

Climbs and Expeditions

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UNITED STATES

Washington

North Arête of Mount Stuart, Cascades. Mount Stuart, a huge granite peak, soars to 9500 feet above the Cashmere Crags and the country of Ingalls Creek. Most of the previous ascents were made on the south face. The north face was climbed once, by Helmy Beckey and H. Strathdee.

On September 8, 1956, Fred Beckey, John Rupley, and Donald Claunch drove up the North Fork Teanaway road towards Mount Stuart, talking enthusiastically about attempting the northeast face, a great wall hidden away on the back of the mountain. Helmy's route was to the northwest. That night we hiked over the pass to the head of Ingalls Creek to get our first view of the mountain, a massive conglomeration of great blocks of granite, rising beautifully in the last rays of the sunset. We camped as far up the valley as we could, built two fires and in the cold tried to get a night's sleep.

Early next morning we crossed two westerly spurs descending from Mount Stuart. After a long grind over boulder fields and heather, we eventually reached the crest of the higher ridge. Dropping down several hundred feet, we obtained our first good view of the north face. It was a splendid, high-angle face, quite alpine, which rose about 2000 feet above the Stuart Glacier. Much of the rock looked firm, but in places, such as Helmy's route, it seemed rotten. On the left skyline was a fine narrow ridge rising above the glacier, which apparently divided the entire north face, although we could still not see beyond onto the northeastern portion. Still hoping to reconnoiter and if possible climb this northeast side, we dropped below the main section of the Stuart Glacier. We found that it would be necessary to drop another 1000 feet and to climb back up a steep, broken icefall. Having little time, we gave up these plans.

We retraced our steps and crossed to the eastern side of the glacier, where John and I decided to give the north arête a try. Fred was unfortunately not feeling well and agreed to meet us on the other side after the climb. The route looked possible, but we had considerable misgivings about a great gendarme or buttress near the top. We reached the rock after crossing an ice tongue and climbed diagonally upwards through a narrow

couloir. Soon John clambered over the crest of the arête. From there we had a full view of our abandoned route to the east. Hardly a worse-looking face can be seen anywhere in the Cascades. Rising above the jumbled icefall, a series of gaunt cliffs and slabs soared upward for 2000 to 3000 feet; climbable perhaps, but not very appealing. Happy in that we had chosen this ridge in the middle of the big rock-face, the only sensible route, we donned our rock-climbing shoes, strapped our boots and axes onto our packs and climbed rapidly, not wishing to be benighted. The rock was excellent as we climbed upward over pitch after pitch of class 4 rock, with occasional walls requiring pitons. The arête was so very narrow and exposed on both sides that we often had to straddle it. It was not too long before we reached the base of the buttress. For the last three hours clouds had been coming in over the western Cascades, but we did not suspect that they would bother us, since the eastern skies were clear. Within a bewilderingly short time, however, Stuart produced a cloud cap and almost immediately it began to hail. Returning would have been as difficult as continuing on up the last 600 feet. Our only hope was to climb around the right base of the buttress. After rappelling down a very steep slab, we soon found ourselves on a catwalk ledge. We traversed upwards and over a tiny ledge system, which required occasional pitons on the rain-covered rocks. Our zigzag ascent brought us onto the summit at 4 P.M. It was still hailing and we lost no time getting down in improving weather.

DONALD CLAUNCH

The Temple, Kangaroo Ridge, Cascades. On September 29, 1956, Fred Beckey and Donald Claunch decided to go to the well-known but seldom-visited Kangaroo Ridge area, north of Methon Valley. We drove from Chelan to Twisp and thence up the Twisp River to Gilbert, the end of the road. Next day we climbed through brush and up spotty trails above the main valley leading to Copper Pass. Fred and I planned to try the great couloir on the spectacular wall of the south face, a route I had attempted previously. We hiked to the base of the ridge that connects with the eastern face of the Temple and upwards for a few minutes through brush, heather, and boulders to a point near the crest of the ridge. Here we traversed south along a wide ledge to the corner between the south and east faces. Fred started up the steep, slabby corner, but was soon confronted with a very smooth section of it, a pitch which I had led free without aid in 1953. After getting that "shaky feeling on discolorations," Fred retreated to let me have a try. Although he had discovered a piton crack, as I retraced this lead, I soon found myself quivering also. I finally managed it with a sling