

Keele Peak, Hess Mountains. This mountain is located on the Yukon-North West Territories border. George Denton and I ascended Keele by a rib in its west face on July 2.

MONTY ALFORD

Canadian Rockies

Mount Hooker, Northeast Face. Photographs from early expeditions along the Whirlpool River indicated not only the splendor of the Scott Glacier and Hooker Icefield but the elegance of the ice-clad northern and eastern faces of majestic Mount Hooker. Although the mountain scarcely rivals Robson in magnitude, the buttress formed by the convergence of these two faces features ice cliffs and a high-angle ice sheet resembling the Kain face. Kain, in fact, was with Thorington in 1924 when he saw Hooker's "northern cliffs surmounted by a twisted, corniced arête that makes direct ascent virtually impossible. An ice bulge at the mountain's Eastern end swoops down and seems to overhang. And so we chose the Western col . . ." The pictures and the build-up cast their strange charm. As a rainy August week temporarily cleared, John Rupley and I hiked along the Whirlpool River and up the ice labyrinth of the Scott Glacier, much as our predecessors had done. Fortunately, connecting ribs and tunnels through ice frameworks enabled us to find a route with a minimum of step cutting. At 8800 feet we set up our tent as the chill of evening shadow set in, 2000 vertical feet below Hooker's pointed white summit. Everything looked the same as the pictures of forty years ago—those overhanging ice bulges, the corniced arête, the steep ice sheet, the stratified rocks on the flanks now flecked with fresh powder. How steep was the ice sheet? Would there be blue ice close beneath the lustreless surface? Would the fresh powder be coalesced with the older surface? Would the morning sun loosen dangerous surface avalanches? An unusually cold night promised the best conditions possible under the circumstances, and daybreak found us bursting with enthusiasm. A slightly late start and a peculiar drifting dark cloud did not erode confidence, though perhaps they should have. In an hour we were in the morning sun, crampons biting into a relentless 50° slope. We belayed, each lead getting closer to those soaring white bulges. Yes, they overhung—quite a bit, in fact. We veered to the north to avoid them. The angle decreased 5° and the top-snow decreased to a half-foot. It was time for tense belays. Spikes still bit well into the crisp powder-and-ice combination, though solid ice-axe security was a thing of the past. And so was the good weather. The tight way the first ice screw went in gave me a feeling of complete euphoria.

And it took muscle to twist them out—between belays and at the belay points. Now we were higher than the first overhanging bulge. The angle increased 5° to 8° , but our feet remained very cold—a good sign, for we knew that this special chill would keep those lovely screws amply tight. Ordinarily, a jet-sounding surface avalanche just a rope-length to the side would be more than unnerving. Three of these came close by, but faith in the protection of the great bulges dulled their imminent menace. I cut half a lead, twisted in a few extra ice screws and cut over a bulge that put us on easier slopes at the margin of the north sheet and above the highest point of the final bulge. Mount Columbia darkened to a blur and in ten minutes the wind whipped us with force and the sting of snow. At the next belay we discovered that an ice axe would hold better than a screw, and from then on we were out of trouble, heading for that beautiful twisting cornice with the biting blast hitting the right side of our faces. Once on the summit, the curtains rapidly closed in. There was no time for a second look, as we hurried toward the southeast ridge. Loose rock and electricity in the air proved more than annoying but caused no delays. In view of the oncoming fury, we broke camp and hurried to the level of the gravel bars and spruce trees. Neither of us could recall such a violent and drenching rain, all night long; safe under a tight tarp, we mused on how close the timing had been that day, how close we had come to not climbing that classic route of white elegance on Mount Hooker.

FRED BECKEY

Boom Mountain, North Face. Joe Farrand and I started above the east end of Boom Lake, on easy quartzite just left of a deep gully. After a few hundred feet we took to the gully bed, until it steepened to a wet overhanging corner. A long traverse right took us past this and we then angled left towards an apparent weakness higher up. We were now at the top of the quartzite band, and I led one delicate pitch on rather shaky sandstone. Joe's next lead was our first limestone pitch—a vertical wall with two small overhangs which required aid (in a severe thunder-and-hail storm). One easy pitch took us to a large ledge below an overhanging wall. We walked left looking for a weakness, and I had to lead a very delicate move on loose rock. At least the weather had dried up. 200 feet of easier climbing brought us to the summit plateau. NCCS III F7 A2.

DICK LOFTHOUSE

Mount Eisenhower, Southwest face. When the Calgary Mountain Club erected a bivouac hut on Mount Eisenhower in 1967 I predicted that the