face. Class 3. From the summit of Peak 2 traverse on the west face of Peak 2 and ascend the ridge to the summit of Peak 3.

Peak 4. First ascent by Owen L. Williams and Ethyl Mae Hill, August 6, 1936.

Route 1. Class 4. From the summit of Peak 3, descend the east side of the ridge between Peaks 3 and 4 to a point about 30 feet below the notch. From here climb the northeast face directly to the summit.

Route 2. Class 4. Climb from the left of a prominent row of shrubs at the base of the northeast face, directly to the summit.


Peak 9. Class 5. First ascent by Charles Wilts and Spencer Austin. Descend from notch west of Peaks 8 and 9 until the south face can be easily reached, traverse out on the south face and go straight up to an overhang. Traverse east and up and back west to the arete. Then go along the arete to the summit.

Matthes Crest (10,900+)

First ascent by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, and Walter Brem on July 26, 1931. This is the spectacular knife edge on the south slope of Echo Ridge. In the past it has borne other names since it has also been known as Echo Ridge, and Echo Crest. The present name, in honor of François C. Matthes, the geologist, was made official in 1946. Their north peak is the higher.

Route 1. East face. Class 4. Ascend the east face directly below their north peak.

Route 2. South arete. Class 5. First ascent by Charles and Ellen Wilts in June 1947. Ascend the south arete above a group of pines and traverse along the ridge.

Route 3. North pinnacle. Class 4. Ascend the north arete and then go out on the east face and climb to the summit.

Peak 10,700 (0.7 N of Columbia Finger)

This is a cockscomb between Columbia Finger and Tenaya Peak and was ascended prior to 1948. The south peak is the highest.

Route 1. Class 4. Approach up the south arete. Near the top traverse north on the west face, then up the face to the south summit. The peak on the north end of the ridge is class 3.

Columbia Finger (10,400+)

Route 1. West face. Class 3. Ascend the easy ridge north of the pinnacle and climb the west face.

Johnson Peak (11,000+)

First ascent in 1933 by H. B. Blanks. This peak can be climbed easily from Elizabeth Lake.

Rafferty Peak (11,178)

First ascent by Edward W. Hernden. Second class by talus and ledges from the col at the head of the middle fork of Rafferty Creek.

Peak 11,300+ (1 SW of Rafferty Peak)

First ascent in 1931 by Julie Mortimer, Alice Carter, and Eleanor Smith. Class 2 from Booth Lake, the largest in the group of small lakes between Fletcher and Emeric creeks, southwest of Tuolumne Pass.

Fletcher Peak (11,100+)

No record available.

Vogelsang Peak (11,511)

Ascended before 1923 by F. E. Matthes. Class 2. From Vogelsang Laker climb to the saddle between the main peak and the north peak, then south to the summit.
Parsons Peak (12,120)

First ascent by Marion Randall Parsons before 1931. The ascent can be made either from the head of Ireland Creek or from the Bernice lake area south of Vogelsang Pass. Class 2.

Simmons Peak (12,504)

First ascent in 1931 by Sierra Club members. Class 2 from upper Bernice Lake.

Mount Florence (12,507)

First ascent by Theodore S. Solomons and F. W. Reed August 4, 1897. Class 2. From Washburn Lake follow the stream toward Mount Florence. At the source scramble over shale and weather-beaten rock to the summit.

Peak 12,700 (1/2 SW of Lyell)

No record available.

Peak 12,100 (2 SW of Lyell)

No record available.

Peaks on and near the Main Crest

Mount Dana (13,050; 13,053n)
First ascent June 28, 1863, by W. H. Brewer and C. F. Hoffmann, who found the view so impressive that J. D. Whitney climbed the peak the next day.

Route 1. Class 1. From the Tioga Road many easy routes are available up the west and south slopes.

Route 2. Glacier route. Class 3. Ascend over the glacier on the north side of Mount Dana to the prominent couloir that heads just east of the summit (ice axe necessary), or climb the rock east of the couloir.

Mount Gibbs (12,700; 12,764n)

The first ascent was on horseback, August 31, 1864, by W. H. Brewer and F. L. Olmsted (père). The ascent from any direction except the east is class 1.

Mount Lewis (12,200+; 12,296n)

No records. The ascent from Mono Pass at the northwest is class 1.

Kuna Peak (12,951; 12,895n)

First ascent in 1919 by Walter L. Huber. Third class routes may be selected on the northwestern side.

Kuna Crest (12,200+; 22,207n)

This is the long ridge extending in a northwesterly direction from Kuna Peak and forming the east wall of Lyell Canyon. First ascent by Walter L. Huber in 1909. Class 3 routes may be selected on either the east or west side.

Mammoth Peak (12,225)
This is the high point at the north end of Kuna Crest. First ascent by Walter L. Huber in 1902. Careful inspection will reveal many class 2 and 3 routes.

**Parker Peak (12,850; 12,861n)**

First ascent by Norman Clyde in 1914. It may be easily climbed from the Parker Pass Trail where it passes between Parker and Koip peaks. Class 1.

**Koip Peak (13,000+; 12,979n)**

First ascent by François E. Matthes before 1919. Most easily climbed from Parker Pass Trail where it passes between Parker and Koip peaks. Class 2.

**Mount Wood (12,663; 12,637n)**

No records are available.

**Koip Crest (12,000+ to 12,600+; 12,120 to 12,585n)**

Koip Crest extends south from Koip Peak to Blacktop Peak and then southeast from Blacktop Peak. On the northern section of the crest there are nine pinnacles. The first traverse, by George Templeton and Milton Hildebrand on August 9, 1939, took 12 hours. Class 4.

On the southern section (southeast of Blacktop) there are seven pinnacles; the largest and highest is the round one at the northwest end joining the Eocene plateau of Blacktop. This pinnacle is class 2 from Blacktop, class 3 from the southeast arête. From the southwest it is possible to make a class 5 climb up the most prominent chimney on the southwest face of the highest summit. This chimney strikes the ridge just east of the summit. The first ascent of this last route was made by Richard M. Leonard and Jim Koontz August 1950.
Blacktop Peak (12,723; 12,700n)

No records except for the traverse of Koip Crest (above).

Donohue Peak (12,073; 12,023n)

First ascent in 1895 by Sergeant Donohue, U.S. Cavalry, on horseback. The northwest face affords class 1 and class 2 routes.

Mount Lyell (13,090; 13,1140)

The highest peak in Yosemite National Park was described as an “inaccessible pinnacle” by the first party to attempt it, Wm. H. Brewerr and Charles F. Hoffmann in 1863. It was first climbed by John B. Tileston, August 29, 1871. The first winter ascent was on March 2, 1936, by David R. Brower, Lewis F. Clark, Boynton S. Kaiser, Einar Nilsson, and Bestor Robinson, who skied up the Merced Canyon from Yosemite Valley via Bernice Lake and crossed the north ridge of Maclure to Lyellr Glacier (4 days).

Route 1. North glacier and north face. Class 2 to 3. This is the easiest and most popular route; however, it requires careful judgment. A roper should be carried, especially if there are inexperienced people in the party. The difficulty may vary considerably with the season, depending on the amount and condition of the snow or ice. Ascend the talus and the west end of the glacier to the notch between Mount Lyell and Mount Maclure. From here climb toward the summit of Lyell along sloping class 2 ledges somewhat above the snow, but below the rock face. After a rather short distance on these ledges, ascend a narrow, steep crack at 65° to the arête (class 2 to 3). Then ascend the arête to the summit (see Sketch 6).

It is also possible to climb to the summit slopes up ledges or chutes a little farther east, but this will necessitate climbing rather steep snow above the glacier. Nevertheless it is a popular route, and may be reached from rather high on the Donohue Pass trail by walking to the morainier below the east lobe of the glacier, crossing the moraine through a saddle, climbing directly up the face of the glacier, crossing the bergschund, and proceeding westward along the base of the cliff above the glacier until a series of ledges is found by means of which the easy summit plateau can be reached.

Route 2. North glacier and east arête. Class 3. From the base of the glacier, climb to the col east of Lyell, crossing the upper snowfield as soon as possible. Ascend the east arête to the summit.
Route 3. Southwest gully and west ridge. Class 3. From the head of the Lyell Fork of the Merced ascend the obvious gully to the col between Mount Maclure and Mount Lyell and follow the arête to the summit.

Route 4. South face. Class 3 to 4. From the Lyell Fork of the Merced ascend the talus chute directly to the summit. Care must be taken on the loose rock in the upper portion of the gully.

Route 5. East arête. Descended in 1950 (Sierra Club High Trip); no known ascents. Descend the north side of the east arête to snow, then cross the lowest gap to the south face and follow the talus to the next.

Sketch 6. Mounts Lyell and Maclure from the northeast, showing Route 1 on each.

Mount Maclure (13,000+; 12,988 ft)

First ascent by Willard D. Johnson in 1883.

Route 1. East ridge. Class 2 to 3. From the col between Mounts Lyell and Maclure ascend the talus and ledges to the summit.

Route 2. South face. Class 3. First ascent by a Sierra Club party led by Ted Waller, 1934. From the Lyell Fork of the Merced ascend on the left side of the prominent gully on the south face and then traverse east to...
the ridge. Follow the ridge to the summit.

Route 3. Northwest ridge. Class 4. First ascent by Al Steck and Georger Steck. From the V-shaped pass between Simmons Peak and Mount Maclure follow the ridge to the summit.

References


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The Clark Range and Adjacent Peaks

Richard M. Leonard

THE CLARK RANGE early attracted the attention of geologists, topographers, and mountaineers because of the commanding position of its peaks, standing as they do near the center of the granite wilderness of the headwaters of the Merced River. Clarence King wrote of its principal peak:

“From every commanding eminence around the Yosemite no distant object rises with more inspiring greatness than the obelisk of Mount Clark . . . its slender needlelike summit had long fired us with ambition. . . . There was in our hope of scaling this point something more than mere desire to master a difficult peak. It was a station of greater topographical value, the apex of many triangles, and, more than all, would command a grander view of the Merced region than any other summit.”

Accordingly, after he had spent the summer of 1864 surveying the Yosemite Grant, the new park that had just been granted by the Federal Government to California, King started out on November 11, 1864, with Richard D. Cotter, and reached a fine camp near timberline in the cirque between Clark and Gray Peak just to the south. There an violent early winter storm nearly trapped them in a foot and a half of new snow. Their escape provides a fine tale of early mountaineering. More prudently, his next attempt was made in warm weather, July 12, 1866, with James Terry Gardiner. They made the ascent by a thrilling route along the southeast arete from the same cirque at the head of Gray Creek.

Geology
r The Clark Range is a remnant of the ancient, folded, metamorphic mountains of Appalachian type that reached an elevation of approximately half that of the present range about 130 million years ago. Their northwest-southeast trend of these peaks is roughly at right angles to the great southwest slope of the Sierra granite block, which was uptilted only ten million years ago. Remnants of the ancient metamorphic rocks can still be found in the quartzite of “Quartz Peak,” just north of Mount Clark, and in the ancient metamorphic lavas similar to those of the Ritter Range which give the dark color to Merced Peak and explain its earlier name, “Black Mountain.”

r

r Mount Clark is composed of a very firm granite rather free of master joints, and would probably have become a dome except that it was severely glaciated on three sides. The absence of the black iron-bearing minerals gives Mount Clark an exceptionally light appearance. Gray and Red peaks, as the naives indicate, are strangely different. Their granites are similar to the white granite of Mount Hoffmann, but on Red Peak the black iron-bearing minerals seen in Gray Peak are weathered to an iron rust that colors the granite brilliantly. On Gray Peak these minerals are still predominantly black. Merced Peak is composed of extremely hard metamorphic lavas approximately 190 million years old, similar to those that form the sharp crest of Mount Ritter and the Minarets. The mixture of red and white granite and the black rocks of Merced Peak combine with brilliant blue lakes and bright green meadows to form a bowl at Ottoway Lakes that is one of the most colorful in the Sierra.

r

Approaches and Campsites

r

r The peaks of the range are easily accessible by fine trails and open inches on all sides. The easiest route is from Glacier Point or Monor Meadow to the point where the trail crosses the Clark Fork of Illilouet Creek, where there is fine camping and scattered animal feed. There are many additional camp spots above the trail along the west slope of the range, with a particularly fine site on the trail at Ottoway Lake; across Red Peak Pass there are good campsites by a series of fine lakes at timberline on the Merced Peak Fork of the Merced River. Mount Clark can also be reached from the Nevada Fall trail by the old Army trail to Starr King Meadow, or from Merced Lake Ranger Station up the other end of this early trail on Gray Peak Fork of the Merced River. The trail has not been maintained for nearly fifty years and therefore must not be considered as more than an indication of a feasible route. The southern peaks of the range are easily accessible from the roadhead at Clover Meadow Ranger Station, in Sierra National Forest, reached from the Bass Lake junction of the Fresno-Wawona Road.

r

r There are four passes, each crossed by good trails, which bring one into the southern portion of the Clark Range and its adjacent peaks. See the Mount Lyell quadrangle (U.S. Geological Survey) for details.

r

Routes on the Peaks
This portion of the guide includes the peaks of the southern Yosemite National Park and northern Sierra National Forest from the Merced to the San Joaquin rivers. The peaks are listed alphabetically owing to their scattered location.

Mount Ansel Adams (11,760+ ft, 1 NE of Foerster Peak)

Class 3. First ascent July 11, 1934, by Glen Dawson, Jack Riegelhuth, and Neil Ruge. From the Lyell Fork meadows on the Merced River this is the most spectacular and beautiful peak in sight. Two days after the first ascent, Ruge led to the summit a Sierra Club High Trip party which proposed the name “Mount Ansel Adams.” The route ascends a prominent gully to the south of the peak, thence to the summit over the south face.

Black Peak (10,507). (See Madera Peak.)

Buena Vista Crest (9,712; 9,757 ft)

Class 1. An excellent ski ascent from Ostrander Lake Ski Hut.

Mount Clark (11,506; 11,522 ft)

Route 1. Southeast arete. Class 3. First ascent July 12, 1866, by Clarencer King and James T. Gardiner. A thrilling account of this climb is given by King in *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*. Although a rope has probably never been used on this route, one should be available. The sharp southeast arete can be reached without difficulty from either west or east. On the arete, King’s thrilling gaps in the knife-edge will still be found, and it is at those points that a rope is welcome protection. Approach from Merced Lake: Cross over logs at the confluence of the Merced River and Gray Peak Fork and proceed up fishing trail along Gray Peak Fork to the upper basin (above the waterfall) and, keeping to the right, follow to a small creek (8,400 feet) running from Mount Clark into the Gray Peak Fork. Follow this watercourse to the lakes and thence to foot of Mount Clark over fairly open and gradual slopes. One can also proceed directly south from Merced Lake.

Route 2. Northeast face. Class 2. Although Mount Clark was a popular climb with at least four ascents before 1893, it was not until the solo ascent by Francis P. Farquhar on July 4, 1916, that the easiest route was clearly described. He climbed from Merced Lake, and observed, on reaching the head of the snowfield on the northeast face, that a series of broad ledges on the north edge of the face provided a simple route to the summit (*SCB*, 1917, 227).
Route 3. Northwest arête. Class 4. On September 8, 1935, Kenneth May, Don Parkin, and Howard Twining pioneered this difficult route, which is unmistakable to one with class-4 training and equipment. It consists of 1,500 feet of roped climbing on sound granite.

The true north face at the head of the great cirque has not been attempted so far as is known.

Winter Ascent. Class 4. On February 21, 1937, Kenneth Adam, David Brower, Kenneth Davis, and Hervey Voge skied from a camp low on the Starr King Plateau to the notch southeast of the summit, from which they continued on foot and belayed across the east face and thence to the summit, arriving at sunset.

Electra Peak (12,462; 12,442n)

Class 2. Ascents were made by Norman Clyde in 1914 and 1919, and by Ansel Adams in 1931. Ted Waller led a Sierra Club High Trip party of eight to the summit on July 12, 1934. From the upper Lyell Fork of the Merced, climb to the ridge north of the summit, and thence southward to the summit.

Foerster Peak (12,062; 12,058n)

Class 2. Norman Clyde led a knapsack party in 1914, Robert Owen made an ascent on July 13, 1929, and three ascents were made on successive days by the Sierra Club High Trip in July 1934. The best route is on the southern slope. The west face is dangerous owing to rotten rock.

Gale Peak (10,690; 10,693n)

Class 2. The first recorded ascent was made in 1920 by Lawrence Fley, Freeman Jones, and Thomas Jones. The peak is well situated at the head of the beautiful Chain Lakes, almost at the southernmost boundary of the park, and can be climbed easily by ascending the ridge dividing the Chain Lakes from Breeze Lake to the north.

Gray Peak (11,581; 11,574n)
Class 2. In 1920 Ansel Adams placed a Sierra Club cylinder typewriter register on the summit. The best route is up the broad southwest sloper of the Illilouette Basin. From the Gray Peak Fork side, an ascent would be considerably more difficult.

Horse Ridge (9,600+)

Class 1. An excellent ski ascent from the Ostrander Lake Ski Hut. Fine view of the main crest peaks.

Isberg Peak (11,000; 10,996n)

Class 1. The first recorded ascent was made April 20, 1924, by Ansel Adams. It is an easy ascent from the upper basin of the Triple Peak Fork of the Merced.

Long Mountain (11,468; 11,507n)

Class 2. Ansel Adams made an ascent in August, 1922. The best route is from the south.

Madera Peak (10,507; 10,509n)

This is the approved name for the “Black Peak” of earlier editions of the topographic map. The peak is the southernmost high point of the northwest-southeast ancient ridge that formed the Clark Range. Class 2. Mr. and Mrs. Garthwaite, their 7-year-old son Ted, and Mrs. Herminar Daulton made the ascent in August, 1931. They “found a cairn but no records.” The Brewer Survey reports an ascent on August 19, 1864, but they were probably referring to Merced Peak, 7 miles to the north, which at that time was known as “Black Peak” owing to its dark volcanic rock. The peak may be ascended from the upper basin of the Black Peak Fork of Granite Creek. An easier ascent can be made over the west slopes.

Merced Peak (11,722; 11,726n)

The highest peak of the Clark Range was an early favorite as a climbing objective. In 1870 the California Geological Survey wrote that “All these points [of the Clark Range] except Gray Peak have been climbed by...
the Survey.” In 1878 the peak was again occupied, this time by the Wheeler Survey party under Lieutenant M. M. Macomb. On July 29, 1897, Robert M. Price, his wife, F. W. Reede, and Theodore S. Solomons placed Sierra Club Register number 56 on the summit. Fifty-two years later the tube was still there, though the records were missing. In 1871 the glacier in the cirque below the north face was found by Muir and described in detail in 1875 as the first living glacier to be found in the Sierra Nevada. His drawing of the great icicles in the bergschrund “12 to 14 feet wide” is a fascinating bit of recent Sierran geological history. The glacial milk in the lakelet below the cirque in 1949 prompted Alfred R. Dole and Richard M. Leonard to reexplore the glacier. Icer was still present in good quantity, but they felt the glacier, one of their lowest glaciers in the Sierra, should probably be classed as “fossil” or inactive.

The early accounts do not give the route of climb.

Route 1. Northeast arête. Class 2. On a traverse of the peak in August, 1949, Alfred R. Dole, Stewart and Elizabeth Kimball, and Richard M. Leonard found the northeast arête the easiest. It is reached from finer camping on lower Ottoway Lake by following up the canyon to the class-2 pass between Ottoway and Merced peaks, and ascending the blocks of talus, keeping to the ridge crest to lessen danger from looser blocks.

Route 2. West arête. Class 3. This route is a half-mile in length and contains several steep pitches that require detours on the south slope down onto smooth 50 degree slabs of very hard ancient metamorphic lava. Traversed in August 1949 by Dole, the Kimballs, and Leonard.

Ottoway Peak (11,500+; 11,360+n)

Class 2. The first recorded ascent was made by Ansel Adams on September 16, 1934, when scouting the route for the present trail, just a half-mile to the west. The route from the summit of the trail is easily ascertained.

Post Peak (10,996; 11,009n)

Class 1. The first recorded ascent was by Ansel Adams. It was climbed September 7, 1930, by Walter A. Starr, Jr., who described it as “A finer vantage point from which to get a fine view of the upper Merced and San Joaquin region.” A branch of the old Isberg Pass Trail passes within a few hundred feet of the summit. The route is obvious.

Mount Raymond (8,548)
Class 1. Two miles by easy trail from Wawona Point, in the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees.

Red Peak (11,700; 11,699n)

Class 2 to 3. Presumably climbed by the California Geological Survey by 1870. In 1910 S. L. Foster made a solo ascent and found a cairn (SCB, 1911, 25-33). In 1920 Ansel Adams placed a Sierra Club cylinder type register. This peak has some steep cliffs on the north. The easiest route is via the canyon to the north of the three summits, or via the crest of this summit ridge. The cliff face is very difficult.

Redtop (9,900+; 9,840+n)

This peak, on the south boundary of Yosemite, was at one time known as “Madera Peak” (which see). William Frederick Badè made an ascent prior to 1919.

Rodgers Peak (13,056; 12,978n)

Class 3. This peak was known in early literature as “Kellogg Peak.” The first recorded ascent was made on August 5, 1897, by Robert M. Price, who climbed from the Lyell Fork of the Merced. Captain N. F. McClure made an early ascent, and in 1924 Ansel Adams placed a Sierra Club cylinder type register. The best route is from the east (Rush Creek Basin). It can be climbed from the upper canyon of the Lyell Fork of the Merced, but is more difficult from that side.

Triple Divide Peak (11,613; 11,600+n)

Class 2. The peak splits two forks of the Merced from the East Fork of Granite Creek, a tributary of the San Joaquin. It affords a fine view. It was climbed by Norman Clyde in 1920. Ansel Adams, Elizabeth Adams, and F. C. Holman placed a Sierra Club cylinder type register in 1922. The best route is from the upper valley of Triple Peak Fork. The summit should be approached from the northeast.

Peak 10,755 (10,823n; 2 SW of Triple Divide Peak)
Class 2. Climbed in August 1934 by Edwin L. Garthwaite, Ted Garthwaite, and Jean Scupham.

Peak 11,200+ (11,200+n; 1 SW of Triple Divide Peak)

Climbed August 3, 1934, by Edwin L. Garthwaite, Ted Garthwaite, and Jean Scupham.

Peak 11,500+ (11,535n; 1 S Of Foerster Peak)

Climbed July 13, 1929, by Robert Owen.

Peak 12,000+ (12,000+n; 3/4 E of Foerster Peak)

Climbed July 13, 1934, by Marjory Bridge, Helen LeConte, and Louise Hildebrand.

Peak 12,500+ (12,560+n; 0.7 S of Rodgers)

Class 2. Climbed July 10, 1924, by Ansel Adams, Cedric Wright, and Willard Grinnell.

Other peaks

There is no record of ascent for Buena Vista Peak, Cattle Mountain, Green Mountain, Junction Butte, Lion Point, Moraine Mountain, Quartz Mountain, Quartz Peak, Sadler Peak, Sing Peak, or Timber Knob. Several of these summits should afford fine panoramas, and none of them is likely to exceed class 2 in difficulty. It is quite possible that ascents have been made of all these peaks, and in particular Green Mountain, since a trail passes almost over its summit.

Photographs in Sierra Club Bulletin
The Sierra Crest south of Island Pass surrenders its Alpine summits and scenic attractions to the Ritter Range, whose peaks rise two to three thousand feet higher to the west. The Ritter Range is a remnant of an ancient mountain system and, as François Matthes writes, “when you climb Mount Ritter you climb the core of one of the ancestral mountains that were formed more than a hundred million years before the present Sierra Nevada was uplifted” (SCB, 1930, 1-8).

Geologically the Ritter Range is composed of dark mottled rocks representing ancient lavas, highly metamorphosed, associated with a complex of dark igneous rocks. This tough rock has resisted the forces of erosion through the ages, which accounts for the height of the range. The joint planes generally are vertical, or at high angles, with northwesterly trends. This structure causes the almost vertical faces and knife-edge ridges which are characteristic of the range. Caution is called for in climbing because of the danger of loose blocks or slabs which may pull away from the faces.

The chutes in the Minarets, as in other parts of the Sierra, constitute convenient routes of approach. But the systems of chutes in the Minarets are often complex, and many chutes carry difficult chockstones. One must watch with care to select the right chute, and should carry a rappel rope for the descent. The rocks are on the whole quite sound, but handholds, which are usually plentiful and of adequate size, need to be tested carefully. Many of the ledges slope downwards, and exposure is often considerable. There are a great many possible routes up almost any of the Minarets when combinations of chutes, ridges, and ledges are considered. The rocks are very hard and many have sharp edges that approximate right angles and will cut
hands or ropes unless carer is taken. It is difficult to round the edges of some of these rocks with a hammer, and hence padding is sometimes desirable for a rappel point.

The John Muir Trail passes east of the range close to its base. Here lie several lakes, famed for their beauty—Thousand Island, Garnet, Ediza, Shadow, Upper and Lower Iceberg, and Minaret. The nearest approaches by road are Silver Lake, Agnew Meadow, and Devil’s Postpile. Good campsites will be found above the western end of Lake Ediza (9,400) and on the meadows of Shadow Creek above Shadow Lake (9,000). More exposed campsites may be found at Garnet Lake (9,700), and Thousand Island Lake (9,850). There are good campsites on upper Minaret Creek (9,000-9,500), and between Lake Ediza and Lower Iceberg, from which to approach the southern end of the Minarets. For detailed information concerning approaches and trails see Starr’s Guide to the John Muir Trail and the High Sierra Region.

Mount Davis is the most northerly peak of the range and Iron Mountain the most southerly. Sketch 7 presents a map of the region. Although peaks of this range have been climbed for many years, no pinnacle of the Minarets was climbed until 1922. Since 1931, by application of sound rock-climbing methods, the difficulty and danger have been greatly lessened, and most of these pinnacles have been ascended. This region offers some of the finest climbing in the Sierra Nevada, and it is also endowed with unusual grandeur, beauty, and fascination.

Banner and Ritter are twin peaks, connected by a saddle. To the east a cliff drops off from the saddle. Sloping northwestward from the saddle, North Glacier covers the floor of the chasm between the two peaks, flowing down to North Glacier Lake. Half a mile south of this lake and lapping the western base of Ritter lies Ritter Lake. Beyond and somewhat above, another lakelet is fed by Southwest Glacier which fills a rugged amphitheater on the north side of a bold jagged spur extending southwesterly from the summit of Ritter. The highest point on this arete might be regarded as the western summit of Ritter. On the southeast side of Ritter, draining into Lake Ediza, Southeast Glacier slopes steeply down, enclosed in an amphitheater bounded on the north by the face of the peak and on the south by pinnacles extending downward from the crest of a spur which dips southeastward from the summit to a saddle. South of this saddle the knife-edge ridges of the Minarets, crowned with many pinnacles, split the sky. At its southern end the ridge forks into two groups of minarets, the eastern dominated by Clyde Minaret and the western by Michael Minaret, the two highest pinnacles. Between them a remarkable amphitheater is formed by their sheer walls, in which lies a small ice lake. Several steep glaciers lie along the sloping walls of the eastern base of the Minarets.

An ice axe is necessary and crampons may be helpful for ascents over the glaciers east of mounts Banner and Ritter and of the Minarets.


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Note: The new Muir Trail goes east of Garnet Lake.

**Sketch 7. The Ritter Range and the Minarets**

A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge
The Ritter Range may be approached from the North Fork of the San Joaquin River on its western side, but by far the nearest and most interesting approaches are from the trails leading to its eastern side. To cross the range several passes are available.

**Glacier Lake Pass, east to west.** Class 1. From the head of Thousand Island Lake ascend to the saddle between Banner Peak and Mount Davis, keeping to the side of the basin toward Davis. North Glacier Lake lies on the saddle. Easy rocky slopes are met on the west side.

**Banner-Ritter Saddle, east to west (11,600+).** Class 3; ice axer needed. From Lake Ediza, or Garnet Lake, ascend to the basin lying east of the cliff between Banner and Ritter. Climb the cliff to the saddle, keeping to the right of black stains made by water courses near the middle of the cliff, and following a series of zigzag ledges. From the saddle descend on the north side of the glacier to the east end of North Glacier Lake.

**Ritter Pass, east to west.** Class 1. From Lake Ediza ascend the cliff southwest of the lake to the saddle between Ritter and Waller Minaret. Easy, rocky slopes lie on the west side.

**The Gap, east to west.** Class 2; ice axe usually needed. From Lake Edina climb the cliff or chimneys below the gap south of Waller Minaret, and ascend the small glacier to the gap. Steep talus slopes are on the west side.

**North Notch, east to west.** Class 3; ice axe useful (seasonal). From Lake Ediza ascend southwest up the stream which enters the head of the lake to an easy ridge leading toward the notch (lowest point) between Jensen and Dawson minarets. There is a nice ledge leading up from the north into the chute. Climb the chute past one small chock-stone to the notch. This is the shortest route to the west side of the highest minarets from Lake Ediza. Rough steep talus slopes extend along the west base of the Minarets.

**South Notch, east to west.** Class 2 to 3 (seasonal); ice axe needed. To approach from Minaret Lake, ascend the stream entering the lake to a bench above the southwest end of Upper Iceberg Lake. To approach from Lake Ediza, ascend the stream on the south side of the lake to Lower Iceberg Lake. Traverse on the east side and climb up to Upper Iceberg Lake. Traverse on the west side of this to a bench above the southwest end.
From the southwest end of Upper Iceberg Lake ascend the steep slope (snow conditions seasonal) to the col or notch between C Minaret and D Minaret, which rise just south of Clyde Minaret. A prominent pinnacle stands above the north side of the notch. Traverse west from the notch into Minaret Amphitheater which contains a small ice lake. Ascend to the col on the southeast side of Michael Minaret and descend a chute (class 4) to the base (western side) of that minaret. To reach this point by the long route (class 1) from the amphitheater, circle Adams Minaret to the south and west and then cross a spur ridge to the north, keeping well to the west to avoid difficult chutes on their north side of the spur.

Beck Lakes Pass, south to north. Class 1. From the northwest side of Upper Beck Lake ascend northwest up talus, rocks, and snowslopes to a saddle. Cross the basin at the head of Iron Creek and cross a spur ridge extending southwest from Adams Minaret at a low point to the head of Dike Creek. Or, ascend to the upper end of Iron Creek into Minaret Amphitheater and proceed as from the South Notch. There is a trail from Devil’s Postpile to Lower Beck Lake.

Routes on the Peaks (North to South)

Mount Davis (12,308; 12,311n)

First Ascent August 28, 1891, by Milton F. Davis.

Route 1. Southeast slope. Class 1. From Thousand Island Lake proceed to the low pass between Davis and Banner (Glacier Lake Pass) and climb up toward the summit, staying on the southwest side of the sharp ridge. The slope to be traversed is quite gentle and leads up to the easy southeast slopes of the peak. This route may also be reached by traversing southwest from Island Pass and passing through a notch in the ridge southeast of the summit. On this variation some care is necessary in route finding across the high shoulder above Thousand Island Lake.

Route 2. Northeast buttress. Class 4. Ascended by Hervey Voge and Virginia Romain, August 20, 1950. The northeast buttress rises above a slope of snow or ice somewhat east of the main north buttress. Ascend the east side of the northeast buttress, climb an open chute to the ridge of the buttress, follow this to the broad slopes southeast of the summit, and walk up these to the top.

Route 3. North buttress. Class 4. Ascended by Jim Koontz and companion, August 20, 1950. Climb up between the main north buttress and the glacier to the west, and when the rocks become easier go up the rocks to the top of the buttress which is followed almost directly to the summit.
Banner Peak (12,957; 12,945n)

Route 1. North glacier and southwest slope. Class 2. First ascent, August 26, 1883, by Willard D. Johnson and John Miller (SCB, 1905, p 193). From Thousand Island Lake, ascend to the east end of North Glacier Lake (see Glacier Lake Pass), climb the rocks to the north edge of the glacier lying between Banner and Ritter, and ascend that side to the saddle at its head, just short of the east cliff. Thence ascend steep talus slopes and easy rocks to the summit.

Route 2. East cliff and southwest slope. From Lake Ediza, or Garnet Lake, climb to the saddle between Banner and Ritter, thence to summit as on Route 1 (see Banner-Ritter Saddle).

Route 3. East face. First ascent August 3, 1931, by Jules M. Eichorn and Robert L. M. Underhill (SCB, 1932, 114-115). From Garnet Lake start up the chimney to the left of the buttress to the south of Banner Glacier. Leave the chimney and take to the ridge north of the chimney leading up from the buttress. Climb the ridge until an overhang makes the ridge look impossible. Traverse diagonally right upward about 80 feet along a rather smooth wall, and then climb broad steep chutes or faces to the summit.

Route 4. Southeast face. Ascent July 6, 1946, by Charles Wiltsr and Harry Sutherland, who went about up the middle of the southeast face as viewed from near Lake Ediza, and described the climb as their finest in two trips to the Minarets. They started in the first couloir right of a deep chimney, ascended to a point where it was necessary to cross left into another couloir rising from the chimney, and then continued diagonally right and up a nearly vertical face to a balcony which usually has a small snowfield. Then after traversing right about 100 yards, they went straight up to reach the top about 100 yards left of the summit.

Mount Ritter (13,156; 13,157n)

Route 1. North glacier and north face. First ascent October 1872 by John Muir (The Mountains of California, 1894, 52-73). From Thousand Island Lake proceed as on Route 1 for Banner Peak to their saddle between Banner and Ritter. Ascend the snowfield to the right hand or west chute of two chutes leading up the north wall of Ritter. From the top of the chute cross a ridge to the left into the head of ther left hand chute to a wide ledge leading diagonally left to the arête. Thence follow the arête west to summit.

Route 2. East cliff and north face. From Lake Ediza or Garnet Lake proceed as on Route 2 for Banner Peak, to the saddle between Banner and Ritter, and thence to the top as in Route 1.
Route 3. Glacier Lake pass. Ritter Lake. West slope. Class 2. First ascent August 20, 1892, by Theodore S. Solomons (SCB, 1894, 69-70). From Thousand Island Lake proceed to North Glacier Lake (see Glacier Lake Pass). Thence proceed around the west side of the mountain to Ritter Lake. Climb the west slope (various routes) to the summit.

Route 4. Southeast glacier, south side. Class 3; ice axe useful. First ascent, June 28, 1928, by Norman Clyde (SCB, 1929, 87). From Lake Ediza proceed to the base of the cliffs slightly to the left (S) of the lower end of the glacier. Climb the cliff to the left of the lowest of the pinnacles on the south side of the glacier. Pass through a gap above the lowest pinnacle onto the glacier. Continue up on the south side of the glacier, keeping left of an ice ridge which extends from the lower to the upper part of the glacier, until a crevasse renders further travel upward on the glacier impossible. Leave the south side of the glacier, climb over the ice ridge and descend across the glacier (use ice axe for safety) to its extreme northwest edge, whence ascend easy rocks and talus slope to the summit.

Route 5. Southeast glacier, north side. Class 2 to 3 (seasonal); ice axer may be needed when snow is high on the north side of the glacier. Evidently this was John Muir’s route of descent in October 1872. It is the easiest route from Lake Ediza. First known ascent August 3, 1931, by Sierra Club party led by Lewis Clark and Ernest Dawson (SCB, 1932, 115). From Lake Ediza proceed to the snout of the glacier and below it to its north side, and thence up talus at the base of the south cliff of Ritter along the north side of the glacier to a chute which leads up (N) to the talus slope extending northwest to the summit.

Route 6. Northeast buttress. Class 3 to 4. Ascent August 7, 1941, by Art Argiewicz and Lorin Trubschenk. This buttress rises 2,000 feet from the cirque enclosed by Banner and Ritter to the summit ridge, and is east of the prominent snow ledge on the north face as viewed from Garnet Lake. Proceed directly up the buttress on firm angular rock and over debris-covered ledges.

Winter Ascent. An ascent was made in February 1952 by Georger Bloom, Bob Swift, and Floyd Burnette (SCB, 1953, 40), who used Route 3.

Pinnacles (highest pinnacle, 12,300). Class 3. First ascent of highest pinnacle August 4, 1936, by Richard M. Jones and William Rice. From Lake Ediza proceed as on Route 4 for Ritter to the lowest pinnacle. After crossing through the gap above, contour west a short distance and climb the highest pinnacle by one of several possible routes.

Ritter, southwest spur. There have been no recorded ascents of the several summits on the arête.
The Minarets

These are listed from north to south, and the identifying numerals or letters correspond to those on the accompanying Sketches 7, 8, and 9.

Sketch 8. The Minarets from Minaret Creek

1 Clyde Minaret 6 Dawson Minaret 11 Volcanic Peaks D Ken Minaret
2 Michael Minaret 7 Leonard Minaret A Riegelhuth Minaret
3 Eichorn Minaret 8 Waller Minaret E Jensen Minaret
4 Rice Minaret 9 Adams Minaret C Kehrlein Minaret
5 Bedayan Minaret 10 Starr Minaret

The Minarets have been named after the climbers who made the first ascents, with one or two exceptions.

No. 8. Waller Minaret (11,711n)

Class 4-5. First ascent August 1934 by Ted Waller and Jules M. Eichorn. This minaret is the summit of the ridge between the Gap and Ritter Pass. From the crest of the Gap follow the south end of the Waller ridge down and east for approximately 150 feet where a ledge will be found running east and then around a buttress and northerly on the east face. Rope up and follow this ledge. About one pitch along the ledge, work diagonally up the east face, aiming to reach the arête just above the vertical wall rising from the Gap. One or two pitons may be needed for protection in this section. Walk north up the chuter dividing the arête for about 150 feet, until stopped by the high angle, smooth south face of a large tower or step. This 180-foot face may be climbed directly by following a series of cracks and small footholds up the center. Pitons will probably be desired on this high angle, airy
No. 9. East Face of the Minarets from Shadow Creek

1 Clyde Minaret 5 Bedayan Minaret 8 Waller Minaret
3 Eichorn Minaret 6 Dawson Minaret  E Jensen Minaret
4 Rice Minaret  7 Leonard Minaret 11 Volcanic Peaks

A series of pitches. Scramble north along this step, crossing over to the west side. Descend 20 feet, traverse around top of steep couloir and around a rib on west face. From here go diagonally right directly toward summit via one more step on ridge. Descent may be effected by the same route providing a 300-foot rappel rope is available. An ascent from the north and east may be easier.

No. 7. Leonard Minaret (11,600+ ft)

Route 1. Southeast rock chimney. Class 4. First ascent August 4, 1932, by Richard M. Leonard and H. B. Blanks. From Lake Ediza proceed on the route toward North Notch. From the benches above (W) of Lower Iceberg Lake, Leonard Minaret will be seen on the right as a sharp spire, being the abrupt termination of a narrow arete projecting east at right angles to the main crest. A prominent (and sometimes snow-filled) chimney will be noted on the right center of the terminus of the arete. The best route on this face is up a less prominent rock chimney left (S) of the snow chimney, to a conspicuous ledge on the northeast face of the arete at the head of the snow chimney. Climb this face diagonally to the left (SE) to the crest, thence along the arete east to the cairn and register above the terminus.

Route 2. Traverse west to east. Class 4. First ascent August 19, 1933, by Norman Clyde. From the Gap climb up the ridge of the minaret, and traverse the arete east to the cairn and register at the east end.

Point F. Turner Minaret (11,600+ ft)
A party of three led by Ed Turner made a first ascent of the Minaret north of Point “E” on July 14, 1938.

Point E. Jensen Minaret (11,760+n)

First ascent by Carl P. Jensen and Howard Gates June 1937. A new route was used in climbing Jensen Minaret by Spencer Austin, Dan Bannerman, and Charles Wilts July 27, 1943. From the Shadow Creek Basin, two prominent cracks or chimneys can be seen immediately to the right of the Minaret. The right-hand chimney was ascended to a sharp saddle on the main ridge. The arête was then followed to the left to the summit. Minimum class 5 (1 or 2 pitons).

No. 6. Dawson Minaret (11,920+n)

Class 4. First ascent August 16, 1933, by Glen Dawson, Jules Eichorn, and Richard M. Jones (SCE, 1934, 83, 99). From North Notch work along the west side of the first little minaret to the south, and traverse around it into the next chute. Then climb directly toward the summit up a broken face, work to the right to a prominent shelf on the ridge and cross the head of the next chute to the final south face, where an open chimney leads to the summit. The final south face can also be reached from the west via the chute that heads just under this face, ar chockstone being bypassed by a ridge to the left.

No. 5. Bedayan Minaret (12,080+n)

Class 3. First ascent August 11, 1936, by Torcom Bedayan and William Rice. Traverse from Rice Minaret to the next minaret north. Another route was made August 25, 1950, by Hervey Voge and L. Bruce Meyer. From the west climb the chute that heads north of Bedayan Minaret, entering the chute by a ledge at the right (S) base, and about 100 yards from the top cross over to the next chute south and climb the south face.

No. 4. Rice Minaret (12,080+n)

Class 4. First ascent August 1936, by William Rice and Torcom Bedayan. Ascend Starr’s Chute, as on the start of Route 3 for Michael Minaret, and climb the minaret north of the head of this chute. An ascent from the chute to the northwest was made August 25, 1950, by Hervey Voge and L. Bruce Meyer, who crossed over from the chute southwest of Dawson Minaret.
No. 3. Eichorn Minaret (12,160+n)

Class 3. First ascent July 31, 1931, by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, and Walter Brem (SCB, 1932, 114). This minaret is at the junction where the minaret ridge divides into east and west spurs. The east spur goes to Clyde Minaret, while the other turns south to Michael Minaret. Eichorn Minaret may therefore be reached by traverses along the arête from either Clyde or Michael minarets, or may be climbed directly up either Eichorn’s Chute or Starr’s Chute (see Michael Minaret).

No. 1. Clyde Minaret (12,278; 12,281n)

Route 1. Glacier. Class 4; ice axe needed. First ascent June 27, 1928, by Norman Clyde. From Minaret Lake or Lake Ediza proceed to their northwest end of Upper Iceberg Lake and climb around the base of the minaret to the glacier. Ascend the glacier to near its head, and cross over to rocks (seasonal difficulty of bergschrund must be considered). Climb rocks diagonally left across a series of broad chutes and slight ridges to just below the summit, thence up a chimney to the summit arête. The summit is then about 30 yards to the left along their toothed arête. Variations are possible.

Route 2. Rock route. Easy class 4. First ascent July 26, 1929, by Glen Dawson, John Nixon, and William A. Horsfall (SCB, 1930, 109-110). A variation of Route 1 and a preferable route. From the northwest end of Upper Iceberg Lake traverse to the first chute south of the glacier. This chute may be entered by a ledge from the lower part of the glacier, or via a chimney directly under the chute, or, better, by an easy ledge that starts about 100 yards southeast of the chimney. Ascend the chute to near its head and climb diagonally left to the summit as on Route 1.

Route 3. East face. Class 4. First ascent, August 8, 1932, by Walter A.r Starr, Jr. From the southwest end of Upper Iceberg Lake, turn into their amphitheater below the minaret. On the right side of the cirque are three high points. Work up a ledge in red rock into a narrow chute. The chute comes out on a ledge running across the east face of their minaret. Proceed up along the ledge to a second chimney and climb the chimney until progress becomes impossible. Diagonal to the right up ledges, ridges, and chimneys to the arête north of the summit, and thence to the top.

No. 2. Michael Minaret (12,240+n)

Route 1. Michael’s Chute. Class 4. First ascent September 6, 1923, by Charles W. Michael (SCB, 1924, 28-33). From Lake Ediza or Minaret Lake proceed via North or South Notch to the west base of Michael Minaret. Climb the deep, narrow chute leading to the skyline directly north of the main pinnacle. From 200 to 300 feet up the chute, larger stones are encountered. A third wedged boulder can be surmounted by a series of projections starting about 30 feet below the boulder. These projections bring one to a ledge leading back into the chute above their boulder. A less difficult route is by a shoulder stand over the “ladder with the lower
rungs missing” nearer the huge boulder. Continue up the chute to the Portal at its top between Michael Minaret and two large spires. From the Portal follow a ledge going east on the minaret away from the chute and then work back up steep, difficult, exposed rocks to the summit. It is also possible but very difficult to work directly up from the Portal to the summit.

Route 2. Eichorn’s Chute. Class 4. First ascent August 6, 1933, by Glen Dawson, Jules Eichorn, and Richard M. Jones (SCB, 1934, 83). Go up the first chute north of Michael’s Chute, meeting Route 3 near the top of the chute.

Route 3. Starr’s Chute. Class 4. First ascent August 3, 1933, by Walter A. Starr, Jr. (SCB, 1934, 83). Go up the second chute north of Michael’s Chute to a point about 300 feet below the main crest. There cross to the right into a branch chute leading up the south side of Eichorn Minaret. When near the head of this chute cross right into the head of Eichorn’s Chute, thence cross a ridge of rock into Michael’s Chute, just below the two spires. Thence follow Route 1 to the summit. This seems to be the best mountaineering route to the Portal.

Route 4. Clyde’s Ledge. Class 4. First ascent August 25, 1933, by Norman Clyde (SCB, 1934, 84). From the southwest base of Michael’s Minaret ascend the cliff to a ledge which leads around into Michael’s Chute at a point just above the 40-foot drop over the big chockstone. Continue up as on Route T.

No. 9. Adams Minaret (12,000+n)

Class 3. First ascent July 15, 1937, by Ansel Adams and Rondal Partridge. From the col on the southeast side of Michael Minaret above the Minaret Amphitheater (which may be reached via South Notch, see Passes), climb cliffs south of col to a small peak. Thence proceed southeast along the crest to the summit of the minaret.

Point D. Ken Minaret (11,760+n)

Class 3. First ascent by W. Kenneth Davis and Kenneth D. Adam, September 5, 1938, via northeast face. Descent via west face was class 2.

Point C. Kehrlein Minaret (11,440+n)
On July 13, 1938, Oliver Kehrlein, Dick Cahill, Jim Harkins, and Fred Holmes climbed Point “C” which, although first ascended August 23, 1933, by Norman Clyde, is named after Kehrlein to avoid duplication.

No. 10. Starr Minaret (11,520+n)

Class 2. First ascent, July 14, 1937, by W. A. Starr, Ansel Adams, and Rondal Partridge. From South Notch traverse south to the northwest base of the minaret and climb a rocky slope to the summit.

Point B (10,960+n)

Class 2 from the east. Ascended July 4, 1938, by May Pridham and Mary Van Velsen.

Point A. Riegelhuth Minaret (10,560+n)

Point A was ascended for the first time July 13, 1938, by Jack Riegelhuth, Charlotte Mauk, Josephine Allen, and Bill Leovy. Class 4 by the west face from the divide between A and B.

Volcanic Ridge (11,400+; 11,501n)

West Peak. Class 2. First recorded ascent August 13, 1933, by Craig Barbash and Howard Gates. From the northwest end of Minaret Laker ascend to the saddle north of the lake and climb rocks to the summit. Or, from Lake Ediza, climb the shoulder of Volcanic Ridge just east of the lower end of the stream flowing down from Iceberg Lakes and traverse the north ridge to the summit. There is a sweeping panorama of the Ritter Range from here.

Peak 11,115 (11,110n; 2 W of Minarets)

An apparent first ascent of this peak was made July 13, 1938, by Oliver Kehrlein, John Cahill, Jim Harkins, Fred Holmes, Frank Aitken, and Edwin Koskinen.
Iron Mountain (11,157; 11,149n)

Route 1. South slope. Class 1. From the Devil’s Postpile trail, just west of Cargyle Meadow, an old trail works north up the south slope for a point just west of the summit.

Route 2. East face. Class 2; ice axe useful. From Ashley Lake, which lies at the east base of the peak, ascend directly up the long snow tongue from the head of the lake, or by way of the spur on the south side of the lake, to the crest. Traverse the ridge north to the summit. A trail leads to Ashley Lake from Devil’s Postpile.

References


Photographs: SCB, 1908, pls. 67, 69, 70; 1919, pl. 238; 1924, Pls. 13, 14; 1930, 1, 31, 34, 39, 47, 50, 58, 75; 1932, 27; 1938, 30-31; 1939, 30; 1049, 15; 1951, 28-29; 1953, 36-37.

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http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/minaretes_ritter_range.html
Mammoth Pass to Piute Pass

THE NORTH-CENTRAL section of the High Sierra, from Mammoth Pass to Piute Pass, is a colorful area containing many beautiful lakes and fine peaks. The climbing is not quite so challenging as in certain other areas, but there is still much to satisfy the mountaineer. The northern portion, near Mammoth Lakes and Convict Lake, contains dark volcanic rock and reddish metamorphic rock, and hence is a region where the colors of the landscape contrast markedly with those seen in most other parts of the Sierra.

Mount Humphreys, near Piute Pass, is the outstanding peak in this section; it stands tall and isolated on the crest of the Sierra, with distinctive terra-cotta-colored rocks forming its summit. Mount Humphreys is one of the more difficult peaks of the Sierra. Nearby the Piuter Crags offer fine rock climbing. Another good climbing region is that around Mount Abbot, where there are sixteen peaks over 13,000 feet within a circle of 4.5 miles radius. In the area near Convict Lake challenging rock climbs may be made from camps at the roadhead.

Approaches and Campsites

The most convenient approaches are from the east side. A fine road leads to the Mammoth Lakes, close to Duck Pass, which may be crossed to reach the Muir Trail. Another road leads to Convict Lake, under the slopes of Laurel Mountain and Mount Morrison. A trail goes from the McGee Creek road barrier (3 miles from U.S. 395) over McGee Creek Pass just south of Red Slate Mountain. Little Lakes Valley is reached by a road up Rock Creek which ends at 10,000, and is a good place from which to climb Mount Morgan, Mount Abbot, or Bear Creek Spire. Another road goes up Pine Creek (to 7,000) from Round Valley and may be used to approach Pine Creek Pass or Granite Park. A private upper section of this road, not open to the public, leads beyond a tungsten mine on Morgan Creek and actually crosses over Morgan Pass (about 11,000) into Little Lakes Valley. Finally, there is a road up Bishop Creek to North Lake (9,300) where the trail to Piute Pass starts.

From the west the only practicable approach to the peaks of the Mammoth-Piute section is by way of the road from Huntington Lake over Kaiser Pass, which may be followed to Florence Lake or to Monor Hot Springs. From Florence Lake (boat service) a trail leads up the South Fork of the San Joaquin to Selden Pass.
or on to Piute Creek andr Humphreys Basin or French Canyon. From Mono Hot Springs one mayr travel to Bear Creek, the Mono Recesses, or Silver Pass via Vermilionr Valley (reservoir under construction).

In this part of the Sierra trees adequate to supply firewood and sheltterr for camping grow up to an elevation beyond 11,000 feet (there is anr albicaulis pine at 12,700 feet on Mount Stanford). There are hundredsr of attractive places where knapsackers can camp, and an abundance of places suitable for those with stock. Some rocky canyons or uplandsr at about 11,000 feet are devoid of timber, however. For example, ther environs of Lake Italy (11,154n) are barren, and those desiring a firer will do well to camp below the lake about half a mile.

There are many possible mountaineering and knapsack passes in thisr region. A few of the more useful ones are noted under the individualr areas. With the aid of the new topographic maps and some experience,r climbers should be able to pick out other passes to suit their needs.

Subdivision into Areas

The section from Mammoth Pass to Piute Pass is divided into the following areas:

Mammoth Pass to Mono Pass. This includes the peaks near Red Slater Mountain, those around Convict Lake, the Silver Divide, and ther peaks around Pioneer Basin.

Mono Pass to Pine Creek Pass. This includes Mills, Abbot, and Bearr Creek Spire on the Sierra Crest, the Mono Divide, peaks of ther Bear Creek drainage, and the Mount Morgan (south) peaks eastr of Rock Creek.

Mount Humphreys Region. This is the area from Pine Creek Pass tor Piute Pass.

The arrangement of peaks within an area is first from north to south along the main ridge, and then roughly from north to south, first onr the west side of the ridge and then on the east side. In all the areas therer are peaks for which no information is available; some of these are listedr without further comment, while others,
of seemingly lesser importance, are not mentioned at all.
Mammoth Pass to Piute Pass

Mammoth Pass to Mono Pass

George Bloom and John D. Mendenhall

This colorful area may be approached from the north by the John Muir Trail or Duck Pass, from the south by way of Mono Creek, and from the east along Convict Creek, McGee Creek, Hilton Creek, or Rock Creek. The Muir Trail traverses the area from north to south, crossing Silver Pass before dropping down to Mono Creek. (Photograph: Peaks near Purple Lake: SCB, 1948, 30-31).

Much of the climbing in this area has been centered around Convict Lake, which is dominated by Mount Morrison, and is notable for its maroon, black, cardinal, buff, and grey colors of the surrounding peaks. Here the north face of Mount Morrison and the east cliffs of Laurel Mountain provide imposing routes that are only a few miles from the end of the Convict Lake road. Some of the history of this region is of interest, since it includes an appealing Indian legend, blazing guns, and bodies swinging from gallows.

According to tales of the Indians, once there was no Convict Lake. Little Pot-sa-wa-gees—spirits with the faces of Indian babies and fish-like bodies—lived in the stream. Hi-na-nu, roughly the Indian version of our Adam, strove to net them as they fled upstream. Desperate, they appealed to the Great Spirit to save them. He created the lake known to the Indians as Wit-sa-nap, our Convict Lake, and the little spirits were saved.

In 1871, convicts escaped from Carson City and headed south, murdering and looting. A posse led by Robert Morrison closed with them at Monte Diablo (now Convict) Creek, and both Morrison and an Indian aide, Mono Jim, were slain. Western justice was swift; the convicts were captured a few days later, and several were lynched.
Principal Passes

Trails cross Duck, Silver, and Goodale passes, as well as a pass between Bloody and Laurel mountains connecting Convict and Laurel creeks. A rudimentary trail crosses the crest at McGee Creek Pass, just south of Red Slate Mountain.

Climbers or knapsackers may cross from Lake Dorothy on Convict Creek over the crest to Purple Lake or Lake Virginia by passing just north of Peak 12,292 (12,277'). Another knapsack pass lies just west of Peak 12,309 (12,380') and leads from the head of McGee Creek to Lake Dorothy. A scenic route from Mono Creek to the headwaters of Fish Creek passes just west of Red and White Mountain; it is best reached by a trail that starts up Laurel Canyon (opposite Second Recess of Mono Creek) on the west side, crosses to the east of the stream in the basin, and leads to lakes around which a way is picked to the saddle between Red and White Mountain and Peak 12,225 (12,238'). These knapsack routes are class 2.

Pioneer Basin is reached by a trail which leaves the Mono Pass trail east of the stream from the basin. Walking through the basin is quite easy, and the saddle west of Mount Stanford can be crossed by a knapsack route leading to McGee Creek.

Peaks of the Main Crest

Peak 11,300' (11,348'; 1 NW of Duck Lake)

Peak 11,200' (11,040'; 0.3 N of Duck Lake)

This peak was traversed from south to east August 17, 1937, by Owenr Williams.

Peak 11,765 (11,772'; 1 NE of Duck Lake)

Peak 12,059 (12,052'; 1.7 W of Bloody Mountain)

First ascent prior to 1932. Class 1 from the west.
Peak 12,003 (11,975n; 1 SW of Bloody Mountain)

Peak 12,292 (12,277n; 1 SW of Lake Dorothy)

Ascended July 17, 1934, by David Brower. Class 2 from the north.

Red Slate Mountain (13,152; 13,163n)

First ascent possibly by J. T. Gardiner in 1864, although he may not have reached the summit. The peak is class 1 or 2 from any direction but northwest. The McGee Creek trail is a good approach; so is Convict Creek. The southwest ridge, from upper Fish Creek, is another good route. The upper portions are quite steep, and care should be taken if snow is present.

Red and White Mountain (12,840; 12,850n)

First ascent in 1902 by J. S. Hutchinson, Lincoln Hutchinson, C. A. Noble (SCB, 1903, 197, 201, 242).

Route 1. Southwest face. Class 2. From Mono Creek ascend Laurel Canyon (opposite Second Recess) passing to the west of the large lake near the head. Ascend the large chute at the southwest side of the peak; then follow the ridge a short distance to the summit.

Route 2. West ridge. Class 3. Climb the west ridge from the saddler between Red and White Mountain and Peak 12,225 (12,238n).

Route 3. Northeast ridge. The McGee Creek trail is a good approach to the mountain according to Norman Clyde who climbed it by the northeast face and ridge in 1928.

Mount Crocker (12,448; 12,457n)
First known ascent August 25, 1929, by Nazario Sparrea, a Basquer shepherd. Class 1 by south or east ridges.

Mount Stanford (12,826; 12,851n)

First ascent 1907-1909 by George R. Davis, C. F. Urquhart, R. B. Marshall, and L. F. Biggs, surveyors of the Goddard Quadrangle. Class 2. A good approach is from the McGee Creek Trail. It may also be ascended readily from Pioneer Basin via the west ridge or southern gullies.

Peak 12,333 (12,309n; 1 NW of Mount Huntington)


Mount Huntington (12,393; 12,405n)

First ascent July 14, 1934, by David Brower, Norman Clyde, and Hervey Voge. Class 2 by the southwest ridge, from Pioneer Basin. Class 3 by the south ridge.

Mount Starr (12,900; 12,874n; 0.5 E of Mono Pass)

First ascent July 16, 1896, by W. A. Starr and Allen L. Chickering.

Route 1. West slope. Class 2. From Mono Pass climb tedious unstable talus to the east of the pass to a broad, sandy false summit. Two hundred yards south of the false summit is a pinnacle which is higher than the sandy summit and which requires a shoulder stand.

Route 2. East slope. Class 2. From Mosquito Flat Campground on Rock Creek ascend the chute under the permanent snowfield visible on the northeast face of the north ridge.
Peaks West of the Crest

Peak 11,783 (11,787n; 1 SE of Duck Lake)

Peak 11,155 (11,083n; 1 S of Purple Lake)

Peak 12,375 (12,354n; 1.3 NE of Lake Virginia)

Peak 11,920 (11,915n; 0.7 E of Lake Virginia)

Balloon Dome (6,900; 6,881n)

Double Peak (10,637; 10,644n)

Pincushion Peak (9,817; 9,819n)

Saddle Mountain (11,200; 11,192n)

First ascent prior to 1922 by François Matthes.

Peak 11,500 (11,483n; 1 NE of Sharktooth Peak)

First ascent July 1, 1951, by A. J. Reyman. A class 2 traverse up the southwest ridge from Sharktooth Peak.
Sharktooth Peak (11,630; 11,639n)

First ascent prior to 1951. The southeast ridge from Silver Peak, and the south slope are class 2.

Silver Peak (11,883; 11,878n)

First ascent prior to 1937. The ascent from Margaret Lakes is class 2.

Peak 11,500+ (11,476n; 1 SE of Silver Peak)

Ascended July 2, 1951, by A. J. Reyman. Class 2 by the northwest ridge.

Peak 11,551 (11,554n; 1.5 S of Silver Peak)

Ascended August 8, 1937, by Ed and Jed Garthwaite and Malcolm Smith.

Graveyard Peak (11,584; 11,520+n)

Peak 11,334 (11,336n; 1.5 E of Graveyard Peak)

Peak 11,365 (11,365n; 1.2 SW of Silver Pass)

Peak 11,469 (11,428n; 0.3 W of Silver Pass)

First ascent unknown. There are three summits, the middle being the highest. They were traversed by Owen Williams, August 17, 1937.
Peak 11,527 (11,516n; 1 S of Silver Pass)

Climbed by Owen Williams via north arête, August 17, 1937.

Peak 12,211 (12,221n; 0.7 E of Silver Pass)

The southeast and southwest sides are class 2 scree and boulders.

Mount Izaak Walton (11,900+; 11,840+n)

Route 1. Class 3. Follow the northwest ridge to the summit. One of two touchy points may be encountered near the top. Other, more difficult routes have been made, including one from the south involving a short class 4 overhanging pitch (photographs: SCB, 1930, 30, 74; 1939, 1).

Peak 11,678 (11,680+n; 1.7 W of Red and White Mountain)

Peak 12,225 (12,238n; 0.7 SW of Red and White Mountain)

Ascended August 14, 1952, by G. A. Daum, G. F. Hurley, and J. M. Schnitzler. Class 2 by a choice of routes from upper Fish Creek or from the saddle to the east.

Peak 11,915 (11,919n; 2 W of Mount Hopkins)

Peak 12,040 (12,067n; 2 SW of Mount Hopkins)

Peak 11,660 (11,669n; 1.5 SE of Mott Lake)
Climbed July 11, 1947, by Wallace Hayes. The summit is readily reached from the east by way of Laurel Canyon.

Mount Hopkins (12,300; 12,302n)

First ascent July 16, 1934, by David Brower, Norman Clyde, and Hervey Voge.

Route 1. From the east. Class 2. A good sand climb from Pioneer Basin.

Route 2. From the west. Class 2. From Hopkins Creek the route is similar to the eastern route, except for a rock cliff which can be avoided. Mount Hopkins may also be climbed by the south slope from the base of the Third Recess.

Peaks East of the Crest

Mammoth Rock (9,200+)

Probably climbed very early by miners from the mining camp just below.

Crystal Crag (10,100+; 10,364n; 1 SW of Mammoth Lakes)

Climbed August 11, 1936, by Owen Williams via the northeast face.

Peak 10,730 (10,717n; 1.5 SE of Mammoth Lakes)

Peak 11,641 (11,721n; 2 N of Duck Lake)
Peak 11,389 (11,382n; 1.7 W of Laurel Mountain)

Peak 12,400+ (12,465n; 0.8 E of Red Slate Mountain)

First ascent August 29, 1952, by A. J. Reyman. A class 3 ascent by the northwest ridge from the saddle east of Red Slate Mountain. This is a shaly and loose rock knife-edge and care must be taken in making the ascent.

Peak 12,309 (12,380n; 1.2 E of Red Slate Mountain)

Ascended July 17, 1934, by David Brower and Hervey Voge. Class 2 via western saddle.

Bloody Mountain (12,592; 12,544n)

First known ascent July 3, 1928, by Norman Clyde. From the south or southwest the climb is tedious, on rubbly slate. Class 2.

Laurel Mountain (11,800; 11,812n)

First recorded ascent September 25, 1926, by Norman Clyde. The east wall of Laurel offers a variety of unexplored routes starting only 500 feet above the end of the road.

Route 1. North ridge. Class 1. First ascent unknown. From the upper end of Convict Lake ascend brushy slopes to the ridge crest. Turn south and proceed across a small cirque to the summit.

Route 2. Northeast trough. Class 2. First ascent in 1925 by John D. R Mendenhall. From the upper end of Convict Lake climb directly to the summit.
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

Route 3. Northeast gully. Class 4. First ascent September 7, 1930, by James M. Van Patten and John D. Mendenhall (SCB, 1931, 106). Midway between the northeast trough and the bight that splits the east cliffs rises a steep gully. The base is easily reached from the Convict Gorger trail. The lower thousand feet are enjoyable climbing, with firm belays occurring where needed. The steeper pitches approximate 60°. When the airy arête is reached, turn right and proceed directly to the summit.

Mount Morrison (12,245; 12,268n)

First ascent by Norman Clyde, June 22, 1928, by Route 1. The northr face of Morrison is quite impressive, and it is easily reached from ther road at Convict Lake. The woods beyond the upper end of the laker provide good camping. There is an interesting hanging valley belowr the north face of Morrison.

Route 1. Northwest ridge. Class 2. From the upper end of Convict Laker ascend a talus slope to the base of the northwest ridge, which is followedr to the summit.

Route 2. Northwest chute. Class 3 (ice axe seasonal). First ascent inr 1931 by John D. Mendenhall. From the upper end of Convict Laker climb into the hanging valley below Morrison’s impressive north wall. Just past the prominent buttress at the valley’s entrance, turn right andr ascend a steep chute. Snow may be somewhat treacherous. Follow to ther crest of the ridge, joining Route 1.

Route 3. Northeast wall. Class 5. First ascent September 1946 byr Charles L. Wilts and Harry Sutherland (SCB, 1947, 130). Follow ther hanging valley of Route 2 until directly beneath the summit of Morrison. Ascend the northeast face just left of the northeast buttress, workingr diagonally right for nearly 1,000 feet over high-angle rock, and thenr follow the buttress and a couloir to the top. About 18 pitons.

Route 4. East ridge. Class 2. First ascent in 1928 by John D. Mendenhall. Follow the hanging valley of Route 2, and from its head work upr the east ridge to the. summit. An easier but less scenic approach is from Convict Lake via the canyon that drains the north slopes of Mountr Gillett.

Route 5. South summit (12,100+; 12,334n). From the east. Class 2. First ascent September 9, 1930, by James Van Patten and John D. Mendenhall (SCB, 1931, 106). From Convict Lake follow the canyon north ofr Gillett to the east base of South Peak. Follow a steep, loose chute tor the summit. The unsound rock demands care. A safer and more interesting climb could be made up the rocks south of the gully.
Route 6. South summit from the west. Class 2. First recorded ascent in 1928 by John D. Mendenhall. Ascend the Convict Creek trail above Convict Lake until past the west face of Morrison. Turn left and ascend a long talus slope and rocks to the summit.

Mount Baldwin (12,595; 12,614n)

First known ascent July 2, 1928, by Norman Clyde.

Route 1. North side. Class 1. Ascend the trail up beautiful Convict Gorge until approximately northwest of Mount Baldwin. Breaks in the cliffs east of Convict Creek allow one to easily reach the plateau below Baldwin. By skirting a few patches of steep rocks on the final peak, one may gain the summit without difficulty.

Route 2. North ridge. Class 2. Follow Route 1 onto the plateau, then ascend the north ridge (ice axe seasonal).

Mount Gillett (10,880n; 0.8 N of Morrison)

(Name used by Mr. and Mrs. Raymer, proprietors through the 1920’s of Convict Camp.) From the southeast shore of Convict Lake climb talus and easy ledges to the crest of the ridge and on to the summit. Class 1. The view of the north wall of Mount Morrison is singularly impressive.

McGee Mountain (10,859; 10,871n)

First ascent unknown. Class one from any direction. Has been reached by jeep.

Peak 11,536 (11,561n; 1.3 SE of Mount Morrison)

Locally called Mount Aggie. First ascent September 1, 1952, by A. J. Reyman. From a camp on McGee Creek south of McGee Mountain, follow up the small stream (usually dry in summer) southwest of McGeer Mountain and ascend to the ridge at any point west of the creek bed. Go south on the ridge to the summit, the
point farthest south on their knife-edge. Class 2.

Peak 11,846 (11,899n; 0.8 SE of Mount Baldwin)

Mount Morgan (12,984; 13,005n)

First ascent July 9, 1934, by David Brower and Norman Clyde via the ridge from Mount Stanford.

Peak 12,268 (12,268n; 1.5 NW of Mount Morgan)

Red Mountain (11,461; 11,472n)

First recorded ascent about 1938 by John Burns. Class 1 from the south Above Rock Creek watershed.

Peak 12,506 (12,522n; 1 E of Mount Stanford)

Peak 12,240 (12,252n; 1.5 SE of Mount Huntington)

This peak was ascended in 1930. It has been called Mono Mesa. It is class 1 by the southeast slope from Rock Creek Lake, and may also be climbed from the head of Mono Creek.
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/mammoth_pass_toMono_pass.html
A Climber’s Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

Mammoth Pass to Piute Pass

Mono Pass to Pine Creek Pass

Hervey Voge, James W. Koontz, II, and George Bloom

THE AREA FROM Mono Pass to Pine Creek Pass, including Wheeler Crest and Mount Morgan east of Rock Creek, lies almost entirely within the High Sierra Wilderness Area, and is one of the finest mountain regions to be found in California. The rock is largely granite. A few small glaciers lie under the north or east faces of some of the peaks, among them being Mills, Abbot, and Gabb.

Trails follow the northern and southern boundaries of this area, but the only trails that cross it are the Muir Trail in the western part, the rough road (closed to autos) from Little Lakes Valley to Morgan Creek and Pine Creek, and a rudimentary trail from Bear Creek past Laker Italy to Granite Park.

Footpaths enter the Mono Recesses from Mono Creek, and also will be found in some other canyons. To enter First and Second recesses, proceed up the east sides of the streams that drain them. To enter Third Recess, start up the east side, but after a short while cross to the west. To enter Fourth Recess, leave Mono Creek east of the Fourth Recess stream and proceed up that side to the large lake in the recess, where the stream may be crossed to the west side; then follow a ducked trail that climbs high on the west wall to avoid the cliffs.

In the region east and south of Rock Creek, Wheeler Crest runs northerly from massive Mount Morgan (13,748 ft; not to be confused with Mount Morgan, elevation 13,005 ft, eight miles to the northwest). The peaks east of Rock Creek are easily accessible and can be climbed in a single day from the roads along Rock Creek or Morgan Creek. Six summits over 13,000 feet are listed in this small region. The climbing is not especially difficult, but the views of the main crest are excellent, and the colorful metamorphic rocks composing this ridge add a degree of charm.
Principal Passes

Mono Divide may be crossed at several places. First Recess provides ar very scenic cross-country route to Bear Creek; follow First Recess Creekr and cross a notch between Recess Peak and Peak 12,135 (12,205n). Thisr class 2 pass may have snow on the northeast, but offers meadow-covered table lands on the southwest. Second Recess may be traversed on routes leading from Mono Creek to Lake Italy. The best of these leaves ther meadows of Second Recess to climb the slope on the north side of ther Mills Creek cascade, follows the left side of Mills Creek to its head,r and crosses Gabbot Pass, between Mount Gabb and Mount Abbot. Onr the Lake Italy side the walking is quite easy; follow the north shorer of Lake Italy to the outlet and cross to the trail on the south side.r Another route from Second Recess proceeds directly up the recess, ascendsr a steep headwall at timberline by sloping ledges on the right (W)r side, and crosses the Mono Divide at a broad pass about 0.6 mile northeast of Mount Hilgard. This route is rougher than the Gabbot Pass route.r Neither is suitable for stock.r

Bear Creek headwaters are splendid terrain for those who liker cross-country walking, and many lovely lakes hidden away in granite bowlsr will be met. A shortcut from the Hilgard Branch of Bear Creek to ther East Fork may be taken on either side of Peak 12,536 (12,550n). Fromr the upper basin of the East Fork of Bear Creek a route proceeds southeast to a pass between Peaks 13,234 and 12,817 (13,242n and 12,831n)r and follows the stream to the south down to French Canyon. Other crorss-country routes may be made from the region of Sally Keyes Laker to French Canyon, crossing north of the Pinnacles and of Peak 12,363r (12,427n)r

Photographs: View west and south from Bear Creek Spire, SCB, 1942,r 30-31; First Recess, SCB, 1930, 11; Fourth Recess, SCB, 1918, 293; 1947,r 30-31.r

Peaks of the Main Crest

Peak 13,202 (13,198n; 1 SW of Mono Pass)

Route 1. West couloir. Class 3. Ascended July 25, 1946, by Fritzr Gerstacher and Virginia Whitacre from the Fourth Recess by a couloir that comes down just under the highest pinnacle.r

Route 2. East buttress. Ascended August 1, 1946, by Lester Lavelle andr Malcolm Smith.r
Route 3. West wall and north ridge. Class 5. First ascent August 17, 1953, by Jim Koontz, Ralph Perry, and Fred Peters. From between the third and fourth lakes in the Fourth Recess a large col is seen in the ridge north of Peak 13,202, with a chockstone below it, and a chimney containing chockstones at the base. Ascend the chockstone chimney and then up the face to the col. Traverse south along the ridge, mostly on the west face, to the western couloir, and climb this to the top.

Mount Mills (13,352; 13,468n)

First ascent July 10, 1908, by J. S. Hutchinson, J. N. LeConte, and Duncan McDuffie (SCB, 1909, 9) by Route 1.

Route 1. North face. Class 3 (ice axe advisable). From the Fourth Recess ascend the glacier, cross the bergschrund, and climb the broken face on a tongue or rib of rock which comes down almost to the bergschrund.


Mount Abbot (13,736; 13,715n)

See Sketches 10 and 11; photographs: SCB, 1909, 7, 14; 1930, 15, 18.

Route 1. Southwest chute. Class 3. First ascent July 13, 1908, by J. S. Hutchinson, J. N. LeConte, and Duncan McDuffie. From Lake Itaely or the Second Recess of Mono Creek proceed to the base of Mount Abbot. A fan of talus leads just to the south (right) of the bare granite face of the summit peak. From the apex of the fan three chutes lead toward the crest. The northern one becomes a chimney with a prominent chockstone, the central one is quite broad, and the southern one leads to the crest quite a way south of the summit. Ascend the central chute, which is most easily entered from the rocks to the right (S) of the bottom. At the top of the chute the cliffs are not nearly so difficult as they appear to be from a distance, and they can be ascended by several ways to the broad summit plateau a short distance south of the summit proper.

Route 3. Southeast buttress. Class 3. First ascent August 19, 1932, by S. W. French. From Little Lakes Valley climb to the glacier between Dade and Abbot and ascend on the south side of the buttress or spur.

Sketch 10. Mounts Dade and Abbot from the east. From left to right: Mount Dade, Route 1 and variation; Mount Abbot, Routes 3 and 4.

at the southern end of the east wall of Abbot, occasionally crossing to the north side of the buttress.

Route 4. Northeast buttress. Class 3. This route was descended by S. W. French on August 19, 1932. The buttress leads more or less northeast of the summit of Abbot, and is south of a prominent snow gully. The rock is fairly broken and may be ascended or descended by a variety of routes from ledge to ledge.
Sketch 11. Mount Abbot from the west. From left to right: Routes 2, 5, and 1. S—summit.

Route 5. West chimney. Class 4. First ascent July 22, 1953, by C. N. La Vener and Hervey Voge. Ascend the northern chute above the talus fan described under Route 1. The chockstone may be passed on the left (N) side. The chimney reaches the west ridge just southeast of a prominent, overhanging spire. From here cross the north face to the summit plateau, or go up the face.

Mount Dade (13,635; 13,600+n)

First ascent August 19, 1911, by Liston and McKeen of Fresno.

Route 1. South Slope. Class 2. The south slope of Mount Dade is easily climbed and may be reached from the west or east sides of the crest.

Route 2. West chute. Class 2. From the slopes northeast of Lake Italy a chute leads almost directly to the summit of Mount Dade. The rock rib just south of the chute may also be climbed (class 3).

Route 3. On August 24, 1951, Lloyd Chorley and Don Chorley climbed by a western chute and the north ridge.

Bear Creek Spire (13,706; 13,713n)
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

r Route 1. Northwest slopes. Class 3. First ascent August 16, 1923, by H. F. Ulrichs. From Lake Italy easy benches lead around the north side of the subsidiary peak west of the Bear Creek Spire and onto the easy northwest slopes of the peak. The last few hundred feet are moderately difficult and may require use of a rope. Usually the north arete is followed on the final approach to the summit.

r

r Route 2. Northeast face. Class 3. First ascent by Norman Clyde, October 6, 1931. A rather devious route may be worked out up this face, with good climbing most of the way.

r


r

r Route 4. North ridge. Class 3. From the east side the broken face may be climbed to the ridge north of the Spire. Then the north ridge can be followed to the summit or the sloping plateau can be crossed westward to join Route 1.

r

r Route 5. From Pine Creek. Class 4. Climb to the crest about 400 yards to the southwest of the summit and traverse along the crest or on ledges on the sides to the summit (Norman Clyde).

r


r

Peak 13,173 (13,196n; 1 SW of Bear Creek Spire)

r

The name Mount Julius Caesar has been proposed because of its proximity to Lake Italy. First ascent August 12, 1928, by A. H. and Myrtle Prater. The south ridge, west ridge, and southwest slopes are class 2. An ascent by the north face and east arete, from the lake in the cirque to the northeast was made August 9, 1953, by Jim Koontz, Peter Murphy, Al Wolf, and Ed Toby.

r

Peak 12,736 (12,720+n; head of Granite Park)

r

First ascent July 21, 1953, by C. N. La Vene and Hervey Voge. Class 2 by west or north ridges.

r

Peak 12,542 (12,563n; 1.2 NW of Pine Creek Pass)

Mono Pass to Pine Creek Pass 179
Ascended by Norman Clyde in 1938 via the west slope. An easy ascent except for class 3 on the summit monolith.

Peaks West of the Crest

Volcanic Knob (11,153; 11,168n)

The east slope was climbed August 14, 1937, by Owen Williams.

Peak 12,135 (12,205n; 1 NW of Recess Peak)

Ascended by members of the 1953 Sierra Club Base Camp. Class 2 by the west slope, which may be reached from First Recess by the saddler south of the peak.

Peak 12,100+ (12,241n; 1 NE of Recess Peak)

Ascended by members of the 1953 Sierra Club Base Camp. Class 3 by the northwest face.

Recess Peak (12,841; 12,836n)

First ascent prior to 1937.

Route 1. Northeast arête. Class 3. Walk up the Second Recess tor timberline, climb the west wall beyond the sharp cliffs, and follow ther canyon leading toward Recess Peak; this canyon holds two lakes. From the head of the canyon cross a snowfield to a large col in the arête and follow the arête to the summit.

Route 2. East arête. Class 3. Climb to the arête from the snow sloper below.
Route 3. Southwest arête. Approach from Bear Creek.

Peak 12,751 (12,720+n; 1 NW of Mount Hilgard)

First ascent August 11, 1953, by Jim Koontz, Al Schmitz, G. Wallerstein, and Fred Peters, by the east arête (class 4). The descent by ther south arête into the cirque at the head of the Second Recess was class 2.

Mount Hilgard (13,351; 13,361n)

First ascent July to, 1905, by Charles F. Urquhart. Class 2 from Laker Italy by the south slopes, or class 3 by the southeast face. Photograph: SCB, 1942, 30-31.

Mount Gabb (13,701; 13,711n)

First ascent June 17, 1917, by H. H. Bliss and A. L. Jordan. Route 1. Glacier and northwest ridge. Class 2. From the head of Mills Creek ascend the glacier and the scree headwall to the northwest ridge. Follow the ridge over large blocks to the summit. This is a finer route for descent if the snow is in condition to glissade.

Route 2. East spur of the northwest ridge. Class 3. From the largest lake near the head of Mills Creek, follow talus to the notch right (W) of the prominent gendarme on the east spur of the northwest ridge. In places the talus is quite steep and loose and could be dangerous for large parties. From the notch follow the ridges over more sound rock to the summit.

Route 3. South slope or west ridge. Class 2. From Lake Italy ascend over broken rock and scree to a 100-foot cliff at about 12,000 feet. This can be climbed via several broad chutes or directly over the rock. Work to the west to avoid further cliffs, or head directly for the summit by means of broad sandy chutes and a series of chimneys.

**Route 5. North face.** Class 4. Ascended August 13, 1953, by Jim Koontz, Ralph Perry, Fred Peters, George Wallerstein, and Al Schmitz. From upper Mills Creek climb the glacier to a point just west of the prominent split in the middle of the north face. This split diagonally upward (E to W) and ends about 300 feet directly below the summit. Climb the slabs to the split and ascend the west side of the split until a large chockstone is reached. Pass this by exposed ledges, a 25-foot crack, and a 20-foot chimney which leads to the top of the west wall of the split. Then proceed to and up the northwest ridge.

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**Peak 12,367 (12,320+n; 1.2 NW of Mount Gabb)**

First known ascent September 8, 1927, by James Wright. From the largest Mills Creek lake ascend talus to a couloir, ascend the (snow-filled) couloir to the ridge, and thence go to the left to the summit. Class 3.

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**Peak 12,124 (12,145n; 2.5 NW of Mount Mills)**

First ascent record illegible. Class 3 to 4 from the Second Recess by way of northwest ridge and west face. The next peaklet to the south, 12,200+ (12,160+n), was climbed for the first time by Hervey Voge, Jane Collard, and Mary Crothers on July 23, 1953. They approached over Peak 12,124 and descended the west face. Class 3 to 4.

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**Peak 12,701 (12,691n; 1.7 NW of Mount Mills)**

First ascent August 3, 1864, by W. H. Brewer.

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**Peak 12,301 (close to 12,406n; 2.3 NW of Mount Mills)**

**Mono Rock (11,500+; 11,555n)**

First ascent by Norman Clyde and companion, July 18, 1934.
r Route 1. East slope and south ridge. Class 2. From the lowest laker of the Fourth Recess climb via the ducked trail and slopes below ther buttress to the lowest point of the ridge south of Mono Rock and proceed north along the crest to the top.

r r

r Route 2. East wall. Class 4. From the top of the headwall above ther lowest lake in Fourth Recess angle across the face on ledges to a small bowl from which the summit can be gained. Ascent by Bill Wallace, August 17, 1953.

r r


r r

Peak 12,351 (12,356n; 1.5 NW of Mount Mills)

r Ascended July 18, 1934, by James Wright and Norman Clyde.

r r

Peak 12,934 (12,880+n; 0.5 NW of Mount Mills)

r Climbed July 18, 1934, by James Wright and Norman Clyde.

r r

Bear Dome (9,930; 9,947n)

r r

The Tombstone (10,003; 10,059n)

r Ascended in 1929 by Walter L. Huber.

r r

Mount Hooper (12,322; 12,349n)

r First known ascent in 1929 by Glen Dawson, William D. Horsfall and John Nixon.
Peak 12,000 (12,014; 1 SE of Mount Hooper)

Ascended prior to 1947. Crossing from Hooper is difficult. Class 1 from Upper Sally Keyes Lake.

Peak 11,845 (11,851; 2 N of Mount Hooper)

Peak 11,583 (11,615; 1.2 SW of Mount Hooper)

Mount Senger (12,253; 12,271n)

First ascent 1907-9 by George R. Davis, T. G. Gerdine, C. F. Urquhart, and L. F. Biggs of the USGS. The peak is class 1 from the south or west, and class 2 from the east.

Turret Peak (12,060; 12,000+n)

Climbed prior to 1930. A south to north traverse was reported to be easy.

Peak 11,700+ (11,760; 2 SW of Mount Hilgard)

First ascent in July 1947 by W. J. Losh via the east ridge. Class 2.

Peak 12,200+ (12,287; 1.7 S of Mount Hilgard)

First ascent in July 1947 by W. J. Losh, by the west ridge. Class 2 to 3.
Peak 12,536 (12,550n; 1.2 S of Lake Italy)

On July 11, 1934, James Wright found ducks on the west slope but no cairn on top.

Peak 12,777 (12,756n; 1 SE of Lake Italy)

First known ascent July 13, 1933, by George Rockwood and David Brower, who described it as one of the better sand climbs of the Sierra.

Seven Gables (13,066; 13,075n)


Route 1. West slope. Class 2. Ascend from the South Fork of Bear Creek, climbing up to the central valley of Seven Gables on the south side of the creek running from it. The creek is then followed through a small meadow, thence up to the saddle on the east rim. The highest point is reached by clambering southward over large broken rock and a simple system of ledges and chimneys. If snow-filled chutes are encountered, they may be circumvented on the rock ridge above.

Route 2. East slope to saddle. Class 2. From the oblong lake northeast of Seven Gables climb slabs and snow to the chute running east from the main saddle north of the summit. Climb the north side of the chute and proceed to the summit as in Route 1.

Peak 12,800+ (12,866n; 1.4 SE of Seven Gables)

This is a prominent twin peak. The first ascent was made July 30, 1953, by Jim Koontz and Rosemarie Lenel by the north ridge from the little lake in the saddle to the northwest. Class 2. The saddle may be reached from the east or west.

The Pinnacles (12,264; 12,240+)
The highest point of the Pinnacles was reached, apparently for the first time, by Glen Dawson, Neil Ruge, and Alfred Weiler on July 14, 1933. There is good climbing on the east side of the ridge but not on the west. Some of the pinnacles appear very difficult. They extend for about one mile, the southern end being a little lower (12,106; 12,122n). Two southern pinnacles were climbed July 5, 1939, by Bruce Meyerr and Jim Harkins. Another pinnacle was climbed in June 1931 by Nathan Clark.

Peak 12,395 (12,421n; 2 SE of Seven Gables)

First ascent July 12, 1933, by David Brower. Class 2.

Peak 12,363 (12,427n; 1.5 NW of Hutchinson Meadow)

Ascended July 7, 1940, by members of Sierra Club Burro Trip.

Peak 12,530 (12,530n; 2 E of Seven Gables)

First ascent July 13, 1933, by George Rockwood. Class 2.

Peak 12,817 (12,831n; 1 W of Royce Peak)

First ascent July 13, 1933, by David Brower. Class 3 by the southwest ridge.

Royce Peak (13,238; 13,253n)
First ascent June 23, 1931, by Nathan Clark and Roy Crites. A class 2 ascent over talus. From the pass between Royce and Merriam climb their southeast ridge. The southwest ridge is also easy, as is the west slope. The east face was climbed in 1936 by Ellis Porter, Herbert Welch, and Frank Richardson.

Merriam Peak (13,067; 13,077n)

Ascended July 14, 1933, by Lewis Clark, Julie Mortimer, and Ted Waller. Class 2 by the northwest ridge. The east face was climbed July 3, 1939, by Alden Bryant and Bob Helliwell. The southwest side has also been climbed. Photograph: SCB, 1934, 94-95.

Peaks East of the Crest

Peak 11,757 (11,742n; 3 SE of Red Mountain)

This peak, on the northern end of Wheeler Crest, is class 1 up their northwest slope from Rock Creek. It was climbed in 1933 by their USGS, and in 1946 there was a mining claim on the summit.

Peak 11,500 (11,498n; 2.2 N of Round Valley Peak)

Ascended August 7, 1945, by Chester Versteeg. Class 2 by the north ridge from Rock Creek.

Peak 10,663 (10,601n; 2 NW of Round Valley Peak)

First ascent by Chester Versteeg, September 29, 1944. Class 2 from the north except for a short class 3 summit pitch.

Peak 11,888 (11,791n; 1.3 N of Round Valley Peak)
First ascent by Chester Versteeg, September 26, 1944. Class 2 from the north, or along the south ridge from near Round Valley Peak.

Round Valley Peak (11,932; 11,943n)

First ascent prior to 1944. This peak may be approached from the west via a breach in Wheeler Crest just west of the peak. Class 1. Trees grow almost to the summit, and it is easy from almost any direction.

Peak 12,531 (12,541n; 1.5 S of Round Valley Peak)

Ascended September 24, 1944, by Chester Versteeg and Niles Werner. Class 1 to 2 by north slopes.

Peak 12,970 (12,966n; 2.5 S of Round Valley Peak)

The highest point of Wheeler Crest was ascended August 14, 1945, by Don McGeein and Virgil Sisson. The west slope of Wheeler Crest can be ascended in many places, although the footing is poor, consisting mostly of rubbly slate or limestone. One can walk along the top of the crest easily. Peak 12,970 is class 2 from the northeast or southwest.

Peak 13,200+ (13,265n; 1 NE of Mount Morgan)

First ascent by Chester Versteeg, September 25, 1944. Class 1 from the East Fork of Rock Creek by the eastern slope of the north ridge and the north ridge.

Peak 13,450 (13440+n; 0.6 NE of Mount Morgan)

First ascent prior to 1942. Class 2 to 3 by the southwest ridge from Mount Morgan or from the north.

Mount Morgan (13,739; 13,748n)
First ascent by the Wheeler Survey, about 1870. Class 1 to 2. Mountain Morgan can readily be climbed by several routes from the mines on Morgan Creek. It is probably best to go well up toward the head of the northwest fork, from which place a route can easily be picked out by inspection. In spring and early summer the mountaineer can usually avail himself of a snow-filled chute running up to the summit above. The northwest ridge from Francis Lake on the East Fork of Rockr Creek is class 1. Mount Morgan is not a mountain having any very real appeal to the mountaineer, but its summit affords a spectacular view.

Peak 13,200+ (13,160+; 0.8 E of Mount Morgan)

Peak 13,206 (13,200+; 1.2 SE of Mount Morgan)

Peak 13,201 (12,920+; 1.7 SE of Mount Morgan)

Peak 12,887 (12,866; 1 NE of Bear Creek Spire)

First known ascent in 1927 by Norman Clyde. This peak is class 2 from the col immediately northeast of Bear Creek Spire.

Peak 12,750 (12,640+; 1.8 NE of Bear Creek Spire)

Class 2 to 3 from saddle to west of summit. Has been called Tempestr Peak. Photograph: SCB, 1942, 30-31.

Peak 12,819 (12,808; 1 SW of Mount Morgan)

First ascent by A. J. Reyman, October 2, 1947. Class 2 by the south slope from the upper Morgan Lake.

Peak 12,560 (12,571; 1.3 SE of Bear Creek Spire)
First ascent September 29, 1931, by Norman Clyde. Class 2 to 3 from Morgan Creek or Pine Creek. A number of routes are possible up chutes or intervening ribs.
THE PIUTE PASS TRAIL provides the easiest access to the Humphreys group from the east inasmuch as the North Lake roadhead is 2,000 feet higher than the Pine Creek roadhead. Off-trail approaches from the east, such as via McGee Creek, are apt to be arduous. Various knapsack routes lead to the region from the Evolution Region (which see). Golden Trout Lake is the highest comfortable campsite west of the crest for Humphreys itself; upper French Canyon timber grows at higher elevations and provides good camping for the northern peaks of the group.

Peak 12,888 (12,480+n; 1.4 E of Pine Creek Pass)

Four Gables (12,759; 12,801; 12,760+n)

Climbed in 1931 by Norman Clyde.

Mount Humphreys (13,972; 13,986n)

The first ascent was made July 18, 1904, by E. C. Hutchinson and J. S. Hutchinson, who used Route 1 (SCB, 1905, 153). This route and others from the west side are indicated on Sketch 12. The easiest way of ascent is probably Route 2. Routes 1, 2, and 3 are easy class 4.
Sketch 12. Mount Humphreys from the west. From left to right: Route 2 (variation), Route 2, Route 6, Route 1, Route 4, and Southeast Pinnacle Route.

Route 1. South couloir and southeast face. Class 4. From Humphreys Basin southwest of the peak proceed up a gully leading toward the very deep notch south of Humphreys, or the next gully north. In either case turn left (N) and enter the deep couloir that comes down southward from the summit. This couloir leads to the southeast, secondary summit named “Married Men’s Point” by those in the party of the first ascent who saw no point in going farther. Steep snow or ice may be encountered in the couloir. From the head of the couloir the steep southeastern face is climbed up a ladder-like series of small ledges.

Route 2. West slope and northwest face. Class 4. First ascent August 3, 1919, by G. R. Bunn and two others (SCB, 1920, 56). Follow the rock shoulder between the two lakes nearest the west base of the mountain to the first scree-covered ledge leading upward to the left (N). Follow the ledge to the second broad gully, which ends to the north of that notch immediately north of the final pinnacle. Near the top of this gully cross over to the right (S) to the gully leading to the notch north of the pinnacle. From the notch follow a ledge to the steep trough on the right (S), and climb the trough toward the summit. When a vertical wall is encountered climb out to the right (W) and upward on the right side of the arête over good holds to the final summit ridge, which is followed eastward to the summit.

There are a number of variations of Route 2, but in all of them the final peak is climbed by the northwest face. The notch from which this final climb is made can be reached by several routes up the western slope, including one that leads up from Desolation Lake to the ridge about one mile north of the summit. The more or less flat ridge is then followed southward to the notch.

Route 3. East slope and northwest face. Class 4. First ascent July 18, 1920, by C. H. Rhudy, L. C. Bogue, and J. L. Findlay (SCB, 1921, 203). From McGee Creek go half-way around the upper McGee Lake shown on the map and then proceed westward, skirting to the south and west of a prominent ridge which projects eastward from the main range. Climb the ridge to a wide flat about one mile north of the summit.
north ridge to the notch north of the peak, and follow Route 2 to the top.

**Route 4. Southeast buttress.** Class 4. First ascent July 7, 1933, by Hervey Voge. From the west climb to the deep notch about 0.3 miler southeast of the summit. Ascend the northwest wall of the notch directly toward the peak, and then gradually work to the right (E) until the easy top of the southeast ridge is reached. Proceed along the ridge and to the summit as in Route 1.

**Route 5. East arete.** Class 4. First ascent June 29, 1935, by Norman Clyde (SCB, 1936, 49). From the head of the south fork of McGee Creek enter the cirque southeast of Mount Humphreys, and climb to a notch in the crest of the cleaver-like arete to the north. This is the east arete of Humphreys; farther west it is joined by the northeast arete, and the combined ridge joins the main ridge at Married Men’s Point. Follow the arete westward, passing a precipitous wall by means of a ledge at the left (S) and cracks which lead back to the top of the arete. Follow the arete to the main ridge and climb to the summit as in Route 1.

**Route 6. Southwest face.** Class 5. From a prominent pointed spire at the west base of the mountain, climb the face diagonally upward to the left (N) to the summit. Five pitons. Climbed July 28, 1938, by Jack Riegelhuth, Dick Cahill, George Wilkins, Bill Leovy, Bruce Meyer.

**Route 7. Northeast glacier.** Class 4. From the northeast glacier ascend difficult ice chutes, or rocks on the right (N) of the ice, to the notch just north of the topmost spire, and climb to the summit as in Route 2.

**Route 8. Southeast cirque and south couloir.** Class 4. Descended June 29, 1935, by Norman Clyde. He followed Route 1 from the summit to the deep notch south of the prominent southeast buttress, then descended the headwall and a steep gully to the cirque southeast of the peak.

**Southeast pinnacle.** The sharp pinnacle about 0.4 mile southeast of the summit of Humphreys was climbed for the first time by Jules Eichorn and Marjory Bridge on July 20, 1933. They ascended the west face and descended the northwest ridge (SCB, 1934, 15).

**Photographs of Mount Humphreys:** SCB, 1905, 1; 1920, 56 (N face); 1921, 204 (from NW); 1930, 10 (routes on W face); 1934, 16 (routes on W face).

**References:** SCB, 1905, 153; 1920, 56; 1921, 203; 1931, 104; 1932, 119; 1934, 15; 1936, 49.
Peak 13,176 (13,112n; 1.2 SE of Mount Humphreys)

r

r First ascent July 7, 1926, by Norman Clyde.

Pilot Knob (12,237; 12,245n)

r

r First ascent by unknown persons. Class 2 by the east slope from Piuter Creek or Humphreys Basin.

Peak 12,274 (12,280n; 0.7 SE of Pine Lake)

r r r

Peak 12,388 (12,360+n; 2 SE of Pine Lake)

r

r This peak is just east of Peak 12,575n. It was ascended in 1912 by W. L. Huber and C. S. Brothers.

Mount Tom (13,649; 13,6526)

r

r First ascent may have been made about 1860 by Thomas Clark. Class 2 from Gable Creek northwest of the peak. Start up Gable Creek on the west side and follow the tramway of an old mine; then cross over the creek and follow a good trail up the west slope to mines just below the summit. From there it is easy going to the summit.

r r

Basin Mountain (13,229; 13,240n)

r

r Climbed by Norman Clyde September 15, 1937. Class 2 from Horton Lake by the north slope of the mountain or the north ridge.

r r

Peak 13,216 (13,200+n; 1.3 N of Mount Humphreys)

r r
Mount Humphreys Region

Peak 12,222 (12,228n; 1.2 E of Mount Humphreys)

Mount Emerson (13,226; 13,225n)

The north face was climbed by Norman Clyde, July 3, 1926.

Piute Crags

The Piute Crags comprise the ridge that extends eastward from Mount Emerson. They may be identified on the Mount Goddard Quadrangle as the series of summits between Mount Emerson (13,226) and Peak 10,666 which is north of North Lake. Since the crags are close to a road, and a trail parallels their base, they offer easy access. At the end of the North Lake road (9,400) is a public campground from which climbs of the crags may be made. There are several other campsites along the trail leading to Piute Pass.

There is much loose rock on the crags so caution must be observed. Loose rock was sent down from Crags 1 and 2 by blasting from a miner at 1 i,800 in 1953. Ice equipment will not be needed during the summer months, although ice may be found in the couloirs in the spring. Otherwise the couloirs to the various notches from which the climbs are made are about class 3. Sketch 13 identifies the crags. See also SCB, 1951, 156.

Crag 1

Class 5. First ascent September 2, 1950, by Charles Wilts and George Harr. Ascend the couloir between Crags 1 and 2, that passes to the west of the White Tower, to the notch. Approach the crag from the northeast and traverse diagonally upwards across the 700 north face on ladder-like holds to the summit ridge. Traverse to the summit.

Crag 2

Route 1. Class 5. First ascent August 27, 1949, by Ray Van Aken, George Harr, and Ray Osoling. From the notch between Crags 1 and 2r ascend (class 4) the west face to a belay point at the junction of the west face and the west arête. The route goes diagonally upwards and to the right on the smooth slab (class 5, 4 pitons). At the end of this pitch gain the west arête and follow it to the summit.
Sketch 13. The Piute Crags from the south.

**Route 2. Class 5.** First ascent September 3, 1950, by George Harr and Charles Wilts. From slightly below the Crag 1-2 notch traverse onto the south face and ascend a series of interesting pitches to the summit.

**Route 3. Class 4.** First descent September 3, 1950, by George Harr and Charles Wilts. From the Crag 2-3 notch climb over loose, high angler rock up the east-northeast side.

**Crag 3**

**Route 1. Class 4.** First descent July 7, 1951, by Ray Van Aken, Wallace Hayes, and Lou Hayes. From the Crag 2-3 notch ascend the arête to the summit.

**Route 2. Class 4.** First ascent July 7, 1951, by Ray Van Aken, Wallace Hayes, and Lou Hayes. From the Crag 3-3' notch ascend over looser rock (class 3) to the base of the east face. Traverse around the corner to the north and ascend upwards and traverse onto the north face (class 4). Scramble to the ridge and follow it to the summit.

**Crag 3'**

Crag 4’

Class 5. First ascent September 1949 by George Harr, Charles Wiltsr and Ellen Wilts. May be climbed from the Crag 3'-4' notch.

Crag 4

Class 5. First ascent September 1949 by Charles and Ellen Wilts, and George Harr. From the Crag 4'-4 notch traverse across the steeper north face to a platform. A delicate pitch leads straight up to the eastern ridge from which an easy pitch-and-a-half brings one to the summit.

Crag 5

Class 3. First ascent by Norman Clyde, 1927. Traverse from the Crag 5-6 notch onto the south ridge and follow it to the summit. There is a minor but sharp summit between Crags 5 and 6; this is class 4, and was ascended June 17, 1950, by George Harr and Ray Van Aken. It may be traversed west-east or vice-versa.

Crag 6


Route 2. Class 2. First descent June 17, 1950, by George Harr and Ray Van Aken. Ascend talus and ledges to the summit from the Crag 6-7 notch.

Crag 8

This is a prominent red pinnacle on the south face of Crag 7. Class 3. First ascent July 21, 1951, by Ray Van Aken, George Harr, and Charles and Ellen Wilts. Ascend the couloir to the east of Crag 7 and branch...
from this to the notch behind the crag. Climb over sound rock up the northeastr face to the ridge from which the summit is easily reached. There are some excellent long climbing routes on the south face of this crag.

Crag 9

The higher of two pinnacles to the east of Crag 8.

Route 1. Class 5. First ascent July 21, 1951, by Charles and Ellen Wilts, George Harr, and Ray Van Aken. From the notch between Crags 10 and 11 climb the south ridge (2 pitons) over sound rock.

Route 2. Class 3. First descent July 21, 1951, by Charles and Ellen Wilts, George Harr, and Ray Van Aken. From the broad couloir to the east of Crag 9 gain the notch on the uphill side of the crag. Ascend the ridge to the summit.

Crag 10

The lower of two pinnacles to the east of Crag 8. Class 3. First ascent July 21, 1951, by George Harr, Charles and Ellen Wilts, and Ray Van Aken. Ascend the gully between the two crags and climb the north face over loose rock to the summit.

The White Tower

A prominent point of white rock as seen from the trail. Class 1. First ascent August 27, 1949, by Ray Osoling, George Harr, and Ray Van Aken. Scramble to the top over loose rock from the talus on the west side.

No recorded ascents have been made of Crags 7, 11, and two towers on the northeast side of Mount Emerson.
Piute Pass to Kearsarge Pass

BETWEEN PIUTE and Kearsarge passes is to be found some of their finest high country of the Sierra. Most of this high country lies within the Kings Canyon National Park. It is indeed fortunate that this magnificent wilderness area, which is not penetrated by a single road, is thus preserved for study and enjoyment by man. Climbers are probably in the minority among users of the area, and it is not likely that their little cairns, their footprints on the sandy shelves, and the evanescent tracks left upon the sparkling snowfields will cause significant changes in the landscape.

For the organization of the Guide the section from Piute Pass to Kearsarge Pass has been divided into five areas, as has been indicated in Sketch 2 in the Introduction. The areas are:

1. LeConte Divide and Adjacent Peaks. This includes the peaks west of the LeConte Divide to Helms Creek, and those south to Crown Mountain.

2. The Evolution Region and the Black Divide. This includes the main crest from Piute Pass to Bishop Pass, the Glacier Divide, the Goddard Divide, the Black Divide, and some neighboring peaks.

3. The Palisades Region. This includes the main crest from Bishop Pass to the Thumb, peaks south and east of Bishop Creek (south fork), the Inconsolable Range, and a few adjacent peaks.

4. Kings Canyon Region. Here are described Spanish Mountain, the peaks of Kettle Ridge, the White Divide, and Monarch Divide, and rock climbs of the lower canyons of the Middle Fork and South Fork of the Kings.
Palisades to Kearsarge Pass. The main crest is covered from Mount Bolton Brown, just south of the Palisades, to Kearsarge Pass, together with peaks south and east of those in the other areas. Included are the peaks around Amphitheater Lake, Cirque Crest, Goat Crest, Arrow Ridge, and the peaks around Sixty Lake Basin.

In using maps of this section, it is well to remember that the old Goddard Quadrangle has gross inaccuracies, particularly in the area of the Middle Fork of Bishop Creek. The new Goddard Quadrangle shows the geographical features properly, but gives names for some of the lakes that are not in agreement with local usage. Sketch 14 gives the names of the lakes of the Bishop Creek region.

http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/piute_pass_to_kearsarge_pass.html
Piute Pass to Kearsarge Pass

The LeConte Divide and Adjacent Peaks

Fred L. Jones

THE TERRAIN of the LeConte Divide and environs is not as rugged as that of the higher peaks to the east; neither is it as austere. It has not been frequently visited by climbers.

Approach may be made from the east from Goddard Canyon, via Florence Lake and the South Fork of the San Joaquin River, or from the west by way of tributaries of the North Fork of the Kings, where a road runs from the Kings to Dinkey Creek and Shaver Lake. Hell-for-Sure Pass crosses the LeConte Divide from Fleming Creek to Goddard Canyon. This pass, at an elevation of 11,280 ft, was crossed from east to west in 1898 by LeConte and Cory, who followed their directions of a sheep herder. They continued to Crown Valley and then to the Kings Canyon.

Routes on the Peaks

Peak 11,567 (11,600 ft; 1 NW of Mount Henry)

Class 1. First ascent July 10, 1951, by Art J. Reyman. He ascended the west slope and the northwest ridge.

Mt. Henry (12,197; 12,196 ft)

A Climber’s Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge
It is not known when or by whom the first ascent of this peak was made.

**Route 1. Northeast ridge.** Class 2. First ascent July 7, 1939, by a Sierran Club Party led by Dave Brower. They ascended the northeast side from Goddard Canyon.

**Route 2. Southwest slope.** Class 2. First ascent August 14, 1939, by a party of eight via the southwest slope from Fleming Creek.

**Route 3. West slope.** Class 2. First ascent August 29, 1940, by Bob Helliwell and Alden Bryant via the west slope from Blaney Meadows. The climb was described as long and tedious.

Sketch 14. Local Names of Lakes of Bishop Creek and Environs

via the north arête on a traverse from Peak 11,567. Keep on the arête or to the east in order to bypass large blocks and notches. Drop to ther west when the west ridge is reached and walk to the summit plateau.

Peak 12,100+ (12,154n; 1 SE of Mount Henry)

Class 2. First ascent July 10, 1951, by Art Reyman via the northwestr ridge on a traverse from Mt. Henry.

Peak 12,023 (12,040n; 0.5 NW of Red Mountain)

The LeConte Divide and Adjacent Peaks
Red Mountain (11,933; 11,951n)

Class 1. First ascent July 11, 1951, by Art Reyman. He ascended the south slope from Red Mountain Basin.

Peak 11,833 (11,760+n; 0.3 S of Hell-for-Sure Pass)

Class 2. First ascent July 11, 1951, by Art Reyman via the northwest ridge. It is a rough knife-edge climb from Hell-for-Sure Pass.

Peak 12,028 (12,034n; 1.5 S of Hell-for-Sure Pass)

Class 2. First ascent July 13, 1951, by Art Reyman via the northwest arête from Red Mountain Basin.

Peak 12,038 (12,011n; 1.5 SE of Hell-for-Sure Pass)

Class 2. First ascent July 13, 1951, by Art Reyman via the west ridge on a traverse from Peak 12,028.

Peak 12,254 (12,265n; 2.5 W of Mount Goddard)

Class 3. First ascent July 13, 1951, by Art Reyman via the west ridge. It is a knife-edge traverse from Peak 12,038. He descended into Laker Basin to the southwest.

Mount Reinstein (12,595; 12,604n)
No record of ascent is available, though Art Reyman believes he saw a cairn on its summit while on Peak 12,254.

Ward Mountain (10,395; 10,392n)

No record of ascent is available.

Mount Shinn (11,013; 11,020n)

First ascent August 8, 1925, by Francis A. Corey.

Peak 11,139 (11,148n; 2 W of Mount Henry)

Class 1. First ascent July 15, 1951, by Art Reyman via the south and southeast slopes.

Fleming Mountain (10,750; 10,762n)

No record of ascent is available.

Peak 11,900+ (11,967n; 1.2 S of Hell-for-Sure Pass)

Class 1. First ascent July 12, 1951, by Art Reyman up the broad southwest slope.

Peak 11,275 (11,286n; 0.7 SE of Devils Punchbowl)

First ascent July 1, 1936, by W. M. Wyman and eight others. It is class 1 from the west, south or east slopes.
Peak 11,394 (11,398n; 1.5 SE of Devils Punchbowl)

Class 2. First ascent July 12, 1951, by Art Reyman along the north ridge from the saddle.

Maxson Dome (9,538)

First ascent August 15 (year not given, but it was prior to 1933 when the second ascent was made) by Waldo Knight and M. Kaye, a survey party for the San Joaquin Light and Power Co. It is class 1 from all sides.

Blackcap Mountain (11,159; 11,559n)

This is a USGS benchmark so it has been climbed.

Peak 10,624 (10,622n; 1 SW of Scepter Pass)

First ascent in 1951, by a USGS survey crew. Class 1 by west, south or east slopes.

Loper Peak (10,059)

This peak is a USGS benchmark so it has been climbed.

Finger Rock (9,500; 9,606n)

Castle Peak (10,668; 10,677n)
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

Volcanic Cone (9,180; 9,180n)

Crown Mountain (9,339; 9,318n)

http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/leconte_divide.html
Piute Pass to Kearsarge Pass

The Evolution Region and the Black Divide

Alan M. Hedden and David R. Brower (1942), andr Alan M. Hedden (1953)

Well back in the central High Sierra is the Evolution region, where there are concentrated examples of almost every essential part of the High Sierra scene—cathedral-like Mount Huxley as an example of finer peak sculpture, the Enchanted Gorge for the majesty of exotic cliffs, Mount Goddard for superb views, and the Devil’s Crags to provide the challenge of jagged summits. This area has remained the most remote section of the entire crest, having no one-day route into its heart for pack animals and being hardly more accessible to knapsackers.

The Evolution region lies sixty miles southeast of Yosemite Park and twenty miles southwest of the town of Bishop. Almost all of the area is within the Kings Canyon National Park. The peaks are here divided geographically into four sections: (1) peaks of the crest, (2) peaks west of the crest, from north to south through the Goddard Divide, (3) peaks west of the crest and south of the Goddard Divide, and (4) peaks east of the crest. This, the natural grouping of the peaks, is used in describing them. The Mount Goddard quadrangle of the United States Geological Survey (either the 1937 or the 1951 editions) or the map accompanying Starr’s Guide should be referred to for cartographic detail.

Historical Résumé

Had sheepherders spent their hours keeping notes instead of sheep, more might be known with respect to who, in this as in many other parts of the Sierra, may have been the first white—or nearly white—mountaineer. The first known record of exploration is that of the California Geological Survey party, led by William H. Brewer, who approached the region from the north in August of 1864. Four members of this party attempted to climb Mount Goddard from a camp about twenty miles distant, and of these, two, including Richard Cotter, companion of Clarence King, on that same year’s first ascent of Mount
Tyndall, all but made it. In thirty-two hours, twenty-six without food, Cotter covered the forty-mile round trip, missing the summit by just 300 feet, according to Brewer’s journal. Next of record is John Muir, who in about 1873, according to Francis P. Farquhar, climbed the highest mountain at the head of the San Joaquin, probably Mount Darwin.


In 1879 Lil A. Winchell’s explorations took him to Mount Goddard, which he climbed with L. W. Davis; he returned to repeat the ascent in 1892. But the region remained virtually unknown and incompletely explored until July of 1895. Then, hoping to find a high mountain route between the Kings River Canyon and Yosemite Valley, Theodore S. Solomons and Ernest C. Bonner, left Florence Lake on a memorable expedition into the region. Following sheep trials, they knapsacked up the south fork of the San Joaquin River and continued on into the Evolution Creek valley. At the head of what is now called Colby Meadow, a prominent mountain shaped like a sugarloaf suggested to Solomons a name, The Hermit, which he promptly bestowed. From here, also, he named the flat-topped Mount Darwin, Evolution Creek, Evolution Lake, and, to complete the homogeneity of the place names and honor the respective philosophers, Mounts Huxley, Fiske, Spencer, Haeckel, and Wallace. Retracing their steps to the junction of Evolution Creek and the Goddard Canyon, the two men turned south and followed the canyon to its source, southwest of Mount Goddard, and made the third ascent of this peak. Dropping down the southeast side of the Goddard Divide, Solomons and Bonner entered the deep Enchanted Gorge, passing through a gateway formed by two black metamorphic peaks, which became Scylla and Charybdis, and descended Disappearing Creek, then Goddard Creek, and finally the Middle Fork of the Kings to Tehipite Valley. Thus they succeeded in finding a route from Yosemite to the Kings. The complete route has seldom been used since, but the place names Solomons left behind—and almost all in the region are his—are some of the most pleasing in the Sierra.


The rest of the story follows a familiar pattern. Explorers had done their work. Then came the decades of scrambling, with the last of their important summits going down before the onslaught of members of high-mountain outings. As yet, relatively little roped climbing has been done in the region, except among the Devil’s Crags. A glance at the rugged terrain, however, is enough to convince a rock climber that there are still many excellent and difficult routes to be pioneered.

Topography and Its Relation to Climbing

In the Evolution Region, as in nearly all parts of the High Sierra, there is an easy way to climb almost every peak. In general, the peaks on the crest are most easily climbed from the southwest, while the northeast sides present higher, more vertical faces for the rock-climber. Ther small glaciers of the region provide interesting...
routes for climbs of several peaks, such as Darwin, Goddard, and Mendel.

For the most part, the peaks of the crest are of granite. A substantial part of the region is composed of dark metamorphic rock, resembling the highly metamorphosed ancient lava of the Ritter Range. The Black Divide, Scylla, Charybdis, the Enchanted Gorge, Mounts McGee, Goddard, and the Black Giant are all, as many of the names imply, of dark rock, much of it beautifully sculptured. The beauty is not so apparent however, to the rock-climber, who will find much of the metamorphic rock unsound and easily fractured. Chutes in the Devil’s Crags are particularly unsound and should be avoided during storms.

Approaches and Campsites

From the east. Bishop Pass, 11,989 (11,972n). At an elevation of 9,750r (9,755n) feet, leave the end of the road which follows the South Fork of Bishop Creek. From here a horse trail continues from South Laker over Bishop Pass into Dusy Basin, then down into LeConte Canyon. Excellent campsites are found in Dusy Basin and at Grouse and Littler Pete meadows in LeConte Canyon.

From the east. Piute Pass 11,409 (11,423n). From the roadhead at North Lake the Piute Pass trail leads past Mount Humphreys and descends through Humphreys Basin and Hutchinson Meadow, following Piute Creek to its junction with the South Fork of the San Joaquin River. Here the Muir Trail may be followed southward into the Evolution Region. Campsites are both good and plentiful anywhere along Piute Creek or the upper reaches of the South Fork, particularly on the Evolution Creek.

From the east. Lamarck Col, 13,000 (12,920+n). Lying 1/4 mile southeast of Mount Lamarck on the main Sierra crest, this high pass provides the most direct route for knapsackers into the Evolution Region. Because of the difficulties encountered by many climbers who did not follow the exact route, it will be described in detail. At the end of the road above North Lake leave the Piute Pass trail and follow a fork to the south (left) toward Grass Lake. Shortly after reaching the level of the first bench, on the northwest side of Grass Lake, the trail again divides. Here, follow the west (right) branch to Lower Lamarck Lake, skirting its southeastern end and continuing on westward toward Upper Lamarck Lake. Shortly before arriving at this latter lake, the trail forks into a western branch, which continues on to the lake, and a southern branch, which leads toward the spur forming the southern boundary of this upper lake basin. Follow the southern branch over this spur via a series of switch-backs, which ascend a north slope in a southerly direction reaching the first of several sand flats. (When crossing from west to east it is highly advisable to follow the side of the spur rather than to drop directly down to Upper Lamarck Lake.) Proceed in an southwesterly direction to the second sand flat, at which point the crestr comes into view. Continue toward what appears to be a low gap to the southwest. On the north (right) side of this and somewhat beyond the low wall in which the gap is situated is a prominent butte with a large monolith. Continue up and through the gap, beyond which is a third sand flat which leads into the final cirque basin, after curving around the southern side of the butte with the monolith. At the head of this cirque valley is a tiny lake, to the south of which can be seen a jagged spire somewhat higher than its neighbors. To the east (left) of this spire is a low’ notch, which leads to Bottleneck Lake. To the northwest (right) is a series of three or four notches in the arête leading up to Mount Lamarck.
The first notch to the northwest (right) of the jagged spire is Lamarck Col, and it is best reached by passing to the south (left) of the lake, climbing between it and the tall spire, and then ascending directly to the col itself.

When the summit has been reached, the “trail,” now no more than a route, drops down toward the upper lakes of Darwin Canyon. After a descent of several hundred feet, it ends altogether save for an occasional duck. It is not imperative to follow the ducks, for any route may be followed over the talus and down the north side of Darwin Canyon. From the lower end of the canyon a ducked trail contours south to the Muir Trail at Evolution Lake. Fair campsites for small groups may be found around the lowest lake in Darwin Canyon. Excellent campsites are available on Darwin Bench halfway between the mouth of Darwin Canyon and Evolution Lake.

From the west. At Florence Lake, where the road from Fresno ends, a pack trail follows the South Fork of the San Joaquin River, joining the Muir Trail in Blaney Meadows; the Muir Trail ascends the South Fork into Goddard Canyon, and leads up Goddard Canyon to the Evolution Creek junction. The Muir Trail, following Evolution Creek, winds up a steep canyon, passes Evolution, McClure, and Colby meadows and continues on past Evolution Lake and over Muir Pass. With its vast supply of pasturage, wood, water, and scenery, Colby Meadow is one of the finest camping spots in the Sierra.

On the south shore of the large peninsula which enters Evolution Lake from the east and about one hundred yards from the trail there is a fairly well sheltered campsite for a small group, with feed for a few animals, firewood, and an excellent view of the southern half of the lake.

From the West. Hell-for-Sure Pass, 11,280+ ft. One of the first routes of access to the Evolution country, but now seldom used, is the trail from Dinkey, on the North Fork of the Kings, over Hell-for-Sure Pass, and down to Goddard Canyon. Knapsackers may easily travel directly up Goddard Canyon, taking the east branch for the Evolution Peaks or Muir Pass, or taking the main branch south to Mount Goddard. Martha Lake, at the head of Goddard Canyon, is above timberline.

From Blackcap Basin it is readily possible to cross the saddle (11,850 ft; 11,800+ ft) just north of Mount Reinstein. There is good camping at Lake 10,237 (10,212 ft), near the head of Goddard Creek.

From the South. Mather Pass (12,050). The John Muir Trail descends Palisade Creek to its junction with the Middle Fork of the Kings River. Just north of this junction is Grouse Meadow, a perfect little alpine valley. For climbs among the nearby Devil’s Crags there is an excellent site high up on the south fork of Rambaud Creek at about 10,200 feet.
Passes

The Goddard Divide. Muir Pass. The only trail that crosses the Goddard Divide is that over Muir Pass, 12,059 (11,955n). At the summit of the pass is the John Muir Memorial Shelter. Through the generosity of George Frederick Schwarz, the Sierra Club was able to build this stone hut in 1930. Since it is high above timberline, its fuel supply is strictly limited. Signs along the trail at the bottom of the pass advise the traveler of the last place to get wood before beginning to climb to the hut. Every extra branch that he can carry to the pass is just so much added insurance that the weary hiker, caught in a sudden summer storm, will find warmth in the hut.

Knapsackers may cross the Goddard Divide at the gap southwest of Wanda Lake. It is also practicable to go from Davis Lake to Martha Lake by a route west of Mount Goddard. A pass north of Davis Lake may be crossed to upper McGee Lake.

The Black Divide. Black Giant Pass, 12,200+ (12,200+n). Although not a pass of the Black Divide, Black Giant Pass offers the best approach to the Enchanted Gorge from Muir Pass. It is an easy, broad knapsack pass, located about 1/2 mile due west of the Black Giant and about 1/4 mile north of a large lake at the headwaters of Disappearing Creek.

The Black Divide. Rambaud Pass, 11,500+ (11,553n). There is an old trail which ascends Rambaud Creek and crosses the Black Divide, dropping down its western slopes to Goddard Creek.

Glacier Divide. At the eastern end of Glacier Divide are two rocky knapsack passes connecting Piute Pass with Evolution Lake. From Piute Pass go southwest to Muriel Lake. Above the head of the southeastern tributary to this lake is a low notch, The Keyhole, 12,550 (12,560+n), so named because the climber may pass through it rather than over it. On the western side the slope drops sharply to a small lake basin, which is descended to its junction with Darwin Canyon. (See Sketch 14.)

Another tributary to Muriel Lake, which enters from the southwest, leads to a large basin filled by Goethe Lake, 11,511 (11,528n). Above the southeastern end of this lake a small tributary stream comes down the ridge wall from a small notch, Alpine Col, 12,200+ (12,320+n), which leads into the same lake basin and on down to Darwin Canyon, thence to Evolution Lake.

Peaks of the Crest

The Evolution Region and the Black Divide
Peak 13,162 (13,160+n; 1.5 S of Piute Pass)

Class 2. First recorded ascent July 3, 1939, by James R. Harkins, Fred L. Toby, and Herbert L. Malcolm on a traverse of the crest from north to south; class 3 by this route, but estimated as class 2 from the head of the north fork of Lamarck Creek.

Mount Lamarck (13,450+; 13,417n)

Class 1. First ascent in the summer of 1925 by Norman Clyde, who found it an easy scramble from the south.

Peak 13,252 (13,248n; 1 NE of Mt. Darwin)

Class 2. First recorded ascent by Norman Clyde in the summer of 1925; however, he found a cairn.

Mount Darwin (13,841; 13,830n)

The broad, sandy, nivated summit table of Mount Darwin is a fascinating indication of what the ancient Sierra was like, before the great uplifts and the extensive glaciation. It is particularly odd that an unsteady-looking pinnacle, well detached from this summit plateau and southeast of it, is actually the highest point.

The first ascent on record was made by E. C. Andrews, Geological Survey of New South Wales, and Willard D. Johnson, of the United States Geological Survey.

Route 1. West wall. Class 3. First ascent by Andrews and Johnson, August 12, 1908. Although their exact route is not known, it seems to parallel closely the following. Near the south end of Evolution Lake ascend a small tributary east of the lake, through meadows leading to the base of the west face. Here, cross to the left (N) to the base of the third of three talus fans, counting from south to north, and ascend the chute from which the fan emanates. Midway to the crest this chute branches, and the right-hand (S) branch is followed to the saddler just above the first pinnacle on the right (S) side of the chute. By a series of easy ledges drop down into the middle chute and continue up its right-hand (S) side to an indented trough, which leads to the crest of the main shoulder. The only difficulty yet to remain in traversing to the nearly flat plateau is a
knife-edge which must be straddled.

Variations are possible for most of this route. The chutes forming the first and second talus fans may also be climbed; thus avoiding the knife-edge. The climber must be prepared, however, to cross from one chute to another frequently. No one has yet determined which combination of chutes and traverses is best.

**Route 2. Via glacier and west ridge.** Class 3. First ascent by Robert M. Price and Peter Frandsen, August 21, 1921 (SCB, 1922, 284). Between Mounts Mendel and Darwin there is on the ridge a large notch with a smaller one about one hundred yards farther to the east. In an approach from the north via Darwin Canyon the glacier presents a problem. If weather is favorable and adequate equipment is available, the quickest route is directly up the glacier to the bergschrund, over it if possible, and on up to the smaller, eastern notch. The easier but longer route is to skirt the right (west) side of the glacier and then traverse above it from west to east to any of several routes to the small notch. The route then proceeds along the ridge to the summit plateau and thence to the higher, southeastern end.

**Route 3. North face.** Class 3 to 4. First ascent by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge, July 5, 1934. Two ribs or arêtes run down the north face, partly dividing the glacier. The east (left) side of the east rib, which lies one-quarter of a mile west of the northeast ridge, is ascended a short distance over talus and snow. The route then goes up onto the rib itself and ascends, via easy ledges, up to the point where the rib merges with the face. Here a moderate pitch is passed by a crack to the left (east), and the final climb to the summit may be made via a small chimney having an overhanging south wall and containing several large, loose blocks. (See Sketch 15.)
**Route 4. Northeast ridge.** Class 4. First ascent in 1945 by Austin, Pabstr and Wilts who climbed some 500 feet of difficult class 4 terrain to their summit. (See Sketch 15.)

**Route 5. East face.** Class 3. Climbed from Blue Heaven Lake (above Midnight Lake) by members of the 1950 Base Camp. Above the glacier on the east side a snow tongue and rock rib were climbed to the summit plateau.

**Summit Pinnacle.** Class 4. The detached summit pinnacle was first climbed by E. C. Andrews on August 12, 1908; he descended into the chimney east of the arête between the summit and the pinnacle, thence reaching the top by means of a “monstrous icicle,” referring doubtlessly to the snow tongue which lies in the chimney well into the summer. Ascent of this chimney fortunately does not depend upon the existence of the icicle. It is a rock scramble permitting several variations, exposed just enough to warrant a belay for the unsteady.

**Peak 13,332 (13,280+; 3/4 SE of Mt. Darwin)**

**Mount Haeckel (13,422; 13,435n)**

**Route 1. West shoulder.** Class 2. On July 14, 1920, a party of nine climbers, led by Walter L. Huber, left Evolution Lake, going around the west shoulder of Mount Spencer, and climbed into a small basin between Mounts Spencer and Huxley (SCB, 1921, 144). From this point they crossed along the left of the basin and then ascended a chute to the top of a ridge which joined the crest just south of the summit. The only serious obstacle remaining, a vertical face of 30-40 feet, was surmounted with the help of a number of excellent hand-holds.

**Route 2. South ridge.** Class 2. First ascent by Edward O. Allen, Francis E. Crofts, and Olcott Haskell, also on July 14, 1920. From the small basin between Mounts Spencer and Huxley, proceed directly across this amphitheater, climb to the saddle between Mounts Haeckel and Wallace, and traverse the many sawteeth to the summit. Allen, Crofts, and Haskell were quite surprised to find that they had been beaten to the summit by a matter of minutes. Yet, still greater was their surprise on learning that they had not, as they had intended, climbed Mount Darwin.

**Route 3. North face.** Class 3. The first ascent was made on July 20, 1933, by Jack Riegelhuth, who climbed up the northwest chimney and then the north face to the top.
Route 4. Northeast ridge. Class 2. On August 8, 1935, Merton Brown, O. H. Taylor, and Angus E. Taylor reached the larger of two aretes on the northeast side of the summit. Here Brown climbed the slabs to the lower and then the higher summit. The Taylors ascended the arete, traversing to the crest at about the point where the west shoulder joins it.

Mount Wallace (13,328; 13,377n)

On an early edition of the Mount Goddard quadrangle, Mount Wallacer was erroneously placed upon the 13,701 (Mount Mendel, 13,691n) foot peak northwest of Mount Darwin. On the 1937 edition it is still, according to Solomons who named it, incorrectly marked as the peak at the junction of the Goddard Divide and the crest. The true Mount Wallace is peak 13,328 (13,377n), on the crest about one-half mile north of the junction of the Goddard Divide and the crest.

Class 2. First ascent by Theodore S. Solomons, July 16, 1895. From the amphitheater west of the summit, climb up a rock-filled chute that leads to a splintered wall whose highest point is the summit. A class 3 route leads up the north ridge from the east.

Clyde Spires (13,300+; 13,267n)

Between Mounts Wallace and Powell on the main crest are two small granite spires. The north spire (13,267n) was first climbed on July 22, 1933, by Norman Clyde, Jules Eichorn, Theodore Waller, Helen LeConte, Julie Mortimer, Dorothy Baird, and John D. Forbes. The south spire was ascended the same day by Clyde, Eichorn and Waller and proved to be a difficult slab climb. The spires were named after the party’s leader.

Mount Powell (13,361; 13,360+n)

Route 1. South plateau. Class 2. First ascent August 1, 1925, by Walter L. Huber and James Rennie. From Helen Lake climb an intervening ridge of about 12,200 feet, and drop down several hundred feet into a small cirque. Then climb the ridge just south of the summit and follow the long, barren plateau to the top. The final peak is a huge summit block where “a careless step might result in a drop to the glacial ice far below, under the north face.”

Route 2. Northwest chute. Class 3. First ascent by Norman Clyde on June 29, 1931, who described it as “an interesting climb from the northwest.” Members of the 1950 Sierra Club Base Camp proceeded past...
Moonlight Lake and ascended snow patches between the Powell ridge and the eastern lateral moraine. They crossed the snow below the flat turretr which marks the northeast end of Mount Powell and climbed up ther southernmost of two large, parallel cracks in the west wall for twenty feet, after which they climbed the face of the wall itself toward the south.

**Route 3. East ridge.** Class 3. First ascent by Norman Clyde (date unknown) who climbed from Blue Lake on the middle fork of Bishop Creek via the col between Mounts Powell and Thompson.

**Mount Thompson (13,494; 13,480+n)**

The first ascent of this peak, which marks the junction of Thompson Ridge with the main crest, was made by Clarence H. Rhudy and H. F. Katzenbach in 1909. Their route is unrecorded. Several routes have since been used.

**Route 1. Northwest face.** Class 3. First ascent, June 30, 1931, byr Norman Clyde.

**Route 2. Southwest face.** Class 2. First ascent by Jack Sturgeon onr August 14, 1939. Ascend via some steep slopes and a narrow chute onr the face itself.

**Mount Gilbert (13,232; 13,103n)**

Although correctly marked on the 1937 edition, Mount Gilbert has been incorrectly labeled on the 1951 edition of the Goddard quadrangle; it is actually Peak 13,103n which is 3/8 mile west of the incorrectly labeledr summit.

**Mount Johnson (12,850; 12,868n)**

Class 2. First ascent by Norman Clyde on September 15, 1928. Clyder desk ribed it as an “easy ascent except for a chute which may at timesr icy; no cairn.” On August 14, 1939, Jack Sturgeon followed the crestr and climbed it via the southeast slopes, reporting a cairn but no record.

The Evolution Region and the Black Divide
r Class 2. Jack Sturgeon, who ascended the peak on August 14, 1939, by way of the western arête, reported that it had previously been climbed twice by Norman Clyde.

Mount Goode (13,068; 13,092n)

r Class 1. The first recorded ascent, via the southeast face, was made by Chester Versteeg, July 16, 1939; a cairn was found but no record. An ascent of the south ridge was made by Jack Sturgeon on August 12, 1939, while traversing the crest from Bishop Pass to Mount Thompson.

Peak 12,903 (12,916n; 1/2 S of Mount Goode)

r Class 1. On July 12, 1939, Chester Versteeg made the first recorded ascent of the higher summit. Norman Clyde, in 1936, climbed the lower but more difficult summit, which Versteeg considered to be class 3.

Peaks West of the Crest:

r the Goddard Divide and North

Peak 12,026 (12,045n; 1.5 SW of Hutchinson Meadow)

r Class 2. The first ascent of this northernmost peak of the Glacier Divider was made on July 4, 1939, by Marion Abbott and Scott Smith.

Peak 12,592 (12,582n; 2.2 S of Hutchinson Meadow)

r Class 2. First ascent on July 14, 1933, by Hans Helmut Leschke, Dr. Hans Leschke, and Helen LeConte from the north.

Peak 12,251 (12,241n; 1.5 NE of Evolution Meadow)
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

Class 2. Weldon Heald and Alden Smith made the first ascent on July 5, 1939.

Peak 12,486 (12,498n; 1 S of Golden Trout Lake)

Class 3. First ascent by Glen Dawson and Neil Ruge on July 11, 1933.

Peak 12,961 (12,971n; 1.8 S of Golden Trout Lake)

Class 2. Northwest of the Goethe Glacier and lying on the crest of the Glacier Divide, this peak was first climbed by R. S. Fink on July 25, 1942. The second ascent was on August 29, 1942, by August Frugé, Neal Harlow, and William A. Sherrill, who climbed from McClure Meadow to the saddle between Peak 12,961 (12,971n) and Peak 13,250+ (13,240+n) to the southeast and thence directly to the summit.

Muriel Peak (12,951; 12,942n)

Class 2. First ascent on July 8, 1933, by Hervey Voge, who described it as "an easy rock-climb from the west."

Mount Goethe (13,277; 13,240+n)

Class 1. First recorded ascent by David R. Brower and George Rockwood on July 6, 1933. This, the highest point on the Glacier Divide, is an easy ascent from the east.

Peak 12,741 (12,720+n; 1 W of Mt. Lamarck)

Class 2. First ascent July 5, 1934, by David R. Brower, who climbed the south side and descended the west ridge. There is some scrambling among the large blocks of the summit ridge. Brower could not determine which end of the ridge was higher.
Ridge 11,922 (12,355n; 1.5 NE of Colby Meadow)

First ascent July 29, 1941, by members of the Sierra Club knapsack trip.

Mount Mendel (13,701; 13,691n)

For many years this peak was erroneously labeled Mount Wallace on the topographic map. On the 1937 edition it bore only the elevation and soon acquired among climbers the rather inelegant title of “Ex-Wallace.” On the 1951 edition it has at last been named correctly and thus assumes its rightful place among the great Sierra summits.

Class 3. The first recorded ascent was by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, and John Olmstead on July 18, 1930; they found a cairn. The chimney by which they ascended was considered more difficult than the climbing on Darwin. It is quite possible that the first ascent was made in error by climbers, seeking the summit of Darwin, who started climbing, as so often been done, too far north along the shores of Evolution Lake.

The easiest route up Mount Mendel is readily apparent from The Hermit. About 400 yards along the Muir Trail south of the peninsular jutting into the lower end of Evolution Lake, a massive buttress of glaciated granite descends from the peak, in contrast to the extensive accumulation of talus bordering the lower half of the east shore. Ascend this buttress for 1,500 feet, diagonally up and southward, until the glaciated granite gives way to the broken rock of the summit mass. Then continue upward by crossing right (SE) to a talus fan, the first fan southeast of the buttress, and ascend this fan into the chute from which it emanates, keeping in the north branch of the chute, to the notch at its head. Thence, traverse north along the broken and serrated ridge to the summit.

Two of the most spectacular snow couloirs in the Sierra descend the north face of Mount Mendel. So far as known, these have not been attempted. Climbers who would explore them are urged to investigate them cautiously from Mount Lamarck to the north or from Darwin Canyon at the base.

The Hermit (12,352; 12,360n)

The cleanly sculptured granite of The Hermit culminates in an inviting summit that dominates the view from Colby Meadow. It was first ascended by George R. Bunn on July 28, 1924, but his route is unrecorded.
The final summit monolith was ascended in 1925 by James Rennier and Norman Clyde. Bunn had declared that the “20-foot summit slab” was unclimbable. However, it was climbed by sixty-five persons in three days in July, 1939. Because of the exposure, a rope is recommended for the final pitch. A shoulder stand is usually used and dexterity is required.

Route 1. From Evolution Lake. Class 2. The easiest and most often used route is to cross just below Evolution Lake, contour to the base of the peak, and climb the eastern talus chute to the notch just south of the summit, traversing from there to the summit. From the base of the peak on the east side it is also fairly simple to work out on the more exposed face and then directly to the summit.

Route 2. From McGee Canyon. Class 2. Ascend McGee Canyon for about 10,400 feet and proceed east up the first tributary to the small lake that feeds it; then, ascend over talus and scree to the top of the chute heading in the notch south of the summit, from which proceed as in Route 1. Special care must be taken to avoid loosening the rocks in the chute.

Route 3. North ridge. Class 3. First ascent on July 9, 1936, by Richard G. Johnson and Peter Grubb. From Colby Meadow ascend through forest and over easy, open granite to a shelf on the north shoulder, usually sheltering a snow bank, just beneath the high-angle granite slabs of the final 1,000 feet of the summit. From here traverse to the left (E) under the cliffs and proceed diagonally up and westward over granite slabs, now more broken and at a lower angle, to the final summit pitch which must be reached by traversing to the south of the peak, 25 feet below the summit.

Route 4. Northwest face. Class 3. First ascent July 9, 1939, by Harriett Parsons, Madi Bacon, and Maxine Cushing. Follow Route 3 to the snow-bearing shelf. Here a broad ledge extends up and around the west face to a chute leading back to the shoulder, but above the cliffs that shelter the snow. Continue over the steep but broken ridge to the summit, as in Route 3.

Peak 12,341 (12,35012; 1/2 SE of The Hermit)

This peak erroneously bore the name of The Hermit on an earlier edition of the map. It was first climbed by Dr. Grove Karl Gilbert and Mr. Kanawyer, the packer, in July, 1904. It is a class 1 climb by either the southeast ridge or from the saddle on the northwest ridge.

Mount Spencer (12,428; 12440+n)
Class 1. First climbed by Robert M. Price, George J. Young, H. W. Hill, and Peter Frandsen on August 20, 1921. About one-half mile above Evolution Lake ascend one and a half miles east along a tributary creek, reaching lake 11,592 ft. Climb over broken granite and talus to the east saddle of the peak, thence westward and up to the summit. The saddle is just as easily reached from the lake basin east of Sapphire Lake.

Mount Fiske (13,560; 13,524 ft)

Named in 1895 by Theodore S. Solomons for John Fiske, historian and philosopher, this peak was first climbed by Charles Norman Fiske, John N. Fiske, Stephen B. Fiske, and Frederick Kellet on August 50, 1922 (SCB, 1923, 417).

Route 1. Southeast ridge. Class 1. First ascent by the above party on August 10, 1922. From Muir Pass contour at about 12,000 feet around the southeast side of Peak 13,223 (13,231 ft), and then drop down about 200 feet to the small lake to the northwest of Helen Lake. A steady climb then leads to the southeast peak, whence the ridge may be followed to the summit.

Route 2. Southwest ridge. Class 2. First ascent on August 18, 1939, by Jack Sturgeon, who traversed from Peak 13,233 (13,231 ft) and the basin to the south, ascending by way of the southwest arete. The southwest saddle is easily accessible from the group of lakes, nestled between Mounts Fiske and Huxley, which drain into Sapphire Lake. The nivated slope east of this ridge provides a class 1 route.

Mount Huxley (13,124; 13,117 ft)

Class 2. First ascent by Norman Clyde on July 15, 1920. From the trail on the first bench above Sapphire Lake, ascend the southern side of the western shoulder until the angle steepens appreciably; then continue up the shallow chute, which empties almost on the shoulder itself, to the slabs and large blocks of the sharp summit arete. Descent of the southwest chute and face may require the use of rope.

Peak 13,223 (13,231 ft; 1 N of Muir Pass)

Class 1. First ascent in 1926 by Nathaniel Goodrich and Marjory Hurd. This is an easy traverse from either Muir Pass or Mount Huxley. The best opportunities for rock-climbing are found on the east face and in the small cirque to the north of the summit, between Mounts Huxley and Fiske, but no climbing has yet been reported there.
Peak 12,800+ (12,800+n; 3/4 W of Muir Pass)

First ascent by Jack W. Sturgeon in 1939. Route and class unknown.

Peak 13,012 (13,016n; 1/2 SW of Muir Pass)

Class 2. The first ascent was made by M. H. Pramme and T. F. Harms on August 12, 1929. It is an easy climb directly from Muir Pass via the northeast shoulder or by the snow chute which heads in very looser rock just under the flat summit. By way of the southwest ridge it is a class 1 climb, but the ridge itself is remote. The summit affords a striking view of Scylla, Charybdis, and the Ionian Basin.

Peak 13,070 (13,081n; 1 S of Wanda Lake)

Class 1. First ascent by Jack Sturgeon on August 16, 1939. Held to be an easy climb by the northeast ridge or almost anywhere on the southern or western slopes.

Mount Goddard (13,555; 13,568n)

The early history of the Evolution Region is, in many respects, the early history of Mount Goddard. Many were the explorers who were enamoured of its summit, and for good reason: it was not only one of the highest summits in the range, but also it was well isolated, distinctly set off to the west of the crest, and could promise a unique viewpoint and admirable triangulation station for topographic mapping. Members of the Whitney Survey viewed the peak from far to the south in 1864, named it in honor of civil-engineer George Henry Goddard, attempted to climb it twice, and estimated the height to be 14,000 feet. It was not climbed, however, until fifteen years later, when, on September 23, 1879, Lil A. Winchell and Louis W. Davis made the first ascent.

Routes. There are class 1 routes up the talus of the southwest ridge from Martha Lake, and up the east slopes rising from the head of the northernmost tributary to Goddard Creek. Neither of these routes is readily accessible, however, from the most frequented trails. Walter Starr, Jr., has given a detailed description of the class 2 approach from the Muir Trail, which is essentially as follows:
At the lower end of Wanda Lake, ford the outlet, cross the saddle to the southwest at its lowest point, and descend into the rocky basin beyond. Continue almost due south across the basin, fording several smaller streams some distance above Davis Lake, and proceed toward the very steep spur which ascends from the floor of the basin southward to the crest of the Goddard Divide. Rock-climbers may proceed straight up the very steep top of the ridge from the floor of the basin. Those who prefer snow climbing may work their way onto the buttress higher up from the snow on the right. A short distance below the crest, where the buttress becomes almost perpendicular, a ledge leads around the left side, above the long snowfield, and comes out on the crest to the left of the point at the top of the buttress. From here a long talus slope leads up the crest to the summit. There is a double summit, the farther peak being higher.

**Peak 12,908 (12,913n; 1 N of Mt. Goddard)**

First ascent by R. S. Fink on July 27, 1941, by an unrecorded route. Second ascent on September 2, 1942, by August Frugé, William A. Sherrill, and Neal Harlow whose route was as follows:

Class 3 to 4. After leaving the Muir Trail at the outlet of Wandar Lake, proceed over the low saddle to the southwest and thence across the large basin toward the ridge connecting Peak 12,908 (12,913n) with the crest of the Goddard Divide. Ascend this ridge via the steep, blunt buttress to the southeast of the summit. Then follow the ridge, passing to the right (E) of a large pinnacle and then out onto the left (W) side of the ridge, traversing onto the steep south face of the summit mass itself. A narrow chimney then leads up to several chutes which may be followed to the summit.

**Peak 12,279 (12,290n; 1 NW of Wanda Lake)**

Class 1. First ascent by Kenneth Adam, 1933. This peak may be easily climbed from the north or east.

**Mount McGee (12,966; 12,969n)**

Mount McGee dominates the westerly panorama from Muir Pass. Sharply sculptured, dark with metamorphic rock, it is situated just far enough from the Muir Trail to have discouraged most climbers who might have liked to reach the summit. It may be approached from Goddard Canyon, Colby Meadow, or from Wanda and Davis lakes. It was first climbed July 1st, 1923, by Roger N. Burnham, Robert E. Brownlee, Ralph H. Brandt, and Leonard Keeler; their route is unrecorded.
Route 1. North chute. Class 4. First ascent by Glen Dawson, Charles Dodge, Jules M. Eichorn, and John Olmstead on July 16, 1930. From Colby Meadow proceed up McGee Canyon directly toward the summit, turning southwest when past timberline to climb over moraine and talus toward a spur at the base of the west peak, which resembles an massive inverted shield. Ascend the ridge that circles west of the residual glacier and which deflects westward the drainage from the mouth of the steep snow-chute cleft in the north face of the peak, but well to the west of its center. It is usually possible to ascend this chute along the edge, where the snow has melted back from the rock wall. The last 800 feet of the chute is exposed enough to merit use of a rope for safety. From the notch at the top of the chute, proceed east along the well-broken ridge to the summit.

Route 2. West face. Class 2. First ascent by Glen Dawson, Neil Ruge, and Bala Ballantine on July 17, 1933. From Goddard Canyon ascend the east fork of North Goddard Creek to about 11,000 feet. Proceed northwest to the base of the west face and ascend the talus to the summit of the west peak, traversing from there into the notch at the head of Route 1.

Route 3. South chute. Class 1. (Probably the route of the first ascent.) From the lower end of Davis Lake ascend the broad fan of scree and talus to the prominent chute ending in the notch between the west and east summits. Ascend the scree in this chute to the notch and proceed east to the summit. The sliding nature of the scree makes this route a bit disagreeable as a means of ascent.

Peter Peak (12,514; 12,543n)

Class 2. First ascent on July 11, 1936, by Peter Grubb and Richard G. Johnson. Ascend to the northeast notch from the head of McGeer Canyon, and climb the ridge to the summit. Grubb and Johnson also climbed the eastern buttress of the peak when making the first ascent. The metamorphic rock of the peak, and particularly of the chute leading to the notch, is quite unsound. One must “hold the mountain together with one hand while he climbs it with the other.”

Peak 12,200 (12,258n; 1/4 NE of Peter Peak)

First ascent July 11, 1936, by Peter Grubb and Richard G. Johnson.

Peak 12,407 (12400+n; 3/4 SE of Emerald Peak)

First ascent July 9, 1939, by Alden Smith and Grace Nelson.
Emerald Peak (12,517; 12,546n)

r

Class 2. First ascent made by Norman Clyde, Julie Mortimer, and Eleanor Bartlett, August 8, 1925. From Evolution Meadow ascend the steep south wall of the canyon and continue over the gradual slope above to the north base of Peak 11,764. It is perfectly feasible to climb this peak first, traversing the northwest ridge of Emerald Peak to its summit. It is much easier, however, to contour a mile at 11,000 feet (timberline) until almost due west of the peak, thence climbing over talus and nivulated slope to the top.

Peak 11,764 (11,767n; 1 NW of Emerald Peak)

r

First ascent in 1925 by Norman Clyde; see Emerald Peak above.

South of Goddard Divide

r

South of the Goddard Divide, between LeConte Canyon and the Whiter Divide, is the wildest part of the High Sierra. Perhaps no more than a dozen parties have been through the Enchanted Gorge since its discovery. Of the Ragged Spur peaks, only Scylla is known to have been climbed and that but once. Place names are rather far between. From the old map it is apparent that the Geological Survey parties were not too familiar with the topography. Lack of trails, rugged terrain, high altitude and low timberline, remoteness, and the lack of any great number of mountaineers who would prefer to cope with these conditions—all this has contributed to the final result: a knapsacker’s wilderness, as black, ragged, and enchanting as its place names.

Peak 12,700+ (12,760+n; 3/4 SW of Mt. Gilbert)

r

First ascent by Jack W. Sturgeon in 1939. Route and class of climb unreported.

Peak 12,100 (12,148n; 1/2 SW of Mt. Johnson)

r

First ascent made in 1939 by Jack W. Sturgeon via unreported route.
Peak 12,700+ (12,760+n; 3/4 S of Muir Pass)


Scylla (12,943; 12,939n)

Class 1. First ascent by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge on July 2, 1934. From Muir Pass, cross Black Giant Pass and contour an elevation of about 12,000 feet along the north slope of the Ionian Basin, past Lake 12,002 (11,824n) to the lake just north of Scylla. From here the route to the summit is an easy scramble, the best rock-climbing near the peak being found on the sharp crags to the east.

Charybdis (13,077; 13,091n)

Class 2. First ascent on July 7, 1931, by Anna and John R. Dempster. Cross Black Giant Pass to the large lake at the head of the east fork of Disappearing Creek and follow up the northeast ridge, going somewhat to the south of the ridge at times. There are several chutes on their north face, any of which may be used.

Peak 12,818 (12,800+n; 1 E of Muir Pass)

Class 1. First ascent by Kenneth Davis and John U. White on August 3, 1938, from Muir Pass via the west slope.

Black Giant (13,312; 13,330n)

Class 1. First ascent by George R. Davis in 1905. Along the western side the climb is little more than a rock scramble. On the eastern approaches, however, the whole ridge is sharply broken off. Any ascent from this side would be considerably more difficult.

Peak 13,046n (1.5 E of Charybdis)
No records are available. The name Mt. Locker has been suggested for this peak to commemorate Charles Bays Locker who was killed while descending with three companions from a first ascent of a small peak one-half mile east, Peak 12,360+.

**Peak 13,260 (13,271; 2 SE of Charybdis)**

**Route 1. North ridge.** Class 3. First ascent by Charles Bays Locker, Karl Hufbauer and Alfred Elkin on July 23, 1951. From the northwest, climb to the saddle between peaks 13,260 (13,271) and 13,000+ (13,046) to the north, and thence along the ridge to the south, keeping 50-100 feet below the top of the crest. The final summit climb is up the north side of the 150-foot snow chute which lies just below the summit on the west face.

**Route 2. Southeast ridge.** Class unreported. First ascent by Charles Bays Locker, Don Albright, Gary Hufbauer, and Karl Hufbauer on July 15, 1952. From the small lake 3/4 mile to the southeast of the summit, proceed up the west (left) side of the southeast ridge, following it tor the summit.

**Peak 12,114 (12,125; i W of Langille Peak)**

Class 2. First ascent by George R. Davis and George W. Hoop on August 19, 1907. This is a class 2 climb by either the southwest ridge or on a traverse from Langille Peak.

**Langille Peak (11,981; 11,991)**

Class 3. The first ascent of this magnificent example of finely sculptured, gleaming granite was accomplished in August 1926 by Nathaniel L. Goodrich, Marjory Hurd, and Dean Peabody, Jr. The route of their ascent is unrecorded, possibly via the west ridge. They descended by way of the south face, a vast glaciated granite apron of polished smoothness (class 3). The first ascent by this latter route was made by Glen Warner and Suzanne Burgess on August 5, 1941. From LeConte Canyon ascend the tributary opposite the Dusy Branch and climb the cirque wall just north of the prominent waterfall above 11,000 feet. Traverse to the north onto the west ridge, and follow this to the summit.

**Peak 12,699 (12,652; 1.3 S of Mt. Goode)**
Class 1. First recorded ascent by Chester Versteeg on July 14, 1939. An easy climb either by the southeast ridge or from Dusy Basin on the south.

Peak 12,566 (12,520+; 2.2 E of Charybdis)

Class 2. First ascent August 5, 1941, by Glen Warner and Suzanner Burgess. From LeConte Canyon ascend the tributary opposite Dusyr Branch to 10,500 feet, climb the chute leading to the notch just south of the summit. A narrow snow chute provides a class 3 route up the north face.

Peak 12,400+ (12,483; 1.5 N of Ladder Lake)

Class 2. First ascent July 13, 1952, by Charles Bays Locker, Karl Hufbauer, and Don Albright. A difficult class 2 climb from Ladder Lake via the south arête.

Peak 12,935 (12,920+; 1 SE of Charybdis)

No records are available.

The Citadel (11,700+; 15,744; 1.5 NW of Grouse Meadows)

Route 1. West ridge. Class 2. First ascent on June 24, 1951, by Richard Searle and William Wirt. Proceed from Ladder Lake directly up the west ridge to the summit.

Route 2. Northeast face. Class 4. First ascent by Donald Goodrich and Robert Means on June 24, 1951, arriving on top several hours after the party of the first route. Ascend the northeast face via several gullies and chutes to the summit ridge, climbing southwest along this ridge over the subsidiary East Peak and traversing along the ridge to the higher West Peak.
Route 3. North wall. Class 4. First ascent by Charles Bays Locker, R. J. McKenna, S. Hall, D. E. Albright, and Karl G. Hufbauer. Ascend to the base of the northwest buttress from the eastern end of Ladderr Lake. Climb up the first chute on the northwest side of the peak. From the top of the chute proceed along the ridge to the left (E) directly to the summit.

Peak 12,015 (12,009n; 1.5 W of Grouse Meadow)

Route 1. Southeast arete. Class 2. First ascent on August 9, 1934, by H. B. Blanks and B. S. Kaiser who climbed from the Rambaud Lake Basin via the southeast arete. This party made a complete traverse of ther ridge from east to west.

Route 2. North ridge. Class 2. First ascent by this route by Charles Bays Locker, Donald Albright, Gary Hufbauer, and Karl Hufbauer. Climb from Laddei Lake in a southeasterly direction to the north ridge and follow it to the summit; no particular obstacles are encountered.

The western summit of this peak (approx. 12,000) was also climbed by both parties and is a class 1 traverse from the eastern summit.

Peak 12,400+ (12,425n; 1 SW of Ladder Lake)

Class 3. First ascent on August 9, 1934, by H. B. Blanks and B. S. Kaiser who traversed the ridge from the east.

Peak 12,767 (12,760+n; 1 NW of Wheel Mtn.)

First ascent by Charles Bays Locker, Donald Albright, and Gary and Karl Hufbauer, July 15, 1952. Class 3 from the crest of the Black Divide.

Peak 12,400+ (12400+n; 1/4 SW of Peak 12,425n)
Wheel Mountain (12,778; 12,781n)

Rambaud Peak (11,023; 11,040+n)

Devil’s Crag (12,612—11,000; 12,600+n—11,240+)

The Devil’s Crag is about two miles southwest of Grouse Meadow and form the southern end of the Black Divide. They are slightly over a mile in length, have a northwest-southeast trend, and the highest crag is at the northern end. Although several systems of numbering have been employed, the system here used numbers only those crags which rise 150 feet or more above their notches (see Sketch 16). Since this nomenclatorial system is rather recent, the numbers in the crag registers will not always be in agreement. There are eleven crags, and the routes of ascent lie, generally, in their neighboring chutes. From the southwest west the chutes which are fairly easy to climb are those between crags 2-3-4, 6-7-8-9-10.

Sketch 16. The Devil’s Crags from Rambaud Peak.
From the northeast, they are 2-3, 4-5, 8-9.

Highest (12,612; 12,600+n)

Route 1. Southwest face. Class 3. First ascent made by Charles Michael on July 21, 1913. Two chutes on the southwest face cross each other forming an “X.” Climb the left (northwest) chute to the junction, where the most direct route is to continue on straight across, following the upper right-hand chute nearly to the summit and then swinging to the left to the arête and following it to the top. An alternate and less difficult route is to take the upper left-hand chute at the intersection, following it to the arête, and climbing along the arête to the summit.

Route 2. Northwest arête. Class 3. First ascent by Jules Eichorn, Helen LeConte, and Alfred Weiler on July 25, 1933. Follow the crest of the northwest arête to the summit.

Route 3. Northeast face. Class 4. First ascent by Raffi Bedayan, Kenneth Davis, and Jack Riegelhuth on August 5, 1938. From the upper end of the lake at 10,450 feet on Rambaud Creek, proceed southeast half a mile to the notch just under and northeast of the face; this is the roping-up point. Traverse to the right (northwest) and up over somewhat looser rocks of a delicate pitch to the chute marking the middle of the face, planning the traverse so as to end well above the overhanging lower portion of the chute. Ascend this chute toward the summit over rocks that is fairly sound. Belay positions are good for the most part. When 35 feet below the summit, cross to the north wall of the chute, ascend a high-angle pitch to the summit ridge, and scramble to the top.

Crag 2 (12,350)

Class 4. First ascent by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, and Ted Waller on July 26, 1933. Climb the first chimney south of the main peak on the northeast side. It is most difficult in the lower portion. From the notch the ridge is easily climbed to the summit. From the southwest it is possible to climb the chute that heads between Crag 2 and the subsidiary crag to the north. From the notch follow the arête.

Crag 3 (12,350)

First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyder on June 24, 1934.
Route 1. From the northeast. Class 4. Climb the northeast chute between Crags 2 and 3, remaining on the floor of the chute and passing under the huge chockstone. From the notch climb the first pitch by the left side of the broken face. Contour out and up on the broad, sloping ledge on the north face to the north arête. Climb the left side of this tor the northwest arête, and thence to the summit. With little more difficulty the northwest arête may be followed from the notch.

Route 2. Traverse. Class 4. The southeast arête may be descended 250 feet without too much difficulty. Descend a sloping, broken ledge heading on the east side of the peak. Follow this down and to the south, traversing easterly to a very broad shelf when the angle becomes too severe. Climb down an additional 60 feet just west of the southeast arête. Ensuing overhangs will suggest roping down into the notch between Crags 3 and 4. Descend via the southwest chute. If this route is used for an ascent, pitons are necessary for safety while climbing the largest overhang, 100 feet above the notch.

Route 3. From the southwest. Class 3. Climb the southwest chute between Crags 2 and 3 to the 2-3 notch, following Route 1 from the notch.

Crag 4 (12,250)

Class 3. First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyde on June 24, 1934. From the southwest reach the 3-4 notch and follow the much-broken westerly side of the northwest arête to the summit. Descend the same route. A traverse would involve an 800-foot descent on a steep, ledgeless face.

Crag 5 (12,250)

Class 3. First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyde on June 25, 1934. From the northeast follow the arête from Crag 5 to the 5-6 notch, and ascend the west side of the northwest arête.

Crag 6 (12,250)

Class 3. First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyde on June 25, 1934. From the northeast follow the arête from Crag 5 to the 5-6 notch, and ascend the west side of the northwest arête.
Crag 7 (12,250)

Class 3. First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyde on June 25, 1934. From the northeast walk up the northwest arete from the 6-7 notch, which has been reached by the traverse of Crags 5 and 6. Descend the southwest chute, roping down in the lower portion.

Crag 8 (12,250)

Class 2. First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyde on June 25, 1934. From the southwest climb the southwest chute between Crags 7 and 8, and follow the northwest slope to the summit.

Crag 9 (11,950)

First ascent by Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn on August 1, 1933.

Route 1. From the northeast or the southwest. Class 4. Climb to the notch between Crags 8 and 9 by either the northeast or southwest chutes. From the notch climb up and slightly to the west onto the arete, which is followed just below and to the north of its crest to the summit.

Route 2. Traverse. Class 4. A traverse involves a little climbing and two rope-downs into the 9-10 notch, from which one may descend by traversing Crag 10.

Crag 10 (11,950)

First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyde on June 23, 1934.

Route 1. From the northwest. Class 4. Traverse Crag 9 to the 9-10 notch and follow the west side of the northwest arete to the summit.
Route 2. From the southeast. Class 2. Climb the northeast chute between Crags so and 11 to the 10-11 notch. Traverse to the northwest, over a subsidiary crag and along the arête to the summit.

Crag 11 (11,950)

Class 4. First ascent by David R. Brower, Hervey Voge, and Norman Clyde on June 23, 1934. Climb the northeast chute between Crags tor and 11 to the 10-11 notch. From the notch climb up toward the summit over rather exposed pitches on somewhat broken rock.

Mount Woodworth (12,214; 12,219n)

Class 2. First ascent by Professor Bolton Coit Brown on August 1, 1895, who climbed straight up the southwest spur, and above this followed along the base of the jagged spires bounding the southern face. Descent was along the easterly edge of the south face.

Peaks East of the Crest

Peak 12,317 (12,320+; 3/4 SE of Piute Pass)

Class unreported. First ascent on July 3, 1939, by Jim Harkins, Fred Toby, and Bert Malcolm. Contour from Piute Pass to the north shoulder and then follow this to the summit.

Peak 12,702 (12,707n; 1.5 SE of Piute Pass)

Class 2. First ascent by John Cahill and Neil Ruge on July 9, 1933, from the north fork of Lamarck Creek.

Peak 11,257 (11,215n; 1 SE of Lake Sabrina)
r Class 1. First ascent by Chester Versteeg on July 21, 1939. An easy climb from Lake Sabrina southeast and up to the summit monolith, where a shoulder stand is required.

Table Mountain (11,707; 11,696n)

r

r Class 1. First ascent October 24, 1931, by Norman Clyde. The easiest route is along the trail between George and Tyee Lakes until beneath the summit rock pile.

Peak 13,202 (13,198n; 1 SE of Mount Lamarck)

r

r First recorded ascent of this peak was made by Norman Clyde in 1925, but the route and class are not recorded.

Peak 11,827 (11,800+n; 2 S of Lake Sabrina)

r

r Class 2. First ascent by Angus E. Taylor on July 29, 1936. This peak is an easy climb from the west and south except near the summit.

Peak 11,943 (11,936n; 1/2 W of South Lake)

r

r First ascent 1918 by Walter L. Huber.

Peak 12,993 (12,993n; 1.5 N of Mount Thompson)

r

r First ascent by Norman Clyde on November 7, 1931. A class 1 climb along the east arête and a class 2 climb from the southeast face.

Peak 13,100+ (13,120+n; 3/4 E of Mount Haeckel)
The first ascent of this peak was on June 27, 1931, by Norman Clyde.

Peak 13,029 (13,000+ n; 1 NE of Mount Thompson)

First ascent by Chester Versteeg on July 24, 1939. He did not climb the summit block.

Peak 13,350 (13,323 n; 3/8 NE of Mount Thompson)

Norman Clyde made the first ascent of this peak on September 6, 1931.

Peak 13,000+ (13,300+ n; 1/2 N of Mount Powell)

First ascent of this peak was accomplished by Walter L. Huber and James Rennie on August 1, 1925.

Hurd Peak (12,224; 12,219 n)

Class 2. First ascent by H. C. Hurd in 1906, route unknown. It is a class 2 climb from Treasure Lakes via either the east or west face.

References

Various authors. *Sierra Club Bulletin*: 1895, 221-37; 1896, 287-8; r 296-337; 1899, 259; 1901, 255; 1905, 233, 235, 237; 1913, 52-3; 1921, r 117, 140, 144-6; 1922, 251, 275-89; 1923, 417-20; 1924, 87-90; 1926, r 220-2, 250-1, 306-7; 1927, 379-80; 1928, 81; 1929, 87; 1931, 104-5; 1932, r 19-20; 1934, 19-23, 93-5, 97; 1936, 102; 1938, 14; 1939, 127-8; 1942, 128.

Photographs: (References are to annual magazine numbers of *Sierra Club Bulletin*)
Piute Pass to Kearsarge Pass

The Palisades Region

Hervey Voge and David R. Brower (1939), and Hervey Voge (1953)

Although there are higher peaks in the Sierra Nevada than those found in the Palisade Group, there are none of bolder or more rugged relief, or more beautifully alpine in character. The Palisades divide the watersheds of the Middle Fork of the Kings and the branches of Big Piner Creek; they rise 6,000 feet above LeConte Canyon to the west and nearly two vertical miles above the desert environs of the little town of Big Pine to the east. The Palisades form the second highest group in the Sierra. They are about 40 miles northwest of the higher Muir Crest peaks which culminate in Mount Whitney, and about 70 miles southeast of Yosemite. North Palisade (14,242) is the third highest peak in California. Four other points of the Palisade range exceed 14,000 feet in elevation: the northwest peak of North Palisade (about 14,200), Mount Sill (14,162), Middle Palisade (14,040), and Thunderbolt Peak (about 14,040). Split Mountain (14,058), formerly known as South Palisade, is actually apart from the Palisades, and is not included in this area of the Guide.

Historical Résumé

The Palisades were named by the California State Geological Survey in 1864; the heights of North Palisade and Split Mountain were determined at over 14,000 feet in 1875 by the Wheeler Survey. Four years later the late Lil A. Winchell was in the region and named Mount Winchell, after his father’s cousin, geologist Alexander Winchell, and Agassiz Needle, after naturalist Louis Agassiz. It is hardly possible that “Agassiz Needle” could have been intended for the gradual peak which bears the name on the topographic map, and, in order to correct a false impression, the name “Mount Agassiz” has been substituted. Winchell also gave the name “Duly Peak” to North Palisade, but the name did not become established. In 1895 Professor Bolton Coit Brown renamed it “Mount Jordan”; but finally the original “North Palisade,” an admirably descriptive name, was restored, and David Starr Jordan was commemorated by a peak on the Kings-Kern Divide.
Approaching the Palisades from Cartridge Creek in 1903, Joseph N. LeConte, with James S. Hutchinson, James K. Moffitt, and Robert Pike, attempted to climb North Palisade. Stopped in their first attempt, they turned to Mount Sill, and met with success on its easier slopes. The following day, however, July 25, 1903, they discovered a route, and LeConte, Hutchinson, and Moffitt made the first ascent of North Palisade.

Middle Palisade did not fall so soon or so easily. An unsuccessful attempt was made July 20, 1919, when H. H. Bliss, A. L. Jordan and J. M. Davies climbed a peak just south of the true summit, which they named “Peak Disappointment” upon discovering their error. A storm stopped a subsequent attempt upon the correct peak. Two years later, Francis P. Farquhar and Ansel F. Hall, unaware of the earlier attempt, repeated the mistake, but upon discovering their error descended 2,000 feet and then climbed the true summit, thus accomplishing the first ascent, on August 26, 1921.

For the pioneering of new and more difficult routes in the region principal credit must go to Norman Clyde, veteran of at least a thousand Sierran ascents. Because of his residence in Owens Valley, it was natural that his interest in the Palisades should center upon routes from their glaciers. Several fourth class routes were established in 1931, when a party of nine, led by Robert L. M. Underhill, of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and Farquhar and Clyde, of the Sierra Club, introduced their proper use of the rope to the Sierra. Routes of still greater difficulty have evolved from the application of pitoncraft. One should not conclude that all the climbs of moderate difficulty have already been made, although it is likely that quite a few not reported below have been done.

Topography and its Relation to Climbing

Unlike most peaks in the Sierra, the Palisades have few easy approaches. The southwest walls, where one usually expects gradual slopes, are high; while the northeast sides are severely glaciated, with steep-walled amphitheaters and residual glaciers to complicate the climbing routes. The main Palisade Glacier is the largest in the Sierra. The peaks above it are shown in Sketch 17. For details of the topography reference is made to the Bishop and Mt. Goddard quadrangles of the United States Geological Survey, and the new Mt. Goddard and the Big Pine quadrangles.

In 1864, members of the California State Geological Survey, seeing the Palisades at a distance, spoke of them as of volcanic origin. This was wrong, however, for the area is largely of granite, very much disintegrated along lines of cleavage, but very sound and excellent for climbing. Nevertheless, the ceaseless testing and care inevitably associated with climbing above timberline are essential. The glaciers, although contributing much to the scenic magnificence of the Palisades, do not figure largely in mountaineering except as convenient avenues of approach. Crevasses are small and do not often impede progress; furthermore, the declivities are not extreme except where ice meets rock walls. In chutes and couloirs steep ice is frequently encountered, and though it may sometimes be avoided, an ice axe is necessary if peaks are approached from the northeast.
Climbers who approach the Palisades from this side should use lug soles or nailed boots, and they will find crampons useful in the couloirs. Snow and ice conditions vary greatly, and the exercise of sound judgment backed by experience is prerequisite to many of the climbs. Steep chutes and couloirs on the north of the Palisade Ridge contain much loose rock, especially when the snow is low, and rockfalls caused by man and nature are perhaps more common here than elsewhere in the Sierra.

Approaches and Campsites

From Big Pine. The quickest approach and the most dramatic, because of the sudden transition from barren desert to alpine splendor, is from the east. From El Camino Sierra (U.S. 395) in Big Pine an 11-miler road extends to an elevation of 7,900 feet at Glacier Lodge (accommodations, supplies, packing) and slightly above. A horse trail continues up the North Fork of Big Pine Creek and above Fourth Lake to Glacier Lodge Upper Camp (meals, accommodations) at 10,900 feet, with short laterals to many lakes, fine campsites, and the Palisade glaciers. One of the higher campsites is on the south shore of Sam Mack Lake. From Glacier Lodge there is also a trail into the South Fork basin, and knapsackers will find many campsites beyond the end of the trail, up to 11,400 feet under Temple Crag, and to 11,000 feet beneath Middle Palisade. There are good campsites just south of Contact Pass, by a little meadow.

From Bishop. A road follows Bishop Creek 20 miles to an elevation of 9,750 feet at Parcher’s Camp (accommodations, supplies, packing), from which a horse trail continues over Bishop Pass to fine campsites in Dusy Basin.

From the Muir Trail. The Bishop Pass lateral approaches Dusy Basin campsites. The Muir Trail passes within two miles of Middle Palisade on the way to Mather Pass and the South Fork of Kings River. Finer campsites are to be found in Little Pete, Grouse, and Deer meadows. Palisade Basin is quite desolate, but knapsackers can camp at its lower border (11,200) and also along Glacier Creek or at 10,500 feet on Palisade Creek.
Principal Passes

There are no passes over the Palisades for stock. The following passes are suitable for knapsackers or climbers. The explored passes over their crest are listed from north to south, followed by passes over the eastern and western spurs.

Jigsaw Pass (12,622'). Class 1. This pass offers a convenient router from Fifth Lake to Bishop Pass. East to west: Follow the south shore of Fifth Lake, and ascend talus and slabs south of the creek flowing from Mount Agassiz. It is well to stay about 300 feet above the stream to avoid the bluffs over which it cascades. Follow the north branch of the creek for about one mile and then angle to the left over easy ground that may be covered with snow to the pass. Jigsaw Pass is not the lowest point on the divide, but lies a few hundred yards south, beyond a minor rise. It is marked with a cairn. Peak 13,200+ separates the pass from Mount Agassiz. Descend on the west by a steep but easy chute and cross large talus blocks to the nearest point of the Bishop Pass trail, just north of Bishop Pass. West to east: As with many climbs in the Sierra, the west approach to Jigsaw Pass is a problem in choosing the correct chute. From the trail at Bishop Pass one sees that the ridge north of Mount Agassiz extends one mile to the first important peak of the Inconsolable Range (Peak 13,278n). Jigsaw Pass is just south of the lowest point of this ridge, and is separated from the low point by an angular but low peak. Proceed up the chute ending at the pass. The climb, over scree, grass, and well-fractured granite, will be found much easier than it had appeared. On the two-mile descent to Fifth Lake all one need remember is to keep south of the inlet stream and to stay well above it for the last 400 yards.

Agassiz shoulder. Class 2 to 3. As a rugged route from Palisade Glacier to Bishop Pass, Alfred Wilkes has suggested a 13,000 foot pass just north of Mount Agassiz. From the foot of the Palisade Glacier cross the east ridge of Mount Agassiz and follow the contours around to the pass. Descend a small ridge just south of the pass to the top of Bishop Pass.

Agassiz Col (13,200+). Class 2. This pass is higher and more difficult than Jigsaw Pass, but provides knapsackers the opportunity for side-trips to Mount Agassiz or Mount Winchell. East to west: Follow the Palisade Glacier trail south to Sam Mack Lake, turn west from the upper end of the lake, and proceed north of the east spur of Mount Winchell, which cannot be seen until the lake is passed. The route leads past a small lakelet, up through a series of moraines, and across the small glacier north of Winchell. The col is the low point at the head of the cirque, and is best reached by climbing to the top of the right (N) side of the glacier and then continuing diagonally up to the left over broken rock. The descent over scree and talus to Dusy Basin is not nearly as tedious as the climb back. West to east: The correct chute is the largest between Mounts Agassiz and Winchell. Ascend the chute to the col and descend the stream from the Winchell Glacier.

The U Notch (13,900+). Class 3. This spectacular alpine notch separates North Palisade from the Mount Sill massif, and from it both peaks are accessible. It is a climber’s route and is not suggested for knapsackers. For details, see North Palisade, Routes 2 and 3.
**Southfork Pass (12,400+).** Class 2 to 3. This is the lowest point between Middle Palisade and The Thumb, and provides the best knapsack route between the South Fork of Big Pine Creek and the Muir Trail near Mather Pass. *North to south:* From the end of the South Fork trail follow the easternmost of the South Fork tributaries, passing east of Brainard Lake. Work up over open granite slopes, through old moraines, and across the small glacier northwest of The Thumb. A steep, narrowing slope, which may be icy, leads to the pass; it makes little difference upon which side one chooses to pass the tiny pinnacle in the pass. A gentle lake basin extends to the south, and the stream which drains it crosses the Muir Trail. *South to north:* Follow the stream, which enters the upper of the twin lakes at the head of Palisade Creek, east a mile and a half into the amphitheater which it drains. From the first large lake in this basin it is another mile and a half due north to Southfork Pass. Beware of ice on the north side. Descending from the glacier below The Thumb, keep to the right of the stream. The trail will be found about two and one-half miles below on a bench about 200 feet above and south of Willow Lake. The trail down the South Fork is not too easy to follow. In the central part it crosses a high ridge well south of the stream.

**Contact Pass (11,640+n).** Class 1. This rounded notch just east of Temple Crag affords a good route between the two forks of Big Piner Creek. It receives its name from the contact zone between two different granites, to which it also owes its origin. *North to south:* From the upper end of Second Lake follow the contact zone to the notch. A few hundred feet below the pass is a small lake that drains into Willow Lake, with the connecting stream about one and a half miles long. Follow the north side of the stream, crossing shortly above Willow Lake, and climb about 200 feet to the trail on the bench south of the lake. *South to north:* Follow the north inlet of Willow Lake and the north branches of this inlet stream to the little amphitheater and lake at timberline just under Temple Crag, which may be identified by its beautifully castellated summit. From the lake Contact Pass is unmistakable, and the route of descent to Second Lake is likewise obvious. A fisherman's trail leads from Second Lake to Third and Fourth lakes.

**Glacier Notch (13,000+).** Class 2. The saddle between Mounts Sill and Gayley, called Glacier Notch, is not difficult on either side, and forms part of a route from the Palisade Glacier to the Sill Glacier. It is probably best to cross the level portion near Mount Sill. On the north side the chute leading to this level portion is easiest to follow on the east side.

**Knapsack Pass (11,673n).** Class 1. Although stock has been taken from Dusy Basin to Palisade Basin over the pass south of Columbine Peak (Knapsack Pass), it is recommended only for knapsackers or hikers. The divide between the two basins may also be crossed just northeast of Columbine Peak (12,000+n), or where the divide joins the Palisade wall (12,360+n). The route across Knapsack Pass is an interesting way for knapsackers to proceed from Bishop Pass to Mather Pass, and it will therefore be described in a little more detail. Leave the Bishop Pass trail in Dusy Basin where the trail swings close to the lower lakes, and head southeast across easy open country to Knapsack Pass, which is the obvious gap just south of Columbine Peak. The route from the top of the pass goes to the left, where a well-defined trail leads below the cliffs of Columbine Peak, eventually dropping into Palisader Basin. A fairly well ducked route can then be followed to the diker west of the largest and highest lake in Palisade Basin (Barrett Lakes). Travelers should be warned that there is no wood at this lake, or, in fact, anywhere in the Basin above about 11,200 feet. It is probably best to skirt the lake around its north and east banks, staying right at the edge of the lake. A stream flows into the southeastern corner of the lake. A ducked route can be followed, starting up the south bank of the stream.
the stream, and leading up the ridge and across gentle country to Potluckr Pass (12,120n), which marks the
division between Palisade Basin andr Glacier Creek Basin. The east side of Potluck Pass is quite steep; bear
to the right while descending and work off the sloping ledges to a sloper of scree, and then descend to the
north shore of the large lake, fromr which Mount Sill can readily be climbed (see Mount Sill, Route 1).r One
can camp a little ways down the steep canyon of Glacier Creekr below the lake. To continue on the route,
cross Glacier Creek at ther outlet of the lake and ascend the cliff. A ducked route starts at the baser of the cliff
somewhat to the right of the pass (Cirque Pass, 12,040+n)r and zigzags up a series of ledges to the top. From
this pass a route isr picked down to the west side of a small lake at 11,100+ (11,400+n)r in the mouth of the
cirque. Continue southeast and work down a clifftr to a small stream which may be followed to the Muir Trail
just belowr the Palisade Lakes.r

r

r Other passes. There are doubtless many routes, not described here,r which can be traversed by climbers or
knapsackers. One, known asr Chimney Pass, crosses the southwest spur of Palisade Crest at 12,500+r
(12,600+n). The gap between Palisade Crest and Peak 13,336 (13,390n)r is easily approached from Glacier
Creek, but has a cliff on the northeast.r The col southeast of Mount Winchell involves a 100 foot rappel fromr
east to west, and is therefore not practical for knapsackers.r

r

Peaks of the Crest (North to South)

r

Mount Agassiz (13,882; 13,891n)

r

r Ascended August 30, 1925, by Norman Clyde.r

r

Route 1. West slope. Class 1. This is the easiest of the major peaks ofr the Palisades. A good view of the
North Palisade and the basin of ther Big Pine Lakes is obtained from the summit. The ascent is made viar the
spur of the peak that extends to Bishop Pass. This slope might almostr be described as nivated; the route has
been used for a moonlight ascent.r

r

Route 2. Southeast face and south ridge. Class 2. See Agassiz Col, underr passes, for the approach. From the
terminal moraine of the Winchellr Glacier work up the debris-filled chute that empties just north of ther
moraine, follow the chute to the ridge north of Agassiz Col, and followr the ridge to the summit. It is also
possible to follow the east side ofr the south ridge all the way from the Col, and this route may be preferred
since it avoids the scree of the chute.r

r

Route 3. Northeast face. Class 4. First ascent by Norman Clyde.r r r r Approach by the canyon leading
directly from Fifth Lake to Mount Agassiz.r From the snowfield proceed to the foot of the Y-shaped couloir
thatr heads on the north arête, ascend half-way up to the “Y,” then climbr left (S) to the rocks. Continue
diagonally upward and half-way to the summit over the moderately difficult face, and then it will be possible to traverse right (N) to the little arête dividing the lower portion of the route from the south branch of the “Y.” Follow this arête a short distance, and then either continue along the east face to the top or cross the ridge to the less exposed northwest face and climb it to the top.

Mount Winchell (13,749; 13,768n)

The ascent of Mount Winchell is not difficult, but it is quite satisfying as the peak is rugged and the view down the sculptured western face is impressive. The first ascent was made June 10, 1923, by H. C. Mansfield, J. N. Newell, and W. B. Putnam by Route 1 (SCB, 1924, 90).

Route 1. East arête. Class 3. From near Sam Mack Lake walk up south of the east arête to within about 500 yards of the col southeast of Winchell. Climb the south face to the east arête and follow the arête westward until it becomes a knife-edge. From here an exposed route leads a short distance to the left into a steep chute which leads to the spectacular summit. A variation of this route, ascended in September, 1953, by George and Kay Bloom and Glenn Cushman, is also class 3. Go to the north of the large buttress at the end of the east arête and climb up a broken face to the top of the arête. Then follow the arête to join the usual Route 1.

Route 2. West face. Class 4. First ascent July 29, 1930, by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, and John Olmstead. From upper Dusy Basin climb a chute to the left (NW) of the summit and work up through a series of tricky chimneys.

Route 3. Southwest chute. Class 4. First ascent August 11, 1938, by W. K. Davis and Jack Riegelhuth. Start in the largest chute on the west face of Winchell that has a large buttress on the north side. From the top of the chute traverse left into a notch east of the buttress. Then climb to the top. There are many possible routes on the west face, most of them class 4. The most northerly chutes lead to the north arête, which involves class 5 or class 6 climbing.

Route 4. Southeast face. Possibly class 5-6. A descent was made August 11, 1938, by W. K. Davis and Jack Riegelhuth. Follow the skyline of Winchell as seen from Dusy Basin. The overhanging southerly buttress was turned to the east, but a rope-down was still necessary.

Winter ascent. January 10, 1938, by Norman Clyde, Morgan Harris, and David R. Brower (SCB, 1938, 44), by Route 1.
Thunderbolt Peak (13,900+; 14,040n, about)

The name of this peak was inspired by a thunderstorm which harried the first ascent party and hurried them off the ridge after a bolt had struck very close to one of the climbers (SCB, 1932, 124). First ascent by Route 1 on August 13, 1931, by Norman Clyde, R. L. M. Underhill, Bestor Robinson, F. P. Farquhar, Glen Dawson, Lewis Clark, and Jules Eichorn.

Route 1. East couloir. Class 4. From Palisade Glacier twin couloirs lead to the notch between Thunderbolt Peak and the northwest peak of North Palisade. The right (NW) one is the so-called Underhill Couloir. Climbing in these couloirs depends greatly on snow conditions, and sometimes one may be preferred over the other (see SCB, 1950, 127). Ice may be met in either. To reach the notch the left (SE) couloir may be climbed about half way up and then the arête between the two may be followed the rest of the way. However this left couloir contains much dangerous loose rock if the snow is low, and then the right one is better. About two-thirds of the way up, the floor of the right couloir is blocked by a large chockstone, which may be passed on the right up a rock wall with good holds. From the notch climb slabs leading to the north, and then work upward along the southwest side of the ridge, finally climbing to the crest and following it to the summit block. The smooth summit block may be climbed with the aid of a shoulder stand or with protection from a rope thrown over the top.

Route 2. Southwest chute, No. 1. Class 4. First ascent August 3, 1933, by Norman Clyde, John Poindexter, Philip Von Lubkin. Climb the larger chute southeast of the divide between Palisade and Dusy basins to the deep notch southeast of Thunderbolt, and proceed to the summit as in Route 1.

Route 3. Northwest ridge. Class 5. First ascent August 11, 1938, by W. K. Davis and Jack Riegelhuth. They followed the ridge from the col southeast of Mount Winchell. The first third of the route was class 3, while the rest was class 4 and 5. The first ascent was made as part of a climb from Dusy Basin to the summit of Winchell and then along the ridge to North Palisade; the total time was 13 hours.

Route 4. Northeast buttress. Class 4. First ascent by Norman Clyde on an unknown date. There is a large, ice-filled couloir west of the great northeast buttress of Thunderbolt. Cross the bergschrund about 20 feet to the right of the eastern margin of the lower end of the couloir, and cut steps up to accessible ledges, all the while being protected from falling rocks by an outward bulge in the wall of the couloir above. After a short distance on the ledges, climb upward and eastward to the crest of the buttress, and follow this to the main ridge, where an upward traverse to the right leads to a notch of the main ridge. From this traverse to the left around a shoulder and into a couloir which leads to the summit block.

Route 5. West face. Class 4. First ascent September 3, 1949, by Oscar Cook, Sylvia Kershaw, Mildred Jentsch, and Hunter and Isabella Morrison (SCB, 1950, 123). They ascended the first feasible chute on the Dusy Basin (N) side of the Palisade-Dusy basins divide. They followed the right (SE) branch of the chute.
until it ended in an ice-filled chimney, and then worked to the right to an arête which was left higher up by a vein of rotten quartz that led to next chute to the southeast. Ar chockstone in this chute was passed on the left by a class 4 pitch. Ther chute led to a spur which was followed to the main ridge west ofr Thunderbolt, and from there they followed the ridge southeast to ther small notch between the twin summits of Thunderbolt. The highest r is the southwest peak, and a class 4 pitch from the notch takes on tor the east side of this.

Route 6. Southwest chute, No. 2. Class 4. From the Palisade Basinr side of the Palisade-Dusy basin divide, take the first chute east of ther divide. This chute heads between the twin summits of Thunderbolt. First descent September 3, 1949, by the party of Route 5. This is probably the easiest route of ascent of Thunderbolt yet found. About one-third of the way up the chute there is a narrow chimney choked with stones. The chimney can be passed on the right side (looking up) byr traversing out on a three-foot, scree-covered ledge. Above the chockstoner the chute divides several times. Wherever it divides, always take ther right-hand chute, looking up. Ascend the chute to the notch between the twin summits. At the notch the highest peals is to the right (SW). There is one class 4 pitch directly up from the notch which leads aroundr to the left of the peak to the flat ridge on the east side, and then a larger crack leads to the south side of the summit block.

North Palisade (14,254; 14,242n)

First ascended July 25, 1903, by J. N. LeConte, J. K. Moffitt, andr J. S. Hutchinson, by Route 1 (SCB, 1904, 1; 1921, 204; 1934, 24).

Route 1. Southwest chute (LeConte route). Class 3. See Sketch 18. Enter the chute which leads to the U Notch (this is the deep notcr southeast of North Palisade) from the southwest. This chute may ber identified from the upper end of the highest and largest of the lakes in Palisade Basin, where one sees at the base of the southwest wall ofr North Palisade three white cliffs, resembling inverted shields, and marking the entrances to two chutes. The right (SE) chute is ascended, andr would lead to the U Notch if followed to the crest. About half-way up, r at the upper end of a bare granite bottom area in the chute, where it
Sketch 18. North Palisade from the west, and Route 1.

Route 1. North Palisade from the west. The ledge widens out somewhat, is a narrow ledge running to the left (NW). Follow the ledge, which is only a few feet wide at one point, around to the next chute. Climb this second chute until progress is stopped, and then cross to the right to a third chute, which usually has snow in it and which is not visible from below, and ascend to the crest of the ridge. Then proceed northwest over large blocks to the summit.

Route 2. Southwest chute to U Notch. First ascent July 19, 1921, by Hermann Ulrichs. Enter the first chute described under Route 1 and climb to the U Notch. A steep, open, class 4 chimney leads up the west wall of the U Notch. From the top of the chimney an easy ridge leads to the summit. Clyde’s variation: Leave the chute about 100 feet or so down on the southwest side of the U Notch, climb the left (W) wall, work to the left around a shoulder, and then climb up to the right to the crest and follow it to the summit.

Route 3. Via U Notch from the glacier. Class 4. First ascent in June, 1928, by Norman Clyde (SCB, 1929, 58; 86). Follow the trail to the main Palisade Glacier and cross the glacier to the broad, steep couloir leading to the U Notch. Neither the couloir nor the notch can be mistaken; the notch is the most prominent one between North Palisader and Mount Sill. Late in the season the bergschrund may be a serious obstacle; it is usually best crossed at the northwest side of the couloir. Ice is always present in the couloir, and any snow surface should be carefully probed before it is trusted. Late in the season bare ice will be met. It is well to work up along the northwest edge of the couloir, out of range of rock or snow sliding down the couloir. About half-way up a peninsula of rotten granite is reached, and this can be followed without difficulty to the notch. From there proceed as in Route 2. An ice ax is a must for this climb. There is a real danger of rockfalls in this, as in other couloirs on the northeast side of the Palisades, especially in late afternoon, during storms, or late in the season of a low snow year. Some remarks by Norman Clyde on this subject are of interest (SCB, 1950, 127). Clyde says: “More ricocheting rocks and rockslides come down the Palisades than was the case when there was more snow. These rockfalls are rather numerous in the latter half of July and are still numerous in August. They are most common also in the afternoon, but may occur at any time—even early morning.”

Route 4. North face. Class 4. First ascent in July, 1929, by Norman Clyde. This climb starts up the steep and rather narrow couloir west of the couloir leading to the U Notch. This couloir splits the north face of North Palisade, and heads at a high notch between the summit and the northwest peak. Sometimes the bergschrund
below this couloir is nearly impassable. Climb the west wall of the couloir to the notch and follow the ridge, mostly on the southwest side, to the summit. This is said to be one of the finest climbs in the area. It is also possible, when about half-way up the couloir, to cross over to the left to the north face of the main peak and to climb this face directly to the summit.

Route 5. West chute. Class 4. First ascent July 13, 1933, by James Wright. From the extreme north portion of Palisade Basin climb up the "second large cleft which narrows in the ascent; thence up a steep snow tongue into a wide chute. At the head of this chute cross to next chute to the southeast, then climb to the pinnacle northwest of the summit. Cross to the east side of the ridge, carefully cross a notch, and proceed to the summit" (SCB, 1934, 95).

Route 6. Northwest ridge. Class 4. First ascent June 29, 1934, by Norman Clyde, David R. Brower, and Hervey Voge. From the notch between Thunderbolt Peak and North Palisade (see Thunderbolt Peak, Route 1) work upward along ledges on the southwest side of the ridge. When progress becomes difficult, climb by an intricate route behind some large blocks to the crest and follow it to the northwest peak of North Palisade. From there the best route follows the crest rather closely, crossing from side to side several times, and, in particular, crossing to the north at a prominent gendarme in order to pass a difficult gap. Variation: Cross to the northeast (glacier) side of the ridge when progress on the southwest side becomes difficult, and proceed along ledges and snow until directly beneath the main summit; then climb to the top.

Route 7. West face. Class 5. First ascent in August, 1936, by Richard M. Jones and Mary Jane Edwards. Start to the left of a black streak on the base of the mountain, cross to the right above this mark by going under a large, fallen slab on the slanting shelf, continue up a fairly wider chute to a point where it becomes very narrow, cross to the right into the next chute on a horizontal white vein, passing slightly above a larger block. Then proceed more or less directly to the summit.

Winter ascent. North Palisade was climbed March 17, 1940, by David R. Brower and Fred Kelley, by Route 3.

Northwest peak of North Palisade (about 14,200). This peak may be reached by the northeast face, by a variation of Route 4 for North Palisade, either directly up the face or by returning from the notch separating it from North Palisade. It can also be climbed by North Palisade Route 6, either from the summit of North Palisade, or from the notch southeast of Thunderbolt. The first ascent was made July 9, 1930, by Norman Clyde. The summit is a large block somewhat resembling a milk bottle; this block can be climbed without artificial aid.

Mount Sill (14,100+; 14,162n)
Route 1. Southwest slope. Class 2. First ascent July 24, 1903, by Joseph N. LeConte, James K. Moffitt, James S. Hutchinson and Robert D. Pike. Go up Glacier Creek to a cirque, then up a steep talus slope to the left to the foot of the small glacier southeast of North Palisade. Ther summit of Sill is not visible from here. There are two alternatives. One can ascend the steep cliff on the northeast side of the glacier directly to the summit, or follow up the glacier and the snowfield at its head and then work to the east over the easy slopes to the top.

Route 2. Northwest face. Class 3. Ice axe necessary. First ascent, June 10, 1927, by Norman Clyde. A number of routes are possible up the face to the summit, or up the wall to the ridge west of the summit. The bergschrund of the main Palisade Glacier may cause difficulty but can almost always be crossed along the left margin of the lower edge of the large couloir running up toward Mount Sill.

Route 3. Traverse from the U Notch. Class 4. First ascent, July 27, 1930, by Jules M. Eichorn, Glen Dawson, John Olmstead and Charles Dodge. From the U Notch (see North Palisade, Routes 2 and 3) climb about 20 feet up the southeast wall and traverse right to the southwest arete. Then follow the ridge to the summit.

Route 4. North couloir. Class 4. First ascent, September 25, 1931, by Walter A. Starr, Jr. From Glacier Notch go up the chute between the face of Sill and a small pyramid under the face. Pass through the gap and traverse on ledges across the face to an arete which leads to the crest on the north side of the summit. Then ascend the easy ridge to the summit.

Route 5. East couloir and southeast ridge. Class 3. Descended June 16, 1934, by Norman Clyde, Hervey Voge, and David R. Brower. For an ascent proceed from the east to the Sill Glacier and up to the first deep notch southeast of the summit of Mount Sill. A couloir just south of the precipitous east face leads up to this notch; this couloir is best entered by the left (SE) branch. From the notch follow the easy ridge to the summit. An ice axe is necessary.

Route 6. North buttress. Class 5. First ascent July 3, 1938, by Spencerr Austin, Ruth Dyar, Ray Ingwerson, Richard M. Jones, and Joe Momyer. From Glacier Notch cross the north couloir diagonally upward to the buttress. Climb to the ridge of the buttress and follow it about half-way to the summit. Then traverse around an awkward corner to the right (W) on a series of ledges formed by a prominent band of light colored rock. One can climb back to the ridge from several places on these ledges. On the ridge proceed up over huge blocks to the summit. This route has more exposure than Route 2, but is almost free of loose rock. A class 4 variation may be made by traversing to the right (W) earlier and farther.

Peak 13,336 (13,390; 1/2 SE of Mount Sill)
First ascent July 4, 1940, by Ted Sanford and Tom Jukes, from the south side.

Palisade Crest (13,568; 13,520+n)

This is a serrated crest carrying many jagged spires. There is no information available regarding ascents.

Peak 13,956 (13,920+n; 1/2 NW of Middle Palisade)

Route 1. North face. Class 3. First ascent June 9, 1930, by Norman Clyde. Go up the glacier north of the peak and ascend the first couloir west of the peak to the ridge. Then traverse southeast down the north face, around a buttress, and into the main chute north of the peak. Climb the ridge just west of the summit and follow the ridge to the top.


Middle Palisade (14,049; 14,040n)

First ascent August 26, 1921, by F. P. Farquhar and A. F. Hall, by Route 1 (SCB, 1922, 264).

Route 1. Southwest chute and south face. Class 3. The history of this peak reveals much disappointment that has resulted from the choice of the wrong chute. Those wishing to climb Middle Palisade instead of Disappointment Peak should take the third chute north of the angler between the Middle Palisade wall and its southwest spur, counting the chute that marks the angle as the first. The first and second chutes lead to Disappointment Peak, while the third leads to Middle Palisade, and heads just north of the little sawtooth peak between the two peaks. The route is intricate at the top, and there are a number of possible variations. Three-fourths of the way up, work to the left out of the chute and ascend the face south of the summit to the top.

Route 2. Northeast face. Class 4. First ascent by Norman Clyde, June 7, 1930. The northeast face may be climbed by means of several routes up chutes and arêtes leading up from the glacier. This face is west of the prominent buttress that projects eastward from the peak.
Route 3. Northwest ridge. Class 4. Traverse along the ridge from Peak 13,956 (13,920+n), with a few deviations to pass gendarmes. First done July 30, 1933, by Jules Eichorn and Glen Dawson.


Route 5. East face. Class 3. This route is probably the easiest way to the top of Middle Palisade; it follows a prominent chute or couloir directly below the summit and directly above the moraine that divides the glacier to the northeast of the peak (see Sketch 19). First ascent uncertain. From the top of the moraine that divides the glacier proceed onto the left hand (S) glacier. About half way up the glacier a ledge is seen leading up the buttress to the right. Follow this ledge to the broad couloir and follow this couloir until it ends; then cross over to the next couloir to the north. After a short distance this couloir divides and the left branch may be climbed to a notch on the ridge just northeast of the main peak.

Sketch 19. Middle Palisade from the northeast, and Route 5. A—Disappointment Peak, B—Middle Palisade.

Disappointment Peak (13,900+; 13,917n)

This is the highest peak just southeast of Middle Palisade, and the central one of three on that ridge. From some places it appears to be higher than Middle Palisade. First ascent July 20, 1919, by J. M. Davies, A. L. Jordan, and H. H. Bliss, by Route 1.

Route 1. Southwest chute. Class 3. Climb up the large chute just north of the prominent buttress or spur that extends to the southwest from the main ridge. The chute leads to a point just south of the summit.
Route 2. Northeast couloir. Class 3. First ascent June 20, 1930, by Norman Clyde. It was stated to be a good climb, with some difficulty at the foot of the couloir.

Route 3. East ridge. Class 3. From the north climb to the main ridgeline about midway between Southfork Pass and Disappointment Peak, and follow the ridge to the summit, sometimes deviating to the north side. William Dunmire and Allen Steck climbed Middle Palisade by this route in September, 1953, but they bypassed the summit of Disappointment.

The Thumb (13,885; 13,388n)

This peak has sometimes been called East Palisade. The old elevation was undoubtedly incorrect. The first ascent was made December 12, 1921, by W. B. Putnam (SCB, 1922, 271).

Route 1. Southeast slope. Class 2. The peak was first climbed by this slope after an approach from Birch Creek. From Birch Lake (little or no wood for camping) proceed southwest to the cirque southeast of The Thumb. The wall of the cirque can be climbed near the southwest end on ledges (class 3). Then proceed up the easy southeast slope of the peak. To climb The Thumb from the Muir Trail, follow the stream that comes from the east into the upper Palisade Lake. Cross the Sierra Crest by ascending the more easterly of the two talus-filled chimneys in the wall to the right of a small peak to the right (E) of Southfork Pass. The Thumb lies north of the main crest. Proceed up the easy southeast slope.

Route 2. Northwest face. Class 4. First ascent June 5, 1930, by Norman Clyde. Climb up a couloir of the northwest face, then circle around the final peak to the south or southeast slope.

Peaks East of the Crest

Coyote Ridge (12,246) (renamed “The Hunchback,” 12,226n)

As this peak was an old benchmark it was climbed early by a survey party.

Peak 12,378 (12,322n; 4 E of South Lake)
First ascent September 14, 1938, by Arthur Blake.

Round Mtn. (11,165; 11,188n)

Class 1. As this peak is an old benchmark it was climbed early by a survey party. The first recorded ascent was in August 1935 by Chesterr Versteeg and Mr. Stevens. It is climbed often by deer hunters.

Sugar Loaf (11,003)

No record of ascent is available. It is class 1 by inspection and is easily reached via the jeep road through Coyote Valley.

Chocolate Peak (11,712; 11,658n)

Class 1, by the southeast ridge. First recorded ascent July 16, 1939, by Chester Versteeg, who found empty cartridges on top.

Inconsolable Range, Peak 13,400+ (13,501n)

First known ascent June 15, 1927, by Norman Clyde. The name “Cloud Ripper” has been proposed. Class 1 from Seventh Lake via the east ridge, or class 2 from Green Lake via the north ridge.

Inconsolable Range, Peak 13,210 (13,278n)

First recorded ascent June 15, 1937, by Norman Clyde.

Peak 12,850 (12,834n; 1 N of Fifth Lake)
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

Climbed prior to July 1940 by Morgan Leonard.

Peak 13,200+ (13,200+n; 1/2 N of Mount Agassiz)

Climbed June 14, 1934, by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge. A class 3 ascent from Jigsaw Pass or the glacier northeast of Mount Agassiz.

Peak 12,986 (12,880+n; 0.7 W of Fifth Lake)

First ascent July 6, 1929, by Norman Clyde. The ascent from Fifth Lake by the east ridge and the north side of the east ridge is class 3. The summit is a large, smooth block.

Peak 12,981 (12,840+W; 0.8 NE of Mount Agassiz)

Route 1. Northeast face. Class 3. First ascent July 4, 1930, by Norman Clyde, who described it as a good rock climb, involving the passing of numerous pinnacles.

Route 2. West ridge. Class 3. First ascent June 14, 1934, by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge. Follow the ridge from the little glacier northeast of Mount Agassiz.

Route 3. Southeast face. Class 3. Descended June 14, 1934, by the party of Route 2. The face is cut by rough, broken chutes, which are readily climbed or descended.

Mount Gayley (13,500+ 13,510n)

This is the peak just northeast of Mount Sill. It has sometimes been called Mount Alice. The first ascent was made June 10, 1927, by Norman Clyde, by Route 1.
**Route 1. Southwest ridge.** Class 2 to 3. Follow the ridge from Glacier Notch. An alternative (Norman Clyde, 1949) is to climb from the Palisade Glacier to the ridge north of the buttress north of Glacier Notch rather than first climbing to the notch.

**Route 2. South face.** Class 3. Descended September 28, 1931, by W. A. Starr, Jr. A number of routes are possible.

**Route 3. West Face.** Class 3. First ascent June 1950 by Robert Cogburn and Ed Robbins. A fairly large gully comes down the west wall south of Gayley. Ascend on the northeast side of this gully for a short distance in a rotten chimney, and then traverse left (N) on a series of ledges underneath a prominent gendarme to a couloir that leads up to the summit ridge.

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**Temple Crag (13,016; 12,999n)**

From the north Temple Crag is one of the most beautiful mountains of the Sierra, chiefly because of the splendid sculpture of the precipices on that side, which are of dark, massive granite and rise 3,000 feet above the lower Big Pine Lakes. The north face is cut by two deep and narrow snow chimneys; the northwest face by a broader couloir. These Have carved the intervening buttresses into tremendous, fantastic towers.

The first ascent was made by the USGS in 1909, probably by Route 1. Three new routes have been established, but these have hardly touched the climbing possibilities. (SCB, 1922, 312; 1941, 141).

**Route 1. Southeast face.** Class 3. Climb the deepest chute in the broken southeast face to the gradual nivated slope above it. A shallow chute connects the top of this slope with a spectacular knife-edge leading to the summit. As a variation, the nivated slope of Route 1 may be reached by a steep crack or chimney up the west wall of Contact Pass, just south of the highest point of the pass. Fourth class climbing up the crack, or up the wall outside, leads to the slope above.

**Route 2. Northwest face.** Class 3. First ascent by Norman Clyde in 1930. Go up the chute to the right (SW) of the broad northwest couloir until it joins the latter, then follow the right wall of the main couloir to the broken face at its head. Here cross to the left of the left branch of the chute for a way and work up to the west arête of the Crag, which is followed to the summit.

The crack goes more or less up the center of the north buttress. Then climb the east wall of the snow-chimney to a point below the notch between Temple Crag and its north peak. Proceed diagonally upward and east to the summit knife edge.

Route 4. North peak from the northeast. Class 4. First ascent July 7, 1940, by John and Ruth Mendenhall. From Third Lake ascend scree and snow slopes and enter the first deep chimney or couloir southeast of the north buttress. Well up in the chimney the angle diminishes and climbing becomes class 3 until the notch looking down the northwest face is reached. To reach the north peak, first ascended by the Mendenhalls, climb north along the ridge, winding in and out of, and over rocky teeth. The summit of Temple Crag should also be accessible from the notch.

Peak 12,840 (12,861n; 1 E of Temple Crag)

First ascent Nov. 22, 1925, by Norman Clyde. Class 3 from the north.

Peak 13,530 (13,165n; 1 NE of The Thumb)

First ascent November 14, 1926, by Norman Clyde.

Peaks West of the Crest

Columbine Peak (12,545; 12,652n)

First ascent prior to 1925, by persons unknown. Class 2 by northeastr or south ridge.

Peak 12,339 (12,359n; 1 E of Giraud Peak)

First ascent by John White, August 11, 1938. A class 2 traverse from Knapsack Pass.
Isosceles Peak (12,100+; 12,280+n)

This is the most striking feature of the south wall of Dusy Basin, and is a good class 3 climb by the northwest face. The first ascent was made July 10, 1938, by Wear and Morse.

Giraud Peak (12,539; 12,585n)

First ascent September 1, 1925, by Norman Clyde. Class 2 by the east arête.

Peak 13,900+ (13,920+n; 0.4 SW of Mount Sill)

First recorded ascent July 25, 1925, by W. A. Starr and A. M. Starr. A class 2 climb from the cirque southwest of Mount Sill.

Peak 12,688 (12,692n; 1.3 S of North Palisade)

First ascent in 1925, by Ralph A. Chase.

Peak 12,200+ (12,220n; 2 S of Mount Sill)

No information is available.

References

Photographs: Palisades in general: SCB, 1896, 297 (sketch of “Mount Jordan”); 1903, plate 68; 1904, plates 2, 3, 4; 1913, plate 29; 1917, 223; 1922, 266, 267; 1934, 95; 1936, 30-31; 1938, 62-63.

North Palisade: SCB, 1904, plate 5; 1915, 262; 1921, 205 (route from SW); 1931, 14 (W face); 1934, 14 (from S), 25 (sketch of route from SW); 1938, 62-63.

Mount Sill: SCB, 1904, 11; 1924, 64; 1926, 304; 1934, 94-95.

Palisade Crest: SCB, 1934, 95.

Northwest peak of Middle Palisade: SCB, 1922, 267; 1934, 94-95.

Middle Palisade: SCB, 1914, 189; 1917, 223; 1922, 266 (route from SW); 274 (from the E); 1934, 94-95 (from the S).

Temple Crag: SCB, 1913, 55.

Next: Kings Canyon • Contents • Previous: Evolution & Black Divider
FOR WILD and rugged grandeur the Kings River Canyon Region of the Sierra Nevada has no peer. A mighty panorama, beginning at the laundring snow-fed streams, sweeping up the terrifying gorges past jagged spires, and culminating in towering granite peaks and domes presents itself to the adventurer. In this vast, largely unknown area the opportunities for exploration are limitless. With the imposing array of peaks and rock towers, and with many unclimbed summits still awaiting an ascent, the climber can fare very well.

Deepest of all Sierra canyons are those of the Kings River and its two main forks. The great canyon of the Middle Fork of the Kings River is one of the most spectacular parts of the entire Sierra. It is indeed an awe-inspiring sight to break out of the pine forest onto the rim of the Tehipite Valley and gaze across at the opposite mountain wall, fantastically cut up into multiple flying turrets soaring in the bluer haze. The thin ribbons of streams, sweeping down the myriad of steep gorges from the high country, line the mountain sides with bands of silver. The great river, four thousand feet below, sends its dull roar echoing about the valley. Here also is the graceful and symmetrical Tehipite Dome, the sentinel of this seldom-visited domain.

To the southwest stands an even greater mountain wall. Spanishr Mountain, on the edge of an immense plateau, towers 8,200 feet above the Kings River. The expanse between, dropping off in dizzy contours, is a vast jumble of deep gorges, madly cascading and falling streams, and steeply-tilted spurs, all more vertical than horizontal.
Historical Résumé

In this section of the Sierra, as well as many of the others, the sheepherders played an important part in early exploration. Perhaps the best known and certainly the most ambitious of this group was Frank Dusy. In 1869 Dusy and Bill Helm set up partnership in sheep raising at Dinkey on Dinkey Creek. On a hunting trip the same year, Dusy shot a grizzly bear near Crown Creek, and followed the wounded bear all the way down to the Middle Kings Canyon. He hiked up to the Tehipite Valley and can presumably be given credit for its discovery. Dusy also built the Dinkey trail to Crown Creek and its extension, the Tunemah trail, to the upper Middle Fork Canyon, both of which were needed to get his sheep to Simpson Meadow.

Around 1876 there was a Hydrographic Reconnaissance of the same area. Among other things, the height of Tehipite Dome was estimated.

Known primarily for his early mountaineering in the Kings Canyon area was Prof. Bolton C. Brown. Among his many achievements were first ascents, in 1895, of Mt. Woodworth and Avalanche Peak and his extensive work in exploration and route finding.

Until recent years, very little climbing has been done here. Some of the peaks above the canyon walls were climbed in past years by hikers or members of the USGS, but the more difficult peaks and the rock climbs remained untouched. In 1935 an attempt was made on the Sphinx, but it was not until 1940 that it was finally conquered. In the years that followed many of the difficult rock towers fell to Sierra Club climbing parties. First was the Obelisk in 1947, and then the towers of the Grand Dike, Gorge of Despair, and Silver Spur in 1951 and 1952. A reconnaissance party in late 1952 returned with the information that there are even more great rock towers to be ascended, which leaves the climbing in this region with a very hopeful future.

Topography and its Relation to Climbing

The canyons of the Kings River owe their astounding depth mainly to streamwork, although they have been remodeled and enlarged by intense glaciation. Often compared with Yosemite, the Kings Canyon is actually different in most respects. While Yosemite has its hanging valleys and great waterfalls, nearly all the tributary streams in Kings Canyon have cut their valleys down to so great a depth that they now descend in broken cascades engulfed in slot-like gorges, dark and narrow. The walls are further scored by great avalanche chutes. In the canyon of the Middle Fork of the Kings River, particularly on the southern wall above Tehipite Valley, the actions of streams, glaciers and the elements through countless centuries have left in their waker many fantastic spires and towers. It may be safely said that these are the finest rock climbs in the entire Sierra, outside of Yosemite Valley. The fact that they lie in lonely, barely accessible country only adds to their enchantment.
The great canyon of the South Fork also has attractions for the mountaineer. The best climbing is undoubtedly on the Grand Dike, an immense steep and broken ridge comprised of eight large towers and ar number of minor summits. Farther up this canyon may be found ther Grand Sentinel and the Sphinx, also fine climbs, which are easilyr reached from roads end.

In general, the rock in this region is fairly sound granite, but that offr a crumbling nature is occasionally encountered. Many of the rocks haver peculiar knobs protruding from their surface shells, a remarkable characteristic seldom found elsewhere. These knobs can be found on the towers above the Gorge of Despair, where they enable one to climb high-angler walls, and on the Obelisk, where they are sound enough to safely holdr a rappel rope.

Approaches

From the north. A trail leaves the John Muir Trail at the mouth ofr Palisade Creek (8,125) and follows down the Middle Fork of the Kingsr River to Simpson Meadow. Here the trail divides, one branch continuing down the Middle Kings to Tehipite Valley, the other branch rising to Dougherty Meadow, and still upward to cross the Monarch Divider at Granite Pass (10,677), then dropping down to meet the Kings River Canyon at the old Kanawyers campsite.

From the south. Starting from Giant Forest in Sequoia National Park,r the most direct route is over J. O. Pass (9,410) to Rowell Meadow, wherer two branching trails lead to the same route. One joins at Horse Corralr Meadow and the other goes over Marvin Pass (9,100) to join betweenr Horse Corral Meadow and Summit Meadow. The trail descends byr switchbacks to the floor of Kings River Canyon at Cedar Grove (4,631).

From the east. Leaving the John Muir Trail at the forks of Woodsr Creek, a trail goes down the creek to its intersection with the Southr Fork of the Kings River. After fording the river, the trail follows downr the west bank through Paradise Valley to a junction with the Kingsr River Canyon trail. Farther south on the Muir Trail, the Bubbs Creekr trail leads westward to the Kings River Canyon.

From the west. Highway 180 from Fresno leads first to Generalr Grant Grove, then continues to Cedar Grove. From here all points ofr the Kings Canyon area are accessible with the exception of the Tehipiter Valley and peaks on the north wall of the Middle Fork. A long trailr from Cliff Camp on the North Fork of the Kings River passes throughr Three Springs, Collins Meadow, and finally drops into the Tehipiter Valley, from which Simpson Meadow may be reached. At Collinsr Meadow an alternate trail branches eastward over Tunemah Passr (10,879), and descends a steep and unsafe route to Simpson Meadow.
The Tehipite Valley may be reached from Cedar Grove by crossing the Monarch Divide at Happy Gap and following down the east bank of Silver Creek. This is a dangerous route, unfit for pack animals, and is further complicated by the fact that it is often impossible to cross the Middle Fork of the Kings in the valley. In the spring, at high water, this river may present an impassable barrier at many points, as the only bridge is a suspension bridge at Simpson Meadow.

The rock climbs on the great spurs above Tehipite Valley are not easily approached from any direction. The only feasible route is to start from the South Fork of the Kings River, following up either the Lewis Creek or Deer Cove trails to Wildman Meadow. Just west of this meadow is Grizzly Creek, which can be followed along its west bank to the top of the Monarch Divide. The divide is crossed at a saddle just west of Hogback Peak. Care must be taken at this point to descend into the correct canyon. A route due north would continue past Swamp Lakes and then down into Lost Canyon, which is virtually unexplored. A one-half mile traverse to the west must be made from the saddle to enter the upper end of the Gorge of Despair. This gorge can be followed down; keeping on the north side of the Creek, until a suitabler base campsite can be found at about 8,000 feet elevation. Many fine rock climbs are available from this point.

Because of the three thousand foot precipice at the lower end, it is impossible to enter the Gorge of Despair from the Tehipite Valley. Those exploring the other great spurs and canyons in this area will find that the obstacles to cross-country traveling are often great, and sometimes insurmountable. Because of this fact, there are many rock towers that have never been closely approached, some of which may well prove to be more than worth the arduous trip to their base.

Campsites

Most of the meadows in this region provide excellent campsites, having water available all year. Especially to be recommended because of the beautiful setting are Collins Meadow in the Crown Valley, Simpson Meadow on the Middle Fork of the Kings River, and Zumwaltr Meadows in the Kings River Canyon. Pasturage is good in general, but is very meager on portions of the Granite Pass Trail, especially between the pass and Granite Basin. The floor of Tehipite Valley is also quite barren, except in early spring. Not shown on the USGS quadrangle map are several meadows about one-third mile northwest of the Obelisk, which are the best campsites in that vicinity.

A good base camp can be established alongside the creek in the Gorge of Despair at an elevation of approximately 8,000 feet, which is near the base of Cobra Turret, and close to the best climbs in the region.

Routes and Records for the Peaks

Kings Canyon Region
The peaks covered in this section of the Guide lie in an area partially within the borders of Kings Canyon National Park and partially in the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests. This region extends from Mt. Woodworth on the north to Sentinel Dome on the south. The western boundary follows from Finger Peak south along Kettle Ridge to Obelisk, and jogs over to include Spanish Mountain. The eastern boundary, starting at the intersection of Goddard Creek with the Middle Fork of the Kings River, follows down the Middle Fork to the Granite Pass trail near Simpson Meadow. This trail serves as the easterly limits of the arbitrary region from here on south. Avalanche Peak and Ther Sphinx are also included in this section.

Because they are widely scattered, the peaks and rock climbs in the Kings Canyon area cannot be grouped in any strict order. Therefore, they are arranged in order from west to east as follows:

Peaks north and west of the Monarch Divide
Peaks of the Monarch Divide
Peaks south and east of the Monarch Divide

There is, however, an exception to the above rule. On spurs having a number of rock towers on them, the towers are grouped according to elevation, from the lowest to the highest. The spurs themselves will follow the original west to east classification.

Peaks North and West of the Monarch Divide

Spanish Mountain (B.M. 10,044; 10,051n)

Climbed in 1921 by Hermann F. Ulrichs. May be climbed from the northwest by a number of routes, but the most interesting route lies along the southeast ridge, where the best view of the 8,000 foot deep canyon can be had. Class 2.

Obelisk (9,707; 9,700n)

Route 1. First ascent in 1948 by Jim Wilson and Allen Steck. The route starts up a long, well broken chimney on the south face. Ther chimney ends at the foot of a steep wall about 100 feet high. This pitch is the crux of the climb, for it is quite exposed and the holds are unreliable. Several pitons are used here for safety. The lead is about 100 feet with no intermediate belay spots. The route to the summit is easy from the top of the wall. Six rappels are required to reach the ground. Length of climb: 500 to 600 feet.
route 2. extreme class 4. first ascent june 1951 by anton nelson, david hammack, john salathe, and alice ann dayton. the climber starts on the short 45° ridge near the center of the north face. the slabs are ascended for about 100 feet, at which point the ridge ends. a traverse to the right (west) is made around the face on very small, exposed ledges to the west arête. the arête is followed to the summit onr excellent holds. time required: 1 1/2 hours.

the rope-down, if made from the northeast shoulder over the great overhang, involves a 130 foot rappel. some of the large knobs that protrude from the surface of this rock make excellent anchor points. care should be taken to see that the rope will run around the knob used.

kettle dome (9,452; 9,448n)

first ascent july 20, 1920, by hermann ulrichs. climbing data is meager on this dome as ascents are rare. in the notes of ulrichs, we find this description: “only one or two narrow cracks in the smooth rounded granite afford finger holds sufficient to make an ascent possible.” the climb is probably class 3.

tehipite dome (7,713; 7,708n)

first known ascent by allan l. chickering and walter a. starr onr july 31, 1896. the summit can be gained by climbing out along a sloping ledge on the west face or by going out the backbone, which involves nothing more than a rock scramble. the easiest way to reach the north base of the dome is to leave the tunemah trail at the 7,500 foot levelr and contour around, as severe brush is encountered at higher elevations.

towers above the gorge of despair (see sketch 20)

fascination turret (7,000; 7,000+n)

unclimbed. this is the lowest rock tower on this immense spur, beingr almost out of sight of the larger towers above. it is located on the extreme end of the spur, immediately above the tremendous drop-offr into tehipite valley. the only possible way to reach it would be to start from the notch connecting frustration turret to the wall, andr traverse around the base of frustration on the north side. the base of
Sketch 20. Turrets above the Gorge of Despair

Fascination Turret could then be reached by ascending the steep sloper for about 300 feet. The climb itself appears to be class 3.

*Frustration Turret (7,500; 7,500+n)*

First ascent June 18, 1952, by David Hammack, Jules Eichorn, Clinton Kelley, and Bob Smith. The climb starts from just below the notch at the base of the east face, and goes straight up this face for about 100 feet.
to a small tree ledge, which serves as the first belay point. These holds up to this ledge are very small at the start, but improve further up. From this ledge continue upward on good holds for another 15 feet to a smaller ledge. Traverse around the face to the right, passing under the huge overhanging slab to a broken shoulder. This is ascended to the large friction ledge above. Cross this outward slanting ledge to the other end and up a semi-chimney. By going upward and to the right, a large steep slab on the northwest corner of the tower is ascended. The route follows up the vertical jam-crack from the slab, and then up to the right to a small platform. Several variations of the route can be made here. By going up to the left, a class 5 route on small holds can be followed. The other choice is to work slightly to the right (W) and up an highly-polished trough at the limit of friction. At the upper end of the trough a traverse is made to the left. Either route brings one to a narrower ledge under a vertical face about 100 feet below the summit, which can be climbed with one or two pitons for direct aid, and with the aid of a small crack. Continuing slightly to the left, the route goes up a short, steep pitch requiring long arm pulls on hidden holds, and finally brings one out on the northeast shoulder at the summit block. A traverse around the block to the south side of the tower leads to an easy route to the summit. The rope down is made on the north face down to the large friction ledge in two rappels. The first ascent party climbed down from here to the tree ledge on the east face, and then rappelled from there. Time required: 3 hours. Length of climb: 400 feet. Class 6.

El Corporale Turret

First ascent July 25, 1951, by David Hammack and Anton Nelson. The climb is made up the prominent gully, making use of the large solution knobs, and is just difficult enough to justify a rope. Class 4.

El Commandante Turret (8,600; 8,590n)

Route 1. First ascent on July 25, 1951, by David Hammack and Anton Nelson. Class of climb: Extreme class 5. The only apparent route on this tower is the obvious chimney that starts from the south (lower) corner and leads to a large platform about half way up. The climb is started by ascending the chimney for about 30 feet until it begins to steepen, and then out on to the southwest face, where use is made of the large solution knobs. The chimney is intersected again at the platform. From the platform, which is at the northwest corner, a class 5 route zig-zags up the 70° face to a point just below the summit block. Here a delicate friction pitch, either up a steep arete or across the face to the southwest corner leads to a point from which the summit may be attained. Time required: 3 hours. Length of climb: 300 feet.

Route 2. First ascent on July 19, 1952, by a Sierra Club party of nine. Class 5. The climb starts in the same chimney as Route 1, but instead of going out on to the face, the chimney is followed up until it ends. Here a short traverse is made to the right (NE) which leads to the platform. From this point the deep chimney is climbed until it also ends. The route traverses slightly to the right, and then up a high angler class 5 crack to the easy summit pitch.
Cobra Turret (9,100; 9,050+n)

First ascent July 26, 1951, by David Hammack and Anton Nelson. The highest point on the northwest side is reached by skirting the cliffs. This point, from which the climb is started, is just to the southwest of the ridge above Crystal Creek. A large tree may be seen about 75 feet above the ground on the face of the turret, and may be reached by a 3rd class scramble. From the tree, the route leads to the southwest for about 50 feet, and then up and back into a semi-chimney, passing the overhang to the right (SW), and continuing to a suitable belay spot. This lead is a full 120 feet, and requires the use of several class 5 pitons. From here, the climbing continues directly up by a number of possible routes. Solution knobs allow one to ascend the vertical face in several spots. It would seem best, however, to remain just above the prominent semi-chimney. Approximate time: 21/2 hours. Length of climb: 500 feet. Class 5.

Crystal Turret (9,600; 9,500+n)

The highest rock tower in this group. First ascent July 25, 1951, by David Hammack and Anton Nelson. This climb is started from the southeast corner. A “window” may be seen from this side through which the route passes. Beyond the window, the climb is simply that of mounting a short arête to a large platform, and then traversing around the south side of the summit block to a point where it can be easily climbed. Time required: 45 minutes. Length of climb, 200 feet. Class of climb: Extreme class 4.

Towers on Silver Spur

Silver Turret (9,914; 9,991n). This is the most prominent feature on Silver Spur, and is shown on the USGS quadrangle map (elevation). The summit is reached by a 3rd class scramble from the south. First ascent by David Hammack and Anton Nelson on July 27, 1951.

Fang Turret. A very difficult 100 foot rock spire immediately to the south of Silver Turret. From the southeast notch, the route is easily seen. Pitons for direct aid and safety are required on the almost vertical route. First climbed on July 27, 1951, by David Hammack and Anton Nelson. Approximate time: 1 hour. Class 6.

Below and to the east of Silver Turret is another large rock mass, as yet unclimbed, which promises to provide an interesting climb.

Finger Peak (12,401; B.M. 12,404n)
First ascent by government surveying party. Records of the route used are not available, nor is the date of ascent.

*Burnt Mountain (10,602; 10,608n)*

Probably climbed by early exploring parties. There appear to be no climbing difficulties to surmount this peak, and it is easily approached from the Tunemah trail.

*Blue Canyon Peak (11,838; 11,849n)*

There is no recorded ascent of this peak.

*Tunemah Peak (11,873; 11,894n)*

No recorded ascents, but may have been climbed by an early party or by sheepherders.

*Slide Peak (11,007; 10,9150)*

Unclimbed. The north and west faces of this peak are very steep and would no doubt provide some interesting class 4 routes. An ascent from the south could be done class 3, however. From any direction, it would be a rewarding climb.

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**Peaks on the Monarch Divide**

*Wren Peak (9,449; 9,450n)*

No recorded ascents. This is a group of formidable-looking crags at the upper end of Junction Ridge. Several of the rock towers in the group may prove to be difficult climbs. The best approach would be from Happy Gap.

*Eagle Peaks (9,800; 9,750+n)*
While there are no records of ascents in this group of peaks, some of them may have been climbed by exploring parties. All of them appear to be rock scrambles from their bases.

Mount Harrington (11,001; 11,005n)

First recorded ascent July 27, 1951, by David Hammack and Anton Nelson. The best approach to the base is from the north. The lower part of the mountain presents no serious climbing difficulties. The jagged summit spire is a climb of extreme class 3 difficulty, with large holds all the way up.

Hogback Peak (11,164)

This great heap of huge talus blocks on the crest of the Monarch Divide has probably never been climbed, for obvious reasons. An ascent would involve hours of drudgery for rather dubious rewards. Anyone wishing to climb it, however, would find the best starting place to be the saddle just to the west.

Kennedy Mountain (BM. 11,424; 11,433n)

First ascent by government surveying party. This peak appears to be a class 2 ascent from any direction except the north, where the face drops a sheer 600 feet.

Peaks South and East of the Monarch Divide

The Grand Dike (7,500 to 8,500)

A traverse of seven of the eight towers was made on July 28, 1951, by David Hammack and Anton Nelson, which constituted first ascents of all but tower number 4. The towers are numbered starting from the lower (SE) end. Below the first tower there is a minor unclimbed pinnacle.

Tower No. 1. The route leads up the eastern face of Tower No. 2 for about 70 feet to a broad, horizontal ledge. (A diagonal upward ledge from low down on Tower No. 2 is not the route.) The broad ledge leads to the notch between No. 1 and No. 2. From the notch, Tower No. 1 is easily climbed by circling around to the...
Tower No. 2. This is the truncated, small tower between the larger towers No. 1 and No. 3. From the broad ledge mentioned above, a short chimney continues up the east face to the summit. Class 4.

Tower No. 3. From the notch between Nos. 2 and 3 a traverse is made around the southeast face. After it becomes impossible to traverse easily any further, the route goes up and back to the right (SE) on a high angle face with good holds, to a large ledge. The next lead bears to the left (NW) and follows, in general, the northwest corner. This brings one to the base of the main pitch of the climb, a 70 degree face with few prominent holds. This pitch should be done by working slightly to the right (S) and up until a cornice is reached that supplies a few underholds. From the top of this pitch the summit is easily reached. Approximately 2 hours to climb. Length of climb: 300 feet. Class 5.

Tower No. 4. First ascent June 15, 1952, by David Hammack, Bob Smith, George Larimore and Bob Purington. The route starts in a larger chimney on the northeast side. The chimney is ascended about 30 feet, or until it is possible to work out to the right on small holds onto the face. The route follows up a short distance to a suitable belay point on one of the small ledges. A piton anchor should be used here by the belayer. From here the ascent continues up the northeast face at high angle on good holds, and up a tight chimney to a small but conspicuous tree ledge, the next belay point. Continuing straight upward and then traversing slightly to the left, a large, partially detached flake is reached. The broken edges of the flake make a ladder enabling one to ascend the vertical face quite easily. The face is climbed until the great north shoulder is reached. This is the next belay point. From here, a shorter class 3 pitch leads to the summit. The best method of descent is to climb down to the shoulder and rappel down the northwest side into the notch between Nos. 4 and 5. Adequate rope must be carried, as this is a 120 foot rappel. Time required: 2 hours. Length of climb: 350 feet. Class 5.

Tower No. 5. From the notch between Nos. 4 and 5, the summit may be attained by climbing up the broken southeast face. There is only one spot that offers any difficulty, and that is a short, slightly overhanging wall that must be climbed to get out of an alcove about half-way up. From there the main arete is more or less followed to the summit. It appears as though there is an easier route leading up the north face, but it has not been investigated. The rope-down is to the notch between Nos. 5 and 6. Class 3 to 4.

Tower No. 6. From the notch between Nos. 5 and 6, there is only one obstacle on the entire climb and that is the to foot overhanging wall that extends along the base immediately beside the notch. This is overcome by climbing a small tree about 30 feet below the notch (Wr side) and traversing across to the wall. The rest of the climb is 2nd and 3rd class.

Towers No. 7 and No. 8. May be climbed by any number of routes, none of which offer any serious difficulties. Each of these summits may be attained by 2nd and 3rd class routes.
Lookout Peak (8,547; 8,501n)

First ascent by Elisha Cotton Winchell on Sept. 27, 1868. The climber is described as an easy scramble from Summit Meadow. It is probably no more difficult than class 2.

Stag Dome (7,707; 7,704n)

Records of first ascent are not available, but there is now a USFS lookout station on the summit.

Sentinel Dome (9,127; 9,024n)

This peak is climbed often by hikers to obtain a view of the high country. Information of the first ascent is not obtainable.

Comb Spur (11,617; 11,618n)

A traverse was made of this spur from July 11 to 25, 1931, by Robert A. Owen.

North Mountain (8,642; 8,629n)

No recorded ascents.

Mount Hutchings (10,787; 10,785n)

No recorded ascents.
North Dome (8,657; 8,720+n)

r

r First ascent June 30, 1940, by Neil Ruge and Florence Rata via Graniter Creek and Copper Canyon.

Avalanche Peak (10,085; 10,000+n)

r

r First ascent in July 1895 by Prof. Bolton C. Brown and A. B. Clark. From the description of the ascent by Brown, it was just a stiff hike tor the summit from the outlet of Copper Creek.

Grand Sentinel (8,514; 8,464n)

r

r First ascent in 1886 by J. N. LeConte, Helen M. Gompertz, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Gould and party. This ascent was from the back (S) and did not involve any difficult climbing.

r An interesting rock climber’s route is that used by Roy Gorin and Jerry Ganapole on July 7, 1951. Two major steps can be seen in their outline of the Grand Sentinel from the canyon floor at Zumwaltr Meadows. The base of these steps is approached by working up their stream bed immediately to the west. The lower of the two rock faces can be climbed on the edge of the buttress overlooking the 90 degree north face, with class 4 and one or two easy class 5 pitches. A walk across the wide shelf leads to the base of the upper face. From here several moderately difficult class 5 pitches lead to the summit. Climbing time from the base of the lower face is 4 hours. Total time to reach the summit from the canyon floor is to hours.

The Sphinx (9,122; 9,039n)

r

r First ascent July 26, 1940, by Art Argiewicz and Bob Jacobs. The Sphinx is the farthest north and slightly lower of the two points comprising the mass. In order to reach the top it is necessary to climb over the higher point, down the north face about 300 feet and up to the notch between the two. The key pitch is a 200 foot face, triangular and almost devoid of holds. Above this is the 150 foot summit ridge. A delicate traverse is made across the face to the south wall, where a small ledge can be found around the corner. From here an open chimney leads to the top of the ridge and the summit. Class 4.

References
Photographs: SCB, year and page or plate number as shown: Gorger of Despair and El Commandante: 1898, pl. 8. Middle Fork Kings Canyon: 1908, pl. 8; 1921, pl. 55. Simpson Meadow: 1907, pl. 30; 1911, pl. 19; 1917, pl. 180; 1921, pl. 45. South Fork Kings Canyon: 1907, pl. 20; 1914, pl. 65. Tehipite Dome: 1897, P. 44; 1898, pl. 7; 1907, pl. 28; 1913, pl. 28; 1914, frontispiece; 1914, pl. 57; 1921, pl. 58; 1935, p. 63; 1944, p. 46. Tehipite Valley: 1913, pl. 9, 28, 32, and 48.

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http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/kings_canyon.html
Piute Pass to Kearsarge Pass

Palisades to Kearsarge Pass

Fred L. Jones

THE AREA south of the Palisades, as far as Kearsarge Pass, does not contain many outstanding peaks, but it nevertheless is very fine High Sierra country, with much of charm and interest. There are many places where trails do not go that can be reached by knapsackers. Peaks of special note are Mount Bolton Brown, Split Mountain, Mount Baxter, Arrow Peak, and Mount Clarence King. Most, but not all, of the peaks have at least one moderately easy route. Granite predominates throughout, although dark, metamorphic rock is found on Crater Mountain, Cardinal Mountain, Split Mountain, and near Rae Lake.

Historical Résumé

Indians used Kearsarge Pass as a trading route for untold centuries before Captain John Frémont entered the region to the northwest in 1845 and traveled to 11,000 feet on the North Fork of the Kings. In 1858 J. H. Johnson was led across Kearsarge Pass by a Digger Indian. Prospectors were also active at about this time. The California Geological Survey party led by W. H. Brewer arrived in the Kings River watershed in 1864, and made further explorations in 1865.

In 1873 John Muir traveled up Bubbs Creek and went over Kearsarge Pass. In the years after 1875 sheep came to the South Fork, and in 1876 or 1877 Frank Dusy explored the Middle Fork of the Kings as far as the Palisades. In 1878 the present Split Mountain was named Southeast Palisade by George Wheeler. Taboose, Sawmill, and Pinchot passes were in use by sheepmen by 1890. Bolton C. Brown made a solo trip up the headwaters of the Middle and South forks of the Kings in 1895, and made ascents of Mount Woodworth, Mount Ruskin, and Arrow Peak. Brown explored Sixty Lake Basin and the Rae Lake region in 1899 and made a map of the area.
The early visitors to the mountains naturally paid more attention to passes than to peaks. Mather Pass was first used by stock in 1897 when a sheepman was trapped by snow in the upper Middle Fork of the Kings. Packstock were taken over Glen Pass for the first time in 1906. The Sierra Club conducted its second annual outing in 1902, taking about 200 people into the Kings Canyon. Stock were taken over Muir Pass in 1907 by George R. Davis, who then worked out of the Middler Fork to Cartridge Creek, since there was, of course, no trail down ther rugged Middle Fork.

In 1908 J. N. LeConte, James Hutchinson, and Duncan McDuffier made the entire trip from Yosemite to Kings Canyon via high route, with stock. From the Middle Fork, after crossing Muir Pass, they tried to scout out a route over Mather Pass but decided that it was impassable and went up Cataract Creek, across to Cartridge Creek, over Cartridge Pass to the South Fork, over Pinchot and Glen passes, and finally down Bubbs Creek. This trip took 27 days. In 1915 work was begun on the John Muir Trail, which was finally completed in 1938.

When the trails threaded their way through the mountains, the travelers began to climb the peaks. The early trips of Brown, LeConte, Davis, Solomons, and others left relatively few conquered peaks behind. During the 19305 Sierra Club climbers made many first ascents. Norman Clyde, who began his Sierra climbing in the early 1920s while principal of the High School at Independence, has been and still is the unchallenged dean of modern Sierra mountaineers. He and a few others whose names stand out in the records have accounted for the major portion of the original climbing to date.

Approaches and Campsites

Eastern approaches are described first, from north to south, starting with Birch Creek and ending with Kearsarge Pass. Western approaches and a few words about camping follow.

Birch Creek. There is no pass over the crest at Birch Creek. From Big Pine drive west on the road to Glacier Lodge. Just past the firsr bridge take the branch road to the south to McMurray Meadow. Walk north along the fence to the north; about 200 yards north of the creek the trail runs west among a network of cattle trails. If necessary the trail can be picked up where it climbs up the first draw north of Birch Creek. At about 9,100 one branch of the trail crosses the ridge to the south into a basin on Birch Creek, while the other continues up the ridge to meet the first at a willow patch at about 10,000. Mediocre campsites can be found. The crest can be crossed by knapsackers between the Thumb and the next peak south.

Red Mountain Creek. This is another approach that does not lead overr the crest. From Fish Springs on Highway 395 drive southwest to the old Red Mountain Fruit Ranch. Turn west through the stone portals and go past the pumice mine. Keep to the left and cross Tinemahar Creek. At the next fork turn left again. The
road ends at a spring north of Red Mountain Creek. The steep, rough trail rounds the hill just above the first little rocky point above Red Mountain Creek. There are campsites on the flat just below Red Mountain Lake. The saddle to the north of Split Mountain can be reached by climbers or knapsackers by climbing above the lake to the northwest, and this saddle can be crossed for Upper Basin.

Taboose Pass (11,400+). Taboose Pass offers an approach to the Upper Basin of the South Fork of the Kings, but it is little used and has fallen into disrepair. Animals must be led over several stretches of jumbled talus blocks. It is a long, dry climb. To reach the foot of the trail turn off Highway 395 about 16 miles north of Independence on the first dirt road north of Taboose Creek. Keep to the right after passing through the drift fence and drive to the end of the rocky road. The trail is signed and leads to the north. Camp can be made in the flat below the falls at about 8,800, or at the last timber at about 10,500.

Sawmill Pass (11,200+). From Highway 395 take the first dirt road north of Sawmill Creek and drive to the mouth of Sawmill Canyon. The trail goes up the low ridge north of the canyon mouth. An alternative approach is to drive up the oiled road to the Division Creek powerhouse. A trail leaves the road about one-quarter mile above the powerhouse and meets the Sawmill Canyon branch in the sandy saddle west of the red hill to the south. The trail to the pass is long and arduous, though not particularly rough. Sawmill Meadows is a good camp spot, as is Sawmill Lake, east of the pass.

Baxter Pass (12,000). Drive up the road up the North Fork of Oak Creek to the end. The trail is steep, long, and rough, but there are good campsites at Summit Meadows on the southeast side of the pass, and also at Baxter Lakes on the northwest.

Kearsarge Pass (11,823). From Independence a good road leads to Onion Valley at 8,900 feet, where the trail to the pass starts. This is an excellent and easy trail. Camps can be found at elevations of about 11,000 on either side of the pass.

Western approaches. From Cedar Grove on the South Fork the path follows up the stream. At the Bubbs Creek junction the right hand trail can be followed up Bubbs Creek to Bullfrog Lake, or the left hand one can be taken up Paradise Valley and Woods Creek. From Kings Canyon at Copper Creek a trail can be followed to Granite Pass. It is also possible to approach up the Middle Fork of the Kings, by way of Tehipiter Valley, but this approach is quite lengthy.

Campsites. Places with wood and water can be found along most streams up to about 11,400 feet, which is the average timberline for this area.
Principal Passes

Besides the passes mentioned under approaches, there are a number of others within the area. Mather Pass, Pinchot Pass, Glen Pass, and Granite Pass are crossed by good trails. Cartridge Pass (11,700+) was for long the Muir Trail route between the Middle and South Forks of the Kings, but since the Muir Trail has been rerouted over Mather Pass, Cartridge has fallen into disrepair. Parties use it for stock each year, but it is considered rather rough. Gardiner Pass provides a rough route in current use by packers into Gardiner Basin from Charlotte Lake; the pass lies west of Mount Gardiner.

The remaining routes of this section are recommended only for knapsackers or hikers, although some have been traversed with stock.

Cataract Creek Pass (11,500+). This pass connects Amphitheater and Dumbbell lakes. The trail along Cataract Creek is said to be the worst section.

Dumbbell Lakes Pass (12,200+). This is an old sheep route from the head of Cartridge Creek into Dumbbell Lakes.

Upper Basin Pass (12,300+). LeConte and Lindley pioneered a route eastward out of the head of Cartridge Creek into Upper Basin. It is for knapsackers only.

Red Pass (11,600+). Red Pass lies between Marion Peak and Red Point. It provides a route between Marion Lake and the South Fork of Cartridge Creek, and can be used on a cross-country route from Dougherty Meadow via Horseshoe Lakes, Windy Ridge, and Red Pass to Marion Lake, as was done by the 1935 High Trip.

Arrow Pass (12,600+). The notch about three-quarters of a mile southeast of Arrow Peak may be used to go from the creek southwest of Bench Lake to Arrow Creek. It was once used by sheepmen, and constitutes part of a knapsack route between Upper Basin and Paradiser Valley.

Muro Blanco. The Muro Blanco can hardly be termed a pass, but it does offer an unconventional route between Upper Basin and Paradiser Valley. The descent may be made by knapsackers by following along the river bottom. Although stock have been taken over the same route during periods of low water, the route is decidedly not recommender for animals. The ascent by knapsackers is difficult, and the party should consider that it may be turned back.
Baxter Col (12400+). Between Mount Baxter and Peak 13,167 is a notch which, though up to class 3 on the north, provides a handy route between Woods and Baxter lakes.

Rae Lake-Sixty Lake Basin passes. A route passable to stock lies between Peak 11,904 and Peak 12,553. Another within the basin, (11,800+), is south of Peak 11,950. A ducked trail departs from the Muir Trail on the west side of Rae Lake and crosses the intervening ridge south of Fin Dome.

Sixty Lake Col (11,600+). This pass crosses the ridge between Gardiner Basin and Sixty Lake Basin just north of Peak 12,565. It is rough, but is passable to burrows.

Knapsack routes from Onion Valley to Rae Lake. It is possible to go from Onion Valley to Rae Lake in one day by crossing the Woods Creek-Bubbs Creek divide just west of the crest, near Mount Gould and Dragon Peak. Follow the trail to Kearsarge Pass, then either follow up the west side of the crest toward Gould or follow the main trail west to a point a few hundred yards below the place where the Kearsarge Lakes trail leaves the main trail. At this point an old trail departs to the north and winds up to the top of the ridge between Gould and Rixford and ends on the crest about one-half mile north of Gould at an elevation of about 12,800. Descend down talus to the three lakes just south of Dragon Lake, then follow the stream to Dragon Lake, where a trail leading to Rae Lake is found. In the reverse direction, take the stream that falls into Dragon Lake from the south and follow it to the easternmost of the three lakes south of Dragon Lake. From this lake climb the southernmost talus slope which looks negotiable to the ridge, follow the ridger to Mount Gould, and descend to the Kearsarge Pass trail or to the pass itself. This route is class 2 to 3, and may be done in five hours from Rae Lake to Onion Valley.

Peaks of the Main Crest (North to South)

Peak 13,474 (13,520+n; 1 N of Mt. Bolton Brown)

First ascent June 14, 1930, by Norman Clyde. It is a long, class 3 climb from Glacier Lodge. The peak is more accessible from the basin to their west via the northwest ridge.

Mount Bolton Brown (13,527; 13,538n)
Route 1. Northwest ridge. Class 2. First ascent August 14, 1922, by Chester Versteeg and Rudolph Berls. From the pass to the west proceed along the top of the ridge. A narrow, 100 foot chimney is climbed to reach the top.

Route 2. Southwest slope. Class 3. First descent August 14, 1922, by Chester Versteeg and Rudolph Berls. Descend the slope to the basin below.

Route 3. North slope. Class 2. First ascent October 6, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. From the basin to the north ascend the slope to the top of the ridge west of the summit. Cross to the south side and proceed to the summit.

Mount Prater (13,501; 13,329n)

Route 1. South ridge. Class 1. First ascent unknown. Climb from the saddle to the south, which is reached from Lake 11,563 to west. A short knife-edge ridge just south of the summit presents no great difficulty.

Route 2. North ridge. Class 3. First ascent October 6, 1948, by Fred L. Jones from the basin at the northernmost tip of the South Fork of the Kings. Ascend the largest chute to south of the pinnacles south of Mount Bolton Brown. Cross to the plateau on the east side of the crest, then ascend over the boulders at the south end of the plateau to the summit of the north peak of Mount Prater. A class 3 notch separates the two peaks.

Split Mountain (14,051; 14,058n)

This peak was formerly known as the Southeast Palisade.


Route 2. Northwest shoulder. Class 2. First ascent by Norman Clyde, date unknown. He states only that the shoulder is class 2.
Route 3. West face. Class 3. First descent by Norman Clyde, date unknown. He came directly down the west face, keeping to the ribs instead of the chutes due to drop-offs. Clyde states that the peak can be climbed by this route. It is class 3, with class 4 if the best route isn’t chosen.

Route 4. From east. Class 3. From Red Mountain Lake east of Split Mountain go northwest to the ridge east of the saddle. Ascend this, which is rubbly, to the saddle. The last few hundred feet of the ridge are class 3. Red Mountain Lake is reached by a trail following the north slope of the creek from the road end.

The first gendarme south of the summit affords several hundred feet of class 3. First ascended by Norman Clyde and Jules Eichorn, date unknown.

Cardinal Mountain (13,388; 13,397n)

Class 2. First ascent August 11, 1922, by George Downing, Jr. From Taboose Pass ascend either the southwest spur or the chute slightly to east. A narrow, pinnacled stretch, which must be traversed if the southwest spur is followed, is bypassed by using the chute.

Cardinal Mountain can be easily ascended from Stecker’s Bench on the north side of Taboose Creek, to which a trail leads from the end of the road on Red Mountain Creek.

Striped Mountain (13,160; 13,189n)

First ascent July, 1905, by George R. Davis, route unknown.

Route 1. From Taboose Pass. Class 2. From Taboose Pass proceed past Lake 11,450 and ascend either the northeast or east slopes. This is probably the route of first ascent.

Route 2. West ridge. Class 2. First descent August 1, 1948 by Fred L. Jones. In climbing by this route follow the drainage above the twin lakes west of Striped Mountain, keeping well up on the north slope. Any of several chutes on the southwest face of the mountain lead to the summit plateau, though some are more difficult than others.
Route 3. From Woods Creek. Class 3. First ascent August 11, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. From the lake east of Mount Pinchot ascend the west slope of the crest to the junction of the ridge running east to Peak 12,281. Descend a steep, narrow chute to the head of the north fork of Goodale Creek. Ascend an easy chute to the saddle between Goodale and Striped Mountains from which either can easily be climbed. Their route is class 3 to Goodale Creek and class 2 from there.

Mount Perkins (12,557, 12,591n)

Class 2. First ascent before 1910 by a U.S. Geological Survey party. The west slope and the crest to north and south are easily climbable. Mount Perkins is a mere bump on the crest.

Colosseum Mountain (12,417; 12,473n)

Route 1. Southwest slope. Class 1. First ascent August 5, 1922, by Chester Versteeg. From Woods Lake climb to the highest lake to north, ascend the southwest slope of Colosseum Mountain over gravelly sand.

Route 2. West ridge. Class 1. From the basin to northwest ascend to the saddle west of the peak, then go east to the summit.

Route 3. Northwest chute. Class 2. From the basin to northwest ascend the gully north of the summit and climb out near the top.

Route 4. North ridge. Class 4. From the crest to north traverse over several sheer-sided notches to the summit. This route is generally chosen in error.

Peak 12,101 (12,080+n; 3/4 S of Colosseum Mountain)

Class 2. First ascent in 1935 by Marjory Farquhar, Helen LeConte, Peter Grubb, C. Burkett, et al. It is an easy ascent from the west. Has been called Woods Pinnacles.
Peak 11,991 (12,000+n; 1 N of Mount Baxter)

r

r Class 1. First ascent August 27, 1945, by Art Reyman. It is class 1r from any side.r

r

Mount Baxter (13,118; 13,125n)

r

r First ascent in 1905 by George R. Davis, route unknown.r

r r

r Route 1. North ridge. Class 2. Ascend the north ridge from the saddler south of Peak 11,991. Cross the area of large, jumbled blocks south of the saddle to the large chute above. Bear to the east at the top of this ridge and wind back and forth across the ridge. Bear east for the last 50 feet below the summit. This is probably the route of first ascent.r

r r

r Route 2. From northwest. Class 3. From the lake northwest of Mount Baxter climb to the saddle west of the peak, then ascend the west slope of Mount Baxter to the summit. The route to the saddle is class 3, the upper slope class 2. The basin above the lake is subject to heavy rockfall during the summer and due caution should be exercised.r

r r

r Route 3. From southwest. Class 2. From the upper Baxter Lake climb northeast to the small lake above. The large talus chute northeast of the lake offers the shortest route to the summit plateau. However the rocks are loose and delicately balanced. An alternate class 2 route from the lake via the west slope of the basin to the saddle to west of Mount Baxter (see Route 2) provides surer footing.r

r r

r Route 4. Northeast ridge. Class 3. First descent July 25, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. In climbing by this route, which is a traverse from Peak 12,411 to the east, descend the north side of the ridge and work around and over the first point to west. Cross a knife-edge to the next point, and drop into the notch to west. Ascend one of the chimneys leading to the slope above. Ascend the large chute to near the summit of the sharp point above. Traverse the blocks on the north side of the ridge to the summit plateau of Mount Baxter.r

r r

r Route 5. South ridge. Class 3. First descent August 5, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. In ascending from the upper Baxter Lake climb northeast toward the notch in the crest between Mount Baxter and Peak 12,206. Cross the crest to the east side and traverse the ribs and chutes, keeping as high as possible, until the top of the crest can be followed to the summit plateau.r

r r
Peak 13,051 (13,070n; 1/2 N of Diamond Peak)

r

r First ascent 1925 by Norman Clyde, route unknown. It can easily be ascended by long class 2 climbs from the Baxter Pass trail to west or on a traverse from Diamond Peak. A class 3 route was followed from Baxter Pass, on August 6, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. Climb along the crest to west. Traverse the ribs and chutes on the south side keeping high, until beneath the summit. Several fairly difficult pitches lead to the top.

r

Diamond Peak (13,105; 13,126n)

r

r First recorded ascent August 1922 by Norman Clyde, route unknown. He thinks that there was a cairn there.

r

r Route 1. West slope. Class 2. This route is a long climb from Rae Lakes. It is the most often used and probably was the route of first ascent.

r

r Route 2. From Black Mountain. Class 2. First recorded ascent August 20, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. From Black Mountain descend into the basin to north, then cross the crest to the west side through the notch. Ascend the south slope of Diamond Peak.

r

r The plateau south of the summit can be reached from the head of the North Fork of Oak Creek via the southeast slope. This route has apparently not been used, however.

r

Black Mountain (13,258; 13,289n)

r

r First ascent in 1905 by George Davis, route unknown.

r

r Route 1. South slope. Class 2. Take the trail from Rae Lake to Dragon Lake and ascend the south slope from it.

r

r Route 2. From Diamond Peak. Class 2. Follow the reverse of route 2r for Diamond Peak.
Route 3. East ridge. Class 2. First descent August 19, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. The large blocks directly below the summit present the only difficulty. The summit of the east ridge can be reached from the North Fork of Oak Creek, Charlie Canyon, or the South Fork of Oak Creek.

Dragon Peak (12,955; 13,040+n)

First ascent in 1920 by either Fred Parker and J. E. Rother, or by Norman Clyde.

Route 1. From east. Class 3. From the east climb to the col immediately to the south, then go along the crest to the peak and up the west face.

Route 2. South ridge. Class 2. Traverse from Mount Gould along the connecting ridge and knife-edge to a point south of the top. Ascend the couloir on the southeast face to the ridge and proceed over blocks to the top.

Route 3. From southwest. Clyde states that the best route is from the lakes to the southwest, though he gives no details of the route.

The summit is a gendarme and is class 3. See Mount Gould for the route of the trail to the plateau to south, which gives access to Dragon Peak.

Mount Gould (13,001; 13,005n)


Route 2. Southeast ridge. Class 1. From east of Kearsarge Pass ascend the southeast ridge keeping to south of the ridge top.
Route 3. From the north. Class 1. The plateau to the north is readily reached on a traverse from Mount Rixford or Dragon Peak and it is an easy climb to the summit. A trail leaving the Kearsarge Pass trail a short distance west of the Kearsarge Lakes turn-off winds up the slope to north and proceeds to the north end of the plateau. Both Mount Gould and Dragon Peak are then easily reached.

Peaks West of the Crest

Peak 12,806 (12,851n, 1 SW of Cardinal Mtn.)

First ascent August 5, 1945, by A. J. Reyman via the southeast ridge.

Peak 13,046 (13,080+n; 0.7 NE of Mather Pass)

First recorded ascent August 16, 1922, by Chester Versteeg from Mather Pass along the north side of the ridge. He found a cairn.

Peak 12,674 (12,680+n; 1.8 SW of Mather Pass)

First ascent August 12, 1922, by Chester Versteeg, Mrs. Versteeg, Valr Ellery, and Rudolph Berls, from the pass north of the peak.

Observation Peak (12,375; 12,322n)

First ascent July 25, 1902, by Joseph N. LeConte and Curtis W. Lindleyr from Dumbbell Lakes. It was climbed in 1926 by Marjory Hurd via the northwest ridge.

Peak 12,147 (12,151n; 1 NW of Observation Peak)

Palisades to Kearsarge Pass
First ascent July 20, 1930, by Francis P. Farquhar, Mary Lou Michaels, Doris Drust, Lorna Kilgariff and Robert L. Lipman.

Windy Cliff (11,100+; 11,132n)

No record of ascent is available.

Peak 11,192 (11,265n; 1.7 NW of Observation Peak)

This peak is a USGS benchmark so it has been climbed.

Peak 12,835 (12,860n; 3/4 E of Dumbbell Lakes)

Class 3. First ascent August 12, 1945, by Art Reyman from Lake Basin. Ascend open benches and approach from the southwest. Go beyond the lake lying southeast of the peak and ascend the difficult couloir on the east face. Several routes develop as the climb progresses, all being rather difficult and exposed, but a way is open to the summit.

Peak 12,316 (12,320n; 1.7 N of Marion Lake)

Class 2. First ascent August 12, 1945 by Art Reyman from Lake Basin up the south slope. No specific route is needed to reach the summit.

Peak 12,775 (12,811n; 3/4 N of Mount Ruskin)

Class 2. First ascent August 13, 1945, by Art Reyman from Lake Basin via the west slope.
Peak 12,100+ (12,080+n; 1/2 NE of Mount Ruskin)

- Class 4. First ascent July 22, 1939, by Bruce Meyer, Charlotte Maukr and Dave Brower. They climbed the east face and the arête from the notch to west. They roped down to the south from the west notch. It has been called the Saddlehorn.

Mt. Ruskin (12,800+; 12,920n)

- Route 1: Northwest ridge. First ascent August 7, 1895, by Bolton C. Brown. From Cartridge Pass he climbed the ridge running to north to the junction of it and the ridge running southeast to Ruskin, then out it. The ridge became steep and narrow so he dropped down to the southwest. The other side is a sheer precipice. He then crossed the fluted west face and ascended the south spur. This last portion was termed by Brown to be the most aerial climbing he had ever attempted. Probably class 3.

- Route 2. West slope. Class 3. First ascent August 13, 1945, by Art Reyman. Ascend the west slope to the couloir on the west face, ascend thir to class 3 rocks which lead to the summit.

Peak 12,139 (12,162n; 1/3 SW of Cartridge Pass)

- Class 1. Ascended prior to 1930. It is an easy short climb from Cartridge Pass.

Peak 12,100+ (11,920+n; 1/4 SW of PK 12,139)

- First ascent August 9, 1922, by Norman Clyde.

Peak 11,527 (11,520+; 1/3 E of Marion Lake)

- First ascent August 6, 1895, by Bolton C. Brown from Cartridge Creek (presumably via the west slope). He descended the south side to Marion
Lake. On July 22, 1902, Joseph N. LeConte and party climbed it by circling Marion Lake. They termed the climb an easy scramble.

*Peak 12,368 (12,361n; 1 NE of Marion Peak)*

Class 2. First recorded ascent August 11, 1945, by Art Reyman. Her found what may have been a cairn. Traverse from Marion Peak and ascend the south slope.

*Marion Peak (12,686; 12,719n)*

Route 1. *East slope.* First ascent July 22, 1902, by J. N. LeConte and Curds Lindley. From Marion Lake ascend the east slope to the summit.

Route 2. *Northwest ridge.* Class 3. First ascent August 11, 1945, by Art Reyman. From the knapsack pass to northwest follow the knife-edger ridge, then go over difficult rocks to the summit.

*Red Point (11,851; 11,840+n)*

Class 1. First ascent August 11, 1945, by Art Reyman. From Marion Lake ascend to the pass south of the point on the knapsack route, then up the south ridge.

*Peak 12,529 (12,524n; 3/4 N of State Peak)*

First ascent probably in 1935 by a Sierra Club party who “climbedr peaks of Cirque Crest.”

*Peak 11,742 (11,760+n; 1 NE of Horseshoe Lakes)*

First ascent July 13, 1935, by a Sierra Club party.
Peak 11,182 (11,150n) (Windy Point)

First ascent unknown, but as it is a USGS benchmark it was climbed by a survey party. It can be reached by following Windy Ridge to its northwest end. A fine view is obtained from this point.

Windy Peak (8,872; 8,867n)

No record of ascent is available.

State Peak (12,609; 12,620n)

First ascent probably in 1935 by a Sierra Club party who “climbed peaks of Cirque Crest.”

Dougherty Peak (12,234; 12,244n)

First ascent in 1935 by a Sierra Club party.

Peak 12,004 (11,920+n; 1 SW of Dougherty Peak)

First ascent probably in 1935 by a Sierra Club party who “climbed peaks of Cirque Crest.”

Goat Crest (11,779; 11,7970)

No record of ascent is available.

Goat Crest (12,055; 12,000n)

A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

Palisades to Kearsarge Pass
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

No record of ascent is available.

Kid Peak (11,443; 11,458n)

First ascent July 2, 1940, by a Sierra Club party of 18 led by Norman Clyde and Dave Brower from Paradise Valley.

Goat Mountain (12,203; 12,207n)

Class 1. First ascent apparently July 22, 1864, by James T. Gardinerr and Charles F. Hoffmann from Granite Basin. It has been ascended several times from Copper Creek via the south ridge. Apparently class 1.

West of the Crest

(South Fork of Kings Rives to Bubbs Creek)

Peak 12,776 (1 NW of Mt Pinchot)

First ascent July 23, 1939, by Madi Bacon and Tom Noble.

Mount Pinchot (13,471; 13,495n)

Class 2. First ascent in 1905 by either Charles F. Urquhart of ther USGS, or George Davis, both of whom climbed it in that year. It is easily climbable from almost any direction.

Mount Wynne (13,100+; 13,179n)
r First ascent in 1935 by a Sierra Club party. It is climbable from almost any direction. The traverse from Mount Pinchot has been used.

Peak 12,601 (12,480+n) (1/2 N of Crater Mountain)

As this peak is an old USGS benchmark it had been climbed by a survey party prior to the first recorded ascent in 1925 by Norman Clyde.

Crater Mountain (12,800+; 12,874n)

Class 2. First ascent July 19, 1922, by W. H. Ink, Meyers Butte, Frank Baxter and Capt. Wallace. The best routes are from the east or northeast. This peak is not a crater as the name implies.

Peak 12,600+ (12,560+n; 1/4 NE of Peak 12,938)

First ascent July 25, 1939, by Art Argiewicz, Cyril Jobson, Don Kauffman, Keith Taylor and Bob Wickersham from the cirque southeast of Bench Lake.

Peak 12,938 (12,968n; 1.3 NW of Crater Mountain)

First recorded ascent July 25, 1939, by Art Argiewicz and party from the cirque southeast of Bench Lake. They found evidence of prior ascent.

Peak 12,044 (12,000+n; SE of Bench Lake)

First ascent August 12, 1922, by W. Sloane and J. Sloane.
**Arrow Peak (12,927; 12,958n)**

**Route 1. Northeast spur.** First ascent August 8, 1895, by Bolton C. Brown. He climbed the northeast spur from the base to the top. It is a simple ascent, but most of it is serious climbing. There are some narrow, knife-edge spots. Brown descended the southeast spur and returned to the South Fork of the Kings.

**Route 2. Southwest ridge.** First ascent June 1902 by Joseph N. LeConte, Tracey Kelley and Robert Pike from the head of Arrow Creek. They ascended the south slope to the top of the ridge. A false summit one quarter mile south of the peak is separated from it by a knife-edge ridge.

**Route 3. Southeast ridge.** Class 2. First ascent possibly August 20, 1930, by Walter A. Starr, Jr. from Bench Lake. From the west end of Bench Lake head for the rock slide at the pass southeast of the peak. Ascend this and then go westerly over talus to the summit.

**Arrow Ridge (12,166; 12,188n)**

**Class 1.** First ascent August 8, 1945, by Art J. Reyman on a traverser from Arrow Peak.

**Pyramid Peak (12,740; 12,777n)**

**Class 3.** First ascent July 21, 1942, by Art Reyman on a traverse from Window Peak. The ridge narrows to a class 3 knife-edge. The climber is class 2 except the knife-edge. The final summit is reached by ascending the south ridge.

**Peak 12,200+ (12,160+n; 1/2 SE of Pyramid Peak)**

**Class 2.** First ascent July 21, 1942, by Art Reyman while on a traverser from Window Peak to Pyramid Peak.

**Window Peak (12,002; 12,085n)**

A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge
First ascent July 5, 1940, by Art Argiewicz and Bob Jacobs. Their route is not known. They found that the window measures four by five feet. The peak has been climbed from Castle Domes via the broken connecting ridge. Another route has been followed by Art Reyman on a descent via the north ridge to Pyramid Peak.

Castle Domes (11,415; 11,360+n)

The highest dome is an old benchmark, so the first ascent was probably made in early years by a USGS survey party. The first ascent of the second most prominent dome was made July 5, 1940, by Art Argiewicz and Bob Jacobs. From Woods Creek the east slope and the northeast ridge afford a class 1 route. It can be climbed on a traverse of the connecting ridge from Window Peak.

Peak 12,332 (12,372n; 1 W of Colosseum Mountain)

Class 1. First ascent August 25, 1935, by Norman Clyde. The southeast slope is class 1.

Peak 12,329 (12,349n; 2.7 W of Mount Baxter)

Class 2. First recorded ascent July 4, 1940, by Jim Harkins, Bob Jacobs and Don Heyneman. They found evidence that it had been climbed before. Their route is not known. It can easily be climbed from the saddle to east.

Peak 12,786 (12,804n; 1.7 NW of Mount Baxter)

Route 1. East ridge. Class 2. First ascent July 1935 by a Sierra Club party led by Norman Clyde on a traverse from Peak 13,167.

Route 2. From northwest. Class 2. First ascent July 21, 1948, by Fred L. Jones from Woods Lake. Ascend the ridge leading to the east edge of the plateau west of the peak, then go up the west slope to the summit. Their descent was made by a class 2 route via the west ridge to the saddle east of Peak 12,329.
Peak 12,885 (12,852n; 1.7 W Of Mount Baxter)

Class 2. First ascent July 1935 by a Sierra Club party led by Norman Clyde on a traverse along the north ridge from Mount Baxter. They continued on to Peak 12,786.

Peak 13,167 (13,189n; 3/4 W of Mount Baxter)

Class 2. First ascent July 1935 by a Sierra Club party led by Norman Clyde on a traverse from Mount Baxter. The east ridge has been reached by Fred L. Jones via the saddle to east from both the north and south. The route to the saddle from the north is class 3 and from the south class 2. Clyde continued the traverse down the west ridge, also class 2.

Peak 11,503 (11,520+n; 1.7 NW of Mount Clarence King)

First ascent July 5, 1940, by Ken Hartley and Don Roberts.

King Spur (12,158; 12,160+n)

Date of first ascent unknown. First ascents on the two most northerly points of the ridge were made from the north on July 6, 1940, by Jim Harkins, Bob Jacobs, Art Argiewicz and Bruce Meyer. Ropes were used on the summit monoliths. They saw a cairn on top of Peak 12,158.

Peak 11,081 (11,1204+n; 1.5 NE of Mount Clarence King)

This peak is a benchmark, so it has been climbed by a USGS survey party.

Mount Clarence King (12,909; 12,905n)
In July 1895 Bolton C. Brown attempted the north and east aretes, being stopped by vertical cliffs on both. On the east he reached to within one or two hundred feet of the summit. The following year he successfully climbed the south face, this approach being the only one by which the summit has been reached to date.

Class 3. First ascent 1896, probably in August, by Bolton C. Brown via the south ridge. From the head of Gardiner Creek or Sixty Laker Basin proceed to the saddle south of the peak. From Sixty Lake Basin the route follows either a ledge in the cliff or a rockslide further south, and is class 3. Proceed north on the flat talus slope. Walter Starr’s choice of the best route is as follows: at the top of this slope, next to the eastern drop-off, is a small hole under the rocks just large enough to squirm up through. This hole is in line with the summit, Mount Cotter and Mount Stanford. The last 50 feet requires rock climbing. Ropes should be used. The summit is composed of big slabs.

Mount Cotter (12,703; 12,721n)

Class 2. First ascent August 6, 1922, by Bob Fitzsimons from Sixty Laker Basin.

The north peak of Cotter was first climbed on July 8, 1940, by a Sierrar Club party led by Dave Brower on a traverse of the north ridge. An exposed 20 feet wall which had to be descended was the only obstacle. Ropes are needed. Probably class 3.

Mount Gardiner (12,903; 12,907n)

Two of the most prominent Sierra mountaineers of all time, Joseph N. LeConte and Bolton C. Brown, met by chance on the lower summit of the peak in July 1896 and joined forces to share in its first ascent.

Route 1. South slope. Class 3. First ascent July 1896 by Joseph N. LeConte and Bolton C. Brown. The south slope from Charlotte Creek to the summit of the lower peak is an easy ascent. A knife-edge ridger separates the summit of the highest peak. Probably class 3.

Route 2. Southeast ridge. On July 7, 1940, Paul Estes and Jack Pointekir traversed the southeast ridge between Mount Gardiner and Peak 12,565, though they didn’t specify which way.
Route 3. Northeast face. First ascent July 9, 1940, by a party led by Norman Clyde. They ascended the glacier to the summit.

Peak 10,667 (10,690n; 2 SW of Mount Gardiner)


Peak 12,565 (12,560+n; 1 SE of Mount Gardiner)

First ascent July 7, 1940, by Paul Estes and Jack Pointeki. They traversed between it and Mount Gardiner, though the direction of travel is not known.

Peak 12,553 (12,560+n; 2 E of Mount Gardiner)

First ascent in 1899 by Bolton C. Brown. A map of his route shows that he crossed the summit using the south and north slopes, though his direction of travel isn’t indicated.

Peak 11,904 (11,942n; 3/4 S Of Fin Dome)

Class 2. Date of the first ascent is not known, but it was prior to July 6, 1940. An old USFS shovel handle was found then by Paul Estes. The ascent from the north is class 2, by inspection.

Fin Dome (11,627; 11,693n)

First ascent 1910 by James Rennie, route unknown, though probably similar to route 1.

Route 1. West face. Class 3. Ducks lead to the easiest route on the west face, directly under the dome. It is a high-angle, zig-zagging trail of sand, gravel and small blocks between large slabs and boulders. If one didn’t stay on the easiest route ropes would be needed. There are several good routes for ropes.
Route 2. Class 4. First ascent July 7, 1940, by Sierra Club party led by Dave Brower. Traversing north from Peak 11,904 they established a class 4 route. Details are not known.

Peak 12,409 (12,400+n; 1/2 W of Mount Rixford)

First ascent probably July 1896 by Bolton C. Brown. It is readily climbable from the south, west or east.

Peak 12,238 (12,160+n; 3/4 W of Mount Rixford)

First ascent in 1909 by William G. Morgan and party from Bullfrog Lake. They traversed north to Peak 12,409.

Mount Rixford (12,856; 12,890n)

First ascent in 1897 by Dr. Emmet Rixford and two others. Their route is unknown. Several routes have been used: from Bullfrog Lake, class 1; from Peak 12,409 to the west, class 2; from Mount Gould, mostly class 2 but the sharp ridge up Mount Rixford from the east may be class 3. The northeast face has been descended by Bolton Brown, who described it as dangerous.

Peak 12,700+ (12,800+n; 1/2 E of Mount Rixford)

First ascent August 19, 1900, by John Fox and 9 others.

Peak 12,067 (12,126n; 1/2 N of Mount Rixford)

This is the Painted Lady. First ascent July 1931 by Robert Owen.
Mount Bago (11,868; 11,869n)

Class 1. First ascent either July 1896, by Joseph N. LeConte and W. S. Gould, or July, 1896, by Bolton C. Brown and Lucy Brown. Both parties were in the area at the same time. Ascend from Charlotte Lake.

Peak 11,440 (11,360+n; 1 E of Mount Bago)

First ascent July, 1896, by Bolton C. Brown, Lucy Brown, Dr. Woodr and Dr. Little from Charlotte Lake.

East of the Crest

Birch Mountain (13,660; 13,665n)

No record of the first ascent is available, though Norman Clyde has climbed it several times. The best route is from Birch Lake up the chuter leading southwest to the col west of the peak, then east to the top. This route is probably class 1 or 2 at worst. The north face affords class 2 and class 3 routes among the many ribs and chutes. The south slope is class 1 or 2. Clyde has descended the east slope on snow in the spring.

Peak 12,543 (named “Mount Tinemaha,” 12,561n)

First recorded ascent July 1, 1937, by Chester Versteeg. He climbed from Tinemaha Creek to the top of the ridge west of the peak, then went east on it to the summit. It can also be climbed from the saddle on the main crest north of Split Mountain via the southerly slope of the ridge. The west end of this ridge and several steep ribs are class 3. From Red Mountain Lake the gravelly southwest slope gives a class 2 route.

Goodale Mountain (12,767; 12,790n)

Route 1. From the west. Class 2. First recorded ascent July 23, 1939, by Norman Clyde, Allan A. MacRae, and Albion J. Whitney. Apparently they climbed it from the saddle to the west. This saddle can be reached easily from Taboose Pass.
Route 2. From Woods Creek. Class 3. First ascent August 1, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. For details see Route 3 up Striped Mountain. From the saddle to the east the class 2 west slope is followed.

Route 3. East slope. Class 1. The east slope of Goodale Mountain cannot be climbed from the road ends between Taboose and Goodale Creeks and apparently has been by deer hunters.

Peak 11,764 (11,765n; 1.3 E of Mount Perkins)

Class 2. First recorded ascent July 31, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. A cairn was found but no record. The top of the connecting ridge was followed from the crest.

It was ascended May 11, 1951, by Fred L. Jones via Division Creek from Scotty Spring. The lower part of Division Creek canyon is class 3 in places, the upper part class 2. The peak was descended via the big chute on the northeast face, which is class 2.

Sawmill Point (9,460; 9,416n)

Class 3. First recorded ascent January 11, 1953, by Art J. Reyman and Fred L. Jones via the northeast ridge. Leave the Sawmill Pass trail above the red cinder cone north of Sawmill Creek. Ascend the spur above the east edge of the summit ridge. At the notch directly east of the summit cross to the north side and regain the top of the summit ridge just west of the summit. Climb east to the top. Two old cairns were found, but no record. An easier ascent can be made by following the trail into Sawmill Creek until under the peak on the north side.

Lookout Point (10,160; 10,144n)

First ascent 1926 by Norman Clyde.

Peak 11,511 (11,520+n; 1 SW of Lookout Point)
Class 2. First ascent October 31, 1926, by Norman Clyde, probably from Sawmill Lake, as was the second ascent, also by Clyde in 1935. Her descended into Black Canyon. The peak was ascended July 26, 1948, by Fred L. Jones on a traverse from Peak 12,411 by going west of that peak, then dropping to the head of the basin to north and crossing it to the top of the ridge south of 11,511. The route was class 2.

**Peak 12,411 (12,400+n; 1 NE of Mount Baxter)**

First ascent September 4, 1935, by Norman Clyde from Sawmill Pass by going southeast across the intervening cirque. The peak was climbed from Mount Baxter on July 25, 1948, by Fred L. Jones by keeping to the top or north side of the intervening ridge (see Route 4 up Mount Baxter). The route is class 3. The peak was climbed from Thibaut Creek on October 16, 1948, by Fred L. Jones by keeping to the top or south side of the ridge between Thibaut Creek and Black Canyon. The descent into Thibaut Creek was made via a class 2 chute from the summit.

**“Indian Rock” (12,200+; 12,160+n)**

This locally named prominence lies on the ridge between Black Canyon and Thibaut Creek about three-tenths of a mile southeast of Peak 12,411. Looking southerly from Highway 395 just north of Aberdeen, it is the prominent tooth on the skyline directly over the highway.

Class 3. First ascent October 16, 1948, by Fred L. Jones. From the head of Thibaut Creek ascend the chute to the base of the northwest face and then go directly up this to the broad top.

**Peak 11,810 (11,844n; 3/4 E of Mount Baxter)**

First ascent September 16, 1935, by Norman Clyde. From Thibaut Creek he ascended the crest of the ridge to east of the peak and climbed west to the summit. It is mostly class 2. An easier ascent is west from Thibaut Creek and up the easy northwest slope. Clyde descended south into the basin at the head of the Little North Fork of Oak Creek. The route is class 1.

**Peak 10,643 (1.8 SE of Mount Baxter)**
r Class 2. First ascent September 16, 1935, by Norman Clyde. He ascended north from the head of the Little North Fork of Oak Creek. It is an easy ascent via the south slope from the Baxter Pass Trail about one mile above the second creek crossing.

Peak 13,031 (13,045n; 1 NE of Black Mountain)

r

r First ascent probably September 14, 1935, by Norman Clyde who prior to and after that date was climbing in the near vicinity, though his allusion to the main crest is obviously incorrect: “On Peak 13,031, on main crest, at an altitude of 11,500 feet picked up a pair of weathered (mountain sheep) horns. No recent evidence except a bed and droppings on the saddle west of peak.”

r

r

r The next recorded ascent was August 19, 1948, by Fred L. Jones on a traverse from Black Mountain. The route was class 2.

Peak 12,710 (12,720+n; 3/4 W of Kearsarge Peak)

r

r First ascent in 1925 by Norman Clyde: “peak west of Kearsarge.” It is easy from the east, though a deep notch to the west is difficult.

Kearsarge Peak (12,650; 12,598n)

r

r First recorded ascent in 1925 by Norman Clyde. This peak is traversed nearly to the summit by mining trails and is an easy class 1 ascent by them. It has been descended by a more varied route by Art Reyman, Mary DeDecker, Joan DeDecker and Carol DeDecker. Take the steeper chute due south of the second or third rocky point from the summit, which ends in a fall below the mine. Climb out of the chute to the north above this and descend by the South Fork of Independence Creek trail to Onion Valley.

Peak 11,988 (12,000+n; 1 E of Mount Gould)

r

r First ascent 1925 by Norman Clyde.
References

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http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/climbers_guide/palisades_to_kearsarge_pass.html

r

Palisades to Kearsarge Pass 306
Kearsarge Pass to Army and Franklin Passes

IN THIS southern part of the Sierra the loftiest peaks are found, but a little farther south the range declines in both height and ruggedness. For this reason the Guide does not discuss peaks south of Armyr Pass on the main crest nor south of Franklin Pass on the Great Westernr Divide, although there are a few worthy peaks in the excluded area.

Much excellent climbing is to be found here. The east wall of ther Sierra near Mount Whitney is one of the outstanding regions for climbing in the United States. The Kings-Kern Divide contains many finer peaks in a small area. The Kaweahs have a reputation for challenging faces of friable rock, contrasting with the granite peaks to the north andr west in the Great Western Divide.

Most of this section, south of the Kings-Kern Divide, and west of ther main crest, is within Sequoia National Park, and therefore boasts somer fine trails, including the southern end of the Muir Trail, the Whitneyr Trail, and the High Sierra Trail which runs eastward from Giant Forest. The trails are described in more detail in the individual areas below, which are as follows:

* The Kings-Kern Divide and the Adjacent Crests. Included are ther main crest from Kearsarge Pass to Shepherd Pass, the Kings-Kernr Divide, and the northern end of the Great Western Divide.

* The Whitney Region. This covers the main crest from Shepherd Passr to Army Pass and adjacent peaks east of the Kern River.

* The Kaweahs and the Great Western Divide. This describes ther Great Western Divide south from the point where it is joined byr the Kings-Kern Divide to Franklin Pass, the Kaweah Peaks ridge, and adjacent peaks to the west.
Kearsarge Pass to Army and Franklin Passes

The Kings-Kern Divide and the Adjacent Crests

Hervey Voge

THE RUGGED ridge of the Kings-Kern Divide connects the main crest of the Sierra with the northern part of the Great Western Divide like the bar in a giant letter H. To the south of this bar lies the high plateau where the Kern River starts, while on the north the tributaries of the South Fork of the Kings River flow northward in several canyons between the subsidiary ridges which jut out from the divide. The Muir Trail crosses the Kings-Kern Divide at Foresters Pass.

The Kings-Kern region has much to offer climbers of various tastes. The main peaks range from easy to moderate by the standard routes, and are without exception very fine viewpoints. The precipitous Kearsarge Pinnacles, the crags north of Mount Ericsson, and many of the north and east faces of the larger peaks present real challenges to rock climbers.

Historical

Recorded climbing started in 1864 with the explorations of the party of the California State Geological Survey. This party was led by William H. Brewer and included Charles Hoffmann, Clarence King, and Richard Cotter. Brewer and Hoffmann ascended and named Mount Brewer, while King and Cotter made their way from Roaring River across the Great Western and Kings-Kern Divides to Mount Tyndall and back in the classic trip described in King’s Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada. King’s narrative relates climbing adventures in the dramatic style of the Nineteenth Century, and two of the most exciting passages concern the Kings-Kern Divide. The first of these describes their crossing of the divide, from north to south, somewhere between Thunder Mountain and Mount Jordan, in the course of which crossing the adventurous climbers at one time pulled themselves up by a lasso thrown over a partially loose spike of rock thirty feet above, and at another time descended by rope-downs when neither forward nor return progress was certain.
The other dramatic episode occurred when the two climbers, on the return journey from Mount Tyndall, passed around the south end of what is now called Lake Reflection. Here they encountered a sheer bluff which could only be passed by ascending a steep tongue of icy snow and climbing a cliff at its head. After an unsuccessful attempt by King, Cotter led up the cliff and seated himself at the top. He called down to King and said, “Don’t be afraid to bear your weight on the rope.” Thus reassured King made the climb unaided, only to discover that Cotter had a very precarious perch and that the least pull would have dragged him over.

John Muir climbed several unidentified peaks near the Kings-Kern Divide in 1873. The region was more thoroughly explored by Bolton Coit Brown, J. N. LeConte, and others in 1896 and thereafter, and by E. T. Parsons in 1903. (The early history of the Kings River Sierra has been described by Francis P. Farquhar, SCB, 1941, 28). In later years many have climbed these peaks, Norman Clyde alone having at one time or another visited most of the major summits.

Geography

The arbitrary region here considered extends about eight miles along the crest from Kearsarge Pass to Shepherd Pass, westward along the Kings-Kern Divide to the Great Western Divide, and north along the latter divide to its terminus. The rock is mostly granite, but some dark, metamorphic rock is found on Center Peak, the Videttes, and in a few other areas. The granite varies from firm material in some places to rather badly decomposed rock in others. Sketch 21 is a map of the area.

Approaches

From Independence, Kearsarge Pass (11,823). From the end of the road in Onion Valley at 8,900 feet a good horse trail leads over Kearsarge Pass to Bullfrog Lake. Just below Bullfrog Lake this lateral joins the Muir Trail, which may be followed south to the upper regions of Bubbs Creek, Center Basin, and the Kings-Kern Divide at Foresters Pass. East Lake may be reached by following west down Bubbs Creek (leaving the Muir Trail at Vidette Meadow) to just below the juncture with East Creek at a spot called Junction Meadow, whence a trail leading up East Creek climbs southward.

Shepherd Pass (12,000+). The Shepherd Pass trail starts at an elevation of about 6,500 feet at the end of a road which leaves U.S. 395 at Independence. The rather poor trail leads over Shepherd Pass to the Tyndall Creek plateau just south of the Kings-Kern Divide. Knapsackers may turn north at an elevation of about 10,500 on the east side of the pass and follow the old Junction Pass trail across Junction Pass (13,200) into Center Basin. The Junction Pass trail is not recommended for animals.
From Kings Canyon. The Bubbs Creek trail leaves the Kings River Canyon at 4,800 feet and follows the creek until the Muir Trail is reached at 9,700 feet in Vidette Meadow. At Junction Meadow, at an elevation of about 8,500 feet, the trail to East Lake leaves the Bubbs Creek trail and goes south up East Creek.

A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

The Kings-Kern Divide and the Adjacent Crests
r From the North. The Muir Trail leads over Glen Pass (11,900+) and to the foot of Bullfrog Lake, from which point various routes may be followed as described for the approach over Kearsarge Pass.

r

r From the South. The Muir Trail traverses the high plateau east of the Kern River and crosses the Kings-Kern Divide at Foresters Pass (13,200). From the pass the trail descends to the headwaters of Bubbs Creek and Vidette Meadow.

r

r From the West. Several routes to the high peaks are possible from the west. Either the trail up Sphinx Creek or that from Big Meadow may be followed to Moraine Meadow, Scaffold Meadow or the headwaters of the Roaring River. These trails are described in more detail in Starr's "Guide" (1951). Knapsack routes lead from these points via Brewer Creek or Longley Pass to East Lake or Lake Reflection.

Campsites

r Camps suitable for knapsackers may be found up to about 11,300 feet elevation in nearly all the valleys. Popular camping spots for those traveling with animals are situated at Bullfrog Lake, along Bubbs Creek from Vidette Meadow to the lower part of Center Basin, on East Creek from East Lake to just below Lake Reflection, and on the south side of the divide along Tyndall and Milestone creeks.

Passes

r Besides the main trail passes mentioned under approaches, several others are of interest to climbers and knapsackers.

r

r Junction Pass (13,200). Class 1. This pass crosses the main crest and connects Center Basin to the head of Shepherd Creek. It was once the main horse trail for north-south travel in this region, but is no longer maintained. Parts have been obscured by slides, and the trail is not well marked, so that knapsackers following it should pay close attention to the topographic map.

r

r Harrison Pass (12,600+). Class 1 to 2. This pass across the Kings-Kern Divide leads from East Lake to Lake South America. It has occasionally been crossed by pack animals, but like Junction Pass is only
recommended for foot travel. The trail is not clearly marked over the higher portion of the north side, but the place of crossing the divide is not especially critical. Steep and sometimes icy snow may be met on the north side, but the south side in this region is very easy walking.

Lucy’s Foot Pass (12,500+). In 1896 Bolton Coit Brown and his wife Lucy crossed the Kings-Kern Divide just west of Mount Ericsson, and since that time the pass has borne her name. There is no trail, and considerable rough talus is encountered, but the route is class 1.

Milly’s Foot Pass (12,300+). Perhaps the most direct route from Laker Reflection to the broad flats of the Upper Kern is the saddle just north of Mount Genevra. This was crossed in July 1953 by Mildred Jentschr and Sylvia Kershaw. The cliff on the northwest side is not as difficult as it appears, for a cleft passes diagonally up through it. Class 2.

University Pass (12,700+). Class 2. This is a climber’s pass from Onion Valley to Center Basin; it is the lowest point between University Peak and Peak 12,910. There is a steep snow gully on the northeast side and a long rocky chute on the southwest side.

Brewer Creek to East Lake Pass (12,800+). Class 1 to 2. This pass crosses the ridge between Mount Brewer and South Guard, and leads from Brewer Creek to East Lake. It is for foot travel only. The routes are about the same as for Mount Brewer, Routes 1 and 2, except that the summit of Brewer is bypassed.

Longley Pass (12,600+). Class 1. This foot pass leads from the stream below South Guard Lake on the west to Lake Reflection on the east side of the Great Western Divide, and passes between Peaks 13,232 and 13,021. On the west it is quite easy, and on the east not difficult except for a possible, seasonal, steep snow bank. There is a trail part of the way on the east side.

Deerhorn Saddle (12,800+). Class 1. The saddle east of Deerhorn Mountain provides a feasible knapsack route from the basin north of Harrison Pass to Vidette Creek.

Routes and Records for the Principal Peaks

The descriptions of routes and records are arranged in the following order:
Peaks of the Main Crest (North to South)

Nameless Pyramid (1/4 S of Kearsarge Pass)

A small pyramid of rather monolithic granite stands on the main crest south of Kearsarge Pass and above Pothole Lake. It was first ascended in July 1952 by Ted Matthes, Frank Tarver, and Phillip Berry. The approach by the ridge from the pass, or from the northeast, or from the west, is class 3. The northern side of the pyramid is class 4 to 5.

Peak 12,423 (3/4 S of Kearsarge Pass)

Ascended by Norman Clyde, April 4, 1926.

University Peak (13,588)

Route 1. From the northwest. Class 1. First ascent July 12, 1896, by J. N. LeConte, Helen M. Gompertz, Estelle Miller, and Belle Miller. From the environs of Bullfrog Lake proceed southeast up the basin between the Kearsarge Pinnacles and the main crest to the upper Kearsarger Lake and continue toward a low gap in the ridge west of University Peak, passing over rough, giant talus and some snowbanks (seasonal) to the gap. From the gap the easiest route is to traverse around and up on the sandy southwest slope of the peak. It is also feasible to proceed from the gap to the ridge running northwest from the summit and to follow the ridge to the top; this variation (Walter Starr, Jr.) is class 2-3.

Route 2. South face. Class 1. From Center Basin the long, rather easy slope to the summit may be climbed by a number of routes.
Route 3. North face. About class 3. First known ascent by Norman Clyde, prior to 1928. From the group of lakes at the northern base, at about 10,500 feet (Slim Lake) climb up a steep, rocky slope, several thousand feet in length, to the eastern end of a knife-edge which can be followed to the summit with comparative ease.

Route 4. Southeast face. About class 3. Climbed by Norman Clyde, Sept. 29, 1928. He described it as a good but not very difficult rock scramble.

Route 5. Southeast ridge. Class 2. From University Pass (see above section on passes) the ridge may be followed easily if one stays somewhat on the south side.

Route 6. Northeast ridge. It is reported that this ridge was climbed in 1947. Class 3 to 4.

Center Basin Crags (about 12,700-12,800)

The sharp crags standing on the main crest between Peak 12,910 and Mount Bradley have been numbered from north to south. Crag I is a fairly broad one, while Crags 2, 3, and 4 are sharper and are grouped together. Crag 5 is less steep. (See Sketch 22.)


Crag 2, 3 and 4. First ascended in July 1940 in a class 4 traverse byr David R. Brower and L. Bruce Meyer. A long rope-down was used at the end. Crags 3 and 4 were ascended again in August 1953 by Browerr and Phil Berry. They proceeded from Center Basin toward the notch south of Crag 4 and then crossed northward to the notch betweenr Crags 3 and 4; from this point both crags were climbed. Class 5.

Crag 5. The north ridge is class 2. First ascent by unidentified party.
Mount Bradley (13,280)

Route 1. West face. Class 2. First ascent July 5, 1898, by Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Price, J. Shinn, and Lalla Harris. The summit can probably be reached by any one of a number of chutes leading up from Center Basin to the main ridge. The easiest way is to climb straight up the talus chute below the main summit. When the chute forks about three-fourths of the way up, take the branch to the right, which leads to the saddle between the two summits. From the saddle go around behind (E of) the main summit, which is the left or northerly one, and ascend a narrow, easy chute to the top. The party of the first ascent took four hours from camp in lower Center Basin to the summit.

Route 2. Northwest ridge. Probably class 3 to 4. This ridge was followed from peak 12,910 on Aug. 31, 1948, by Fred L. Jones.

Route 3. East ridge. Probably class 2. Climbed Oct. 27, 1948, by the east ridge from Symmes Creek by Fred L. Jones.

Peak 13,370 (3/4 NE of Mount Keith)

All but the last 15 feet was climbed July 15, 1940, by Paul Estes. The summit is a difficult and exposed monolith.
Route 1. Northwest face. Class 1 to 2. First ascent July 6, 1898, by R. M. Price, J. E. Price, J. C. Shinn, and C. B. Bradley. Time from camp in Center Basin to the top was four hours.

Route 2. Southwest ridge. Class 2 to 3. The sharp ridge from Junction Pass was followed by two Sierra Club parties in 1916, and it was thought that this route had not been used in any previous ascents.

Route 3. South face. About class 2. According to Norman Clyde the ascent from about 10,000 feet on the Shepherd Pass trail is comparatively easy.

Junction Peak (BM 13,903)

Route 1. South ridge. Class 2. First ascent August 8, 1899, by E. B. Copeland and E. N. Henderson. Ascend the west wall of Diamond Mesa near the lower (southern) end and proceed north along the sandy plateau and along or somewhat to the west of an easy knife edge leading to the summit.

Route 2. West ridge. Class 2. From Foresters Pass follow the ridge eastward, passing over or to the south of one small subsidiary peak. On the main peak stay to the south of the northwest ridge, and proceed southward and upward from one chute to another as convenient.


Peak East of the Main Crest

Independence Peak (11,773)

This may be climbed by the north slope from Onion Valley. Norman Clyde ascended the peak three times in 1926 and twice in 1927.
Peaks of the Great Western Divide (North to South)

Cross Mountain (12,140)

Ascended in 1929 by Walter L. Huber.

Peak 12,871 (3/4 NW of North Guard)

First ascent July 17, 1932, by Sierra Club parties, including Norman Clyde, Thomas Rawles, Lincoln O’Brien, and eleven others, from Sphinx Lakes. The climbers said that it was a splendid peak and that the highest point was a large slab almost overhanging the steep east face.

North Guard (13,304)

First ascent July 12, 1925, by Norman Clyde. The summit is a large, sloping obelisk, which overhangs the east face.

Route 1. South ridge or slopes. Class 1 to 2. From the north fork of Brewer Creek proceed to the saddle between Brewer and North Guard, or up the south slopes of the peak.

Route 2. East and north faces. Class 4. Climbed May 28, 1934, by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge. From East Lake proceed up Ouzel Creek and tributaries to the northeast flank of the mountain and ascend this wall to the prominent shoulder or col north-northeast of the summit. From the col climb a thirty-foot V crack on the nose of the ridge to a platform, and from this platform go to the right (W) on broken ledges on the north face and ascend a second difficult crack to the easier rocks leading to the summit.

A subsidiary peak north-northeast from North Guard, about 13,100, was climbed from Ouzel Creek Aug. to, 1948, by James Koontz and two others.

Mount Brewer (13,577)
**Route 1. West slopes and south ridge.** Class 1. First ascent by W. H. Brewer and C. F. Hoffmann, July 2, 1864. From Roaring River or Moraine Creek go up Brewer Creek to the notch just south of Mount Brewer and follow the easy ridge of broken rock to the summit.

**Route 2. East slopes and south ridge.** Class 1 to 2. First ascent by Bolton C. Brown and A. B. Clark, 1895. From East Lake proceed up Ouzel Creek, taking the middle fork which leads almost directly toward Mount Brewer. From this fork, in one of several possible places, climb the ridge to the south. Alternatively, the ridge may be climbed over rounded slabs at its foot from the junction of the first fork of Ouzel Creek shown on the map. This ridge joins the main south ridge of Mount Brewer at about the southern edge of the summit pyramid. Where this subsidiary eastern ridge joins the peak, work to the left (S) through a small notch to the main south ridge, and proceed northward up this to the summit. Time from East Lake to the top is about four hours.

**Route 3. Northwest slopes.** Class 1 to 2. Climb from the north fork of Brewer Creek.

**Route 4. Northeast couloir and north ridge.** Class 2 to 3. Ascended August 4, 1940, by Oliver Kehrlein, August and Grete Frugé, E. Hanson, L. West, R. Leggett, and A. Mulay. From the east side of the mountain ascend a steep couloir filled with snow and (or) ice which leads to the base of the main pyramid of the mountain on the north side, and then climb the north ridge or face to the top.

**Peak 13,232 (3/4 E of South Guard Lake)**

This peak may have been climbed by Clarence King and Richard Cotter on July 4, 1864. Clarence King wrote, in *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*, that from the notch just south of Mount Brewer “with very great difficulty we climbed a peak which surmounted our wall just to the south of the pass . . .” From this peak they attempted to follow the Great Western Divide southward, but soon descended to the east.

**Peak 13,021 (1.5 W of Mount Jordan)**

First ascent by Norman Clyde in 1925. Climbed August 8, 1940, by Oliver Kehrlein and five others from Lake Reflection by ascending the east side of the Great Western Divider somewhat north of Peak 13,021, and traversing along the divide, from...
north to south. Several minor summits were climbed before Peak 13,021 was reached.

Peak 13,110 (1/2 N of Thunder Mountain)

First ascent August 8, 1940, by Oliver Kehrlein and five others who traversed along the north ridge of the peak from Peak 13,021 (see above).

Thunder Mountain (BM 13,578)

First ascent August 1905 by G. K. Davis of the U.S. Geological Survey. The second ascent was made on July 27, 1927, by Norman Clyde. The customary route of ascent has been from the southeast, from a lake just under the mountain, which drains into the northern branch of Milestone Creek. There are three pinnacles on top which increase in difficulty from east to west. Class 3.

Peaks West of the Great Western Divide

Peak 12,680 (1/2 W of South Guard Lake)

There are no records available regarding this peak.

Peak 12,620 (1.5 W of Thunder Mountain)

No records of any climbs are available.

Peaks of the Kings-Kern Divide (West to East)

Peak 13,241 (3/4 E of Thunder Mountain)
First ascent unrecorded. Second ascent by the east face, August 1939 by Fritz Lipprmann, Dave Nelson, Don Woods, and Edward Koskinen.

Peak 13,102 (1/2 S of Mount Jordan)

Norman Clyde, July 5, 1931, climbed the first pinnacle south of Mount Jordan, and found no cairn.

Mount Jordan (13,316)

First ascent by Norman Clyde, July 15, 1925, evidently of the lower north peak.

Route 1. From the south. Class 2. In 1936 two Sierra Club parties, led by Lewis Clark and Carl Jensen, made the ascent. They found a cairn on the northern summit and also climbed the interesting southernmost pinnacle, which is the higher. It bore no evidence of any previous ascent. The intermediate points were not climbed.

Route 2. North face. Class 3. Climbed August 3, 1940, by Art Argiewicz and six others from Reflection Lake and a basin to the southeast of the lake. A delicate five-foot leap was made to attain the final summit, but this was not necessary as the summit pinnacle can be climbed (class 4) by its east face. The north face of Jordan can be reached from Laker Reflection by passing either east or west of Peak 12,047.


Mount Genevra (13,037)

First ascent July 15, 1925, by Norman Clyde, who also climbed it in 1927. A Sierra Club party led by Lewis Clark and Carl Jensen made their ascent from Milestone camp in 1936.

Route 2. North ridge. Class 2. On August 3, 1940, Robert Schonborn led a party of six to the top from East Lake by way of Lucy’s Foot Pass and the north ridge. As an alternative from Lake Reflection a good class 2 route leads to Milly’s Foot Pass (12,300+) just north of Mount Genevra.

Route 3. North face. Class 3. Ascended July 19, 1951, by Bill Bade, Barbara Lilley, and Franklin Barnett up the north face by way of a snow chute leading to the ridge just west of the summit.

Mount Ericsson (13,625)

Route 1. West ridge. Class 1 to 2. First ascent August 1, 1896, by Bolton C. Brown and Lucy Brown. From Lucy’s Foot Pass follow the easy ridge to the summit.


Route 4. Northwest couloir. Class 3 to 4. Climbed in July 1946 by Norman Clyde, Robert Breckenfeld, ‘Jules Eichorn, Joe Brower, and Danny Kaplan. From Lake Reflection ascend toward Lucy’s Foot Pass. Climb the rocky chute which heads between Mount Ericsson and the first crag to the north. About one hundred feet below the head of this chute turn left (S) and ascend a steep, icy couloir which leads to the Kings-Kern Divide somewhat west of the summit of Ericsson. An ice axe is necessary in the couloir. From the divide climb the west ridger or the southwest slopes to the top.

Gregory’s Monument (about 13,960)

Route 1. West or southwest slopes. Class 1. First ascent July 1894 by Warren Gregory, Emmet and Loring Rixford, and W. Sanderson. This peak is the south and lower peak of Mount Stanford and is separated from the latter by a jagged, class-three ridge about one-fourth of a mile long. Technically speaking, the many who have ascended only to this point have not climbed Mount Stanford.
Route 2. North ridge. Class 3. Follow the ridge from Mount Stanford. See routes on the latter in the section on peaks north of the Kings-Kern Divide.

Route 3. East face. Class 3 to 4. Descended July 23, 1929, by Walter Starr, Jr., who wrote: “Left summit at 4:30 and descended to Centerr Basin via the first chute (lowest gap next to the peak) on the Junction Peak side. Bad rock climb down to ledge. From ledge descended steep snow chute, and from bottom snow in talus along stream to Centerr Basin and down Bubbs Creek. Arrived at Vidette Meadow 7:45 P.M.”

Peak 13,800+ (1/2 SE of Stanford)

Climbed August 17, 1938, by Bob Irwin. In July 1939 Jack Sturgeon traversed to this point from Peak 13,844, which is about one mile to the south. Class 2 to 3.

Peak 13,826 (1 NW of Junction Peak)

This is the highest point on the divide between Junction Peak and Gregory’s Monument. First ascent June 3, 1934, by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge. Class 3. From the lake on the south side of Foresters Pass they ascended the southeast face of the peak to the ridge between Gregory’s Monument and the peak proper, reaching the ridge at nearly its lowest point. They then proceeded eastward along the west arête to the top. Descent was by way of a shallow chute which led down their southeast face from the ridge just east of the summit, and included a rappel of about twenty feet.

Peaks North of the Kings-Kern Divide

South Guard (12,964)

First ascent July 26, 1916, by Walter L. Huber, Florence Burrell, Inezetta Holt, and James Rennie. They followed the south fork of Ouzel Creek to the snow field of its upper basin, and finding the snow too hard for secure footing, climbed the rocky northeast ridge of the peak, described as a very thin knife-edge of very loose rock. This ridge led them to the summit. To avoid the slow ridge, descent was made by ledges of the north face to the snow, and down the snow. Probably class 2 to 3.

Peak 11,844 (1.5 NW of East Lake)
Ascended from East Lake by Art Argiewicz and seven others on July 30, 1940.

*Peak 12,610 (1.5 W of East Lake)*

Traversed May 26, 1934, by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge who proceeded from Ouzel Creek to the saddle between the peak and North Guard and then ascended the west ridge. Descent was by the south face. Both routes are class 2.

*Peak 11,597 (1/2 SW Of East Lake)*

This is actually a long ridge which extends northeastward from South Guard; it offers interesting and convenient climbing.

*Route 1. Southwest ridge.* Class 2 to 3. David R. Brower and Hervey Voge, May 28, 1934. From the upper portion of the south fork of Ouzel Creek climb to the ridge and follow it eastward, weaving among small towers, blocks, and knife edges.

*Route 2. South face.* Class 2 to 3. David R. Brower and Hervey Voge, May 28, 1934. An entertaining climb, just below the difficulty requiring a rope.

*Route 3. North face.* Climbed August 3, 1940, by parties led by Alan MacRae and Oliver Kehrlein.

*Peak 11,593 (1/2 NW of Lake Reflection)*

The north face of this cleaver-shaped peak was climbed on July 31, 1940, by Oliver Kehrlein and six others.

*Peak 12,311 (3/4 W of Mount Jordan)*
First ascent August 8, 1940, by Peter Friedrichsen and three others.

Peak 12,047 (1/2 S of Lake Reflection)

Ascended prior to 1952 by M. Roth and Calkins Fletcher. Class 3 from the saddle to the south.

Ericsson Crags

There are three main crags on the north ridge of Mount Ericsson. Crag 1 is that closest to Ericsson, and Crag 3 that farthest away. These crags are most readily accessible by way of the rocky chutes which lead up to the ridge from the west. The crags offer challenging climbing and there are many possible routes and minor pinnacles that have not yet been explored.

Crag 1. (About 13,000.) Southeast face. First ascent August 4, 1939, by Edward Koskinen, Don Woods, and DeWitt Allen. Ascend the chute which goes up from the west between Crag 1 and Ericsson. About two-thirds of the way up this chute branches. Take the left or north branch, which will lead to a broad shoulder on the ridge just south of the top-most portion of Crag 1. A smaller and rather difficult crag (climbed in 1939 by Voge, Waller, and Woods) separates this shoulder from the north face of Mount Ericsson. From the shoulder a rather open chimney leads up the southeast face of the crag, but at the bottom the chimney ends in an overhanging crack. The climbable portion of the chimney can be reached by a delicate, downward traverse from a little arete just to the left (W) of the creek. This pitch would require a piton for safety except for the fact that it is possible to provide adequate upper belays without one. The route then leads up the chimney, over several larger steps, and finally up the northwest side of the summit block.

Crag 1W. This is a formidable looking crag quite a distance out on the ridge running west from Crag 1. There are no records of any attempts. The most feasible route appears to be on the north and northwest faces.

Crag 2. (About 12,950.) Class 3 to 4. First ascent August 3, 1939, by David R. Brower and Hervey Voge. Ascend the main rocky chute coming down to the west between Crags 2 and 3. From this climb the next to the highest chute which enters this main chute from the south and which leads to the northwest face of Crag 2. Take the right (W) branch of this next-to-highest subsidiary chute and climb out of it just to their left (N) of some caves by means of a class-4 pitch. From there rather easy slopes lead to the top.
Crag 3. (About 12,900.) Class 3 to 4. First ascent prior to 1939. Ascend the main chute coming down to the west between Crags 2 and 3. When nearly to the top of this chute cross a rib to the left (N) by a band of broken rock and continue up the next chute to the north. Leave this by a rather delicate chimney which leads to the crest of the south ridge of the crag. Proceed along the east side of the ridge to a little arête running east from the top of the crag. Climb up the arête to the main ridge and follow this to the top. The climb can also be made by way of the southwest slope from the main chute.

Peak 12,222 (3/4 NE of East Lake)

First ascent Sept. 19, 1926, by Norman Clyde. Climbed July 30, 1940, by William Morrison and four others from East Lake, by way of the lake basin at the foot of Deerhorn.

West Vidette (12,229)

First ascent August 1920 by Norman Clyde and Louis Schichter. This peak is class 1 to 2 from the southeast from Vidette Creek. The north face may offer interesting climbing.

West Spur Peak (12,500+, 1/2 S of West Vidette)

First ascent Sept. 19, 1926, by Norman Clyde, who climbed the West Vidette and the peak to the south.

West Spur Peak (12,685)

On July 14, 1940, Dick Goldsmith and Anna Shinn stopped 50 feet from the top. On August 8, 1940, William Morrison and three others made the ascent from the west, from East Lake.

The Minster (12,200+, 3/4 W of Deerhorn)

This is a jagged ridge of grotesque spires extending westward from Deerhorn Mountain. A complete east to west traverse was made on August 3, 1939, by Ted Waller, Don Woods, and Edward Koskinen, who found no records of previous visits on any of the spires.
Deerhorn Mountain (13,275)

The twin peaks of Deerhorn make it an easily recognized landmark. The southeast peak is slightly higher. The first recorded ascent was made on July 8, 1927, by Norman Clyde, who found no cairn on the southeast peak, but possibly one on the northwest peak. Various routes have been used; those listed below are not necessarily arranged in chronological order.

Route 1. Southwest chute. Class 3 to 4. Ascend the chute which heads between the twin peaks of Deerhorn. The most difficult portions are near the bottom and near the top. From the notch the southeast peak may be climbed by its north face or its northwest arête. This peak has a small, steep top, and in 1939 a party of three was so cramped that they lost the can containing earlier names down the north face.

Route 2. West ridge. Class 3. From the trail to Harrison Pass, at about 11,000 feet, ascend the southwest slopes of the ridge to a point a little east of the lowest point on the ridge between The Minster and the west gendarmes of Deerhorn. Proceed eastward on the ridge, staying more on the north side than on the south. Ascend the northwest peak of Deerhorn on cluttered ledges. Descend to the notch between the two peaks and climb the southeast peak by its north face. This route was followed by Norman Clyde, Hervey Voge, and Ted Waller on August 5, 1939.

Route 3. Northwest basin and west ridge. Class 3. Climb into the basin almost due east of East Lake and proceed from its upper end to the west ridge of Deerhorn, which may be traversed as noted above to the summits. Route done by W. Morrison, R. Kauffman, and Norman Roth on August 5, 1940.

Route 4. Southwest face. Class 3 to 4. From the Harrison Pass trail at about 11,000 feet climb the southwest face of the mountain, aiming for a point just west of and about 300 feet below the northwest peak. From here work around to the north and climb to the top of the northwest peak. The traverse may then be made to the southeast peak. It is also possible to climb directly up the west face of the northwest peak, which for 300 to 400 feet is quite airy but not really difficult. This route was made by Norman Clyde, Jules Eichorn, Robert Breckenfeld, and others in July 1946.

Route 5. North buttress. About class 4. This buttress leads from upper Vidette Creek directly to the northwest peak of Deerhorn. It was climbed by Norman Clyde.

Subsidiary Peaks of Deerhorn Mountain
To the east of Deerhorn there are two sharp subsidiary peaks. Nor records exist regarding the double-pointed peaklet nearest the main southeast peak. The next peaklet to the east was climbed August 3, 1939, by DeWitt Allen and Fritz Lippmann by the southwest chute. They used a piton a number of times for safety in the wet chute.

An arête running north of Deerhorn somewhat west of the northwest peak was traversed by Norman Clyde, David R. Brower, and eight others on July 13, 1940. No record was found of previous ascent of peaks on the arête.

East Vidette (12,742)

First ascent by a Sierra Club party in 1910.

Route 1. Southeast ridge. Class 2 to 3. A variation of this route is the ascent of the north side of this ridge and the traversing of the upper portion of the ridge to the summit.

Route 2. North side. Class 3 to 4 up north or northwest face.

East Spur, Peak 12,722

Climbed for the first time by Jim Harkins and Pat Goldsworthy on July 14, 1940.

Peak 12,288 (1.5 W of Center Peak)

There is no record of any ascent.

Peak 13,440 (3/4 E of Deerhorn)
Climbed by Boynton and Edith Kaiser, August 7, 1948. This peak may possibly have been traversed by Norman Clyde and David R. Brower on August 4, 1939, during a descent from Mount Stanford. It was climbed from Vidette Creek by the Kaisers, who went up their northwest slope, staying somewhat northeast of the ridge leading from 13,440 to the low pass to the west.

Mount Stanford (13,983)

This peak is separated from Gregory’s Monument (see peaks of the Kings-Kern Divide) by a knife-edge ridge about one-fourth of a mile long.

Route 1. South ridge. Class 3. From Gregory’s Monument follow their ridge, with minor deviations to one side or the other. The crossing takes about 20 minutes. First ascent August 1, 1896, by Bolton C. Brown.

Route 2. West face. Class 3. First descent August 1, 1896, by Bolton C. Brown, who went down the chute where the knife-edge from Gregory’s Monument joined the peak of Stanford (just S of the final peak). He went down the chute for about one thousand feet and then proceeded downward and toward the south from chute to chute to the cliff basin near a small lake below Harrison Pass.

Route 3. West face and north ridge. About class 3. The west face may be ascended to the ridge north of the summit and the ridge followed southward to the summit. This route was followed by Art Argiewicz and three others in August 1940.

Route 4. North ridge. About class 3. This route was descended by David R. Brower and Norman Clyde, August 4, 1939. They traversed the north ridge from the summit to the saddle east of Deerhorn.

Route 5. East face. About class 3. A steep couloir or chute usually filled with snow descends almost directly from the summit of Stanford toward the basin west of Center Peak. The face to the south of this chute may be ascended to the summit, or the chute itself may be followed, if one keeps to the north side. These climbs were made in August 1947 by James R. Harkins and several others. In 1948 Beckett Howorth and party ascended the “east ridge.”

Route 6. East arête and north ridge. Class 3. Ascended in 1953 by High Trip party. About one-half mile north of the summit an arête extends eastward. Climb this to its junction with the main mass, and ascend a chimney leading to the north ridge.
Kearsarge Pinnacles (about 11,700 to 11,967, 12,009, etc.)

These sharp little pinnacles are numbered consecutively from southeast to northwest, numbers 1 through 12, after the 1939 system of Edward Koskinen. Several numbering systems have been applied in the past, and the numbers on the summits, if any, may differ from those given here. The minor summits are not numbered. The pinnacles may be identified from the accompanying Sketch 23. From the north, notches 3-4, 5-6, and 9-10 are rather readily reached, while 4-5 and 8-9 are harder.

Sketch 23. The Kearsarge Pinnacles from the north.


Pinnacle 2. First ascent as for Pinnacle 1.


Pinnacle 4. First recorded ascent as for Pinnacle 3.

Pinnacle 5. Records unknown.

Pinnacle 6. Records unknown.
Pinnacle 7. This pinnacle has been climbed numerous times.

Pinnacle 8. Class 5. Best climbed from the south notch (7-8 notch). First ascent in July 1932 by Glen Dawson, Thomas Rawles and Hansr Leschke.

Pinnacle 9. First recorded climb July 25, 1924, by R. Howard. It is easy class 4 from the northeast. Climb up the chute to the high V-notch between 8 and 9, go around to the south side of the ridge, and climb up the face, reaching the lower summit first. An ice axe may be needed in the chute. Or climb from the 9-10 notch.

Pinnacles 10, 11, 12. All have been climbed many times. First ascent probably by Glen Dawson, Owen Ward, and Hans Leschke in 1932. They may be approached from the northwest end of the ridge, from the north, or from the 9-10 notch.

Besides the ascents mentioned above, climbs of unidentified pinnacles were made earlier. In 1932 Jack Riegelhuth climbed up the nearest chimney from Vidette Meadow to the top of “the highest pinnacle.” On July 28, 1935, a Sierra Club party including Peter Grubb and Neil Ruge climbed “a few” of the northwestern pinnacles.

Center Peak (12,767)

First ascent July 5, 1898, by C. G. Bradley, by an unknown route. Two hours to the top from the meadow at the foot.

Route 1. North face. Class 3. David R. Brower and Hervey Voge. May 22, 1934. Three chutes discharge prominent talus fans into Center Basin northwest of the peak. Take the center chute and climb well up within the mountain wall; then turn to the right (SW) up a chute which leads up to the northwest buttress of the peak. Follow along the buttress to a saddle, and there cross to the west side of the northwest ridge and climb upward close to the ridgetop to within two hundred feet of the summit, then cross to the north face for a short way, back to the west, and then to the top.

Route 2. East face. Class 1 to 2. This face may be ascended in several places from about 11,500 feet in Center Basin.
Route 3. Northwest face. Class 3. Ascended by Phil Berry and Frankr Tarver, July 26, 1952. South of the talus fans mentioned under Route 1, and about 100 yards south of the sheerest part of the face, proceed directly up the face to a tunnel at the top of the face. From the tunnel ledges lead to the summit.

Peaks South of the Kings-Kern Divide

Peak 12,492 (3/4 SW Of Mount Genevra)

This peak was climbed from Milestone Creek in August 1939 by Fritz Lippmann, Dave Nelson, Don Woods, and Edward Koskinen.

Peak 13,844 (1.3 W of Junction Peak)

Climbed by Norman Clyde, June 22, 1926.

Peak 13,028 (1.3 W of Diamond Mesa)

Climbed July 10, 1939, by Jack Sturgeon.

Diamond Mesa

Strictly speaking there is no summit of the Mesa, since it rises continuously toward Junction Peak. It was climbed July 10, 1898, by Bolton C. Brown and a companion in an attempt on Junction. It may be ascended by the west face, especially near the southern end, and may also be reached by following the ridge from Junction Peak. There is a meadow and a stream on the Mesa’s lower end.

References
Photographs: Sierra Club Bulletin magazine numbers, year and facing page as shown: Mount Bago: 1910, 236. Mount Brewer: 1897, 17, 20r (sketches); 1902, 95 (from Kearsarge Pass, from Bullfrog Lake); 1903, 278, 281 (on climb from East Lake), 282 (view from); 1907, 162 (from Brewer Creek); 1917, 206 (from east); 1926, 237 (from Kearsarge Pass); 1941, 94-5 (from Mount Gould); 1945, 62 (from east). Center Peak: 1923, 378; 1933, 14; 1941, 14-15. Deerhorn Mountain: 1913, 25 (from southeast); 1930, 67 (from north). East Vidette: 1903, 282; 1911, 13r (from north); 1917, 179 (from north); 1930, 67 (in winter); 1941, 14. Foresters Pass: 1923, 23. Mount Ericsson: 1897, 92 (sketch from west, with crags); 1913, 25 (crags). Mount Jordan: 1911, 15. Junction Peak: 1917, 178 (from east); 1933, 15. Kearsarge Pinnacles: 1894, 100 (from north, as are most of the following); 1902, 95; 1910, 237; 1911, 12; 1917, 190; 1919, 407; 1926, 220; 1941, 94. Kings-Kern Divide: 1897, 21, 22, 26r (Sketch maps); 1917, 207 (from Mount Gould); 1945, 62 (peaks above Lake Reflection); 1941, 95. North Guard: 1903, 278. South Guard: 1897, 20 (Sketch). University Peak: 1910, 238-9 (from north in winter); 1912, 285; 1917, 190, 191 (from Kearsarge and Pothole Lakes); 1944, 46 (from north). West Vidette: 1912, 274 (from Junction Meadow); 1941, 94 (from Mount Gould).
The Kings-Kern Divide and the Adjacent Crests
Kearsarge Pass to Army and Franklin Passes

The Whitney Region

John D. and Ruth Mendenhall, Arthur B. Johnson, Braeme Gigas, and Howard Koster (1941)
John D. and Ruth Mendenhall (1953)

THE WHITNEY REGION, that portion of the crest of the Sierra Nevada lying between Shepherd Pass and Army Pass, is a spectacular display of mountain sculpture. Rising west of Lone Pine, in Owens Valley, and following the northeast border of Sequoia National Park, this jagged thirteen-mile escarpment includes seven of California’s fourteen peaks exceeding 14,000 feet in elevation: Mounts Tyndall, Barnard, Williamson, Russell, Muir, Langley, and the culminating summit, 14,495-foot Mount Whitney, highest peak in the United States excluding Alaska. The 10,000-foot scarp of the Mount Whitney fault block forms impressive eastern precipices. Deep glacier-cut canyons, glacial cirques plucked out among the peaks, moraine deposits in the valleys, sharp ridges, myriad glacial lakes, alpine trails and passes, beautiful timberline campsites—these provide a wilderness of variety for the climber. Indeed, one of the finest rock climbing areas in the Sierra is concentrated in the six miles between Mount Russell and Mount Langley.

In 1864, members of a California State Geological Survey party, Clarence King and Richard Cotter, viewed the region from the north and gave to the highest point the name of their chief, Whitney. Years later, after two unsuccessful attempts, King reached the summit, only to learn that he had been preceded a few weeks by several parties from Owens Valley. A. H. Johnson, C. D. Begole, and John Lucas had, on August 18, 1873, been the first to reach the top. During the years following, the summit rocks have known the tread of countless climbers, singly, in groups, in mass ascents. They have been visited by world travelers, by trail builders, by survey parties. The trail to the summit was completed in 1904, and a stone shelter was erected on the peak in 1909.

Mount Whitney has naturally received the greatest share of attention, both from climbers and from historians. Little, therefore, is known of the early history of the other 14,000-foot peaks of the region, except for Mount Tyndall. This first came to attention in 1864 when King and Cotter made their famous ascent.
dramatically described in King’s *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*. Of recent years, dating specifically from the introduction of modern roped climbing on the East Facer of Mount Whitney in 1931, the mountaineering approach to the region has been somewhat altered.

**Topography and its Relation to Climbing**

A mountain mass of fault-block origin usually possesses a precipitous face contrasting with a gentle approach. This characteristic is exhibited to a striking degree in the region surrounding Mount Whitney, for the general contour rises gently from the west, only to break off in huger cliffs toward Owens Valley on the east. Accordingly, the majority of the difficult climbs are found east of the crest. For details of topography refer to the Mount Whitney and Olancha quadrangles of the United States Geological Survey map, or the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks topographic map. A sketch map (Sketch 24) shows knapsack routes and some local names not on the USGS maps.

In general, the most exposed faces are quite firm; eternal vigilance however, must be exercised to avoid mishap. The general dependability of the cliffs does not extend to the chutes. Some members of an inexperienced or careless party may readily find themselves subjected to a deadly barrage, usually caused by the climbers above. In addition, rockfalls and snow avalanches occur from natural causes, and any leader conducting his party without due regard for this contingency is guilty of negligence or poor judgment. Unsettled weather, accompanied by hail storms, often occurs during the summer, and will, of course, affect climbing conditions. Climbers are also reminded that many of the routes involve an length of time and altitude well in excess of that normally encountered in the Sierra. The Whitney Region contains no glaciers, and ice equipment is unnecessary in late summer and fall. One must remember that...
Approaches and Climbing Centers

The Whitney Region is most accessible by Inyo National Forest trails from the east; here the grandeur of the range is an inspiring sight, with its most lofty summits towering well over 10,000 feet above Owens Valley.

From Independence. From U.S. 395 at the south end of Independence, drive to the Symmes Creek road end (5,900). Follow the arduous trail which starts up Symmes Creek, and leads over to and up Shepherd Creek, where one can camp at timberline (10,400) below Shepherd Pass (12,030). Mounts Williamson and Tyndall can be climbed from the pass.

From Manzanar. Take a dirt road just north of Manzanar, and follow to the second road branching right. This passes through a gate, and just beyond take the right-hand road. Drive to a level spot below a very steep hill (impractical for standard cars). Walk one-half mile to the end of road. Hike up a faint trail on the south side of George Creek to a waterfall about half-way to timberline. Cross below the waterfall and continue up the north side. Just below timberline, the stream forks. If Williamson is the objective, ascend north (right) branch to timberliner camp. If Barnard is to be climbed, go up south (left) fork to camp just below a small lake.

From Lone Pine. Drive up Lone Pine Creek to Whitney Portal (8,350), where a Forest Service campground is maintained. The Mount Whitney horse trail leads up the Middle Fork to Bighorn Park (10,355), Mirror Lake (10,650), and continues to the summit of Mount Whitney by way of Whitney Pass (13,600+). The John Muir Trail junction is near the pass. Most convenient bases for the East Face and Mountaineer’s routes upon Mount Whitney are at East Face Lake (12,850), or on the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek to the southeast and at a slightly lower elevation. These sites lack firewood. Some climbers prefer to camp at Mirror Lake, which is supplied with firewood, cross Pinnacle Pass, climb Whitney’s East Face, and return via the horse trail in a long day.

* Do not confuse with pass (B.M. 13,335) formerly crossed by trail.

East Face Lake or the upper North Fork campsites may be reached from Mirror Lake via Pinnacle Pass, or by climbing directly up the North Fork. The first route possesses the advantage of an excellent trail as far as Mirror Lake, but involves a subsequent trailless climb of 1,600 feet and a steep descent of 300 feet.
The North Fork route is more direct and primitive, but occasionally obscure. Ascend the foot trail, which starts at the highest point of the road. Where the trail joins the horse trail, turn left for Mirror Lake or right for the North Fork near-by.

North Fork Route: Proceed up the south side of the stream for approximately one-half mile after leaving the trail. Beyond a large triangular rock, cross the fork and ascend a steep, narrow slope. This is the first break in the cliffs, and is marked by large pines. After approximately 100 feet of climbing, a narrow ledge running downstream will be found. Follow this up and to the right almost to the end, where it will be possible to turn left and follow another shelf upstream. This way (Ebers-bacher Ledges) replaces the route south of the stream. Remain on the north side of the fork to Clyde Meadow, a lovely bowl graced with a tarn amid foxtail pines. Beyond the meadow, recross to the south side of the main stream and ascend large talus blocks. At the crest of the slope, recross to the north side and ascend to a point about three-quarters of a mile east of the great walls of Whitney. Gravel will provide reasonably comfortable campsites.

If it is desired to camp at East Face Lake, proceed onward to a point just beyond a stream coming from the right (N). Turn right and ascend the steep but rather firm rocks (less tiring than the talus farther upstream). East Face Lake is a short distance beyond the crest.

From Cottonwood Creek. Drive up the Lone Pine-Carroll Creek road and ascend Cottonwood Creek via trail. Numerous campsites will be found in the vicinity of Cottonwood Lakes. Mount Langley is easily climbed from this trail, which leads over Army Pass.

Other Approaches. Entry into the Region from Kings Canyon National Park is gained via Foresters Pass (John Muir Trail), or over Colby Pass and down the Kern-Kaweah. From the Giant Forest, climb via the High Sierra Trail over Kaweah Gap and across the Big Arroyo. A long pack-in can be made up the Kern River from the south. The accompanying map should be studied for location of higher campsites.

Principal Passes

The Whitney Region is crossed by three passes having stock trails. These are Shepherd and Army Passes, bounding the region to the north and south, and Whitney Pass, south of Mount Muir. Other passes are undeveloped, suitable primarily for knapsack parties.

Tyndall Col (13,100+). Class 1. Connects the Bowl with Wright Creek.
Whitney-Russell Pass (13,300+). Class 1. The notch provides convenient passage between the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek and Whitney Creek. East to west: Ascend talus northwest of East Face Lake, and climb into the notch at the corner of the wall north of lake. West to east: Front the bowl at the head of Whitney Creek, climb talus, keeping to right to higher (S) of two notches through headwall. The lower notch is too steep on the east side to be feasible.

Arc Pass (13,000+). Class 1. This saddle offers a direct route between Consultation Lake, in the Middle Fork of Lone Pine Creek, and upper Rock Creek. North to south: Pass the lake on the east and climb the talus to the south, keeping high up to the left until it is convenient to follow a ledge back to the right into the pass. South to north: From Sky Blue Lake, ascend talus to the northeast into a small cirque; thence directly north into the pass.

Tuttle Pass (12,700+). Class 1. This route involves a long trek along the south fork of Tuttle Creek, and is recommended only for sturdy knapsackers.

Crabtree Pass (12,800+). Class 1. A convenient link between Crabtree Creek and Rock Creek recess.

Pinnacle Pass (12,200). Class 2. South to north: Pass north of Mirror Lake and ascend a broad, sloping canyon to northwest, keeping near the base of cliffs to north. After three-quarters of a mile, ledges on the right lead up to the pass, 1,600 feet above Mirror Lake, just right of a prominent pinnacle visible from Mirror Lake. The first part of the descent, eastward, is moderately difficult rock work; below, descend diagonally west. The lower portion and the basin floor are composed of very rough talus. Proceed diagonally toward Mount Whitney to the right side of canyon. Camp on sheltered gravel beds, or ascend to the East Face Lake plateau by going to a gully a short distance beyond the point where a stream comes down the right slope. North to south: From the North Fork canyon, ascend talus at the first place where it rises appreciably against the south wall. At the high point of the talus (300 feet above the stream), follow ledges right and upward into the pass.

Principal Peaks (North to South)

Mount Tyndall (14,025)

Route 1. North face. Class 3. First ascent July 6, 1864, by Clarenecr King and Richard Cotter. From a point between Shepherd Pass and the saddle leading to the Bowl, ascend the rib in the middle of the facer (or the gully to its right) over granite slabs, to the arête. Proceed east among the gendarmes to the summit.
Route 2. Northwest ridge. Class 2. Leaving the Shepherd Pass trail, climb the ridge at the junction of north and northwest faces. Ascend to the arete of Route 1 and follow it to the summit. Variations: Climb any gully to the south of the northwest ridge, traverse the south face of the north peak 100 feet below its crest, and ascend to the arete, thence to the summit.

Route 3. Southwest slopes. Class 2. First descent July 6, 1864, by Clarence King and Richard Cotter. Mount talus above the highest lake on Wright Creek.


Route 5. Southeast ridge. Class 4. First ascent August 8, 1939, by Ted Waller and Fritz Lippmann. The ascent from the east of the southeast wall of the third large chute southeast of Tyndall involves 500 feet of class 4 climbing. The rest of the route follows the nivated southwest slope of the ridge to the top.

West Peak of Tyndall (13,533). Class 2. First ascent unrecorded. The oddly sculptured northwest face offers varied scrambles of similar difficulty, all on excellent granite.

Photographs: SCB, 1894, pl. 11; 1933, 30 (east face).

Point 12,350 (Tawny Point) (N of Bighorn Plateau)

First ascent July 12, 1946, by A. J. Reyman; class 1 from the south. Class 1 and 2 from the north. Minimum class 3 up a steep gravel and rock couloir on the west side, meeting ridge one-half mile north of summit.

Mount Williamson (14,384)

Standing apart from the crest, Williamson offers one of the finest views of the eastern escarpment, and is one of the most imposing peaks, to be seen from Owens Valley. Although first described as “an inaccessible cluster of granite needles,” the summit has now been reached by many routes. The mountain is so complex that it is easy to get off the route and into difficulty. Accordingly it is well to have a rope available, even though the actual climbing problem on most of the routes is moderate in degree.
from the northwest, with marked routes, is shown on Sketch 25.

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**Route 2.** Red talus
**Black stains on rock**
**Northwest buttress**
**North face (lowerr**
**portion hidden byr**
**northwest buttress)**

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**Route 1.** Southeast ridge from George Creek. Class 2. First ascent in 1884 by W. L. Hunter and C. Mulholland. A nine-hour, almost trailless climb up George Creek brings one to a timberline campsite (about 11,500) on the north fork of the creek. From here ascend north-northeast to the gradual slope of the southeast ridge, following this to the base of the steeper slope. Here it is possible to cross the east slope past a small lake and then go diagonally upwards; but “much the easier climb is to keep on . . . the backbone of the ridge . . . There is not very much difficulty in either direction.” (A. W. Carroll)
Route 2. From the Bowl. Class 3. First ascent by this approach was in July 1896 by Professor Bolton Coit Brown and Mrs. Lucy Brown. The 1,800-foot west face of Williamson has provided varied routes to the summit, and, to less experienced climbers, many cul-de-sacs. After approaching from Shepherd Pass, follow the top of the low ridge which separates two lakes in the floor of the Bowl. Proceed along the ridge, avoiding cliff by passing to the right. After passing the rise in the center of the basin, and beyond the second of two lakes to the right of the ridge, move straight toward the summit of Williamson. Ascend to their right on talus toward black marks on rock caused by snow water, and enter the chute above. This is a double chute separated at its mouth by a lower buttress, which resembles an inverted shield with a rectangular column superimposed on top of it. Ascend the right branch of this double chute, which soon branches above; continue up the left branch. Near the top avoid a broad slope to the left. Climb a chimney and emerge on top of a high plateau which slopes gently toward the summit.

Variations. Another, perhaps more frequently used, route lies well to the south. From the Bowl climb up red talus. Ascend the southernmost of abundantly scree-filled chutes, keeping to firmer rock along either wall, to the notch in the southwest ridge. Cross into an open chute in the upper south face, and climb ledges in zigzag route marked with ducks to the nivitated summit slope. Several other variations have been worked out by Norman Clyde and others, sometimes unintentionally. The southwest arête may be followed to the summit, but this is almost class 4. The west face chutes north of Route 2 have been used frequently, but involve much more scree and route-finding. The abundant scree in these chutes can simplify the descent—provided one chooses the correct chute.

Route 3. Northeast ridge. Class 4. First ascent 1925, by Homer D. Erwin. This involves an arduous trailless approach up Williamson Creek. From timberline ascend a chute heading on the nivitated slope on the northeast ridge of Williamson and follow the ridge over Peak 14,150 and Peak 14,211 (see East Peak of Williamson) to summit. Norman Clyde has followed the northeast ridge from Owens Valley—an 8,000-foot, waterless climb from the mouth of the Shepherd Creek gorge.

East Peak of Williamson (14,211). Class 4. First ascent by Leroy Jeffers. From the summit of Williamson descend northeast along the summit plateau; drop 200 feet to the notch below the plateau by traversing diagonally down the southeast side of the notch; ascend a chuter to the crest of the sharp east peak arête; and drop 100 feet down the opposite side, whence a minimum class 4 pitch leads to the summit. Variations of this route are possible, the purpose of all of them being to avoid following the spectacular arête itself. The same applies to their ascent of Peak 14,150 to the northeast.

Photographs: SCB, 1904, plate 10 (from Owens Valley); 1910, plate 38 (from south).

Trojan Peak (13,968)

Route 2. Maximum class 2, by north ridge from saddle south of Williamson.

Route 3. Class 2, from south.

Mount Barnard (14,003)

Class 1. First ascent, September 25, 1892, by John and William Hunter and C. Mulholland. This is a high granitic plateau rising from the south. The east summit (13,747) lies at the crest of the great eastern ramparts, which form an impressive 2,200-foot cliff. Mount Barnard can be easily ascended from Wright or Wallace Creeks, via the southwestern ridge or the south slopes. The northwest slope and the north ridge offer convenient class 2 routes to the summit, and involve less scree. From the northeast an ascent may be made by a broad couloir above Georger Creek to the wide plateau. Climb class 1 talus slope to summit.

Peak 12,393, one and one-half miles west of Barnard, is class 1 via the southwest ridge.

Tunnabora Peak (13,593)

First ascent August 1905 by George R. Davis. Class 2 by the southwest slope from the headwaters of Wallace Creek.

Point 13,008, three-quarters mile north, is class 1 from Tunnabora.

Mount Carillon (13,571)

Class 2. This peak lies northeast of Mount Russell and one-third mile southeast of Tulainyo Lake. First ascent 1925, by Norman Clyde.

Mount Russell (14,190)
This peak presents a formidable appearance from almost any direction, and was one of the last of the major Sierran peaks to be climbed. The south wall is deeply fluted, consisting of four buttresses separated by deep couloirs. The outer ribs rise to nearly identical heights, making the summit a twin-horned arête. The north face is more regular, being cut by a series of horizontal ledges with steep smooth rises. The west summit is slightly higher than the east peak.

Route 1. East arête. Class 3. First ascent June 24, 1926, by Norman Clyde. From Tulainyo Lake, ascend the 500-foot wall to the south. Continue along a ledge on the north side under the crest of the arête, to summit of east horn (SCB, 1927, 382).

Route 2. North arête. Class 3. First descent June 24, 1926, by Norman Clyde. From the moraine bench just west of Tulainyo Lake, follow up the rib that leads into the north arête. Difficulties of the arête can be turned by keeping to right along ends of north face ledges.


Route 4. Southwest face-west arête. Class 4. First descent July 1932 by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, Walter Brem and Hans Leschke. From near the head of Whitney Creek, climb the narrow couloir just left of the buttress that rises sheer to the summit of the west horn. This couloir heads on the west arête; proceed thence by Route 3 to summit.

Route 5. South face-west chute. Class 3. First ascent July 1932 by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, Walter Brem and Hans Leschke. From the head of Whitney Creek, or Whitney-Russell Pass, follow up the talus into wide chute occupying the center of the south face. Halfway up, the chute divides. Take the left (W) branch to near the end, whence ascend the right wall. Attain the arête, which terminates in the summit ridge just east of the west horn.

Route 6. South face-east chute. First ascent was made in 1928 by A. E. Gunther. From the branch in the chute of Route 5, continue up the right (E) couloir to the headwall. There are three variations from here: Gunther variation. Class 3. Climb the second chimney right (S) of the headwall to the crest of southeast arête, thence on to east side of arête and up blocks to summit of east horn. Chimney variation. Class 4. First ascent July 29, 1932, by James Wright. Climb the first chimney on the right (at corner), passing over loose overhang near top, to a shelf on the east face of the southeast arête, thence by Gunther variation. Face variation. Class 3. First ascent August 7, 1931, by Howard Sloan, Frank Noel, and William Murray. Climb the headwall by a ledge leading diagonally up the face to the left, ending at midpoint of the summit arête.
Route 7. Southeast face-east arete. Class 3. First ascent June 19, 1927, by Homer D. Erwin and Fred Lueders, Jr. From Clyde Meadow, go up the right (N) canyon of the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek. Near the river mouth, a long talus slope leads east into a short but prominent chimney, which ends at a high mesa. Cross the plateau westerly to the east arete of Russell proper. From this point, the way is a variation of Route 1.

Photographs: SCB, 1927, 384 (from north, and west peak); 1928, plate 31 (from northeast).

Point 13,938. This peak rises just west of Mount Russell. First ascent June 27, 1926, by Norman Clyde. A class 2 traverse from Mount Russell.

Mount Hale (13,493)

Class 1. First ascent July 24, 1934, by J. H. and Mildred Czock via the south slopes.

Peak 12,808 (W of Wales Lake)

Class 2. First ascent September 5, 1935, by Chester Versteeg via the north ridge, from northwest.

Mount Young (13,187)

This peak is a long, rounded granite mass with a sheer north wall broken by avalanche chutes. An excellent view is obtained of the Whitney crest, the Kaweahs, the Great Western Divide, and the Kings-Kern Divide.

South slopes. Class 1. First ascent September 7, 1881, by Frederick R. Wales, William Wallace and J. Wright. Ascend from Crabtree Creek into the low saddle visible from the trail. Proceed to the summit over talus.

Peak 12,820, five-eighths mile west, is minimum class 2 from the south.

Mount Whitney (14,495)
This peak provides an exceptionally wide range of climbing difficulty. One route is a horseback trail (Route 1, class 1), and entails nothing more than time and stamina. Scrambles, difficult to various degrees, may be made from the west and north (Routes 2 and 3). Block climbing and couloir scrambling are found on the Mountaineer’s Route (Route 4). Hardy and thoroughly experienced rock climbers can attack difficult and exposed routes up the East Face (Routes 5 and 6) and from the southeast (Route 7). The accompanying Sketch 26 shows East Face routes.

References: SCB, 1935, 81; 1936, 64; 1937, r; 1947, 75.

Photographs: SCB, 1894, plate 14 (from west); 1904, plate 13 (from west); 1904, plate 18 (East Face cliffs); 1909, plate 13 (down East Face); 1910, plate 37 (East Face); 1928, plate 30 (from north); 1937, plates 5, 6r (aerial) and 21 (crest trail); 1938, plate 40 (climbing); 1947, opposer 86, 87 (summit). American Alpine Journal, 1931, 416 (East Face). Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail. By Ansel Adams, 1938, plate 43 (Dayr and Keeler needles, East Face).

Route 1. The trail. Class 1. The path leaves the Whitney Pass trailr about 300 yards from the pass on the west side of the crest. The wayr swings high on the west slope of the pinnacles, skirting the notches that give impressive views down the great eastern precipices. The final peakr is surmounted from the southwest. Trail distance from the roadhead to the summit is thirteen miles.

Route 2. West slopes. Class 2. First ascent August 18, 1873, by A. H. r Johnson, C. P. Begole and John Lucas. Leave the lower lake in ther glacial basin at the west foot of the mountain. Climb steep talus andr pass through any of the numerous chutes. Then proceed directly to the summit.

Route 3. North slopes. Class 2. From near the head of Whitney Creek, or from Whitney-Russell Pass, climb west over talus and large blocks. Keeping well under the wall of the north arête, ascend into any of ther shallow chutes leading to a 50-foot wall of broken blocks. Pass through the wall and climb directly to summit. Note: Avoid the lower portion of the west half of the north face, for it is covered by steep, smoother glacial slabs, involving class 4 climbing.

Route 4 (Mountaineer’s Route). Northeast side. Class 2. First ascent generally credited to John Muir on October 21, 1873. A large couloir separates the north arête from the great East Buttress. This couloir leadsr directly from East Face Lake to a notch, the junction of the north arête with the main massif. From the junction, go left directly up 400 or 500 feet of steep large blocks (often icy) to a large cairn on the crest. The summit is 200 yards southeast.
Route 5. East buttress. Class 4, with one class 5 pitch. First ascent September 5, 1937, by Robert K. Brinton, Glen Dawson, Richard Jones, Howard Koster and Muir Dawson. From East Face Lake, climb the talus and ledge to the left of Route 4 for 500 feet, reaching a notch between the First Tower and Second Tower on the face of the east buttress. Roper here and work right, up the face of the Second Tower. Turn it to ther right 15 feet below its summit, thus gaining the second notch. On ther first pitch above the notch, two pitons are needed for safety. Above thisr point, the route roughly follows the arête of the east buttress to a pointr below the “Peewee,” a huge, precariously-placed block of granite overr halfway up the buttress. Climb
past the right side of the block. Ascend directly ahead, or swing to right, up to summit blocks (SCB, 1938, 105, 106).

**Route 6. East face route.** Class 4, with two class 5 pitches, or oner class 5 and one class 6 pitch. First ascent August 16, 1931, by Robert L. M. Underhill, Glen Dawson, Jules Eichorn and Norman Clyde. From East Face Lake follow Route 5 to notch behind First Tower. Rope up for the exposed “Tower Traverse,” class 4 (first ascent August 17, 1934, by Jules Eichorn and Marjory Bridge [Farquhar]). Traverse left (5) face of Second Tower by narrow out-sloping ledge leading steeply upward for 25 feet. The shelf then traverses for 25 feet to the bottom of a 15-foot crack. This is followed by a series of scree-covered ledges, then Washboard. Climb the Washboard to a cliff at the upper end, and move left, up an easy pitch. Descend to a wide ledge leading right and into the angle formed by the Great Buttress and the face proper. Mount about twenty-five feet on easy rocks. Three routes present themselves, namely (left to right): “Fresh Air Traverse,” “Shaky-Leg Crack,” and “Direct Crack.”

**“Fresh Air Traverse,”** minimum class 5, 100 feet. Traverse left (5) around a large rectangular block, cross a gap in the ledge requiring a long step, and work out about 20 feet to the left. At this point climb upward over a rather smooth face to a steep, broken chimney leading gradually back to the right. Ascend the chimney and traverse right at the head. The lead ends almost directly above the start. The climber is now in the angle at the foot of the Grand Staircase, a series of shelves.

**“Shaky-Leg Crack,”** class 5, very strenuous. First ascent June 9, 1936, by Morgan Harris, James N. Smith and Neil Ruge. Climb a few feet above the beginning of the Fresh Air Traverse. The belayer should be anchored on a narrow, partly overhung ledge. A shoulder-stand will be advisable, and the difficult crack above merits at least two safety pitons.

**“Direct Crack,”** class 6. First ascent July 4, 1953, by John D. Mendenhall. The crack splits the wall about forty feet south of the right-hand cliffs, and requires about four pitons.

Above any of these three variations, climb the Grand Staircase to the wall at its head, and move left into a narrow squeeze chimney or crack (one piton advisable). A register will be found after the pitch is conquered. Traverse upward and right until easy rocks lead to the summit above. *Ortenburger Variation:* ascend blocks above the register to the ridge, thence north to summit. (References to Route 6: SCB, 1932, 53; 1935, 109. *American Alpine Journal*, 1931, 415.)

**Route 7. Southeast face.** Minimum class 5. First ascent October 11, 1941, by John D. and Ruth Mendenhall. North of the base of the long couloir separating Whitney and Keeler Needle rises a buttress capped by an impressive gendarme. The buttress is separated from the eastern precipices of Whitney by an overhanging chimney. Ascend the buttress on easy class 4 rocks until one can traverse into and cross the chimney above the overhang. The thousand feet of rock remaining requires but two anchor pitons. The couloir between
Whitney and Keeler is dangerously unsound, having claimed three lives. (Reference to Route 7: SCB, 1942, 131.)

Keeler Needle (14,128)

This is the first needle south of Mt. Whitney. West side. Class 1. First ascent unknown. A short climb over small blocks from the Mount Whitney trail.

Day Needle (14,110 approx.)

This is the second needle south of Mt. Whitney. West side. Class 1. First ascent unknown. From the Mount Whitney trail, climb easy blocks to the summit.

Third Needle (14,100 approx.)

Route 1. West side. Class 1. First ascent unknown. Make a short climb over easy blocks from the Mount Whitney trail to the summit.

Route 2. East buttress. Class 4 and 5, with one class 6 pitch. First ascent September 5, 1948, by John D. Mendenhall, Ruby Wacker and John Altsheimer. Walk up glaciated slabs west of Mirror Lake, south of Pinnacle Ridge. Ascend easy blocks where the Ridge ends against the east buttress of the Third Needle. Rope up and ascend the south edge of the rib to about 13,600 feet elevation, where one crosses to the east face and climbs the class 6 chimney. Some distance above, traverse right into a rotten, bottomless chimney. The rib eases off, and one shifts from the south to the north side via a convenient cleft. A providential ledge leads to easy rocks just north of the summit (SCB, 1949, 145).

Route 3. East face. Class 4, with one class 5 traverse. First ascent September 3, 1939, by John D. Mendenhall and Ruth Dyar (Mendenhall). Follow Route 2 to roping-up point. Class 3 climbing leads upward and to the left into an easy gully, which is capped by an abrupt overhang above the half-way point. Turn the difficulty by a short class 5 traverser to the right. Climb directly to the summit of the ridge by class 4 rocks, emerging upon the watershed between Third Needle and Day Needle. Routes 2 and 3 are recommended for those desiring roped routes combined with maximum accessibility (SCB, 1940, 129).
Pinnacle Ridge (13,050)

This serrated ridge separates the middle and north forks of Lone Piner Creek. A class 4 traverse of the ridge can be made in either direction (John D. Mendenhall and Nelson P. Nies, July 10, 1935). The views are among the finest in the entire Sierra, for the eastern battlements of Mount Whitney tower above, and Thor Peak dominates the view to the east.


Thor Peak (12,301)

This spectacular wall, separating the middle and north forks of Loner Pine Creek, towers to the north of Bighorn Park. The south face provides interesting climbs. Routes 1 and 4 are shown on Sketch 27 of Thor’s south wall.

Route 1. Southwest side. Class 1. First ascent by Norman Clyde. Climb ledges north of Mirror Lake to a sloping, sandy plateau southwest of the peak. Mount talus and scree to the notch south of the peak, and traverse to the northeast side, thence to summit.


Route 3. Southeast chimney. Class 4. First ascent September 7, 1936, by William Rice, Robert K. Brinton and Glen Dawson. Climb to trees on the wall north of Bighorn Park. From a point near the highest trees, traverse along a ledge to left. Ascend a very difficult vertical chimney. Follow ledge back to right. Mount cracks and ledges to a large red-tinged pinnacle standing out from the wall. Between the pinnacle and the main face, traverse right to a gully sloping up to left. An unusually well-defined ledge to left leads to summit.
Route 4. South face. Class 5. First ascent September 4, 1937, by Howard Koster, Arthur B. Johnson and James N. Smith. Follow the Mount Whitney trail above Bighorn Park to top of switchbacks. A broad, brush-covered talus fan leads up to the right. Mount into a crack separating the main peak from Mirror Point to the southwest. Ascend the crack for two pitches, and traverse east along a series of ledges. Climb via a crack to the “Pink Perch,” a high reddish ledge. Descend a crack eastward for a hundred feet. Two or three delicate steps place one in a vertical crack a few feet out on the face. Climb two pitches upward in the crack to a shelf behind a gendarme. Turn to the right and make a delicate face climb of 15 feet; easier going completes a 70-foot lead. Climb another pitch on fine, high-angle blocks, then traverse west highr above the Pink Perch. Follow a series of ledges, which lead up into a recess under a 10-foot wall of cornice blocks, and emerge upon the arête a few hundred feet east of the summit (SCB, 1938, 105).

Variation. Class 4. First descent September 3, 1940, by Carl Jensen, Howard Koster, Wayland Gilbert and Elsie Strand. The Pink Perch may also be reached by a small gully from the east. Take the trail from Bighorn. At top of switchbacks, leave trail and go up broad gully tor where a wide ledge comes in from the right. Follow this ledge about two-thirds its length, then take a steep narrow gully leading diagonally left across the face directly to the Pink Perch.

Mirror Point. This is the southern buttress of Thor Peak, rising immediately north of Mirror Lake.

Route 1. West side. Class 1.
Route 2. Southeast face. Maximum class 4. First ascent September 6, 1936, by William Rice and Robert K. Brinton. Mount the talus sloper northwest of Bighorn Park (northeast of Mirror Lake) to an apron. Climb up and around the apron to the left, ascending series of cracks above. The most difficult pitch is an overhanging 20-foot crack. The router works gradually to the left (S).

Mount Muir (14,025)

This peak provides a most impressive view of the entire region.

Route 1. West face. Class 2. First ascent unknown. A monument of rocks stands in a shallow chute at the point where one leaves the Mount Whitney trail. The summit, 400 feet above, is plainly visible. Climb over loose talus and blocks, and head for the ridge to the right, at that point where the talus blends into the summit rocks. Traverse to the left and up a short crack to the small summit cap.

Route 2. East buttress, north side. Minimum class 4. First ascent July 11, 1935, by Nelson P. Nies and John D. Mendenhall. The route lies up the well-defined buttress that interrupts the sweep of the east wall. Rapid climbing will be encountered by maintaining a course just to the right of the ridge. When approximately half-way up the rib, swing left into a well-fractured chute that climbs back to the right, between two gendarmes. Behind the gendarmes, turn left and ascend large blocks to notch beneath summit. Keep slightly to left and attain summit via steep trough (SCB, 1936, 100).

Route 3. East buttress, south side. Class 4. First ascent September 1, 1935, by Arthur B. Johnson and William Rice. From near the start of Route 2, climb the face of the buttress for a few pitches. Where the blocks become difficult, traverse down a ledge into a gully under the south face of the arête. Follow the trough to its head, where a 70-foot vertical crack appears in the very corner. Ascend the crack and steep blocks to the arête. Work right and up under gendarme to a fractured chute, and rejoin Route 2 (SCB, 1936, 101).

Peak 12,811 (Wotan’s Throne)

This point rises in cliffs from the southwest shore of Mirror Lake. Northwest arête. Class 2. First ascent 1933, by Norman Clyde. From flats north of Consultation Lake there is a prominent class 2 couloir leading directly to the summit. East Chimney. Class 2. First ascent by Chester Versteeg July 10, 1937. Climb northernmost of three short chimneys that breach the southeast wall of summit rocks.
Point 13,777 (Discovery Pinnacle)

Immediately south of new Whitney Pass. First ascent September, 1873, by Clarence King and Knowles. Class 2 from the south.

Mount Hitchcock (13,188)

Class 1. This has a long, ascending nivated slope rising from the southwest. The northeast side is a steep, impressive cliff. The first ascent was claimed by Frederick Wales, September 1881. Ascend the west shoulder from Crabtree Meadows and proceed along the plateau to the summit.

Photographs: SCB, 1910, plate 40; 1937, plate 3 (from Whitney).

Mount McAdie (13,800)

The mountain consists of three summits. The north peak is the highest, with the middle next in elevation.

North peak. Class 3. First ascent 1922 by Norman Clyde. From the slopes north of Arc Pass climb nearly to the summit of the middle peak. Descend to the col between the middle and north summits, traverse to the west side of the north peak, and climb upwards.

Middle peak. Class 2. First ascent June 1928 by Norman Clyde. From the slopes north of Arc Pass, ascend directly to the summit.

South peak. Class 2. First ascent June 12, 1936, by Oliver Kehrlein, Chester Versteeg and Tyler Van DeGrift. From Arc Pass, ascend chimney on southeast face to summit. A class 3 traverse of a knife-edge enables one to attain the middle summit.

Mount Mallory (13,870)
Route 1. Class 2. First ascent June, 1925, by Norman Clyde. From Mount Irvine, go around the east shoulder of Mount Mallory to the easy south slope.

Route 2. From south of Arc Pass. Class 2. From south of Arc Pass, go up one of several chutes just to the north of the prominent peak on the edge of the LeConte plateau. Then follow Route 1.

Route 3. West side. Class 3. First ascent July 18, 1936, by Oliver Kehrlein, Chester Versteeg and Tyler Van Degrift. Ascend a wide couloir from Arc Pass to a point northwest of summit. Mount talus blocks to a horizontal crack running north to south. Class 3 rocks lead from upper end of crack to summit.

Route 4. Traverse from the north peak. Class 3. First ascent July 26, 1931, by Howard Sloan. Traverse from the head of the chute between Irvine and Mallory along the crestline, over the north peak, and into the notch between the north and main peaks. Thence climb to the summit. A variation is to climb about half-way up the north peak, and traverse by a series of easy ledges across its east face, onto the arête a hundred feet above the notch, and thence into notch and up north arête of main peak.

Route 5. East side. Class 2 from Tuttle Creek.

Mount Irvine (13,790)

This ragged granite peak can be climbed by any of the chutes leading from Arc Pass to the high plateau east of crest, from which the summit is easily accessible.

Route 1. Class 1. First ascent June, 1925, by Norman Clyde. From Arc Pass, ascend a deep chute to the ridge to the east. Cross the ridge, descending slightly. Go around to the southeast side and ascend final easy rocks to summit.

Route 2. Class 1. The peak can be climbed directly from the Middler Fork of Lone Pine Creek.
This peak is south of Whitney Portal.

**Route 1.** Class 1. First ascent August 31, 1940, by Chester Versteeg. From Lower Meysan Lake, east of the peak, ascend a scree slope south of the prominent rock face to the saddle, thence to the summit.

**Route 2.** Class 3. Ascend the rock face directly above Lower Meysan Lake, up a chimney. Traverse left on a broad ledge for 25 feet, and then follow an orange-colored dike to within 10 feet of top. Traverse right on a narrow ledge for 10 feet, then ascend 500 feet of scree to the summit.

The north face (above Whitney Portal Campground) offers interesting class 5 climbs, as yet uncompleted.

**Lone Pine Peak (12,951)**

This is an imposing summit when seen from Lone Pine; from the west and northwest, the northeast arête presents an interesting profile.

**Route 1.** Class 1. First ascent 1925, by Norman Clyde. Climb to a point west-southwest of the peak and ascend a talus slope to the high plateau, which presents a steep front to the east. Follow the plateau to the summit.

**Route 2.** North-northeast ridge. Long class 5 (6 pitons). First ascent September, 1952, by A. C. Lembeck and Ray W. Van Aken. From Whitney Portal drive east to summer home tract. Follow Meysan Lake trail, and take left branch where it divides. This trail drops to stream. Ascend north talus of Lone Pine Peak, bearing easterly. Cross under the ridge, gain the ridge’s crest, and follow (class 3) to first large step (visible from Lone Pine). Ascend step, bearing to right (1 piton). The next pitch is strenuous (2 pitons). Climb an overhanging slab with layback to a platform, which is followed by a smooth chimney (3 pitons). Easy class 3 and 4 climbing over towers leads to the final summit blocks. Traverse horizontally east for 10 feet under the overhang, then upward by means of a crack. Make a hand traverse of crack to chimney. Ascend chimney, cross ridge to west, and follow minimum class 4 rocks to summit.

**Mount Newcomb (13,484)**

The Whitney Region
Class 1. First ascent August 22, 1936, by Max Eckenburg and Bob Rumohr. Ascent made from Mount Pickering. Follow down north ridge, across saddle, skirt pinnacles on the west, thence up southwest ridge to summit.

Mount Chamberlin (13,173)

First ascent by J. H. Czock, date unknown. Class 1 by west arete.

Mount Pickering (13,481)

Southeast arete. Class 2. First ascent July 16, 1936, by Chester Versteeg, Tyler Van Degrift and Oliver Kehrlein. Climb from Rock Creek Basin past Primrose Lake via the southeast arete to the plateau, thence to summit.

Joe Devel Peak (13,328)

Class 2. First ascent September 20, 1875, by Wheeler Survey party. Route unknown. Climbed July 7, 1937, by Owen L. Williams via the southeast arete. Records from 1875 to 1908 were found. The ascent is class 2 from the south or southwest.

Mount Guyot (12,305)

Class 1. This mountain lies west of the main crest and affords a finer view of both the Whitney Region and the Great Western Divide. First ascent 1881 by William Wallace.

The Miter (12,784)

South face. Class 3. First ascent July 18, 1938, by R. S. Fink. From Rock Creek, ascend a low ridge just south of Iridescent Lake and follow this to a saddle on the south side of the mountain. Climb many ledges, bearing slightly to the west. Then go in an easterly direction on the upper slope.
Mount LeConte (13,960)

Route 1. Northwest ridge. Class 2. First ascent June 1935 by Norman Clyde. “Followed ridge running southeast from Mount Mallory; thence on ridge around to southwest “shoulder of mountain, encountered 20-foot drop, retraced shelf for 100 yards, dropped down to and came up chimney, passing below 20-foot drop, thence to summit.” Their head of the chute near the summit is the most difficult part of the climb. This route is still used by parties approaching the peak from the north.

Route 2. Northeast face. Class 3. First ascent September 7, 1952, by Steve Wilkie, Barbara Lilley, Wes Cowan, George Wallerstein and Juner Kilbourne. From Meysan Lake, ascend a loose, narrow chute to the plateau between LeConte and Mallory (also readily accessible from northwest). Cross the plateau to the cairn at the base of LeConte. Traverse easterly 200 yards. Now on northeast face but short of the east arête, ascend directly to the summit.

Route 3. East arête. Class 3. First recorded ascent June 12, 1937, by Gary Leech, Bill Blanchard and Hubert North. Follow Route 2 to the cairn. Traverse for 450 or 500 yards to a chimney on the east face and follow up the chimney to a point near the summit; leave the chimney and complete climb on east arête.

Route 4. From the west. Class 4. First ascent July 17, 1936, by Oliverr Kehrlein, Tyler Van Degrift and Chester Versteeg. Climb talus fan about 200 yards north of the east end of Iridescent Lake, the only laker in the recess; thence up a long couloir to a point below crest. Traverse to the northwest for 60 feet, at which point climb directly east toward the summit about 400 feet distant.

Route 5. From the west. Class 2. Follow Route 4, except that the traverse northwest is followed until a difficult chute in north face leads to summit.

Photograph: SCB, 1896, plate 32 (Summit rocks).

Corcoran Mountain (13,733)

This is one-half mile south of Mount LeConte, and the most northerly of three summits just south of LeConte.
Route 1. From the north. Class 1. First ascent 1933, by Howard S. Gates. Climb from Iridescent Lake up a chute to the saddle in the crest north of peak; thence up easy rocks to the summit.

Route 2. From the south. Class 2. First ascent July 20, 1938, by R. S. Fink. Ascend west side of the main crest to the notch just south of the peak, thence up south ridge.

Mount Langley (14,042)

First ascent 1871, by Clarence King and Paul Pinson.

Route 1. From Army Pass on the south. Class 1.

Route 2. From Rock Creek on the west. Class 1. Climb a wide chute, one-half mile south of a point directly west of the summit, to a level bench. Thence follow an easy arête in a northeasterly direction to the summit.

Route 3. North face. Class 3. First recorded ascent August 1937 by Howard S. Gates and Nelson P. Nies. From a bench south of Tuttler Creek, climb to the base, thence southwest to a chimney blocked at the head. Climb out of the chimney to the south ledge, thence traverse southeast, then southwest to a ridge. Follow the ridge to the summit.

Route 4. East-southeast ridge. Class 3. From the northernmost larger Cottonwood Lake, ascend talus to the westernmost of two saddles in the east-southeast ridge. Follow the crest of the broad ridge and plateau to the summit.

Photograph: SCB, 1910, plate 39.

Peak 12,819 (2 SE of Mount Langley)

First ascent July 16, 1938, by R. S. Fink, who established Routes 1 and 2.
Route 1. Class 1. From Diaz Creek climb southwest in a chute to the col on the main ridge west of the peak, thence east around the southr slope to the summit.

Route 2. Class 1. From approximately 11,200 in Diaz Creek, ascend the north slope, bearing slightly east, and thence to the summit.

Route 3. From Cottonwood Lakes. Class 1. First ascent 1938 by Billr Roberts. From the lakes, climb the south slopes to the summit.

Peak 12,437 (The Major General)

Rising northwest of Army Pass, this peak was first ascended by Chesterr and Lillian Versteeg August 8, 1937. From Rock Creek, climb shallower couloir slightly northwest of summit, thence up rock mass. Final pinnacle is short class 3.

Photographs: Of the Whitney Region in general: SCB, 1894, plate 6r (from Williamson); 1929, plate 22 (from Langley), plate 21 (from Mallory); 1937, plate 4 (north from Whitney), plate 7 (from southeast), plates 8, 9 (aerial from east); 1938, plate 39 (climbing); 1947, oppositer page 31 (along Whitney trail); 1950, 36-37 (Sierra Crest from Langley).
**Kearsarge Pass to Army and Franklin Passes**

**The Kaweas and the Great Western Divide**

*Mildred Jentsch* and *Arthur J. Reyman*

Acknowledgment is due the late Oscar A. Cook for his counsel and criticism of this section of the Guide.

EXTENDING from north to south through the central part of Sequoia National Park is the middle portion of the Great Western Divide and its eastern spurs, Kern Ridge and the Kaweah Peaks Ridge. This high barrier forms the western watershed of the Kern River, the southern watershed of the South Fork of Kings River, and the eastern watershed of the Middle and East Forks of the Kaweah River. The name “Kaweahr River” might be considered a misnomer, for although the Kaweah River was once thought to drain the Kaweah Peaks ridge, later exploration revealed that this was not the case, and that its drainage was really from the Great Western Divide.

**History and Geography**

The French and Spanish sheepherders were undoubtedly the earliest mountaineers in this region. They drove their flocks up the grassy canyons of the Kern and Kings rivers and tended them on the mountain slopes of the large basins of the tributary streams. The earliest known ascent was on Sawtooth Peak (then called Miner’s Peak) in 1871 by Joseph W. Lovelace while deer hunting. In 1881 Mount Kaweah was climbed by James A. Wright, Wm. B. Wallace and Rev. F. H. Wales. Wallace did much of the early exploration of the Kings-Kern Divider and the headwaters of the Kaweahs in his search for gold, silver, and copper during the 1879 mining excitement in Mineral King.
It was not until July 1896 that Prof. Wm. R. Dudley ascended Sawtooth Peak and perceived the fact that the Kaweahs were not along the main crest of the Great Western Divide. He also traced the Kaweah River and discovered that its drainage did not include the Kaweah Peaks. Upon further excursions in 1897 he climbed Mt. Kaweah, then believed to be 14,140 feet, and named Kern-Kaweah River, Milestoner Bowl, Red Spur and Picket Guard Peak. The Divide itself has had several designations since 1865 when the Whitney survey referred to it as the western ridge. John Muir in 1891 called it Greenhorn Ridge and LeConte in 1893 regarded it as the Great Western Ridge. In 1896 it had two names—Western Divide according to W. R. Dudley and Great Western Divide according to LeConte’s map.

Further description of the geography, of the ridge is presented by Mr. King in his account of the view from Mount Tyndall: “From Mt. Brewer to Kaweah Peak, the two culminating points of the western ridge, for a distance of fifteen miles there is nothing that can be called a separate mountain; it is, rather, a great mural ridge, capped by small sharp cones and low ragged domes, all covered with little minarets.”

The above quotation is a misrepresentation of the geography as it is known today. Actually the western ridge or Great Western Divide is a lofty chain of boldly carved peaks varying in shape from spire-like Milestone Mountain to flat-topped Table Mountain and pyramidal Sawtooth Peak. Each canyon leads up to a magnificent amphitheater, or cirque, with steep granite walls frequently a thousand feet or more high. In these barren wastes of rock and snow are found many small sharp cones and low ragged domes, all covered with little minarets.

The Kaweah Group is formed as a jagged spur jutting from the Great Western Divide just south of Triple Divide Peak. The Kaweah group of peaks exhibits a color change from black to red which further enhances the spectacular quality of its sky-piercing crags and minarets.

Generally most of the peaks present little difficulty of ascent for they have at least one moderate slope of rocky talus or scree. Many of them, however, do have precipitous faces which call for caution since they are loosely composed and are exposed. Along the Kaweah Peaks Ridger one encounters some of the more challenging aspects of climbing. Ther northeastern exposures are breath-takingly sheer. The structure is looser and therefore extreme caution must be employed in climbing. As yet no ascents of the Kaweah Peaks from the Kaweah Basin are recorded. The southwestern aspects vary from the tremendous rock piles of Mount Kaweah and of the Red Kaweah to the foreboding-looking, cavernous route up the Black Kaweah and the spiny upward projections of lessor points all along the ridge. In short, climbing in this region is what your make it!

Approaches
r From the west. From Mineral King (7,830), a small mountain villager situated 60 miles east and a little north of Visalia, there are five well-constructed trails that lead east and north to the high peaks by various passes. 1) Timber Gap (9,400) renders the country to the north accessible after a two-mile switchback trail from Mineral King. A good horse trail leads north to Redwood Meadow and thence north and east over a long, steep ascent through rugged rock walls of the majestic Hamilton Lakes region to Kaweah Gap (10,800). 2) Black Rock Pass (11,400) is reached by a trail which leaves the Timber Gap trail in Climff Creek Canyon to proceed eastward into Little Five Lakes and the Bigr Arroyo. This pass affords a magnificent view of Kaweah Peaks, Bigr Arroyo and Chagoopa Plateau. The trail is steep and rough. The west side rewards the traveler with views of Upper Cliff Creek, Sawtooth Peak and Columbine Lake. 3) Sawtooth Pass (11,400), 4.0 miles from Mineral King, is approached from the west by a rocky trail that becomes a steep descent to beautiful Columbine Lake on the east. It is recommended for foot travel only. The choice of direction from Columbine Lake may be either east down Lost Canyon or north over a knapsack route (see below, Glacier Pass) to the Black Rock Pass trail and thence to Little Five Lakes. 4) Franklin Pass (11,400) cuts over the divider and serves to join Mineral King (5.1 miles north and west of the pass) with Rattlesnake Creek. The pass is through scree and rocks and is reminiscent of sandy desert travel for a short distance. A trail junction one mile east of the pass renders the areas to the south, east, and northeast accessible. The trail cutting past Little Claire Lake to Soda Creek from Rattlesnake Creek presents a little difficulty to animals on the steep south bank of Soda Creek. 5) Farewell Gap (10,588) is 6.0 from Mineral King. It is gentle and green and is the gateway into the more southerly reaches of the Great Western Divide. Livermore calls this a friendly pass (SCB, 1942, 59).r

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r From Giant Forest (6,500), 52 miles from Visalia and 95 miles from Fresno, a park road leads two miles from headquarters to Crescent Meadow where the High Sierra Trail starts. This trail goes eastward to Bearpaw Meadow, passes along and literally through sheer graniter walls of the Hamilton Lakes region, and over Kaweah Gap into the Bigr Arroyo.r

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r From the roadhead on the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River, six miles above the Ash Mountain Park Headquarters, a trail contours to meet the Timber Gap trail north of Redwood Meadow.r

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r From Big Meadow (7,659), about two miles east of General Grantr Grove Section and about four miles above the northern boundary of Sequoia National Park, a trail leads eastward from the forest campground to Rowell Meadow and to Roaring River where the trail divides. One route follows Deadman Canyon over Elizabeth Pass (11,200), a rough, steep talus climb, to the Kaweah River. The other route follows Cloud Canyon and its southeast tributary to Colby Pass (12,000). This pass is rough and steep on both sides.r

r r

r From Cedar Grove (4,631), on the South Fork of the Kings River, a trail climbs up the south wall of the canyon to Summit Meadow and joins at Rowell Meadow the Big Meadow Trail, which may be followed to either Elizabeth Pass or Colby Pass (see above). Another trail from Cedar Grove may be followed up Bubbs Creek to the Sphinx Creek trail, and so to Scaffold Meadow on Roaring River; thence up Cloud or Deadman Canyon. Continued travel up Bubbs Creek and over Foresters Pass or over Harrison Pass (a knapsack pass) into the Kern River Canyon brings one into the area ultimately from a more northerly direction.r

r r

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From the north. The Muir Trail leads over Foresters Pass (13,200) and descends to Tyndall Creek where a lateral may be taken north to Milestone Basin or south to junction Meadow.

From the east. From Lone Pine on US 395 a road extends to Whitney Portal, the starting point of the Mount Whitney Trail. The trail leads over Whitney Pass (13,000) and joins the High Sierra Trail which leads to the Kern River Canyon. Further south, Siberian Pass (10,800) and Army Pass (12,000) give passage to the east flank of the Kern Canyon.

From the south. There are long approaches from Kernville and Fairview on the Kern River and slightly shorter ones from Balch Park, Wishon Camp, and Camp Nelson over various routes.

Campsites for Climbing and Exploring

At the head of the Big Arroyo in the timber below Kaweah Gap is a good vantage spot for climbing Mount Stewart, Eagle Scout Peak, B.M. 12,022, Kaweah Peaks, Black Kaweah, Red Kaweah, Lippincott Mountain, and other peaks, unnamed. From here many charming lakes and recesses may be explored also.

From Little Five Lakes one gets a fine view of the Kaweah ridger and one can find delightful camping areas. Lippincott Mountain, Mount Eisen and peaks, south of Big Five Lakes furnish interesting material. A peak that is especially noteworthy is the one which looks like two fingers pointing skyward.

A camp at timberline in Lost Canyon may be a base for a third or fourth class ascent of Needham Mountain. Sawtooth Peak is within easy range, as is “Two Fingers” peak.

Florence Peak and Peak 11,730 west of Little Claire Lake and the undesignated one east of it can be reached readily from the upper regions of Rattlesnake Creek or Little Claire Lake. The latter is a scenic spot for parties without animals, and the mountains about it reward the explorer with very curious rock and foxtail pine formations.

Moraine Lake is a popular and convenient campsite. From it one gets a view of the large lake with the impressive back drop of Mount Kaweah. From the rim of the canyon a panorama of the Big Arroyo and its drainage basin presents itself. Mount Kaweah may be ascended from here as well as other points along the ridge.
From the environs of Mineral King itself, Sawtooth Peak, Mineral Peak; and Florence Peak may be reached.

Camps with pasture for stock may be found at Junction Meadow and Upper Funston Meadow on the Kern River, on the Kern-Kaweah River in many meadows along its entire length, along Milestone Creek, in Cloud Canyon, in Deadman Canyon, along Big Arroyo, and at Morainer Lake.

Knapsack Passes

Copper Pass (12,330), at the head of the divide between Cloud and Deadman Canyons takes honors for roughness. For a way it traverses an elevated ridgetop along the divide, affording a sweeping view of the Kaweah Peaks, Milestone and Table Mountains, and beyond.

Lion Rock Pass (12,000). Class 2. The low saddle just east of Lion Rock affords a convenient route between Nine Lake Basin and the basins of Lion Lake and Tamarack Lake.

Kern-Kaweah Col (12,100). Class 2. This is a rough knapsack pass from Nine Lake Basin to the upper Kern-Kaweah River. It has been dubbed Pants Pass by mountaineers because of the destructive effect on trousers when descending. The pass is east-northeast of the large (second) lake on the stream draining the northwest side of Nine Lake Basin. From this lake a small peak is seen to the northeast. North of this peak is a fairly low notch that is easily approached from the west, but which connects with a steep, rocky, class 3 chimney that descends between cliffs on the east. The recommended pass lies south of the little peak; it is a little higher and steeper on the west, but still quite feasible, and much better on the east side. From the east this pass is reached from a lake about a mile north of the cirque at the head of the Kern-Kaweah River. The steep chimney leading to the lower pass is easily identified, and the better pass is south of this.

Kaweah Pass (12,500). Class 1 on the south, class 2 on the north. Leave the High Sierra Trail at about 10,000 feet elevation, proceed northward over the Chagoopa Plateau, and follow the easternmost branch of Chagoopa Creek to the low gap just east of Mount Kaweah. Descend at their lowest point, go west of a lake and then through the Kaweah Basin south of the two smaller lakes and north of the larger lakes. Cross the granite bluff north of the large lake and work across to Picket Creek, which is descended on the west side. The Colby Pass trail on the Kern-Kaweah River is met about three miles west of Junction Meadow.

Glacier Pass (11,000). This is a route connecting the Monarch Lake Trail leading into Mineral King and the Black Rock Pass Trail on Cliff. The northern approach is a gradual ridge leading to the pass just east of the reddish knob. The south approach is the old Glacier Pass Trail which is in fair condition.
Routes and Records for the Principal Peaks

Peaks of the Great Western Divide (north to south)

Table Mountain (13,646)

The first ascent was made on August 25, 1908, by Paul Shoup, Fred Shoup, and Gilbert Hassel.

Route 1. North face. Class 3. First ascent by Norman Clyde and party on July 26, 1927. The only route up this face is a steep chimney which usually contains snow and ice well into the summer.

Route 2. South side. Class 3. Ascended by Norman Clyde on July 29, 1927. This is a shelf and chimney climb of moderate difficulty. The important thing is to change shelves, for each dips at a hazardous angle after a certain point is reached.


Peak 13,682. “Midway Mountain”

The first ascent was made in 1912 by Francis P. Farquhar, Wm. E. Colby and Robert M. Price. The east face is an ordinary rock climb with no difficulties (class 2 to 3).
Milestone Mountain (13,643)

First ascent on July 14, 1912, by Francis P. Farquhar, Wm. E. Colby, and Robert M. Price. They climbed from Milestone Bowl.

Route 1. Northeastern side. Class 3. Ascended in 1912 by a party from the head of Milestone Creek.

Route 2. South side. Class 3. Milestone Bowl route. Traverse under the south face of Milestone Mountain to the ridge whose main axis points southwesterly and then go up this ridge, which trends northeasterly toward the summit cairn.

Route 3. Northwest face. Class 3. The route of Walter A. Starr, Jr., September 19, 1931. From the northwest, ascend talus slopes and chutes to the southwest ridge and follow this to the final spire.

Peak 13,350 (1/2 SW of Milestone Mountain)

First ascent by Francis P. Farquhar, Wm. E. Colby, and Robert M. Price in 1912. A class 1 ascent from Colby Pass.

Peak 12,600 (1/3 SW of Colby Pass)


Route 2. Southwest ridge. Class 2. Ascended by Carl P. Jensen and Howard Gates in 1936 while traversing the ridge.

Peak 12,660 (1 SW of Colby Pass)
First ascent by Carl P. Jensen and Howard Gates in 1936 on traverser from Peak 12,740. The southwest slope is class 2.

Peak 12,740 (3/4 NE of Triple Divide Peak)

First ascent on July 21, 1926, by George R. Bunn and R. C. Lewis. Class 3 by southwest slope.

Triple Divide Peak (12,651)

First ascent in 1920 by J. S. Hutchinson and Chas. A. Noble. Ascend from the basin east of the Whaleback to the saddle northeast of Tripler Divide Peak, and follow the northeast ridge. About class 2.

Lion Rock (12,400)

First ascent by Dave Winkley, William Curlett and Earl S. Wallace on July 7, 1927.

Route 1. West slope. Class 2. From Tamarack Lake ascend the broad western slope and the west ridge to the summit.

Route 2. Southeast face. Class 3. From Nine Lake Basin climb to Lion Rock Pass and enter the chute between the two peaks and ascend their southeast face of the north peak to the summit.

Mt. Stewart (12,202)

First ascent by Norman Clyde on August 14, 1932.

Route 1. From Kaweah Gap. Class 2. Traverse over talus. Time required from the Gap is about 2 to 3 hours.
Route 2. From Nine Lake Basin. Class 2. Ascend a grassy gully at the north end of the first lake in the basin. Time is about 3 to 4 hours.

Eagle Scout Peak (12,000+)

First ascent on July 15, 1926, by Francis P. Farquhar and Eagle Scouts Frederick Armstrong, Eugene Howell and Coe Swift. The peak was named on this ascent. It is class 2 from the Big Arroyo, and the timer is about 2 hours.

Peak 12,022 (1/2 S of Eagle Scout Peak)

A U.S. Geological Survey Bench Mark. The east slope is class 2 from the Big Arroyo by way of the lake basin southeast of the peak; the timer is about 2 hours. The south and southwest cliffs appear to be fourth or fifth class.

Peak 12,200+ (3/4 S of Eagle Scout Peak)

First recorded ascent by A. J. Reyman on August 1, 1951. He found a few rocks on the summit that may have been an old cairn. Class 2 by southeast slope.

Peak 12,200+ (0.6 N of Lippincott Mountain)

First ascent unknown. A. J. Reyman found an empty cairn on the summit on August 1, 1951. The east ridge is class 2. Ascend the low notch from the lake basin northeast of the peak and walk along the east ridge to the rocky summit.

Mount Lippincott (12,267)

First ascent by Norman Clyde in 1922.
Route 1. Southeast slope. Class 2. An easy ascent from either the Bigr Arroyo or the Little Five Lakes.

Route 2. East ridge. Class 2. Ascend the east ridge from the basin north of the peak and walk along the east ridge to the summit over larger blocks.

Peak 11,660 (1 SE of Lippincott Mountain)

First ascent July 15, 1936, by Sierra Club Party of seventeen persons led by Jules Eichorn.

Route 1. Southeast slope. Class 2. An easy ascent from Little Five Lakes.

Route 2. Southwest slope. Class 2.

Mount Eisen (12,200+)

First recorded ascent on July 15, 1949, by Howard Parker, Mildred Jentsch, Ralph Youngberg, Martha Ann McDuffie.

Route 1. From Little Five Lakes. Class 3. Go around the large laker of the north branch of Little Five Lakes. Contour on the north side onr granite to the highest shelf which has an unmapped lakelet. Proceed tor the south notch between the two peaks, and thence north to the peak. Caution: the lowest notch is reached by a high angle scree slope andr the rocks are very loose; therefore avoid this route. There is a possibler fourth class route on the east face.

Route 2. West side. Class 1. A walk over scree and talus.

Peak 12,100+ (1/3 N of Black Rock Pass)

**Sawtooth Peak (12,340)**

The first ascent was made by Joseph W. Lovelace while deer hunting in 1871. It is climbed several times each year by virtue of its accessibility and rewarding view. Follow Monarch Lakes Trail and go up the west side of the peak on the old Glacier Pass Trail. Class 2.

**Peak 11,900+ (1.3 S of Sawtooth Peak)**

First ascent unknown. A. J. Reyman found a mineral claim monument on the south slope below the summit on August 11, 1951.

**Route 1. South slope.** Class 2. An easy ascent from Franklin Lake via the south slope.

**Route 2. Via Crystal Lake Trail.** Class 2.

**Rainbow Mountain (11,975)**

First ascent on July 15, 1942, by Oliver Kehrlein, Jack Allen, and “Black Bart” Evans.

**Route 1. Southeast ridge.** Class 2 from Franklin Pass.

**Route 2. Southwest slope.** Class 2 from Franklin Lake.

**Florence Peak (12,405)**

The Kaweahs and the Great Western Divide
First ascent unknown.

Route 1. From Franklin Pass to the saddle between the two peaks. Class 2.

Route 2. From Rattlesnake Creek over huge talus blocks near their top. Class 3. About two hours.

Peaks of the Kaweah Group (northwest to southwest)

(See Sketch 28)

Peak 12,547 (1.7 N of Black Kaweah)

First ascent by Norman Clyde in July 1922.

Peak 13,100+ (1 N of Black Kaweah)

First ascent on July 11, 1924, by G. A. Gaines, C. A. Gaines, and H. H. Bliss.

Sketch 28. The Kaweah Ridge from the west.

1 Black Kaweah  5 Michael Pinnacle
2 Pyramidal Pinnacle  6 Squaretop Kaweah
3 Koontz Pinnacle  7 Pinnacle SE of Squaretop

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Route 1. Southeast ridge. Class 2. Loose rock.


Peak 13,434 (1 NE of Black Kaweah)

First ascent by Gerald A. Gaines, C. A. Gaines, and H. H. Bliss on July 11, 1924. The name “Kaweah Queen” has been suggested.


Route 2. Northwest ridge. Class 2. A traverse from Peak 13,100+ over shaly, loose rock.

Black Kaweah (13,756)

First ascent by Duncan McDuffie, Onis I. Brown, and J. S. Hutchinson on August 11, 1920, by Router (SCB, 1921, 131).

Route 1. Northwest ridge and south slope. Class 3. Ascend the northwest ridge until a deep notch is encountered. Descend to below the notch and work eastward along the south slope toward the main peak and ascend the largest of several chimneys leading in the general direction of the summit. This is a sixty degree angle chute and great care must be exercised to prevent a rock slide. Upon reaching the ridge the chimney swings toward the southeast and narrows considerably. Ascend the small buttress leading southwest from the main peak and climb to the summit (SCB, 1921, 131).
Route 2. Northwest ridge. Class 3. First ascent by D. G. McAllister and K. Campbell on September 1, 1927. They kept at all times within about 100 feet of the crest, climbing on ledges around the numerous chutes and fins which form the western face (SCB, 1928, 87).

Route 3. East ridge. Class 3 to 4. First climbed by Neil Ruge and James Smith in June, 1935 (SCB, 1936, 99). Ascend to the ridge between the Black and Red Kaweahs, not at the lowest point of the ridge, but at the second small notch toward the Red Kaweah. From this work around the east side to the lowest point. Then follow the ridge westward only descending to the sides to avoid gendarmes. Near the top of the Black Kaweah, as viewed from this ridge, there is seen a ledge running partly around the peak. Go to this ledge, crossing several couloirs. Keep to the left and climb a chute which leads to the summit.

Route 4. Southwest face. Class 3 to 4. First ascent July 26, 1921, by Philip E. Smith, Marian Simpson, and Irene Smith. Ascend to the laker in the cirque below the peak and continue up the high angle slope of loose rock at the base of the mountain. Here two chutes, inclined at an angle of about 60° go up toward the summit. Enter the right hand chute and after about 100 feet cross over to the left chute which can be followed nearly to the summit. Snow or ice are likely obstacles in the chute. About two or three hours are required to the top.

Route 5. Southwest ridge. Class 3. Climbed by A. R. Ellingwood and Carl Blaurock, August 1928. Ascend the southwest ridge from the Big Arroyo and keep to the crest until the west ridge is reached. Climb the west ridge to the summit.

Pinnacles between Black and Red Kaweahs (see Sketch 28)

Pyramidal pinnacle. Class 3 to 4. Probably first climbed August 1932, by Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn. An ascent was made in August 1953 by Jim Koontz and companions, who traversed from the southeast face of the Black Kaweah along the ridge toward the Red Kaweah and up the pyramidal pinnacle. They then returned down the Black Kaweah ridge, traversed under the west wall of the pinnacle, and descended the chute south of that which descends directly from the notch between the pyramidal pinnacle and the next one to the southeast (Koontz Pinnacle).

Highest pinnacle (Koontz Pinnacle). Class 3. First ascent August 26, 1953, by Jim Koontz, Pete Murphy, and Fred Peters. From the west ascend the first chute south of that which descends directly from the notch between the pyramidal and Koontz pinnacles. Traverse from the chute over to the notch and climb to the summit.

Red Kaweah (13,754)
First ascent in 1912 by Charles W. Michael. The west side is class 3.

Michael’s Pinnacle (just south of the Red Kaweah)

First ascent by C. W. Michael in 1912 by an unknown route. Their second ascent was made August 28, 1953, by Jim Koontz, Pete Murphy, and Fred Peters. Class 3 to 4 from the lake to the west. They climbed to the ridge north of Squaretop and climbed over the pinnacles between Squaretop and Michael’s Pinnacle. No cairns were found on their four major pinnacles on this ridge. From the southeast side of their fourth pinnacle they worked around the west side on a narrow ledge which petered out in a steep couloir. They descended this about thirty feet until it joined the next couloir and then worked back up onto the ledge and so to the col between this pinnacle and Michael’s. From the col they ascended a wide talus ledge on the northeast side of their ridge to some easy rock which led back to the ridge. From here it was a walk to the summit.

Squaretop (square pinnacle between Red Kaweah and Peak 13,728)

First ascent June 26, 1935, by Jim Smith and Neil M. Ruge. Class 3 to 4 from the west via the col between this pinnacle and the one to the southeast. Climb directly to the col from the lake at the base of the ridge, staying on as solid rock as possible. From the col work up the southeast face on exposed narrow ledges to a broad 100-foot ledger leading to the next series of exposed ledges which bring you to the summit. The rock on this pinnacle is much firmer than that of the Black Kaweah.

Pinnacle southeast of Squaretop

First ascent by Jim Koontz, Fred Peters and Pete Murphy on August 27, 1953. Class 3 from the col between this pinnacle and the squarer pinnacle, climbing directly to the summit. Descent was made on their south.

Second Kaweah (13,728)

First ascent in 1922 by Norman Clyde. The south slope is class 2. Three pinnacles on the northwest ridge were first climbed August 29, 1953, by Jim Koontz, Fred Peters and Pete Murphy. Class 3.
Mount Kaweah (13,816)

First ascent in September, 1881, by Judge William B. Wallace, Captain James Albert Wright and Reverend F. H. Wales. The south sloper from Chagoopa Plateau is class 1.

Picket Guard Peak (12,311)

First ascent on August 1, 1936, by C. Dohlman, H. Manheim and B. Breeding. Class 2.

Peak 12,996 (1.7 N of Second Kaweah)

First ascent by A. J. Reyman on August 16, 1951. The southeast sloper is class 2 from Kaweah Basin.

Peak 13,186 (Red Spur)

First ascent by Jules Eichorn, Virginia Adams, Jane Younger and Carl P. Jensen on a traverse from Peak 13,200+ in July 1936. Traverse the southwest face to the south face and ascend the large chute which ends at a ledge. Follow the ledge around the summit rock to the southeast side. Climb to summit on the east side. There is loose rock on the entire climb.

Peak 12,771 (Red Spur)


Peak 12,800+ (3/4 NW of Red Spur)

First ascent by A. J. Reyman on August 15, 1951. The northwest sloper is a loose rock climb from Kaweah Basin. Class 2.
Peak 13,291 (1.3 NE of Mount Kaweah)

First ascent on July 17, 1936, by Jules Eichorn, Virginia Adams, Janer Younger and Carl P. Jensen. The south slope is class 2.

Peak 13,200+ (1.7 NE of Mount Kaweah)

First ascent was on July 17, 1936, by Jules Eichorn, Virginia Adams, Jane Younger and Carl P. Jensen on a traverse from Peak 13,291. The southwest ridge is class 2.

Peak 13,075 (3/4 NE of Mount Kaweah)

First ascent by A. J. Reyman on August 14, 1951, on a traverse from Peak 13,291. Class 2 by the southeast slope.

Peaks East of the Great Western Divide (north to south)

Peak 12,673 (1.8 E of Table Mountain)

First ascent in July, 1936, by Sierra Club party.

Peak 13,560 (3/4 SE of Milestone Mountain)


Peak 13,206 (Kern Ridge)
First ascent unknown. May Pridham found a cairn but no records in July 1936.

**Peak 12,749 (Kern Ridge)**

First ascent on August 1, 1936, by Oliver Kehrlein, H. Manheim and B. Breeding.

**Peak 12,808 (Kern Point)**

First ascent on July 25, 1924, by William Horsfall and C. Laughlin.

**Peak 11,845 (2 E of Spring Lake)**

No information is available.

**Peak 11,600+ (1/2 SW of Peak 11,845)**

The names “Fault Peak” or “Two Fingers” are suggested. From a distance this peak resembles two fingers pointing skyward. At closer range a large east-west fault is discovered into which one may look a long way down. The north side of the peak is precipitous, but the south side is a gentle scree slope. The two summit blocks seem to be composed of solidified scree. On an ascent made July 13, 1949, David R. Brower and Jim Harkins found a cairn but no register.

**Route 1. From Little Five Lakes.** Class 3. Go to the knapsack pass 1r mile south of Black Rock Pass and along the ridge toward the summit.

**Route 2. From Big Five Lakes.** Class 3. Climb up the north face.
Needham Mountain (12470)


Route 1. North slope. Class 2. Climb the north slope from Lost Canyon to the notch between Needham Mountain and Sawtooth Peak. Proceed along the west slope to the summit. This route was done on July 28, 1949, by R. R. Breckenfeld, Emily Frazer, and Donald Scanlon.

Route 2. North face. Class 3. Ascended on July 28, 1949, by Howard Parker and Helen Parker. Ascend the north couloir to the ridge and traverse westward to the summit.


Route 4. Southeast slope. Class 2. Ascended by A. J. Reyman on August 8, 1951, on a traverse from Peak 12,300.

Route 5. South slope. Class 2.

Peak 12,300+ (3/4 E of Needham Mountain)

Ascended August 8, 1951, by A. J. Reyman by a class 3 traverse of the south ridge from Peak 12,000+.

Peak 12,000+ (1 SE of Needham Mountain)

Ascended August 8, 1951, by A. J. Reyman. A class 2 climb by the southwest slope from Soda Creek.

Peak 11,730 (1/2 W of Little Claire Lake)
First ascent unknown. Class 3 by the north slope and a chimney up the north face.

**Peak 12,000+ (1 E of Little Claire Lake)**

First ascent by Richard Olhausen, Robert Olhausen, and B. A. Olhausen on July 14, 1942. The south slope is scree and the southwest ridge from Little Claire Lake is class 1. The weathered rock and foxtail pines present interesting formations. The north face may be class 3.

**Peak 12,036 (3 E of Little Claire Lake)**

First ascent on July 15, 1942, by a Sierra Club party of fifteen persons led by Weldon F. Heald. The west ridge is a class 1 traverse from Peak 12,000+.

**Peaks West of the Great Western Divide (north to south)**

**Peak 12,230 (Glacier Ridge)**

First ascent in July, 1936, by E. Grubb, May Pridham and D. Vonr Lobensels. Class 2 to 3.

**Peak 12,163 (Glacier Ridge)**

Surveyor’s Bench Mark.

**Peak 12,467 (Glacier Ridge)**

No records are available.
Peak 12,330 (Glacier Ridge)

First ascent by Walter A. Starr, Jr. in 1930.

Whaleback (11,739)

First ascent on August 5, 1936, by May Pridham and Adele Vonr Lobensels.

Peak 10,400 (2 W of Mount Stewart)

First ascent unknown. On July 7, 1949, Jules Eichorn, Jim Harkins, Howard Parker, Tom Kendig and Mildred Jentsch climbed from Hamilton Lake and found a cairn below the summit. The southeast slope is class 3. Climb up a rocky, wooded ridge onto smooth granite, and thence onto a ramp on the north side to the five-foot-wide summit.

Peak 9,757 (2 WNW of Eagle Scout Peak)

First ascent in 1936 by D. Johnson and party.

Towers above Eagle Scout Creek

On the north and south walls of Eagle Scout Creek there are some fine rock towers, about 9,500 to 10,000 feet, offering 4th and 5th class routes. A number were climbed by the Loma Prieta Rock Climbing Section of the Sierra Club in 1953.

Peak 11,530 (3/4 NW of Glacier Pass)
There is a mineral claim on the summit, which can be reached by a class 2 climb from Glacier Pass along the southeast ridge.

Mineral Peak (11,535)

First ascent on August 3, 1937, by Chester L. Errett and Don A. McGeein. Class 2 by the northeast slope and the east ridge from Monarch Lake.

References

Text: SCB, 1898, 185; 1903, 301; 1909, 27, 99; 1912, 163; 1913, 1, 18; 1921, 118, 128, 131; 1928, 10, 86; 1933, 126, 128; 1936, 99; 1937, 58; 1941, 130; 1942, 59; 1950, 80.


Next: References & Maps • Previous: Whitney
A Climber’s Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

References and Maps

THE LIST below has been selected to include books that may be of particular interest to climbers. For the most part these books are concerned with early history and exploration, geology, or general descriptions and tourist information. Very little is to be found in them about Sierra climbing. A number, however, contain outstanding collections of photographs that can be very valuable to those who wish to climb or explore.


———. Going Light—with Backpack or Burro. Sierra Club, 1951.


Farquhar, F. P. Place Names of the High Sierra. Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1926.

References and Maps
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge


r There are a number of maps of the High Sierra region that show trails and road approaches. Some of these are issued by the National Park Service, some by the U.S. Forest Service, and some by private publishers. The latter are designed primarily for hunters and fishermen. The map in Starr’s *Guide* shows trails and some knapsack routes but does not give topographic detail. By far the best maps for the climber are the topographic maps of the U.S. Geological Survey. They may be purchased from a number of bookstores or sporting shops, or from Survey offices in Washington, Denver, or Sacramento. The original maps on a scale of 1:125,000 (30-minute series) cover the entire High Sierra. The quadrangles, in correct geographical...
arrangement, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dardanelles</th>
<th>Bridgeport</th>
<th>Yosemite</th>
<th>Mt. Lyell</th>
<th>Mt. Morrison</th>
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<td>Kaiser</td>
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Larger maps on the same scale are combined for Yosemite National Park, which includes most of Dardenelles, Bridgeport, Yosemite, and Mount Lyell; and for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, which includes most of Mount Goddard, Bishop, Tehipite, Mount Whitney, and parts of Kaweah and Olancha.

A remarkable Special Map of Yosemite Valley, 1:24,000, is also published by the U.S. Geological Survey.

A fine new series of photogrammetrically based maps has been started by the U.S. Geological Survey. These maps are much more accurate than the old maps. They are published for the High Sierra region on a scale of 1:62,500 (15-minute series). A partial list of these new maps, in correct geographical arrangement, follows:

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<tr>
<th>Mt. Conness</th>
<th>Mono Craters</th>
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<td>Merced Pk.</td>
<td>Devils Postpile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shuteye Pk.</td>
<td>Sharktooth Pk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaver Lake</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mt. Goddard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Big Pine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patterson Mtn.</td>
<td>Tehipite Dome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marion Pk.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mt. Baxter</td>
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</tbody>
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Of these maps, only four have been issued in final form to date (March, 1954), namely, Mount Tom, Mount Goddard, Bishop, and Big Pine, which cover the eastern half of the old Mount Goddard quadrangle and the western half of the old Bishop quadrangle. The other maps may be obtainable in preliminary form from the U.S. Geological Survey, Sacramento. All of them, as well as additional maps of the new series, will be published within the next few years.

The table shows the USGS maps of both the old and the new series that will be needed to cover the various climbing areas. It should be noted that only four of the new series maps have as yet been issued, and that on final issue the names of some may be changed.
**TABLE OF MAPS**

Abbreviations: YNP = Yosemite National Park Sheet  
SKCNP = Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Sheet

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<td>Yosemite Valley ‡</td>
<td>Yosemite Valley</td>
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* Parentheses indicate that this map is needed for only a minor portion of their area named.

† Special Yosemite Valley sheet, scale 1:24,000.

# The Mt. Baxter sheet will probably be renamed Mt. Pinchot when issued.
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Warning: This guidebook is for historical reference only. Routes and terrain may have changed since this guide was written in 1954. Bring and use a up-to-date guidebook instead, such as R. J. Secor's The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, and Trails (2009). From the original guide book:

A guidebook is not a substitute for mountaineering skill, nor can it make climbing safe for those who do not practice the principles of safety. It is urged that inexperienced climbers avail themselves of the instruction and training given by the Sierra Club or other organizations before attempting difficult ascents.
A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra (1954), edited by Hervey H. Voge

- Safety Precautions
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- Classification of Climbs
- Bond Pass to Tioga Pass
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About the Editor
Hervey Harper Voge was born June 29, 1910. He earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from University of California, then received a chemistry fellowship in 1935 from the National Academy of Sciences. Voge was a Sierra Club member and mountaineer and started climbing in the early 1930s while he was a student at Berkeley, California. Voge made first ascents of multiple peaks, including Washington Column from below. He climbed with other well-known area climbers of the day, including David Brower, Norman Clyde, Bestor Robinson, Dick Leonard, and Jules Eichorn. Fellow student David Brower joined the Sierra Club in 1933 at the suggestion of Voge. In 1934, Voge and Brower traversed the High Sierra from Kearsarge Pass area to Yosemite, climbing 59 peaks in 69 days. Voge named two peaks, Norman Clyde Peak and Muriel Peak. While climbing peaks, he made a effort to preserve peak registers and record first ascents.

Dr. Voge lived in Berkeley, California. He married and had at least one daughter, Tamara. Professionally, Voge was a chemical engineer for Shell Development. His work includes heading a team that developed a rocket fuel for use in the vacuum of outer space. Voge was issued 25 US patents for his research work. He died in the Caribbean Islands on June 20, 1990.

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**Bibliographical Information**


**Book review:** *Sierra Club Bulletin* 39:28 (1954).