

Raid Peak, South Buttress and Face North of "Ambush Peak". On July 16 and 17, John Bouchard and I climbed the 2000-foot south buttress of Raid Peak (12,532 feet). The climb starts 100 feet from the toe of the buttress. Three pitches led up an obvious ramp on the right side of the buttress. We continued up the middle, passing several large overhangs. A huge ledge was found in the area of the tenth pitch. We continued five pitches more to a block-covered ledge, where we sighted a golden eagle. The final pitch ascended an enjoyable face. From there it was third class to the summit. Several pitches were relatively unprotected. The rock is generally solid. Iron: 2 horizontals and one angle of each size up to 1¼"; 15 assorted nuts up to Chouinard N° 10. NCCS V, F8. Just north of "Ambush Peak" (12,173 feet) a steep face is bordered on its northern edge by a snow couloir. The right side has three prominent crack systems. John Bouchard and I climbed the left-hand system, which leads directly to the summit blocks. We ascended steep snow or talus to a small stance below an overhang, followed cracks for two easy pitches, then traversed left to a large ledge (cairn). We continued up cracks, eventually reaching an overhanging flake system slanting left. Very difficult free climbing brought us to a small stance below another overhang (hanging belay). We passed a notch in the overhang, using a few nuts for aid, and got up to a belay. After stepping right, we climbed a hard crack to a right-facing corner. Another crack led to a belay on chockstones. We stepped right onto delicate face climbing and ascended to a large ledge on the left. A 40-foot chimney took us to a stance on the right. Easy climbing on superb rock led up to a ledge, above which we followed hard cracks on the right to another ledge, just below the summit blocks. This route, with excellent nut protection, is comparable to the northeast buttress of Higher Cathedral Rock in Yosemite. Iron: 2 horizontals and 1 angle of each size up to 1½"; 20 assorted nuts up to Chouinard N° 10. NCCS IV, F9 to 10, A3.

STEPHEN J. ARSENAULT

Mount Helen, North Face. Bob Beall, Bob Hritz and Jack Turner made the first ascent of the snow gully between Towers 1 and 2 in July. Climbing was on 1000 feet of hard snow of 45° to 50°.

Colorado

The Painted Wall, Black Canyon of the Gunnison River. On May 3 Kris Walker and I completed the first ascent of the Painted Wall. The ascent of 2600 feet of vertical and overhanging rock ranks as my most extreme rock climb. The immensity of the wall, coupled with the knowledge that deterred efforts by Layton Kor and Rusty Baillie had been repulsed, intensely magnified the concomitant doubts and fears of a big wall first ascent. From the beginning, Kris and I had ruled out the Kor-Baillie line. The wall was big enough to preclude trespassing.

So we picked our own line (about 100 yards downstream from theirs) and spent parts of three days making a reconnaissance of the first 700 feet. By the end of the third day we were getting positive vibes about the route, but a sudden snow storm and a rash of poison ivy forced us to retreat. We returned two days later with calamine lotion and determination. Once on the wall we climbed continuously for five days. Fortunately we found three tiny bivouac ledges along the way. During those five days and 26 pitches, rockfall was our chief danger. As I started the fourth pitch I dislodged a 30-pound block which crashed squarely onto my right thigh and then grazed Kris' ear. On pitch thirteen, Kris shoved off a 75-pound block, hoping to direct it, but the block took a bad bounce and plummeted directly for me, blotting out the sun. I was tied to my anchors and couldn't move. It looked like death, and then the sun reappeared. Leading was more difficult for the remainder of the day. On pitch 17 we hit a dead end, so Kris led a dangerous pendulum, and then struggled up an ugly overhang on the right. This pitch ended in "Death Valley," an 85° rock gully filled with loose stones and down-sloping holds. It took us five rotten pitches to get up Death Valley. The belayer was in constant rockfall danger, and the leader seldom had adequate protection. As Kris led the twenty-first pitch the haul line dislodged a watermelon-sized block about twenty feet above my belay. I dodged in time, but a water bottle, gorp bag, and one Jümar were smashed. Two quarts of water and a thousand sunflower seeds splashed and tumbled into the depths. From the top of Death Valley we spotted our final bivouac ledge 75 feet below us. We rappelled and settled into our perch, but our sitting sleep was restless, the summit overhangs were too close—too ominous. The last day was awful and it was beautiful. We wanted off. The top was near. The rich pink and red hues of the gigantic overhanging blocks and the absolute reality of nearly 3000 feet of exposure, coupled with questionable anchors and nearly impossible leads were agony and ecstasy. Kris led free up pitch 23; it was rotten face climbing which ended in a hanging belay from five tied-off angles in a crumbling white band. Pitch 24 took me 5½ hours; it sapped my last reserves. It was the pitch I'd been wanting—an ultimate physical and technical challenge where success was imperative but doubtful. The pitch ended with a pendulum, vertical scrambling, and a lot of praying. Kris' pitch was just as demanding. It led over a series of overhanging bulges and ended in a typical rotten pegmatite band. It was an awful place; 70 feet below the summit, we hung from five bongs in an unstable crack. Pitch 26 led through an easy chimney. We arrived on top at dusk and stood together as the sun sank. We knew the secrets of the Painted Wall, we knew each other, and we were happy. NCCS VI, F9, A4. Considering the size of the Painted Wall and the discontinuous nature of its crack systems we are pleased with the directness of our line. We're also pleased that we had the good fortune

to complete the route without using expansion bolts. To my knowledge, this is the first boltless grade VI in the country. We made a conscious effort to achieve this. Certain risks were involved in that effort; it is very satisfying to have succeeded.

BILL E. FORREST

Black Canyon of the Gunnison, North Buttress of Chasm View. In May Rob Kiesel and I braved the regular descent gully, north of the northern rim of Chasm View. We crossed the river to the foot of the northern buttress of the south rim of Chasm View. The climb began in a crack system 100 yards left of the toe of the buttress on its east face. The sixth lead broke out left of the first crack system and went under a narrow roof into a new crack system that led eventually to a large brush patch at the end of the eleventh pitch. After scrambling to the upper right corner of the brush just a few feet from the buttress crest, we climbed a jam crack to a step on the actual buttress. A difficult free move gave access to the final, lower-angle leads of the upper buttress. NCCS V, F9, A3. In September Mike Wies and Wick Beavers climbed the buttress from its foot starting on the right side.

JEFF LOWE

Mount Alice, East Wall. The route first climbed by Jack Turner and me on July 8 and 9 ascends the 1200-foot east wall of Mount Alice in Rocky Mountain National Park. It is the continuation above and below the left of two parallel white vertical streaks three-quarters of the way up the left side of the face. The first half follows dihedrals directly up slabs with a mixture of aid and free climbing. The ledge that bisects the climb halfway up provides a good bivouac spot. The second half ascends directly up vertical and overhanging rock. A surprising amount of free climbing was done. We used mostly nuts. The few pitons were needed because of dirt-filled cracks. No bolts were placed. This is comparable to the best of the Longs Peak Diamond routes. NCCS V, F8, A3.

ROBERT D. CULP

Diamond, Longs Peak, New Routes. Christopher Robin and Waterhole N° 3 are two new Grade V routes on the Diamond of Longs Peak. I did both solo, taking two days on each. These right-side routes begin with difficult nailing on the lower sections, but the cracks improved to A1 near the summit. Christopher Robin is blessed with a comfortable bivouac ledge while Waterhole N° 3 required a hanging bivouac.

KRIS WALKER, *Unaffiliated*

P 13,841, North Face. In May Larry Derby and I climbed this 800-foot face, at the head of Square Gulch, some 15 miles south of Lake City.