

ascends the discontinuous and parallel crack system quite close to the southern skyline as one looks at the west face. Here again the climbing is over beautiful, high-angle rock and is quite sustained. The Always Arches route, which weaves through thick arches on the northern edge of the northwest face is also sustained—two pitches are 5.10—but not nearly so pleasant. While the firm rock and the excellent views of the high country are delightful, some of the difficult sections under the arches are simply oppressive.

THOMAS J. HIGGINS

*Mount Morrison, North Face, High Sierra.* Mount Morrison, visible from Convict Lake and Highway 395, has presented its spectacular and unclimbed north face for many years without attracting many serious climbing attempts. On May 28 Charlie Raymond and I climbed the face in twelve hours, beginning from a campsite in the hanging valley at the mountain's base. The route starts in the middle of a squat, black hunk of rock. We climbed generally straight up, tending right where the black rock turns grey. Traversing down and left (5.8) to avoid a clean, sharp dihedral, we soon reached an easier broken area. The climbing continued up broken rock to the base of "California," a white section shaped like the state and visible from the hanging valley below. At that point, the imposing wall above forced us left over a friction traverse to an exposed corner. Charlie's lead took us nearly to the prow of the north buttress, where we rapidly climbed toward a gold-colored chute above. The chute took us to a steep headwall and finally a thin ridge, which led to the summit. The first pitch is devious and difficult, but after the first four pitches are done the climbing is never more than 5.6. (V, 5.8).

THOMAS J. HIGGINS

*Mount Hamilton, South Face, Sequoia National Park.* Jim Wilson and Dick Long had scouted the face and reported a Grade V or VI, some 1800 feet of nearly vertical climbing with almost no ledges. The walk in to Lower Hamilton Lake on July 27 was very pleasant. The next morning we sorted gear and searched for a better camp at the foot of the wall across the creek. About noon Al Steck and I set out to climb the first pitches. The first one up the buttress was all free except for one move across a smooth rib, which went with a sling. On top of the buttress we were below one of the more questionable parts. Al led up to the right side of a sickle-shaped ledge, placing a bolt to get to it and

another to make the first move across. A rurl and a bugaboo got him high enough to tension traverse into the beginning of a great crack, the only break in an otherwise 400-foot vertical wall. We descended to return with everyone on the 29th. Climbing the great crack took all day. We bivouacked in slings near the top of the chimney. Above, the most plausible route was to stay right for several leads and then climb a sloping ramp to a moist, grassy area we called "Upper Bearpaw Meadow." Above this the face was split by an open-book which gradually deepened into a chimney and then widened into a steep gully leading to the summit. In the morning a few aid pitons got Al high enough to traverse right to more broken rock and free-climb to a sandy nook at the foot of a deep chimney. Dick led the chimney, the right side of which was a huge, detached finger of rock slowly separating from the wall. From the point of the finger, he gained an open-book which slanted back to a horizontal system of ledges directly below Upper Bearpaw Meadow. Al had trouble around the corner leading to the "meadow," but this pitch was easy to clean; most of the pins fell out when Dick prusiked up the rope. The "meadow," halfway point of the climb, was a 45° patch of wet grass, sloping back into an alcove filled with ferns and dripping water. Above it the open book continued another hundred feet before narrowing into the chimney, every foot a horror, rounded and devoid of cracks. As an alternative, Dick climbed up on the face, shooting pins in all directions like a porcupine. Several hours later he managed to get to a solid flake, placed a bolt and rappelled to the "meadow." Evening was spent chopping mud for seat holes. In the morning Dick managed to reach the foot of a nasty flaring chimney 40 feet right of the bolt and wiggled up it to a ledge which led to the base of a tower of vertical slabs that looked so precarious that we called it the "House of Cards." I led a pitch straight up from there, mostly free. Dick led a long mixed free and aid pitch, diagonalizing left to the foot of the chimney. Success was assured! Al took the next pitch and I started another before darkness caught us. With no level ledges available, we ended up in four different places, each half supported by bivouac seats. On the morning of August 2, I finished my lead on the first level platform of the climb. Al took the next lead, using only two pins right at the start. Jim then made a short lead into the mouth of a deep, narrow chimney filled with chockstones, up which I worked. Al then led the last pitch over the rim to the summit boulders, only 50 feet from the top. Dick guided us over the summit of Mount Hamilton and down the back side.

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