

attempt, and especially my seven pitons and grand total of 17 pounds of equipment. Then I looked back down Pine Creek Canyon to where my car was parked, many miles and 5000 feet below. My pack contained the barest essentials for climbing, self-belay and a bivouac. I used every piece of equipment at least once. The first 200 feet were unroped, but from there on the climbing was F6 to F8 on steep, but rough granite. Just before sunset I stood on top of a long slab a few hundred feet from the top. Above me was a short overhang and a gap in the crack system. My repeated attempts to climb it free failed. I placed a piton for aid but could not reach another placement. Finally a desperate free move from a sling attached to the piton enabled me to reach a wide crack. A traverse on a long ledge gained a dihedral leading to the summit ridge. The sun had set when I reached the top (13,713 feet) and I bivouacked at 12,000 feet on the opposite side of the mountain. The next morning I hiked out to the Rock Creek roadend, jumped on my previously cached bicycle for a 40-mile ride to my car. NCCS IV, F9, A1.

GALEN A. ROWELL

*Merced Peak, North Face.* In early July, Mary Bomba and I made the first ascent of this face. In the middle of the face an obvious ramp diagonals up and right. We climbed to the bottom of the ramp over some loose F7, then ascended the poorly protected ramp. A short, moderate section at the top of the ramp led to easier climbing and the summit. NCCS III, F7.

KENNETH BOCHE

*Fuller Buttes, Eagle Dihedral.* In April Jerry Coe and I climbed a route on the southwest face of the eastern butte. To our knowledge, this is the first route on these surprisingly smooth domes which present 1000-foot cliffs toward the San Joaquin River, southeast of Yosemite. A gigantic dihedral, beginning above the ground but reachable by an easy ramp from the side, is the only natural weakness on the buttes. The third pitch had a ceiling that we found to be unclimbable by conventional methods. A crack, too wide to nail and too difficult for either of us to jam, led past the ceiling. Deep inside it narrowed abruptly to a two-inch width, but once a piton was placed, it was recessed so far that it became impossible to reach higher on the overhang. I free-climbed to the edge of the ceiling, placed a piton, floundered in slings, and returned. Jerry did the same. The ultimate solution was to hang on tension from the last piton while throwing a large Clog nut attached to the haul line. After innumerable attempts, the nut followed the proper arc and jammed in the crack some 15 feet higher. Climbing hand-over-hand, I was soon above the difficulties. Higher, we followed cracks and chimneys past more feasible overhangs until we reached a long ledge that rounded a corner just below the summit. Walking unroped around

the corner, we came almost face to face with a golden eagle coming in for a landing. At least as surprised as we, he hurried unsociably away, flapping a fast about-face and diving downward out of sight. After a moment he reappeared as he soared off into the clouds. An easy chimney put us on the summit slabs at the end of the day and the beginning of a storm. NCCS IV, F9, A3.

GALEN A. ROWELL

*The Smokestack.* This is the lefthand tower on a separate but obscure massif of the Wheeler Crest, marked as P 8400 on the map, above Well's Meadow on the Owens Valley floor. Though visible from Bishop, it appears so small and blends in so well with the 8000-foot escarpment of the crest, that Doug Robinson had trouble convincing me that we should even attempt it. Our first attempt in January, 1970, was stopped on the third pitch by a steep blank section. Looking back, we saw our high point was only a quarter of the way up the tower and realized that it must be at least a 1000-foot face. In 1971, we reclimbed the first two F8 leads, and as I watched amazed, the new Doug Robinson led a F9 traverse without hesitation. Higher I tried to follow his example but finked out by placing the only bolt on the route for protection on F9 face-climbing. I kept the bolt kit out as Doug began the most questionable part of the route where there were no cracks. After many false starts, Doug led a brilliant F10 traverse to the beginning of a chimney system. Still the climbing did not taper off and only one of the nine leads was less than F8. I have rarely seen such continuous and varied free climbing. Jams, flaring chimneys, steep face climbing and low-angle friction with micro-flakes all provided cruxes on various leads. This would be a classic in Yosemite. NCCS IV, F10.

GALEN A. ROWELL

*Hamilton Lakes Dome, North Ridge.* Having chosen an impossible line on Angel Wings and having succeeded in proving it impossible, TM Herbert and I cast our eyes across Hamilton Creek to the north ridge of Hamilton Lakes Dome or Peak 9770. This prominent feature southwest of the lowest Hamilton Lake had been climbed twice before via the east ridge. Our approach was long and required forethought and success with a wet mossy jam crack. The climb was beautiful with seven pitches of fifth class straight up the arête — face climbing, crack climbing, good rock, bad rock, and excellent nut placements. We descended via the fourth class eastern route. NCCS II, F7.

DON LAURIA

*Fresno Dome, Southwest Face.* There appear to be a number of domes and rock outcrops on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada that have been overlooked by the serious climber. One of these is Fresno