



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

SEPTEMBER 1978

VOLUME XXI, NO. 9

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday, September 20, 1978, Pioneer School House, 3rd & Eagle, Anchorage. Main program for this meeting will be slides of a climb of Mt. Silverthorne in the Alaska Range in the summer of 1978, shown by one of the climbers (which one unknown at press time). Dick Thaler will give a min-slide show of Glacier Bay. Nominations for MCA officers and two Board members for two year terms will be requested, in time for the annual election at the October meeting.

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Volunteers are needed for an important monthly job. An editor for SCREE should be a person interested in doing about two days of work per month editing material and typing the draft. Some competence in spelling and grammar of the English language is desirable. Contact any officer or Board member. Thanks to PAT KLOUDA who has volunteered to handle refreshments for our meetings.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: In submitting accounts of trips and climbs, please condense as much as feasible without eliminating your personal style. We do often have space problems, and the editor cannot safely condense when unfamiliar with the area covered. Also, please list date of trip, pertinent USGS map numbers, and indicate if area is described in "55 Ways to the Wilderness in Southcentral Alaska." We believe following these guidelines will add to the satisfaction of readers and authors.

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Two interesting publications are available at a 10 percent discount to MCA members at our monthly meetings. Hudson Stuck's "Ascent of Denali" describes the first climb of Mt. McKinley in 1913. It was recently republished with the addition of Walter Harper's newly discovered diary of the climb and an introduction by Bradford Washburn with updated map information. The price to members is \$6.25. In addition, we now have Bradford Washburn's detailed color map of Mt. McKinley, printed by the Topographical Survey of Switzerland under the auspices of the Museum of Science in Boston. This comes neatly folded in an illustrated jacket for \$3.60 to members.

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SEPTEMBER 1978

Jeff Babcock gave a splendid slide show, with musical accompaniment, of his climb of Mt. Hunter in the Spring of 1978. Other members of the party were Jack Duggan and Gunnar Naslund. A seven-part description of this hairy climb was also published in the Anchorage Daily News, beginning August 16th.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

/s/ Al Robinson, Secretary

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MCA has received notice from the U. S. Forest Service of current planning for a Cross Kenai Trail System which would originate at Homer and connect the existing Funny River Horse Trail system, with connections to Moosehorn and Moose Creek Trails, and the Resurrection Trail ending near Hope. Detail about proposals and a map of the potential trail will be available for your observation at the September meeting, or can be obtained from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, U. S. Department of the Interior.

Your comments is solicited and may be sent to:

Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service
Attn: Kevin Apgar
1011 E. Tudor, Suite 297
Anchorage, AK 99503
Tel #276-3800

U. S. Forest Service
Attn: Bob Rinehart
2221 E. Northern Lights
Room 230
Anchorage, AK 99504
Tel #272-4485

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Attn: Dave Patterson
1011 E. Tudor
Anchorage, AK 99503
Tel #276-3800

Alaska Division of Parks
Attn: Neil Johannsen
619 Warehouse Ave. #210
Anchorage, AK 99501
Tel #274-4676

National Park Service
Attn: Don Follows
540 W. 5th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99501
Tel #276-8166

Alaska Division of Land & Water Management
Attn: Jack Wilds
3325 Fairbanks St.
Anchorage, AK 99503
Tel #279-7691

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS ALSO AVAILABLE
FROM THE ABOVE SOURCES.

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EKLUTNA TO GIRDWOOD TRAVERSE
July 25-29, 1978
by David Stutzer

As is usual with me, I had put off packing until the day of departure. As a result, I didn't get started until noon. It was an easy hike along Eklutna Lake and by five o'clock I had reached the last campground within sight of the glacier. The road was in excellent condition. It sure would have been nice to drive instead of lugging my heavy pack all that way, but such is the price I had to pay for some peace and quiet. It was well worth it, too.

It had been drizzling off and on all day, but as I set up camp I was heartened by the sight of the sun illuminating the awesome north face of the Mitre. Maybe it was an indication of the weather to come.

I woke to blue skies, but that soon changed. I started off about 8:00 o'clock under cloudy skies. After getting off course, doing some unnecessary bushwhacking, and jumping several streams, I reached the toe of the glacier. I adjusted my crampons and set off up the glacier. There was no snow on the glacier, which made for easy going. I arrived at Pichler's Perch in the early afternoon just as it started raining. Perfect timing.

The cabin was neat and tidy, although I soon discovered it was desperately in need of a roofing job. I avoided the drips by putting my sleeping bag in the middle of the cabin. The day's hike had worn me out, so after a light dinner I hit the sack early.

I had wanted to get an early start, so I got up at 4:00 AM to take a look outside. The cabin was completely soaked in, so I crawled back into my sleeping bag. I finally got up about 8:30, ate breakfast, and cleaned up the cabin. I thought I might be stuck there and perhaps even forced to turn back, but that was not to be. About 2:00 o'clock the clouds started to break up, and soon the sun poked through. I packed my things as quickly as I could, and took off up the glacier. I made good time and soon reached the pass between Eklutna and Whiteout Glaciers. The view was extraordinary --the snow-covered peaks gleaming in the sunshine, tempting any would-be climbers. It is a temptation that is extremely hard to resist.

I continued on to the hut on Whiteout Glacier under the wary eyes of several sheep high above me. This part of my hike was a real trudge. By the time I reached the hut I was really exhausted. I had spent most of the day on snow shoes, and I was glad to get them off my feet.

I discovered something interesting during my frequent rest stops between the pass and the hut. There is such a thing as an iceworm. It is a rather unimpressive creature--black, about an inch long and needle thin. There were hundreds of them wriggling on the snow. I had always thought they were just fictitious creatures out of someone's imagination, but now I have seen them with my own eyes.

The next morning I was once again greeted by the fog. It soon cleared however, and I was off for the Eagle Hut. The weather was beautiful. My sunburn was proof of that. It was good going all the way except for the icefalls just before I got down onto the main part of Eagle Glacier. After some intensive route finding and light-footed dashes across snow bridges, I made it down. It was an easy walk across the glacier and a pleasant hike up through the greenery towards the hut. Everything was in bloom, and the

smell was intoxicating.

Just as I arrived at the hut, some rain clouds rolled in. There was a little thunder and a few sprinkles, and then it cleared again. The rest of the evening was sunny, although the hut was in the shade fairly early in the evening.

After waiting several hours in the morning for the fog to lift, I finally decided to start off anyway. The fog soon cleared up, and I was walking under cloudless skies for the rest of the day. The climb was moderately steep, and I made good time to pass between Eagle and Raven Glaciers. I soon found that I had read the map wrong and was about 1500 feet south of where I should be. I traversed back and crossed over the rock ridge to Raven Glacier. The rock was of the typical Chugach variety--it fell apart in my hands. I had to cross the bergschrund and traverse an avalanche slope to get down on the main glacier. It was quite a hectic experience and I breathed a lot easier when I got down. The rest of the journey was an easy hike--across Raven Glacier and then down from Crow Pass to the roadhead to Girdwood. The trail from Crow Pass to the roadhead was bordered by flowers of every imaginable color, shape, and smell. It reminded me of the Swiss Alps. The only thing missing was the cows.

This was a very enjoyable trip. I was reluctant to return to civilization but I know I will return to climb some of the peaks I saw during my hike. Knowing that will help me put up with the rat race until I can get away again.

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WILLIWAU LAKES

Leader - Emile McIntosh

Trip 33 & 35 -- "55 Ways to the Wilderness"

USGS Maps: A7 & A8

The Cloud Gods surely heard this leader when, after an entire summer of soggy boots, she threatened to cancel her August 26-27 trip if even a wisp of a cloud appeared in the sky. I know they hear, because there was sun over the Chugach on Saturday and Sunday. That's right. Sun two days in a row and on a weekend yet.

Since so many of you were foolish enough to miss this hike it behooves me to make you really sorry. Combine sun, gentle breeze, moderate temperatures, lots of wildlife, blueberries, lake after lake, clear cascading streams, and pleasant company, and you've got our weekend.

Eight of us met at Fred Meyer's at a not too popular 6:00 AM. That's not including Gene Klymko, who showed up rubbing his eyes, only to announce that he was going back home to bed. We missed you, Gene.

We parked one car at Prospect Heights and the rest at Glen Alps. Our route was across South Fork Campbell Creek on a new bridge, over the O'malley saddle, up a sloping valley, down a steep scree slope into

Williwaw Lakes, over a low ridge into North Fork Campbell Creek, down that valley, and up and over Near Point to Propsect Heights. I promised everyone that we would be sure to see sheep, and I wasn't wrong. After one false sighting (20 white rocks) by some unnamed hysteric, we did, indeed, see seventeen sheep munching their way along the valley floor by the Williwaw Lakes. On the slope above them were five more--what a sight.

We ate lunch by crystal clear cascading water below the final lake before the ridge. Here we said goodbye to day hikers Sandy and Paula and hello to John and Jerry, who hiked in from Middle Fork. We didn't get to say anything to Valerie LaPue and Craig Renkert because they couldn't find us. There was ideal camping at our luncheon spot, but we pressed on over the ridge, avoiding numerous stubborn ptarmigan along the way.

We passed a few small lakes and then walked along the south shore of the huge lake at the headwaters of North Fork Campbell Creek. There are, what appeared to be small trout in this lake. This is the first time any of us had seen fish there. Our camp spot was along the creek, about three quarters of a mile from the end of the lake. We had plenty of time for a good dinner and some pleasant conversation before the end of the first of two perfect days.

Since all of us were late risers, we left camp at 10:00 AM the next day. We walked about a mile on the south side of the creek and then crossed and walked on the other side until we were directly across the second notch on the ridge to Near Point, and then we crossed again. I find this much easier than staying on the south side because there is less brush.

Climbing the back side of Near Point is the hardest part of this trip, but we took it slowly, and all made it alive, all be it breathless.

My thanks to Tony Bockstahler, Dick Bratton, Shaun Cochrane, Bob Hume, Jerry Jost, Pierce McIntosh, John Nevin, Paula Sanders, and Sandy Wenzel for making a good trip even better.

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"IT WILL RISE IN RUTH'S GORGE"

By Brad Craig

Well, it all started when three Alaskans and one guy from New Hampshire wanted to see the Great Gorge and Ruth Ampitheater. So we all managed to get our acts together and equipment taken care of. Mountaineering is the only sport I've been into that you can buy everything from insulated pink panties to plane fare and still not have enough hardware.

Flying in to the Ampitheater with Cliff Hudson was neat because he's Alaska's living pioneer in mountain flying--to Alaska flying as the Wright brothers are to Kitty Hawk. It took us about 35 minutes from Talkeetna to

the landing spot in the Amphitheater. Weather was good--clear, hot, and no wind. With Gary's and Brad's gear out of Hudson's plane and watching him fly away we were committed.

Next thing to do around camp was to dig a kitchen about three feet deep, set up tents, and sort out gear. About three hours later, we heard the crack of Cliff's propeller and knew that within a minute the rest of our party would be at camp. Pete Panarese and Mike Brocha made the team complete and balanced.

Next day suntans had the most attention from us. That night we would attempt Mt. Dickey. It was 8:00 PM with light cloud cover when we started.

The ski from camp to the base of Pittock Pass was good and on the easy side--also exciting. When we were in the middle of a hanging glacier, a good sized hunk came off and was bee-lining toward us. Due to our cook's rich food we had "gas power" and managed to get out of its way. Taking off the skis and pulling out ice axes was needed to get through Pittock Pass. Dim, flat light made going slow, and there were lots of holes to fall into. Gary fell into one and went over his head. He was not hurt at all but said it was dark down there. Once over the ice blocks and Pittock Pass behind us, everything went smoothly. Mike started to get headaches and tire easily. Pete was strong and feeling fine. Gary and Brad made fresh steps in the soft snow. We found Dickey like most Alaska mountains--false summits, of which we had two. Upward and onward, we made the top around midnight, with no view because of clouds, so we descended within five minutes. Pete led out first and down we went, following our tracks back to our skis. Wow. On the way down, the clouds lifted and the view was super--even an orange sunrise at 2:00 AM. We took a lot of pictures and Mike fell into a hole up to his hips.

The ski back to base camp was a joke. Pete and Brad were all over the slope, falling every 50 feet. Gary was smooth and Mike was giving us a grand performance--head over heels. What a laugh we had in base camp. When we awoke that afternoon it was a lazy day for sure.

That night we had made plans to climb Barrille, but the darn weather closed in. Brad went nuts and dug the kitchen three feet deeper so that all of us would be better protected from the wind while we ate our meals.

On the 15th of May, Pete, Brad, and Gary went rock climbing on Mt. Barrille. We did three short routes, 60 feet or so. It was really super. Brad kept saying he had never climbed on such super-good granite and Pete agreed. Mike stayed in camp because he was not feeling well. He was reading a book something like "Fly Like An Eagle" with Jonathan Livingston Seagull. The weather was looking fair, so Brad, Pete, and Gary decided to try Mt. Barrille.

The ski over to the base was easy and by the time we had our skis off it was white-out city. What a bummer. No view again. The main word for this northeast ridge is steep, in fact the steepest Brad was ever on. We did not place any protection on the way up or down. Exposure was maximum.

Once on the summit we hoped the clouds would disappear, but they stayed. When we came to our skis our eyes were so burnt out from the whiteout they hurt.

The night of the 18th we all skied over to try Mt. Dan Beard. We ascended an 1800 foot couloir in good time, due to Pete's great step kicking. We also did a traverse in corn snow with Gary and Brad sinking waist deep and more. There was really no place for pins or nuts, so you know the rest of the story. Once over the icy section, another rock band, and step kicking went easily for Gary. We spend the night on top of the col--super views and good weather. We dug a small snow pit, rolled our bags into it, and passed out.

The next day was cloudy off and on, with good views of the Armpitheater and Denali. That night we tried for the summit, but had to turn back due to snow conditions--corn snow, sinking up to the armpits. It was a big disappointment for us all, but we are all here in good shape, and maybe we'll try it next season.

The descent on the traverse was tricky again, but this time protection went in, and this felt better. Descending the couloir went by fast, and Brad fell up to his armpits and saw his feet dangling in mid-air when a hole gave way under him. "Exciting!" he said. It was the first hole he had ever gone into. The ski back to base camp was great. Huntington was clear of clouds, the Rooster's Comb could be seen, the moon was out, and sunrise was happening at the same time.

We rested in camp for a day and then headed down the gorge. Skiing was fantastic--just a little push from your ski poles, the wind at your back, and away you went for seven miles. Once at Mt. Barbara we made camp, and Mike tried to tell jokes, but would forget the beginning or end and remember only the punch line. Well, he tried. Also more gas powered talk happened all night.

Next day we sun-bathed to the maximum. Brad even skied to Glacier Point in his green underpants (needless to say, he had a case of the burns). We did a 2500 couloir in five hours--good snow most of the way up until the last two pitches. Brad was swimming up to his waist, so what happened then is that Brad did one pitch and Gary the next. On top wind was blowing, and we dug out a little snow pit and put bivi sacks over our bags, hoping for better weather. Next day was no better, so we dug a good snow cave to wait out the storm. Still that night no improvement, next morning the same. By then, Mike's book, "I Never Promised You a Flower Garden", had been torn up into five short stories because Gary and Brad had left their books down below the couloir and Pete would not donate his book to the savages. (Mike's book was a drag.)

Around 7:00 PM, we left our cave to try our luck with avalanches because it really started to snow hard. Brad led out first, down-climbing the steep snow for a pitch while the others picked off small snow slides--wet ones at

that. We made good time getting down, and everyone did his share of falling down. Gary and Brad were in the safety zone before Mike and Pete were out of the couloir. Looking back up the slope they could see and hear an avalanche coming down. The next words were, "Look out! Avalanche coming!" We watched it come down, picking up speed and spreading to some 300 feet in width. Mike and Pete made it okay. If we had been five minutes later, we would still be there spending the summer.

After we were on our skis and heading up the gorge toward base camp, the clouds came down and formed a white-out. We were even lost for two hours-- in fact, we did a perfect 360' circle and ended up where we started from. After we got our bearings back, because the cloud lifted for five minutes, off we went. From then on we could ski and stop, ski and stop, until the clouds left for good. When the going was easy and safe, Brad took a good long rest while the others headed for camp. Due to that bad snow storm, climbing was out, and sleeping, eating, reading, playing chess, and I hate to say it, boredom set in!

Cliff Hudson brought his Super-Cub in so only one guy could go out at a time. Gary went first and Brad second. Pete and Mike came out in a 185 Cessna. The next stop off was the Rainbow for hamburgers and hot beef sandwiches. What a great trip and super learning experience. I will always have an affair with Ruth.

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HORSFELD TO CHISANA - July 21-23, 1978
 Leaders: Dona Agosti, Chuck Heath, Chuck Moe
 Maps: Nabesna A-1,2,3; McCarthy D-1,2

This was NCA's first hiking trip to the Wrangells. The high country is scenic and worth the effort, but the weather left something to be desired. We hear this is not always the case and that the rain was just part of the blah weather picture all over Alaska during July. Twenty five people drove to Northway (400 plus miles) arriving Friday and Saturday. We camped right on the airstrip and early Saturday morning, charter pilot Floyd Miller began ferrying groups of five to Horsfeld in his 206. Early arrivals made side trips to the Braye Lakes; others waded Horsfeld Creek and checked out Ray McNutt's very neat hunting camp; others pulled a few fish out of Beaver Creek and still others chased horses off the "runway" so Floyd could land. Rain sent us to our tents early and it continued to pour all night long. Backpackers left at intervals early next morning but soon bunched up at raging Klein Creek, running waist and chest high in the main channel. After one man went down, we chose a double braid and Chuck Moe and Chuch Heath gallantly helped everyone across. About this time, Dot McAllister sprained her ankle and Dona, plus med student Jan Agosti and Erile and Pierce McIntosh, elected to stay behind to care for the patient. New leaders were appointed. The terrain up to this point had been wet marsh, despite an altitude of 3600 feet. We discovered a higher, dryer horsetrail later. The ATV trail is designated winter trail on the map and we all decided after the trip that this meant, "Do not use in summer." While waiting for the sprained ankle to heal, the four

others climbed to 6000 feet in upper Klein Creek valley and stirred up one caribou and a great view. Three days later, we were able to move our patient three miles back to Horsfeld using a homemade crutch. MEANWHILE, down the trail apiece: The group of twenty, quite tired after the hairy Klein crossing, camped on the Beaver Creek sand bars near Lower Mt., John Nevin spotted a wolf. A big bonfire helped dry out soggy gear. The next day's crossing of Carl Creek was not as bad as expected because they crossed at braids upstream. This day's package included a fox, five moose and four caribou, all duly recorded on film. Also fish in Beaver Creek. The gang lunched at Beaver Lake the next day. That night about two thirds of the group crossed the broad Chathenda, and the others set up camp on the near side. The two Chucks scored no brownie points when they decided to break camp shortly after arrival and head for Bonanza. Tim Agosti and Dave Klinger accompanied them on a side trip up Bonanza Creek next morning. Chuck Moe's miner friend welcomed them to Skookum Creek. This area provides a real trip to the past era of gold mining. Back at "Confluence Camp" luck early arrivals were sitting out a wild thunder and lightning storm in their tents. Others were not so lucky. Chief animal spotter John watched a wolf with kill; a coyote and a sheep this day. Everyone had a great time examining Bonanza ghost town and camped in the cabin yards. Next, day hikers started arriving in Chisana, six miles away, around noon. Some took the Simons Trail, others the Alder Gulch Trail and each thought his was superior. Chisana lies among black spruce, but the airfield is visible for miles. They set up tents along the strip. One oldtimer owns property at one end of "town" and a new group lives at the other end. Their eyes popped when backpackers walked in - "the first time in 17 years," said one. Floyd Miller was "johnny on the spot" next morning, ferrying the first group back to Northway at 6:00 AM. He didn't get around to the Horsfeld group until early afternoon. Here's the roster of MCAers on this trip: Dona, Giesler; Jan, Tam, Tim Agosti; Kerry Barker; Marty Beckwith; Liz Cuadra; Hans Giesler; Steve Hart; Chuck & Sally Heath; Dave Klinger; Priscilla Legg; Meg Leonard; Jon Lippencott; Jamie Luxwiler; Dot McAllister; Jean McDowell; Erile & Pierce McIntosh; Barbara Miracle; Chuck & Mary Moe; John Nevin; and Ken Thomas. We have some excellent slides and will be showing them at a future meeting. This leader is grateful to all her fellow hikers for showing such great sportmanship despite the difficulties of this trip.
