

SCREE

Thomas Wilson, Editor  
145 - 8th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska  
September 1962

Mountaineering Club of Alaska  
Box 2037  
Anchorage  
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MEETING, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

will meet at Willow Park Recreation Hall at 7:30 p.m. The program will be two color slides which show how the precious natural resources, water and forests, when properly used contribute not only to scenic grandeur so dear to mountain clubbers but also to the health and welfare of an area. One film pictures the wild waters of Northern California's famed Trinity river and the construction of the world's largest earth filled dam. The other film is the story of the living forest of conservation and reforestation. The Executive Committee welcomes your suggestions and desires for programs. D.D.

TECHNICAL SECTION of MCA will meet Friday, September 21st at 8 p.m. at the home of Bill Nagel - 4003 Tanana.

Those interested in CONSERVATION will meet at the home of Scott Hamilton (1223 Anchor Drive) on Wednesday, September 26th at 8 p.m.

THIS AND THAT:

the Wolfes, a male cub, John Gordon Reaney Wolfe, Jr. on August 22nd.

Vin Hoeman, his 5/4th - - 14, that is, Mt. Shasta.

our favorite Benedict found his Beatrice, only her name is Nancy. Bill Davis married Amy Yaw on August 8th in Sitka. Sitka??!!

Having survived the rigors of Mt. Marathon, Hartmut Pluntke will marry Maritta Czinezel on Sunday, September 23rd. All members of the Mountaineering Club are most cordially invited to the service at St. Mark's Lutheran Church (3106 Lake Otis Road) at 3 p.m.

The weekend of September 15th and 16th was a busy one at the MCA Hut near Crow Pass. The hut gained a front porch and coming and going, up and down during the two days were: Pichler, Paul Crews, Sr., Rod Wilson, Dave DeVoe, Scott Hamilton, Janet Archibald, Bill Crews, Jr., Thomas Wilson, Don DeVoe, Wendy Nagel, Art Copeland, Jim Messick, Brian Wilson, Audrey Hurst, Dale Hagen, Cathy Wilson, Leonard Doucette and friend, Cynthia Wilson and Gwynn Wilson.

FIRST ASCENT OF GRANITE PEAK 6729' by Vin Hoeman

From the south or east the Talkeetna Range is a mountain mass from which one peak only stands out. This is Granite Peak and it shows up because it is at the edge of the range and towers above its neighboring 5000 footers. Forbidding looking rock escarpments on all sides and three miles of brush between its foot and the nearest road have kept it from being challenged by mountaineers until this summer.

At the first meeting of the Technical Section of MCA on Friday, August 17th, it was suggested that we climb something that weekend, but others were busy and so it was only Scott Hamilton and myself who headed for Granite Peak late the next afternoon. Red salmon was being caught by a mob of fisherman at Knik River Bridge and we stopped to watch. Not until 4:30 in the afternoon did we leave the car in the coal-mining townlet of Eska at 1250' elevation and start out.

A maze of bulldozer trails and strip-mining explorations led us upward beyond where the roads ended to the ridge south of Knob Creek, and we followed this till we were able to cross the creek near its head and move directly toward our 'beacon in the sky'. But one obstacle we hadn't figured on slowed us considerably. Blueberries, big juicy globes of fruit among the blue-green foliage, stopped us! After the way Scott Daws Hamilton, Jr. had after those berries blue, let him never taunt me again about fireweed sprouts or other products of the wild! It was only because the berries seemed to get bigger and better as we went along that we ever advanced beyond the first patches, but eventually we battled our way through alders and tall grass to reach an alpine ridge 3216' high directly south of Granite Peak. On the other side of this at 7:30 in the evening we made camp in a depression with a small fire of dwarfwillow and a tent fashioned out of my 12x12 plastic tarp. We were lucky to have this as it began to rain as soon as we got it up and the rain continued all night.

About 5:00 Sunday morning, small birds chasing around in the rain wakened us and provided an interesting show for the next two hours. Pipits, white-crowned and Savannah sparrows, and one yellow warbler practically came under our pavillion at times. A golden-crowned kinglet and a pair of red-breasted nuthatches lit atop the ridge within view. Finally the rain stopped, and we left our sacks to start up the mountain about 7:30. Another short ridge led us to the mountain proper where a long slope part grass, part talus brought us to the rocks. We were accompanied by rosy finches and a wheatear, as well as the birds we'd seen in camp, and conies peeked from the rocks. The rock was mostly granitic and the gendarmes formidable, but we skirted around our way around these latter and were able to save time by not having to rope up. The biggest danger, particularly when we crossed for a while to the NW side of the ridge where there is a glacial cirque, was from the very large chunks of loose rock. However, by 10 o'clock we'd found our way up the long ridge and stood upon the virgin summit. Here we built a 3 1/2' tall cairn in which we placed a register in a plastic cottage whose construction was blocked by clouds. Clouds blocked a view that would have been stupendous. We decided to try another route down and did so dropping directly down the SE face over a series of scree shutes and

part rockclimbs over cliffs we couldn't go around, then a long sidehill walk after we left the rocks. Thus our traverse of Granite was complete.

At camp by two o'clock we folded it up and were soon on our way down with it on our backs. However, blueberries and a brushier shortcut made it a 3 1/2 hour trip to the car. A very satisfactory mountain we thought.

EKLUTNA GLACIER September 1-3 by Gregg K. Erickson

Looking like a bunch of British commandos in Dr. Rod Wilson's Land Rover the five of us, Paul Crews, Paul (Cruiser) Crews, Jr., Dale Hagen, Rod and I, rattled our way out of Anchorage and bounced up to the end of Lake Eklutna starting our long planned trip into the mountains. Leaving the car at 9:30 we made good progress up the lower part of Eklutna glacier past misty waterfalls sparkling in the warm sun until at 3:00 p.m. we found ourselves on the snow covered Eklutna ice field. Deciding to devote the rest of the day to reconnaissance we pitched the tents and split up into two groups, Dale and me to explore the higher reaches of the ice field, with Paul, Cruiser and Rod heading for the ridge to our west. Arriving back at camp around 7:00 we discussed various routes over tea and a Starbuck's supper.

The next morning under partly cloudy skies we shouldered our packs and started south over the ice field. Three hours later we stopped just long enough to pitch camp in what I thought was a sheltered spot and grab a bite of lunch before starting off for the three tall peaks that sit astride the Eklutna, Eagle River and Knik watersheds.

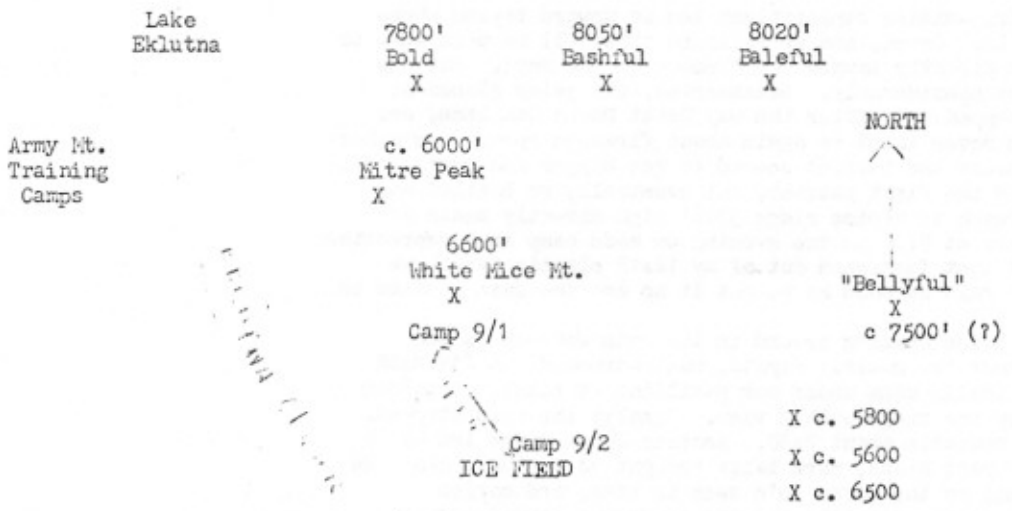
In an increasingly unpleasant rain we climbed all of these peaks, the southern most and tallest of which was apparently unclimbed. The Army had beat us to the northernmost and though there was no register they had left plenty of signs in the form of C-rations (Paul and Rod took great delight in examining every can in hopes of finding some unopened M&M's) and one unexploded projectile which Rod tripped over. We left registers on all of the lowest middle peak.

Back at camp that evening we had our biggest thrill of the trip when Ed Fisher's borrowed Primus suddenly exploded in an orange ball of fire. After a brief moment of panic the stove was hurriedly consigned to the glacier.

With the wind gusting to 40 mph and a cold rain coming down we pondered the best ways of securing our plastic tarps that we might obtain the maximum amount of protection. It turned out that there just isn't any good way and everybody was pretty wet by the next morning though those with ensolite pads seemed to fair the best.

After drying out as best we could we started back down the glacier. Dropping our packs right after lunch we climbed unroped up rocks to a 6600' peak named White Mice Mountain by the ubiquitous Vin Hoeman who had made the first ascent in July 1961. We came off the peak by 6:30 and after a rather hairy trip down the last part of the glacier with a flashlight we reached the car at 10:00 p.m.

As we drove down the Eklutna road entertained by the northern lights, we thought of the peaks we had seen, the G's: Gilbert, Gannet and Goode, Marcus Baker; the B's: Bold, Bashful, Baleful and a newly discovered beautiful cone-like peak to the east of the ice field, jokingly named "Bellyful" by Paul. We were already planning the next trip.



Map by Rod Wilson

TRIP NO. 2 September 9 by Helga Eading

It was grade six, for corvairs that is, to get to the end of the homestead road up at Creek. But we made it. A little after 9 o'clock John Dillman, Paul Crews, Jr. and I headed into the clear morning. A day of pure silver and gold with only the cool breeze to remind us of the coming winter.

John carried an impressive pack, containing just about everything a climber yearns to own; bivouac socks to prevent frostbite (also to be rented out at 50¢ per night), a thermometer to measure inside-pack-temperatures, and an avalanche cord for ...hm? hm! It did not contain ...a shotgun. Not that John needed it. As we came upon a flock of ptarmigan, half their plumage already in winter-white, he picked up a rock and .. PCW .. had himself a supper. These emergency rations were duly added to the pack.

At 10 o'clock we arrived at the crystal azur-blue lake lying in the meadows below the two Suicide peaks. We refueled and took pictures until the breeze had cooled us enough and we decided to climb the west ridge of Suicide 2, the westerly one of the two peaks. It was a nice rock scramble with some extra tidbits of short chimneys and rock pitches thrown in if you looked for them. We did. But as we came up into the world a restlessness drove us on. With every step the view became more magnificent. And then we were there, on the rocky peak (about 5400 ft.) just barely covered with the first snow of the season, and there was no obstruction between us and thousands of square miles of silvery mountains. Our gaze swept from great Denali down the Alaska Range and past Mt. Iliamna into the blue horizon to the south. All the mountains of the Kenai and the Chugaches were out to greet us, scrubbed clean by the September winds.

We lunched at a sheltered spot, opposite a 60 ft. rock face that so intrigued Paul and John that soon they roped up, ironware professionally dangling from their shoulders and waists, to scale the mighty peak once more from the north. The rock, in the shade, was icy cold. Luckily they both reached the top without third degree frostbite.

For the descent we chose a scree gully, set off a slide, and escalated downward upon it. The snowpatch below was frozen and found quite unfit for a good glissade. But if you can't have a good one, a poor one still beats walking. John had his ice axe along and Paul used a long piton, making a fitting self-arrest halfway down, while I preferred walking a little lower and then giving my climbing pants some wear.

This wonderful day and most enjoyable climb ended with another game played against the tasty birds. Score: eight to zero for the ptarmigan.

MOUNT HELGA AND GWYNN'S RIDGE: A FRIDAY JAUNT

by g.w.

The mountain just before Rainbow Creek as one drives south on the Seward Highway has been claimed by Helga as her own because she has used it so often both while training for McKinley and since as a good, brisk 4-5 hour outing. On Friday, September 14th, a bright and beautiful fall day, Helga and Gwynn drove to the gravel pit which marks the beginning of Helga's route. There is a passable trail around the pit and then brush on the ridge to the appropriate point where brush becomes springy undergrowth. The up had already become steepish so that we encountered rocks with brush. Then either rocky stretches - "mere gambols and scrambles", saith Helga - or steep ridge tantalizingly covered with large ripe cranberries. Momentarily yielding to temptation we picked, and then advanced upward to a knoll about 2,000 ft. above the highway and approximately 500' below the "Summit". Appropriately, we named the Knoll in the shadow of Mount Helga, Gwynn's Knoll.

Unexpectedly we glanced up from lunch and met the inquiring gaze of a mountain goat about 200 ft. above us. He observed us quizzically. We regretted that we didn't have the time since the goat, intuitively aware that this was a preserve area, descended closer and closer. Bosco, Helga's dog, meanwhile sat happily watching four mad magpies fly around her.

We started down reluctantly through the dashing fall colors - scarlet carpets under foot. It was such a superb autumn day that the brightness and beauty were almost unbearable. In fact the only reason this was written is that Helga and Gwynn found it such a marvelous experience they wanted to share it.