

base of the face was reached in 7½ hours from the car at St. Andrews Creek on the West Side Road, via Klapatche and St. Andrews Park, lower Puyallup Cleaver, and a crossing of the Puyallup, South Mowich and Edmunds Glaciers. Our lightweight 4-man tent was pitched at 9600 feet on the crest of a small *nunatak* between the upper North Mowich and Edmunds Glaciers. While basking in the afternoon sun we were entertained at close proximity by the largest ice avalanche any of us had ever observed on Rainier.

At 5:30 A.M. we left camp and, after crossing the toe of yesterday's avalanche, tackled the ever steepening slope above. The early part of the ascent was up firm frozen snow whose corrugated surface provided good footing. Gradually patches of blue ice were encountered and we had to swing the axe in places. Generally, our steady upward progress on the 45° to 50° slope was expedited by use of front crampon points. At 13,000 feet the lower of the rock bands was reached via a steep apex of ice. Here, the 12-foot vertical cliff was climbed quickly as icicles and *verglas* provided incentive to get more secure footing in crusted snow on the ledge above. We traversed the ledge around a narrow corner to the left which placed us in a steep ice chute between the rock bands and the prominent ice cliff-bulge that caps the face. After chopping a few steps up the chute and placing one coathanger ice-screw "for looks", we finally gained the warm sunlight above the face at 11:30 A.M. Following a brief pause to catch our breath and note small figures coming into view on the Ptarmigan Ridge route below, we plodded an hour to 14,112-foot Liberty Cap. Our descent was made via the Tahoma Glacier "Sickle" and over the crest of lower St. Andrews Rock. Extremely slushy snow conditions had us all mentally plunging into bottomless crevasses before we reached Puyallup Cleaver. Arriving at the car at 7:30 P.M., we were once again convinced that a descent of Rainier on a hot summer day is a greater test of nerves than is the ascent.

DEE MOLENAAR

*The Blockhouse, South Face.* High on the edge of the Cashmere Crag sits The Blockhouse, one of the Crag's largest and sheerest rock formations, seldom visited since it is not near a trail. John Brottem, Dave Beckstead and I climbed a most pleasurable new route, the south face from the south notch, on September 21, from a camp near timberline just east of the peak. Leaving a couloir on the southeast side was a problem because of overhanging rock. Three bolts were needed here, and after some difficult aid, three more to avoid a balanced loose rock, later dislodged. Once above

the notch, the granite was the very finest, with excellent cracks for direct aid and adequate holds for difficult free climbing. On the fourth pitch a nicely exposed piton traverse led to an overhanging traverse at a corner, really the crux of the route. A delicate openbook led to a final open chimney which worked upward to the summit block. In all, we used 36 pitons and 7 bolts.

FRED BECKEY

*Index Town Wall, Town Crier Route.* A spell of dry weather at Christmas in 1965 prompted Seattle rock climbers to seek out a *direttissima* on this large cliff behind the town of Index, less than an hour's drive from Seattle. At various times Eric Bjornstad, Mark Fielding, Bob Phelps, Dave Beckstead and I explored the crack possibilities, finally reaching the half-way point on the 550-foot vertical wall when snowfalls doomed the continuation of the climb. When spring weather returned, Leif Patterson, Beckstead and I solved the complicated triple overhang, one of the most difficult problems I have seen. It was followed by an exposed hanging belay and then a most stubborn piton crack. Beckstead and I completed the climb on April 17, clearing the last pitch in the night. Iron used on the climb totaled 103 pitons and 19 bolts.

FRED BECKEY

*Three Fingers, East Face Couloir.* On August 16, Jim Stoddard, Ted Carpenter and I made the first ascent of Three Fingers via its east side. From High Camp at timberline above Squire Creek we contoured south over easy terrain, continuing across snow slopes below the east face of the mountain to a point just beyond the south peak, the culmination of a massive wall almost 2500 feet high. Here a long broad 35° snow couloir (hidden to view from the north) rises diagonally north, cleaving the east face into two great segments. This couloir was ascended directly to its steepened upper end which exits onto the snowfield on the high northeast shoulder of the mountain. We crossed the snowfield to the notch between the middle and north peaks from where I climbed the north peak by the chimney of the usual south ridge route. Jim and Ted traversed below the normal route onto the west face proper, climbing a tricky, flaring Class-5 chimney which connects with the heather ledge above the chimney of the usual route.

JOSEPH VANCE

*Early Winter Spires, South Spire West Face.* The unclimbed wall on the west side of the highest of the Early Winter Spires had been bypassed by