

Scree



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
Box 2037 Anchorage Alaska 99501

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Attention mountaineers: let's have as many on these climbs as attend the meetings--plenty of room for more on the summits of most of these scheduled peaks. Longer days and warmer temperatures, in February mean prime winter climbing conditions. Berg Heil! --Bob Spurr

EXPLORER GLACIER & PEAK, 3550±, Sunday, February 9...Leave 6:15 a.m. from Sears parking lot, Seward Highway and Northern Lights. Bring sling, carabiner, and prussiks. From Portage Road climb westernmost glacier to saddle at 3000 ft. Good views of Skookum and Placer River valleys. Those interested can ascend short west ridge to summit. LEADERS: NIENHUESER, PARKER, SPURR.

MT ALPENGLow, 4850±, Saturday-Sunday, February 15-16...High point across Turnagain Arm at Sunrise near Hope. Two-day climb from sea level. Bring skis or snowshoes for three-mile approach through forest. Leave town Friday night to allow an early start Saturday. Good physical condition assumed and full winter equipment for overnight required. LEADER: JOHN IRETON, 272-7428.

KICKSTEP MOUNTAIN, 4660', Sunday, February 23...Last call for Kickstep! Four-mile approach up Tincan Creek and a one-day climb (12 hrs) for skiers. Skeptics, snowshoers, and others wishing to make a weekend of it can snowshoe or ski in on Saturday. Ropes required for every three climbers. Good physical condition assumed. Bring sling, carabiner, and crampons. Leave promptly 6:00 a.m. Sears parking lot, Seward Highway and Northern Lights. Leader needed. Contact Bob Spurr, 272-8330.

GUNSIGHT MOUNTAIN, 6441', Saturday, March 1...Leave at 6:00 a.m. from Safeway parking lot at 9th and Gambell. Very nice one-day hiking-climbing trip--newcomers are introduced to a new area at about mile 117 on the Glenn Highway. If weather is clear, we can see Mt Sanford, and more 10,000-ft peaks in the Chugach. Winter gear is required plus snowshoes or skis. LEADER: GAYLE NIENHUESER, 277-9330.

BYRON PEAK, 4650±, Saturday, March 8...Annual MCA climb...Leave Sears parking lot 6:00 a.m., Seward Highway and Northern Lights. Bring sling, carabiner, prussiks, and crampons. Ropes required for every three climbers. Good physical condition assumed. Bring skis or fast snowshoes. Climb will go either Saturday OR Sunday, depending on conditions. LEADER: BOB SPURR, 272-8330.

ORGANIZATION MEETING for those interested in Mt Sergeant Robinson...
Tuesday, February 11, 8.00 p.m. Call Bob Spurr, 272-8330.

ODD or END: During January 18-20, Nick Parker and Bob Spurr found interesting climbing on Byron's long north ridge but report it will take longer days with a camp on the ridge to complete this 3/4 mile, 2000 vertical foot route.

Pastoral Peak (4,764') or "When only six showed up, we knew it was a club climb."

January 25, 1969

Jim Lethcoe

On a clear, cold January morning six climbers emerged from their cars where Taylor Creek crosses the Seward Highway on Turnagain Pass. This was the MCA Pastoral Peak expedition consisting of Tom and Coral Loy, Nick Parker, Bob Spurr, Clarke Stockwell, and myself. We ascended the southern slope of Taylor Creek on skis and snowshoes to the col where we abandoned them. We then descended to the small glacier below, roped up, and headed for a snow gully at the westerly end of the west ridge. While Bob Spurr was kicking steps up the snow gully, we had to stifle Nick Parker, who was (busily) trying to recall (out loud) Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. Once atop the ridge, we ascended the last third of a mile to the summit. The view was particularly impressive--peaks in all four directions as far as one could see. Visible also were Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. We descended via the central, north ridge (the original route of the first recorded ascent). We arrived back at the cars beneath a wintry twilight.

Vista Peak (5070')

January 19, 1969

Tom Meacham

On a perfect January ski-mountaineering day, nine MCA-ers met in Eagle River to get a better view of Vista Peak, hopefully from the summit. The trip developed beforehand into a combined ski-tour and climb, with Tony Bockstahler leading the tourers (Betty Bockstahler, Ruth Neth, and Jane Meacham), and Tom Meacham leading the climbers (Lotte Kramer, Larry Swanson, Peter Vlasveld, and Clarke Stockwell). The alder-free terrain and gradual elevation gain of Meadow Creek Valley proved ideal for the tourers, while the actual climb to Vista's summit, and the magnificent view in all directions, rewarded the climbers.

Snow conditions were quite crusty, however, providing an element of suspense in the 3½-mile approach. A snow gully prompted a premature removal of skis and snowshoes, as the next ¼ mile saw everyone sinking past his knees except Lightfoot Lotte, who seemed to fairly skim over the breaking crust. After a steep hike up the snow-free central ridge, the long summit ridge was attained, frightening some Dall sheep in the process. The view gave ample justification for Vista's name, as the McKinley complex, the interior Chugach (Marcus Baker), the peaks across the Inlet, and the city of Anchorage were spread above and below us. A somewhat breakneck ski run down the trail in the gathering dark ended a perfect one-day outing. The ski tourers had skied to near the place where the climbers had removed skis, and had skied back down the trail approximately an hour before us, ending a very enjoyable tour, according to Tony.

O'Malley Peak

January 12, 1969

Rod Wilson

Coral and Tom Loy, Jerry Smith (visitor from Seattle), and Rod Wilson climbed O'Malley Peak by the west face route used in a January 1963 (Scree, Feb 63?) ascent. Snow cover was light. Crampons were used in the steep windpacked west face slide area by all but Jerry. Temperature in the valley was -10° F. and on top at 1:00 p.m., -6° F. We returned the way we came, reaching Glen Alps 8 hours after starting.

Western Chugach Indian Artifacts

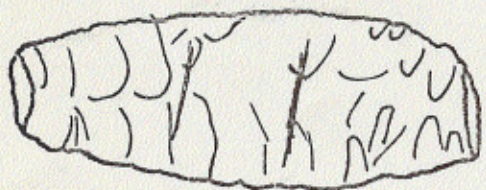
by Vin Hoeman

Until July 1968 no artifacts of the Tannina Indians from before Russian trade days were known to have been found within the Western Chugach, but in that month two separate finds were made a week apart. John Wolfe found a small worked-stone blade amid the scree at about 4000 feet elevation on the southern slope of O'Malley Peak on the 20th, and on the 27th as Grace and I returned from a rained-out Kilisnoak attempt through High Valley we found a 4-inch stone knife and a scraper of a similar hard stone material within 5 feet of each other in the bulldozer clearing about 2500 feet elevation. All three of these artifacts are sketched below in their actual size, and we would be interested in hearing about other finds as the history of these people is largely unknown and any stone tools are apt to be over 200 years old since these Indians had metal from the Russians when James Cook sailed up his Inlet in 1778.

Did the early peoples of Alaska make ascents of the mountains? The Aleuts evidently did on some of their mountains even including Makushin Volcano, 6680, highpoint of Unalaska for G. Jarichof writes of his visit in 1791, "On the summit of this crater the Aleutians collect sulphur and lava; from which latter they make points for their darts." Eskimos too often placed their dead on low hills and Grace and I found an old stone enclosure, perhaps a sheep-hunting blind at nearly 6000 feet on what we named Overlook Peak in the Endicott Mountains of the Brooks Range last August 21st.

There was an Indian legend recorded by H.W. Topham in 1886, that two Ahtena men had attempted Mount Wrangell on snowshoes from their village at Tarai but had either been devoured or chased away by the evil spirits of that volcano. If the former, then these may have been the first recorded crevasse casualties of the mtnry, as crevasses of Alaskan area glaciers are probably the number one killers among our mountain hazards. Still, it seems likely that low glaciers and small icefields were occasionally crossed. A footnote in Bancroft's History of Alaska indicates the promishleniki may have brought some material for the building of the "Phoenix" across the Harding Icefield in April 1794. If correct, this was an absolutely amazing feat, and only possible if the local Indians had some knowledge of and ability to guide through that confusing route. It is interesting to note that the first ascent of Mont Blanc had marked the beginning of the "Golden Age" of mountaineering in the Alps less than 8 years before this, and no mass of ice on earth the size of the Harding had been crossed.

It is unlikely, however, that any mountain in the Alaskan area over 8000 feet was climbed to its top before the ascent of Mount Saint Elias in 1897, thus that elevation makes a good break between Alaska's high and low mountains and in the Alaskan area there are nearly 1000 independent mountains over 8000 feet, of which about 200 have so far been climbed.



John Wolfe - from O'Malley Pk.



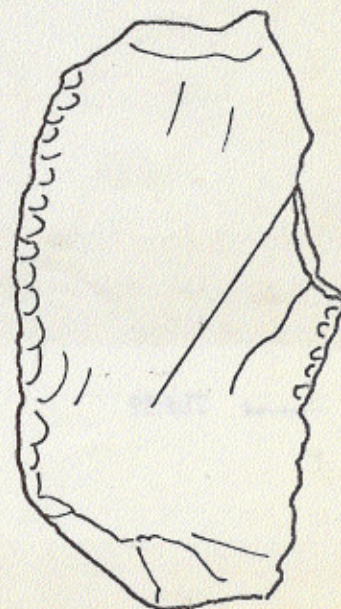
X-section



Hoeman knife from High Valley



X-section



Scraper - High Valley

Bill Hauser writes a detailed account of his 30 Dec. ascent of Pico Bolivar, 16,427, the highpoint of Venezuela, and Bill Babcock, reading it, says it seems in every way the same as his ascent 9 years ago. Unfortunately, the editor of SCREE and typing staff do not feel up to either reproducing or abridging this report at present, but will hold it for possible later publication and call attention to it for anyone Venezuela-bound.

It was recently discovered that the Laurie Anderson who climbed Pioneer Peak in 1954 was male, so Grace Hoeman is the first and thus-far only woman to have climbed to the tiptop of Pioneer, though Helga and 2 Kilcher girls have reached the Counterpoint and Karon Courtright has reached the South Peak. Pioneer can be a relatively easy, though long, one day climb in the summer in good weather, but all attempts to reach the true top in winter have so far been failures. 26 men have been to the true top.

There will be a Geographic Names committee meeting at the home of Vin Hoeman, Chairman, at 7:30 pm Wed. 19 Feb. for any interested to attend.

Those who helped with this issue of SCREE are: Bob Spurr - front page composition, Marie Lundstrom - typist, Carol DeVoe, Joanne Merrick, & Liska Snyder - assembly & distribution
V. Hoeman - editor

The first issue of an Alaska Alpine Club (College) newsletter entitled "DESCENT" has appeared and we hope it will join SCREE in monthly publication

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