

Castle Rock Spire, West Face. Fred Beckey, Mort Hempel, Ben Borson, and I feared the rugged nine-hour approach to Castle Rock Spire deserved a higher rating than the beautiful plumb-like crack system we had spotted from the roadhead. Our fears were unfounded. Closer inspection revealed that the cracks started a full 250 feet above the ground. After seven hours of bolting, penduluming, and nailing overhangs we finally set up a belay in slings from a bolt a scant 100 feet up the wall. On the next pitch I was confronted by an overhang of downward hanging rotten flakes. A piton under a flake, a tied-off loose chockstone, a bolt placed in a one-inch hole drilled completely through one of the flakes, and a shaky piton got me past the crux and into the crack system. My lack of seniority gave me the next lead, which began in a nice easy crack, but soon led to an overhanging, rotten, crackless manzanita field. The field was negotiated by testing the brittle bushes and tying them off for direct aid. I tried to shut out the recurring mental image of a climber hanging in space, spinning in circles after a fall, with bunches of silly bushes tied to the rope at regular intervals above him. As the sun set I reached the top of the manzanita overhang and belayed Fred up. We were only a few hundred feet off the ground, so we rappelled and got a good night's sleep. Fred and I prussiked back up the next morning. We found the upper wall to be made up of clean hard rock with continuous cracks all the way to the summit. The first pitch of the day overhung in one spot and widened out into a jam-crack for about twenty feet. A ledge at the end of the jam was welcomed with mixed emotion since its very presence on the otherwise vertical wall was made possible by a rather mean-looking overhang above it. The overhang was split by a single two-inch crack with rough edges. As I attempted to do the crack free, Fred nervously and repeatedly voiced the merits of aid climbing in situations like mine. After a brief rest on a piton, I finished the crack in good alpine but rather poor Yosemite style. The final pitch was a serene finish. After nailing a short overhang, we found a single crack splitting the smooth 70° headwall leading to the summit. We dispensed with pitons and threaded the crack with jam nuts for its entire length. For three days the walls of the canyon and the spire had hidden the view of the Sierra. We were rewarded with an exquisite view of the peaks of the Great Western Divide as we mantled onto the summit ridge. By evening we had rappelled, packed up, hiked out, and blended into the faceless crowd and the never ending procession of tourists. NCCS IV, F9, A4.

GALEN ROWELL

Mount Morrison, North Buttress Direct. On January 5, Les Wilson,

George Bloom, Ray Jewell, and I completed the first winter ascent of the direct north buttress on Mount Morrison. The first day's climbing, mostly F7, was the most challenging. The holds were small, the cracks few, the rock rotten, and the rockfall frequent. Hardhats are recommended. Soft iron pitons seemed to secure better in the brittle rock than the chrome-molly pitons. Nightfall the first day found us on top of the crux of the climb, the headwall, a 60-foot overhanging wall. The lead ropes were used by Les Wilson to lead this A3 pitch up the two brittle cracks. We spent the night in belay seats, slings, and tied to small steps. The second day, above the wall we climbed toward the obvious rusty chimney. After ascending the chimney, we rappelled down the other side into a couloir, climbed up to the ridge and along the ridge to the summit. Cold clear weather was enjoyed on the two-day climb. NCCS IV, F7, A3.

TED HAMM, JR., *Unaffiliated*

Stonehouse Pinnacle, Stonehouse Peak, Trinity Alps. During the late spring, Frank Yager, Bill Griffin, and I hiked seven miles up to Lower Canyon Creek Lake in the Trinity Alps to climb a 1000-foot pinnacle on Stonehouse Peak. Our route followed the most prominent dihedral for eight pitches of mixed climbing and required a bivouac. We found the granite almost as good as Yosemite's and we recommend the Trinity Alps for enjoyable rock climbing. NCCS III, F7, A2.

BRUCE PRICE, *Unaffiliated*

"White Elephant", Southwest Face, Joshua Tree National Monument. With some probing we found a long face, almost four pitches, in a large formation east of the main campground, which we dubbed the "White Elephant". The ascent was made on February 7 by Brian Gochoel and me. The entire ascent was free and on good rock with a maximum of F8 on the last pitch to the summit.

FRED BECKEY

California-Yosemite

The Prow, Washington Column. Call me Glen Denny. In June, I was near Dinner Ledge on the Washington Column. All day I had been watching Robbins and Mike Covington chipping away at Royal's latest pipe-dream: a new route up the smooth face between the south and east faces of the column. They had started the previous afternoon, climbing 300 feet to reach a ledge for the night. Someone had placed a bomb in