

kind. It is an unvarnished account of how a single individual pursued his personal goals and developed his own community of peers within, but distinct from, the larger context of Soviet society. Shatayev's mountaineering community is no safe haven from the bureaucratization of that society, though. It too suffers from the battles over rank, turf and authority, as well as from personal jealousies and prejudices. His depiction of how and why these battles occur and the human motivations behind them exposes a fascinating slice of Soviet society. These unfamiliar characteristics and obstacles of Soviet mountaineering, such as their rigidly hierarchical organization of the sport and a certain "peak-bagging" approach to meeting out climbing permits according to rank, will impress many readers almost as much as the fact that Shatayev overcame them.

Readers may be surprised by Shatayev's frank account of his own early prejudices against women in mountaineering. The emotional core of his story relates how his own wife gained his grudging respect as a true mountaineering leader before her entire team of eight women tragically perished in 1974, while descending Pik Lenin in a hurricane. His wife's unprecedented 1971-72 climbs on all-women teams of Ushba in the Caucasus and Pik Korzhenevskaya in the Pamirs had "shaken his opinion" just before her tragic death in 1974. Since the book ends with his moving account of his personal reaction to that accident, he never adequately resolves the question of how much he had actually changed his earlier, strongly expressed prejudices. In fact, my own impression from extensive climbing in the Soviet Union is that the legendary death of "The Eight," as the Soviet public refers to them, reinforced a widespread prejudice against women mountaineers in the Soviet Union. Fewer permits are given for all-women expeditions to the more difficult peaks.

But it is only by virtue of the unfailing honesty of his dialogues that Shatayev lays himself open to criticism for his treatment of women in mountaineering. To his credit he does not simply set up "straw women" to act as foils in this arresting debate. He allows his wife and other super-achieving Soviet women climbers to eloquently defend their own objectives and special capabilities. Honesty and uncanny recollection of psychological nuances even better serve him, though, when he reveals the internal dialogues during his pivotal mountaineering experiences with external danger and human failings.

WILLIAM GARNER

Yosemite Climbs. George Meyers & Don Reid. Chockstone Press, Inc., Denver, 1987. 433 pages, monochrome photos, line drawings, maps. \$22.00 (paper).

Yosemite Valley has some of the best granite rock climbing in the world. It also has crime, poverty, disease, despair, and frequent natural disasters. Local culture is warped by a small town mentality compressed to urban densities. Low-rent crag cowboys curse it as a dusty ditch, yet never leave. Above it all,

the Clone Ranger keeps a watchful eye on the status quo.

To compile the climber's guide to Yosemite Valley is the ultimate Sisyphean task. George Meyers took on the project back in the 70s with the original *Yosemite Climbs*, a loose leaf set of route topos. Communicating route information visually, line drawing topos advanced guidebook standards by a couple of grades. Of course, it was some Brits who published the first set of climbing topos to the Valley, but Meyers' guide set new standards for clarity and accuracy.

Knowledge is power, and the dissemination of route information only accelerated new developments. The guide was hardly off the press before it was out of date. Technology, technique, and training sent the standards skyrocketing while every Joe Sunday scoured the remotest reaches of the obscure in search of the next classic crack. After years of waiting for someone else to step forward and tackle the challenge of an update, Meyers once again cranked it out.

The second edition of *Yosemite Climbs*, the "Yellow Bible," was a trend-setting tome. To condense such an immense quantity of reliable route information into a portable package was incredible, but to communicate it so well to such a functionally illiterate populace was truly amazing. Guidebook standards ratcheted up another notch, and the masses thronged to the crags. Life in the Valley got trickier and the scams more refined. Eurodogs came and went, as did pins and bolts. Slander filled the night while fresh faces took the places of those who couldn't sweat out the summer swelter of Camp 4. In the meantime, new lines multiplied like lemmings as informed visionaries discovered realities where none had gazed before.

Doomed, yet not resigned to a tormented fate as editor-for-life, Meyers recruited local guide Don Reid to help out with the latest and third edition of *Yosemite Climbs*. With professionalism based upon years of experience, Meyers and Reid have produced one of the finest guidebooks to some of the finest climbing in the world. The design is clean, the organization straightforward, the scope mindboggling, and the details accurate, and the construction bombproof. *Yosemite Climbs* weighs less than a pair of sticky boots, a set of Jümars, or an apron rack. The information density is high enough to get you out of those challenging situations it will lure you into. Yosemite Valley finally has a guidebook to match its stature in the climbing world.

The bulk of the volume is devoted to route topos in a basic left to right circuit of the Valley, starting at the western end. Photodiagrams are liberally interspersed amidst the drawings. Historic photographs provide random inspiration, linking past to present with a continuous evolution of techniques. Photo quality is high throughout the book, with dramatic cross-lighting to reveal the features of the faces.

Approach descriptions in prose highlight the beginning of each section, and a few critical descents have rappel topos. Given the graphic nature of the guidebook, it seems odd that approach and descent information wasn't sketched in on maps and photographs.

Rack lists are appropriate for the free climbs, but overdone for the big walls. The topo for "Lurking Fear" on El Capitan recommends a rack of fifty pitons, yet this route has been done clean and hammerless. A rule of thumb for the big walls would be to cut the piton list in half, then throw in the latest tech-nut tricks and custom hooks. You'll be less destructive, and have less to haul.

Efficiency and compact style, notable traits of many Yosemite routes, are reflected in the introductory text. The section on "Staying In The Park" clearly details the logistics and cultural nuances unique to living in Yosemite Valley. The rules have changed in recent years, and staying legally on a low budget for an extended period of time can be more challenging than climbing the routes. It would be nice to see a sample budget for lean living that outlined the cash and other costs of staying in Yosemite for a week, a month, or a season.

John Dill's analysis of Yosemite climbing accidents should be required reading for all Yosemite climbers. It presents a number of little details and considerations inherent to safe practice of the sport of rock climbing. You can learn from other climbers' mistakes. Follow the climbing advice presented and you'll probably leave Yosemite alive and unhurt.

The book's history of Yosemite climbing is patched together from climbing guidebooks of various periods. The recent history presents most of the modern trends and their protagonists, analyzed through the rose-tinted spectacles of a Nouveau Traditionalist.

The new "Free Climbing Styles and Ethics" section outlines the bounds of intolerance for Yosemite. Anything goes, except littering, chiselling, or placing pins and bolts on anything except unrehearsed, unpreviewed first ascents established from the ground up and personally approved by God. There seems to be a curious attitude that runouts are unfair unless established in rigid ignorance, in which case they're OK because they're bold. Fortunately, most free climbers in the Valley don't carry a hammer, a bolt kit, or even dream of doing new routes, so they may climb secure in the knowledge that their worst risk is stylistic slander back in the campground.

For aid-climbing styles and ethics, anything goes except bothering the Peregrine falcons on El Capitan during certain seasons, and hurling objects (yourself included) from the heights. Don't send your excrement flying down the walls in plastic bags; it greases up the holds on the free routes at the bottom.

The evolution of the Yosemite Decimal System of rating free climbs is discussed with an attempt to resolve the difference between move ratings and continuity ratings. A move rating describes a pitch by the difficulty of the hardest single move, while a continuity rating says that if the whole pitch has a lot of equally hard moves, it's probably harder. A proposal to apply both ratings to each climb seems doomed to confusion. Aid ratings follow the definitions used in prior editions, an aid pitch being A5 if you take a monster fall and get mangled. In practice, there are only two aid ratings: it sticks or you fly. Anything on the topos rated A4 or harder requires engineering genius, not much love of life, and a wizard's bag of tricks.

The back of the book is a gold mine for climbing historians and rock stars

alike. The graded list of selected routes is indispensable in setting up a day's climbing circuit. Harder routes (5.9 and up) are categorized by the predominant type of climbing, from faces to cracks to chimneys. All that's missing are little boxes to tick off your conquests.

First ascent parties are listed in fine print after the route lists. Some climbers feel this information doesn't belong in a guidebook. They suspect that the ego trip of being listed is the only rationale for establishing new routes. This view ignores the historical continuity buried within the first ascent list. It overrates the value of a name in microscopic type. A number of routes are found in the first ascent listings but not in the topos. Where are the more recent wall climbs by Warren Harding? Who got the FFA on the "Stigma?" Did Tom Rohrer solo a new route on the Lost Arrow? There's more to history than what gets printed, and first ascent listings provide clues to what really happened.

The index in the back of the book is a great shortcut to locating a particular route. It is also a wild collection of the bad puns, obscure references, monuments to posterity, and dull cliches that Yosemite climbers use to mark their territory. If you're into establishing new routes, the index will help you avoid the *faux pas* of an unoriginal name.

The last few pages contain reproductions from the U.S.G.S. topographic map of Yosemite Valley. Gone are the excellent line maps that graced the front and back of the previous edition. This is a loss, since they put the cliffs in context and would complement the topographic maps.

In effectively communicating the critical aspects of more routes than anybody could ever hope to climb in a lifetime, *Yosemite Climbs* succeeds beyond all expectations. It's only a matter of time before the next edition comes along, but until then, *Yosemite Climbs* sets a guidebook standard to which other climbing guides may aspire.

ALAN NELSON

Rock Climbs in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Second Edition. Ed Webster. Mountain Imagery (PO Box 210, Eldorado Springs, Colorado 80025), 1987. 564 pages, 85 black-and-white photographs, 2 color photographs (on cover), 5 maps, bibliography. \$21.95 (paper).

Once again, Ed Webster has produced one of the finest guidebooks in the country. This second edition of *Rock Climbs in the White Mountains of New Hampshire* far surpasses the 1982 guide, in both accuracy and quality. The quantity and clarity of the action photos is excellent. Not only do they show the current activists on some of the newer routes, but there are also a host of historically significant pictures taken during first ascents, or first free ascents. The historical photos should give some of the younger set food for thought. Try leading *Crack in the Woods* without Friends (page 314), or *Interloper* without "sticky shoes" (page 145) . . . I can't do them that way!

My criticisms are few and far between. A detailed map to Band M Ledge would be helpful, as would a map of the Crawford Notch crags. Since