

*Balloon Dome, Northeast Face.* Pouring over topographic maps one boring wet weekend a few winters ago, I became curious about the tightly woven contours on a feature adjacent to the upper San Joaquin River titled Balloon Dome. If those delicate brown lines were accurate, they implied a massive steep uplift from low footings. Peering through old journals and books on the Sierra Nevada, I could find no trace of the name or a photograph, but the aerials at the U.S. Geological Survey proved interesting indeed. To pry climbers away from Yosemite Valley can be exasperating. The first question invariably is, "How far is the hike in?" After some verbal jousting, I convinced Reed Cundiff and Bill Hackett to accompany me, being careful not to mention that the 8 or 10 miles first involved a 3000-foot descent to the river (then gaining it back). Fortunately, the general scenery and magnetic sight of the truly inspiring dome spurred us onward during the frustrating hike. Camped amid the scattered pines close to the giant rock, we discussed a choice of routes. We agreed that the great pillar leaning against the northeast face was too classic to overlook, and on our first sortie we climbed a few pitches. Cold windy weather halted progress higher on the face on the next attempt, but on June 2 conditions were flawless for the completion. The first five pitches are up increasingly difficult slabs and deep jams to the top of the pillar. A fifty-foot rappel from a bolt to the inside notch brings one to the sheer smooth upper dome rock. What we had feared would be bolting proved possible with a hard pendulum, then a pitch of thin aid-climbing. Delightful friction pitches continue to the seldom visited summit. NCCS IV, F8, A3.

FRED BECKEY

*Voodoo Dome, South Face.* This is the largest rock formation in the Needles and its broad monolithic 900-foot face is the highest in the area. Its most noticeable feature is a gigantic arch above a cave-like hollow low on the left center of the face. The classic route line ascends the bald protrusion just right of the arch, and because its initial dihedral is stained green, the name "Pea Soup Route" evolved. Marvelous unglaciated granite contains many minute but solid knobs and hollows for face climbing. There are generally excellent cracks for aid when needed. The route was begun by Dan McHale and Joe Brown in the spring of 1970. After four difficult pitches they called off the venture. Dan and I made the entire climb on October 27 and 28, 1970, with a comfortable "sandy ledge" bivouac above the principal difficulties. The first pitch is a spectacular piton lead (A1) to a hanging belay. An aid lead ascends the left-leaning dihedral; this long pitch nails over a small ceiling into a chimney (knifeblades and rurps). The third pitch ascends the chimney to a tree (dangling belay). Unprotected face climbing leads left up to a bolt. Here hard moves (F8) up chicken-heads are followed by working right to a flake. Here one can climb directly up (F9) or right and down, and then up again (F5). This hard

pitch ends on the prominent slanting ledge with a big rectangular block. The route now nails beneath a flake and works right to an open-book. Difficult nailing leads to where one can free climb to a large platform. Now one wanders left into a groove above the giant arch, which is climbed to the sandy bivouac ledge. Now one free climbs right and up on exposed but satisfactory slabs. The route is deceptive here, but one must have faith, aiming at the right-hand of two parallel cracks amid the blankness. The crack (F6) ascends to a little rib on the left. A relatively easy but wholly unprotected pitch on small solution holds follows. Then come slabs and soon one frictions onto the dome's sloping crown. NCCS IV or V, F9, A3.

FRED BECKEY

*Domeland.* One of Domeland's most prominent rock formations is a large crag with a smokestack tower on its south end. It was dubbed Steamship Rock by Jim Stoddard and me after we made the first ascent of its east face in November 1970. This is a four-pitch climb with excellent free climbing and a minimum of nailing. NCCS II, F6, A3. Radiant Dome, one of the most prominent massifs in the region, apparently was climbed for the first time on November 15, 1971 by Hooman Aprin and me. Using what seemed to be the easiest route, via the south face, the climb involved three roped pitches, two of them F6. NCCS I, F6.

FRED BECKEY

*Crown Point, Peeler Pillar.* Near the Twin Lakes area to the north of Yosemite, Crown Point lies between Crown and Peeler Lakes. Rising above Peeler Lake is an impressive pillar which Geert Dijkhuis (of Holland), Larry Johnson, and I climbed on September 5. We began about 100 feet to the right of the steep north face of the buttress, between an overhanging chimney and a sandy gully. Two hundred feet of undemanding fifth-class led to a large ledge and a rope-length of third class. Above, we climbed a white face lined with vertical cracks, staying left of a large open-book for four leads of consistent 5.5 to 5.6 climbing on excellent rock. The climbing is very reminiscent of the southeast buttress route on Cathedral Peak in Tuolumne. NCCS II, F6.

GREG DONALDSON

*Incredible Hulk.* Greg Donaldson closed his description of the west face of the Incredible Hulk with the sentence, "So the summit is still waiting along with a thousand other possibilities." (A.A.J., 1971, 17:2, p 353.) Note that this is no longer the case. On May 23 Bob Grow and I reached the summit. The route ascended the couloir on the right of the Hulk for several hundred feet. A steep chute in the left wall of the main