

the face. (The route attempted was first suggested and described in detail by Bradford Washburn in *A.A.J.*, 1947, 6:3, pp. 288-290.—*Editor.*)

DON GORDON

*Mount Russell, Alaska Range.* In late May and early June a party consisting of Gene Wescott, Buck Wilson, Bob Goodwin and Jon Gardey made an attempt on Mount Russell (11,670 feet), which is the unclimbed southwestern boundary point of McKinley Park. The group was flown from Fairbanks to an airstrip about 25 miles north of the mountain on May 28. Six days were spent relaying food and equipment up the Chedotlothna Glacier to the north base of the mountain in fine weather. From the camp at the base we carried full loads up to a high camp at about 7200 feet on the northwest side of the mountain. The route beyond this point had and was subject to considerable avalanche activity, and our plans to put a camp further up had to be abandoned. The next afternoon Goodwin and Wescott put in a route up through most of the worst avalanche area to a high point of about 7500 feet and 1 mile from the intended summit ridge, with the intention of leaving at 2 A.M. for a summit attempt. A four-day storm set in that night and put about a foot of new snow on the route and the avalanche faces above. Because of the expected arrival of our plane we were forced to leave the route even though the weather was clearing as we left. We had several bad days of weather while waiting at the strip. The group was flown out on 14 June.

GENE WESCOTT

*Old Snowy, Alaska Range.* Eleven members of the Alaska Alpine Club, led by Buck Wilson and me, used their spring vacation from March 23 to 26 to make the first ascent of Old Snowy (9700 feet) in the Castner Glacier area of the eastern Alaska Range. We spent two days skiing in to Base Camp at 7200 feet on the southwest side of the peak. The third day was spent making the ascent from the south on very good crampon snow. The summit was reached by the south ridge in fine weather. We skied out in less than five hours.

GENE WESCOTT

*Blackcap.* Four members of the Alaska Alpine Club, John Hodsdon, Jim Mack, Ron DeWitt and I made the first ascent of Mount Blackcap (9850 feet) at the head of the Castner Glacier on the weekend of July 16. Leaving the Richardson Highway at eleven P.M. Friday night, we walked three miles up the Castner Glacier and camped on the moraine. On Saturday we carried our camp to 7000 feet eight miles farther up the glacier, using snowshoes above 5000 feet for fast traveling on the snowfields.

The ascent of Blackcap was made in five hours up the glacier that flows down the north side of the mountain until we reached the west ridge of the summit cone. The corniced nature of the ridge and the white-out conditions made it necessary to climb well out on the steeper north face. We were fortunate in having the weather clear while we remained on the narrow summit. The view of the eastern Alaska Range and the Wrangells was excellent. The softening of the snow made continuous belaying necessary during the descent to the snowshoes at 8500 feet. We picked up our camp and arrived at the highway fifteen hours later in an unfortunate cold rain squall.

CHARLES R. WILSON

*Mount Gilbert, Chugach Range.* In two successive flights, Lowell Thomas, Jr. took our party, consisting of Helga Bading, Hans Metz, Bob Bailey, Steve Foss and me, from Palmer to 2500 feet on Surprise Glacier. From there our route lay up a tributary glacier, which is broken up by two badly crevassed icefalls and terminates against the south face of the final ridge. The summit of Mount Gilbert (9646 feet) is the highest point of this 1000-foot high knife-edged ridge, about a quarter mile long and shaped somewhat like an inverted shovel blade. The route finally led up a steep ice chute to a point about 500 feet below the summit on the west side of the shovel and thence along the ridge to the peak.

We pitched our first camp at about 3500 feet at the foot of the first icefall. On May 27 we breached the icefall right through the middle and, in lowering weather, made camp at 6000 feet at the foot of the second fall. That evening Metz and I reconnoitered a possible route up the west side of the glacier and found it bombarded by falling rock and ice. We returned to camp in blowing snow, hoping that the icefall could be circumvented on the east side of the glacier. The storm worsened in the night and not until 30 hours later, at 4:15 A.M. on May 29, were we able to start our bid for the summit. The hoped-for route went and soon we waded in thigh-deep snow on the upper plateau, setting markers at 100-foot intervals. Shortly after, the bergschrund at the foot of the ice chute was overcome, Foss decided to wait for us as he was not well. He bivouacked in our emergency sleeping bag and tent, tied to the rocks. The rest of us continued the climb in sporadic snow flurries, reaching the summit at 12:15 after a delicate front-crampon-point climb of the chute and ridge. We started the descent immediately in deteriorating weather, but countless belays delayed us. After picking up Foss, we continued the retreat in furiously blowing snow and not more than 50-foot visibility. The trail-markers were lifesavers, although only about half of them remained. Camp was reached at five that night and for the next 36 hours we waited