

Cathedral Spires, Kichatna Mountains. We were four in the Kichatnas as usual, but while this was my third trip, it was the first for Bryan Becker, Rob Milne, and Andy Tuthill. The mood in Talkeetna when we arrived was dismal. Several parties had been waiting for weeks to fly in, but almost immediately the weather cleared and we flew with Doug Geeting to the Cul-de-Sac Glacier on June 28. In seeming contrast to the weather encountered by other parties either earlier or later or on different glaciers, our weather was almost too good in that rapidly our expectations were surpassed, appetites for climbing sated, and pitons and slings exhausted. Setting up about 75 rappel points in the space of 2½ weeks was responsible for the latter, and precluded trying any more big routes. Before Andy Tuthill and I walked out however, we and Bryan and Rob managed to get up some real gems of alpine-style climbs, and Bryan and Rob got some more before they flew out. The plum of the trip was Jeffers, of which we did the second ascent (the first being in 1969 by Robbins, Fitschen and Raymond) via the 2400-foot east wall rising from the Cul-de-Sac. We were lucky with the weather, but part of that luck can be attributed to pure speed. We fixed a few pitches in nine hours one day, and then in 33 nonstop hours of climbing and rappelling completed 24 leads up and 22 rappels down. The route was "drop-of-water"-like in its directness and was generally hard free-climbing in EB's for 15 pitches followed by mixed climbing in boots for another nine. NCCS VI, F10 A3. Andy Tuthill and I did, and Bryan and Rob repeated, the first ascent of "Sunrise Spire" (c. 7900 feet, west of P 8520) via "Going to the Sun Couloir" from the Cul-de-Sac. The couloir was 19 pitches long, initially 60° snow over ice and steepening to 80° spindrift-covered thin ice over rock. Two steep leads on rock done as the mid of night became dawn put us on top with wind gnawing at our bones and a sunrise warming them. Not having hardware enough for 21 rappels, we descended east to the high Shelf Glacier and spent most of a day slogging hungrily down it, up and over, and then up the Cul-de-Sac, getting back about 32 hours after leaving. We made three tries on "Cemetery Spire" before making the first ascent via its north "Gargoyle" ridge. We had gotten down from Jeffers in the morning and that evening Bryan and Andy set out for P 7475 ("Bastion") from the Cul-de-Sac and, bagging its first ascent, continued along the row of spires between the Cul-de-Sac and the Shelf, climbing up and over "Rook," the next peak south and also a first ascent, and joined Rob and me on Cemetery (c. 7600 feet), the next peak south. "Gargoyle Ridge" was some 12 leads of sometimes very wild and airy mixed climbing on pinnacles, gendarmes and cornices; it was done during a perfectly still, clear night in early July while the Alaska Range for a hundred miles in each direction glowed pink, red and gold. Rob soloed P 6337 ("Transition Peak") and Bryan soloed "Skuzerian Peak," just south of P 6968, both first ascents and both from the Cul-de-Sac. Rob and Bryan did the second ascent of P 7133, the first having been by Black



PLATE 56

Photo by Andrew Tuthill

**Andrew Embick leading on the East
Face of Mount Jeffers.**

and Graber in 1975 from the Tatina Glacier. Following this period of frantic activity, Andy and I walked out in three days to Rainy Pass Lodge, rappelling over Gashley Crumb Col, trekking up the Tatina Glacier and over Monolith Col and down to the moraines, gravel bars and aspen bushes. We crossed Morris Creek through hip-deep rushing green water with a tight belay, and found the cabin at the head of the Moose Creek drainage. To cross the Happy River required a truly hairy swim, sweeping me about 75 yards downstream. Luckily we got our 8mm rope across after about 20 heaves and from there it was all downhill. The 25 air-miles are probably about twice that on the ground, and we were both grateful for the help game trails gave us in aspen-bashing.

ANDREW R. EMBICK M.D.

Citadel, Northwest Buttress, Riesenstein, West Face and Kichatna Spire Attempt, Cathedral Spires, Kichatna Mountains. After landing on the Cool Sac Glacier with 25 days of food, Ed Newville and I attempted the west face of the 8000-foot "Riesenstein," north of Kichatna Spire lying between the Shelf and Cool Sac glaciers. Bad weather and a lack of food when we were 2½ days up the wall brought about our retreat. Several days later, on May 21, Jeff Thomas joined us and we attempted a more direct route on the face, reaching the summit in a whiteout after three days of difficult free climbing and several pitches of ice-filled cracks. The 2300-foot west face lies above the Cool Sac Glacier and faces Mount Jeffers. NCCS VI, F9, A2. On May 30 we three climbed 1700 feet up a 60° to 70° ice couloir on superb, very hard ice to a col between Kichatna Spire and the satellite peak in an attempt on the northwest face of Kichatna Spire. In the face of a very severe storm, we retreated down the gully in 12 rappels. A future party may find the lack of cracks for several pitches above the col interesting aid climbing. On June 3 Jeff Thomas and I completed a route up the northwest buttress of the Citadel from the col between the Shelf and Cool Sac glaciers. We had difficult climbing and unusually superb weather for the range to make it an excellent climb. NCCS III, F9. 14 hours.

ALAN KEARNEY

P 8000 ("Grendel"). I returned to the Cathedral Spires with Chris and Arthur Manix, hoping to make the first ascent of a peak of 8000 feet with twin east and west summits, about one mile southwest of Augustin Peak. We waited on the Trident Glacier for two weeks in stormy weather before the skies cleared momentarily. We opted for the quickest-looking route and climbed the 2500-foot, northwest-facing snow-and-ice couloir (60°), just left of the main rock face that led to a deep notch north of the summit. We began at dusk and climbed unroped, not wishing to tarry in the path of the tremendous avalanches that regularly poured down the