

In Memoriam

OLIVER PERRY-SMITH

1884-1969

Our Honorary Member, Oliver Perry-Smith, died quickly and peacefully at his son's home in Denver, Colorado on May 13. He was originally a Philadelphian, of distinguished ancestry, but from 1902 until the outbreak of World War I he lived in Dresden, Germany, devoting his life to mountaineering and skiing, in both fields excelling most of his contemporaries. His father had died during the Spanish-American War, and his mother, remarrying in 1902, went to Dresden, where her son soon joined her.

Young Oliver's interest in climbing was aroused by his grandmother, who had travelled extensively and had watched by telescope various ascents of Mont Blanc and other peaks. As a schoolboy of 18, he found companionship with Dresden climbers who were making history on the towers of nearby Saxon Switzerland and were developing under the inspiration and guidance of Rudolf Fehrmann, the brain and leader of the early climbers of that area. They went to the Alps together on the several occasions, and Oliver found a friend in the young guide, Josef Knubel. He led on the Grépon when Geoffrey Young was of the party, and with the latter and Knubel did the north face of the Weisshorn, both in 1909. Fehrmann wrote: "Perry-Smith was the strongest individual personality I have ever known." Young called him "one of the finest transatlantic climbers."

From 1909 until 1914 he competed in skiing, being the first American to threaten Norwegian supremacy. This is not the place to outline his record, which has been fully set forth elsewhere.¹

Perry-Smith made more than 90 ascents in Saxon Switzerland, 33 of which are rated VI or above; there were 32 first ascents, 13 solo climbs and 36 additional ones on which he led. In the Alps his repeated ascents include the following: Weisshorn (5), Matterhorn (3), Dent Blanche (3), Zinal

¹ *American Alpine Journal*, 1964, 14:1, pp. 99 to 120. On page 116 it states that 1910 was Perry-Smith's last climbing season in the High Alps. Since this paper was written we have seen a card from him dated 12 August, 1913, saying: "Wir haben den schwersten Gipfel der Schweiz - Dent Blanche - in 34 Stunden von Zermatt bestiegen."

Rothorn (2), Wellenkuppe (2), Obergabelhorn (2), Giula de Brenta (2), Kleine Zinne (2).

His son, Crosby, also a member of our Club, writes of his father: "I feel it wouldn't be out of order to say he had a special brand of leadership marked 'not transferable.' As we found out, each person must develop his own leadership; it cannot be bought or inherited, and certainly can't be passed on by any process of succession."

J. MONROE THORINGTON

JOHN R. HUDSON

1946-1969

I first got to know Hudson driving across the country in June, 1966. He had hitchhiked to my place with his entire gear in his Kelty, and we went West as fast as we could in a doubtful auto — we had to get to Yosemite before the hot weather. Driving toward the sunset beyond the desert, John sang, "When you're lost in the rain in Juárez, and it's Eastertime too." Sitting on a curb eating trashburgers in Carson City, it was summertime again too!

John was already a great mountaineer with many fine new routes, usually done with Art Gran, and he did much pulling on the rope on the climbs we did together. John could be annoying to follow, because he was so natural, it was hard to believe he was so good. If he did a lead with no protection and shouted down from the top, "What a great pitch!", you could expect trouble. But if he paused before a move, did it singing, "O Mama, can this really be the end, to be stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues again," and then said, "Sorry I took so long, it wasn't that bad!", you knew you had little hope.

We went to the Bugaboos, where John, Ants Leemets and Dick Williams did the first ascent of the south face of Snowpatch, while four more of us did the standard route. We had a joyful reunion on the summit, with cavorting and handstands. Later, seated in a row, the seven of us glissaded from the Bugaboo-Snowpatch col.

1967 was a great summer. Al DeMaria and I met John in Jasper after his return from Mount Deborah in Alaska, one in a long series of fiascos. To speak of someone's debacles might seem unkind, but John's record was such that he could afford a few. To avoid their mention would be to omit something dear to him. Hudson delighted in fiascos, talked of fiascos, imagined greater fiascos and made the word part of our vocabularies. His successes have been well recorded; it is unfortunate that the only real account of a fiasco is found in the pages of this *Journal* (Fitz Roy).