

were the voices and the wonderful magic rock with its chiseled holds. A voice cursed the tiny implement so dear, oddly enough, to the climber. I always get those things in backwards, a difficult job even for the most meticulous of climbers. Finally, a large ledge, large enough to allow both feet to stand comfortably. Dunmire began to follow.

A good ledge it was, and we soon were sitting at the base of the "Tree." Oddly, the sound of a tree frog was quite audible. Here was an isolated outpost of nature . . . unsullied by contact with its infinitely larger life-source below in the Valley. Just the sort of material for a jolly Ph.D. thesis on wild life, it seemed.

Throughout the two days, the cliffs had not budged an inch. Rock-climbing in its purest form is the safest of all the components of Mountaineering, I mused. Take river-crossing, for example . . . (I shuddered at the thought). Clearly a case of mind over matter, but quite a lively bit of matter. You step in a stream not knowing whether there is a bottom or not. But rock, well, it's there to be seen and touched. You hit it, and it usually does not move. I like rock, but maybe I'm prejudiced.

As I said, other people like golf.

ALLEN STECK

*Climbs along the Canadian Boundary.* The south summit of Slesse Peak was climbed for the first time 3 August 1952 by John Dudra, Herb Staley, and Fred Beckey.

On September 20th "The Pleiades" were climbed by John Dudra, Dwight Baker, and Fred Beckey. The following day the party made the first climb of the north wall of American Border Peak, experiencing difficult snow and rock sections on this long ascent.

*North Ridge of Forbidden Peak.* The last unknown ridge on pyramidal Forbidden Peak, in the Cascade Pass area, was climbed June 8th by Don Wilde, Jack Schwabland, and Fred Beckey. It is perhaps one of the most alpine routes in the United States: a half-mile narrow and very jagged rock crest sweeps up to the pointed summit, and on both sides is relentless exposure. At two places the northwest glacier clings steeply to the ridge, with huge overhanging

YOSEMITE POINT BUTTRESS

Steck returning from a lead. Part of route followed on first ascent to El Capitan Tree.

Photo, R. Swift

cornices, and it was at these crossings that the greatest danger was encountered. Changing from tennis shoes to boots and ice axes six times on the ridge consumed additional time.

*The Environs of Silver Star.* Three separate climbing trips were made the summer of 1952 to the granitic wonderland around Mt. Silver Star, one of the highest peaks in the Chelan-Methow region, harboring the most eastern glacier in the state of Washington. On the first of these excursions the party of Joe Hieb, Herb Staley, Don Wilde, and Fred Beckey climbed the summit Ulrichs describes as the "spectacular western peak," but not without overcoming natural difficulties, augmented by approaching darkness. The party also climbed a number of rock summits on Vasiliki Ridge, north of the glacier; Vasiliki Spire, Charon Tower, The Acropolis, and Aphrodite Tower were all climbs of noteworthy individuality and difficulty.

The second journey marked the first ascent of Chablis Spire, one of the four consecutive spires at the fringe of the glacier just north of Silver Star's North Peak, all of which are quite reminiscent of the Bugaboos. Dick Berge, Wes Grande, and Fred Beckey climbed a steep 1500-foot couloir facing west to reach the deep col north of Chablis Spire. The remaining 400 feet to the horned summit at first appeared hopelessly difficult for completion that day, but fortuitously one single line of hidden cracks provided the key to an interesting and strenuous route. Because of the availability of many good belay points from granite flakes and within cracks, only two pitons were used. A brief attempt on Pernod, the second spire, ended in failure.

The third visit to this region of gargantuan slabs and small larch trees came in September and resulted in the first ascents of Pernod and Chianti Spires. From a camp at the head of Silver Star Creek the party climbed moraine and ice to the eastern walls of the spires, and in 500 feet of difficult rock climbing reached the notch between these two peaks. Joe Hieb and Art Maki made a 250-foot rappell on the west face and followed a loose gully to the notch between Chianti and Burgundy Spires. This north face of Chianti Spire was found to hold the only route. Two leads contained the principal difficulties; several times the rock proved unexpectedly unsound. Had time permitted, the climbers would probably have used

ASCENT TO EL CAPITAN TREE

R. Swift leading rope. Route from this point was to the cleft with snow patch at its bottom.

*Photo, A. Steck*