

the significant role Rainier has played in the development of American mountaineering, then this book offers an unparalleled introduction.

WILLIAM UNSOELD

Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley, by Steve Roper. San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1971. 305 pages, 16 photographs, \$6.95

This is a textbook example of how a guidebook should be done. It is without a doubt the finest guidebook in America. Roper has carefully rewritten even most of the older route descriptions, making them more accurate, readable, and concise. The new "Totebook" format allows the addition and removal of pages by means of two screwposts in the binding. Future revisions may be loose-leaf fillers at more frequent intervals.

Unlike many guidebooks, the introduction is entertaining, excellent prose. Subjects such as climbing history, life in the Valley, equipment, safety, names, and rating systems are all evaluated by Roper's acrid and able pen. Under "Life in the Valley" we read:

"Second only to the Curry Company as a hostile force, the bears are at least predictable. During the lean months these omnivora roam freely through the campgrounds, devouring everything edible in their path and creating panic among the uninitiated. Cars are broken into, tents containing no food are destroyed, and tourists flee. The facile bears rule the campgrounds."

Under rating systems, he is succinct:

"Idealistically, an international rating system is as desirable as Esperanto; a fine, doomed idea."

Now that the multi-day climbs of the past are being climbed faster, by means of less direct aid, more knowledge of the route, and advanced technique and equipment, Roper has made a conscious effort to lower the grade ratings of a large proportion of the routes. While this tends to separate climbs in the upper grades, it clogs the lower grades into a confused mass of unequals. For example, Grade II's now include a four-pitch climb with leads from 5.8-5.10, and another that is a two-hour unroped scramble from the trail. Consistently, the gradings are mainly according to time of average ascent, which seems to contradict Roper's own introduction that states, "The Grades I-IV take into consideration length, average difficulty, continuity, exposure, commitment, and other, more subtle factors." It remains to be seen whether the rest of the country will recognize the new gradings by following suit. Oh well, there's always the UIAA.

While a few may mourn the loss of the historical action photos from the first edition, the new informational and well-marked pictures are far more useful. In fact, it is often easier to find a route by a dot on one of these photos than by adjectives which popped out of Roper's head in the course of a winter evening in Berkeley.

The professional consistency and meticulous research make this guide a pleasure to peruse. It's few faults seem to be inherent in all guidebooks and only prove that no number of words can ever substitute for sound mountaineering judgment.

GALEN A. ROWELL

A Climber's Guide to the Interior Ranges of British Columbia, by William Lowell Putnam. New York: American Alpine Club. 1971. 323 pages, 35 photos. \$7.00

The new revision of this guide has been updated with a see-through plastic-cover similar to many European guidebooks. It contains much new information and even the white spaces at the end of the chapters have been utilized for historical and often humorous quotations.

The simplest criticism of the book is that it covers too many mountains. Route descriptions are usually accurate, but brief. References such as (AAJ 10-421) are attached to most descriptions and have caused disgruntled climbers to mutter that in order to find necessary facts about routes in a certain area, they need hundreds of volumes of old journals and seventeen porters to carry them. Actually, the references can be of great help in the city when we wish to learn more about a certain climb or mountain. The book is as valuable for an index of information as it is for a guidebook. Dates, code numbers of pertinent maps, and information on geology are often more useful than F8's, obvious ceilings, and sixty-foot traverses that are actually only forty feet long and place the climber twenty feet in the wrong direction, trying to hold his guidebook and his temper.

The route descriptions are short and general enough so that climbers will not be lulled into false confidence by possession of the book; in fact they will wish that the book was a little longer and more comprehensive. As climbing and exploration continue, it will be necessary to have separate guidebooks for areas now contained in this work. That time may not be too far in the future.

GALEN A. ROWELL

A Climber's Guide To Seneca Rocks, West Virginia. Edited by F. R. Robinson, Potomac Appalachian Trail Mountaineering Section, 1971. \$2.50.

Finally there is an accurate assemblage of the routes on this fine crag in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. Mr. Robinson has compiled descriptions of eighty routes, and their variations, in this compact and easy-to-use guide. The written descriptions used in conjunction with the fifteen excellent line drawings of the crag by John Christian, make this book a thorough compendium without being a hold-by-hold