

ascends F8 hand-cracks and laybacks directly up to the beak. (NCCS II, F8.)

CONRAD VAN BRUGGEN

Homer's Nose, "Dance of Topo-Usha". In August Dave Ohst, John Tuttle and I climbed this exceptional route that ascends the great cleft (chimney) that splits the south face of Homer's Nose. Start fifty feet right of an obvious water streak—the Black Tongue—and follow flakes diagonally up and right to a ledge running below the huge overhanging bulge. Traverse left on this to a short leaning corner and belay just above on a small sloping shelf (F10). Pitch 2: Follow a thin crack straight up (A1) to a short blank section. Use hooks (A3) to gain the crack above (3-4 inches), and follow this (F9) to a small belay stance on the left (1 bolt). Pitch 3: Traverse left ten feet to another bolt and follow the obvious off-width and chimney above (F9+) to a huge belay ledge. The last pitch is easy and obvious, ending in a large cave near the top. (NCCS III, F10, A3).

DICK LEVERSEE

Slick Rock, Crystal Basin. Placerville climbers have been doing new routes on Slick Rock this year (consult the USGS 15-foot map for Robbs Peak). To find the area, leave Highway 50 at Riverton via Ice House Road. A bit north of Jones Place, a road branches right, through a gate. Drive up Cheese Camp Ridge to between Four Cornered Peak and Slick Rock. Circle north and down to Silver Creek, east of the rock. It's best to hit the slabs east of the face, and contour along them, to avoid bush-whacking. The climbing is friction and face on Tuolomne-quality rock. Most routes are easy after the first pitch.

BOB BRANSCOMB

Clyde Minaret, Southeast Face. Kim Schmitz and I made the first winter ascent of this route in February. We were surprised that this most prominent of High Sierra wall climbs had been left alone in winter. Not only was it selected as one of the "Fifty Classic Climbs of North America" in Roper and Steck's book, but also it forms the spectacular backdrop for tens of thousands of winter visitors to Mammoth Mountain ski area. The sheer 1000-foot face rarely ices up, for it faces south, is made of dark meta-volcanic rock that acts as a heat sink, and lies west of the crest where it is influenced more by Pacific than cold Great Basin air. One of the major difficulties of a winter ascent of Clyde is a Forest Service regulation prohibiting overnight parking on the road leading to Mammoth. Except for the banker's hours of the ski area, no public transportation is available to or near the roadhead. We made elaborate plans with local friends to drive my car to town after we left

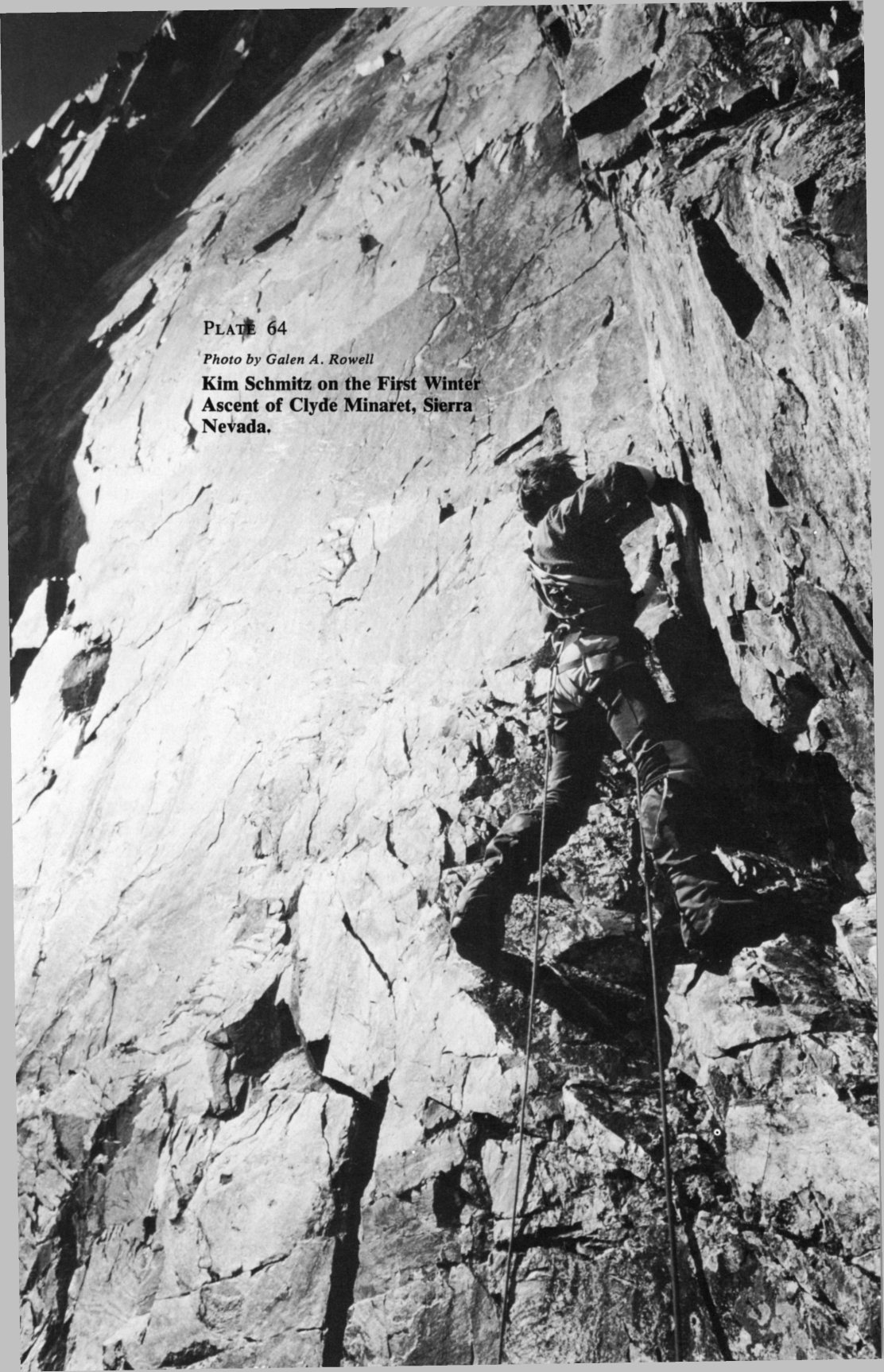


PLATE 64

Photo by Galen A. Rowell

**Kim Schmitz on the First Winter
Ascent of Clyde Minaret, Sierra
Nevada.**

it at dawn, then return it to the roadhead on the third day. To reach Clyde we skied with a full complement of winter climbing and camping gear down to Agnew Meadows and back up to Iceberg Lake. The ten miles took from dawn to dusk. At sunrise the next day we were on the trail, skiing to the base of the face. With boots and heavy clothing, the F8 climbing was near our limit. Without bivouac gear, we moved consistently but not quickly up a route that was far from obvious. The difficulties began about midway up the wall in a smooth dihedral. Tiny holds and cold fingers did not work well together. A boot welt perfect for ski bindings made narrow crack climbing more exciting. When we reached the summit we saw a gorgeous sunset, but we knew exactly what it meant to be watching such a spectacle without bivy gear on top of a 12,281-foot peak in winter. The guide description for the descent suggested a long ridge scramble into a distant notch. We dropped straight down the southwest face onto steep, hard snow. Kim used an ice tool and I used an alpine hammer as we kicked steps rapidly toward a gully that led to our headlamps and skis at the base of the wall. The gully itself had a few 60° pitches that would have been terrifying just a half-hour later in the dark. By the time we reached our skis, we had to use lights just to get into the bindings. A cold wind blew as we descended by kick-turn and long traverse by headlamp. The next day we skied out, very pleased with what we consider the most pleasant winter wall climb in the Sierra Nevada outside of Yosemite.

GALEN ROWELL

Utah

Canyonlands. In the Canyonlands, several new important climbs have been made on the larger spires. Undoubtedly the increased use of Friends in desert climbing will see more new and demanding free climbs in the near future. In April of 1979 several new climbs were done, including the *Lightning Bolt Cracks* (NCCS II, F10+) on North Sixshooter Peak by Pete Williams and me, and the first free ascent of the north face of Castleton Tower (II, F11) by Buck Norden and me. Both routes were soon repeated, the former by Bob Rotert from North Carolina and the latter by Bruce Lella. Also just after the previous climbs, I rope-soloed a major ascent of the east face of Moses, the *Primrose Dihedrals*, taking two days, not to mention a 50-foot fall. Six months later Steve Hong joined me to make the first free ascent of Moses via the *Primrose Dihedrals* (IV, F11+), a seven-pitch route, certainly a desert classic. On this ascent Friends played an important part protecting long, parallel cracks. In addition to these new free climbs, Ken Trout and Bruce Lella made a mid-winter repeat of the *Sundevil Chimney* route on the Titan in the Fisher Towers. Les Ellison and Mike Stone also repeated Brer Rabbit (VI, F9 to F10, A4) on Cottontail Tower in the Fisher Towers. They took four days, trashed their ropes and had