

were fascinating. In 1916 he joined Socony-Vacuum Oil Company where he worked till his retirement as vice president in charge of production; he was primarily responsible for forming ARAMCO—a consortium of oil companies in the Middle East. John was deeply interested in the Middle East, serving for years as chairman of the board of trustees of the American University in Beirut, and he knew and sympathized strongly with the Arabs. He was friend to kings and ambassadors as well as peasants and porters; he seemed always at ease and made others so.

He married Anne Taylor in 1916 after a whirlwind courtship and they lived in Morristown, New Jersey, though their hearts were always in Keene Valley; John returned there to build a new home after Anne died. There with his two children, 8 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren he celebrated his 90th birthday.

John's great love was the woods and mountains. He was a founder of the Adirondack Mountain Club, and member of the British, Swiss and Canadian Alpine Clubs as well as our own, of which he was frequent director and President from 1944 to 1946. At the start of World War II John helped organize the Tenth Mountain Division which many of the best American climbers and skiers made into an elite force. He was a special friend to many eager young climbers whom he loved to take on his favorite rock routes.

Perhaps we remember John best for his vitality and youth. Until his last year he rowed across the lower Ausable Lake to his camp on the upper lake, constantly devising ways to thwart generations of bears who raided his ice chest regularly. He traversed "The Range" almost every year, skied both downhill and cross-country, and cut and split his own wood. But when at age 89 he sought to remodel a really decrepit farmhouse we thought he had gone too far! Contrariwise, this challenged him to greater activity and interest, and the Beede House, beautifully restored high above Keene Valley will be cherished by his family for many generations. There is this one great thing about John: he never seemed to grow old; his body slowly withered but when he died gently at home, the spirit and heart were as youthful as ever.

CHARLES S. HOUSTON, M.D.

JOHN DALE MENDENHALL 1911-1983

John Mendenhall died in Seattle July 30, 1983, three weeks after suffering a stroke. John, his wife Ruth, and other family members were vacationing in the Tetons when John was stricken on the night before a planned climb of Disappointment Peak.

An honors graduate of the California Institute of Technology (1933), John was a respected civil and structural engineer. During the World War II years, his work included design and construction of the Birmingham (Alabama) Aircraft

Modification Facility. He then became Aircraft Structural Designer and later Chief Aircraft Engineer. After the war he joined the Ralph M. Parsons Company in Southern California, with whom he served for many years as Principal Project Engineer with the Petroleum and Chemical Division, and as Chief Structural Engineer. He also helped to develop standards for earthquake resistant buildings through the Structural Engineers Society of Southern California. He retired at the end of 1977, and he and Ruth moved to Seattle in 1978.

In his climbing, as in his profession, John assumed a leadership role. He began making solo ascents at the age of fourteen. His first ascent of the northeast gully of Laurel Mountain in 1930 is generally accepted as the first belayed climb in the Sierra Nevada. He climbed all through the 1930s, pioneering several early technical routes in the Sierra.

His mountaineering after 1938 centered around the Rock Climbing Section (RCS) and the Ski Mountaineers Section of the Los Angeles area Sierra Club chapter. He met his future wife, Ruth Dyar, on an RCS outing to Tahquitz Rock; they were married in 1939. John and Ruth participated in the early climbing development of Tahquitz Rock in the 1938-53 period. John led the second (first completely free) ascent of the class 5.8 Mechanic's Route in 1938, considered by Chris Jones to be perhaps the hardest pre-World War II rock climb in the U.S. He and Ruth were frequent leaders of local Sierra Club climbing and skiing outings from 1938 until they left Pasadena in 1978.

In 1940 the Mendenhalls began a series of nine trips to the Rocky Mountains and Selkirks of Canada. They attempted Mount Confederation, which had been tried five times before. They returned in 1947 to make the first ascent. Later visits to Canada included first ascents of the north peak of Mount Lowell (1948); Mount Synge, Midway Peak, and Aiguille Peak (1952); Mount Palmer (1953); and the Northwest Ridge of Mount Temple (1957).

In his home range, the Sierra, John made hundreds of climbs, ranging from club climbs with beginners to new routes and first ascents. These included the first ascent of the North Face of Mount Williamson (1957, with Ruth) and numerous new routes on the east face of Mount Whitney, Temple Crag, the Lower Spire in Yosemite, and other difficult faces. Years of ski mountaineering included the first winter ascents of Mount Sill (1957) and Middle Palisade (1960). He also climbed in the Cascades, the Tetons, the Midwest, and the Alps.

The Mendenhalls' two daughters, Vivian and Valerie, were born in the mid-1940's and often climbed and skied with their parents, later becoming active mountaineers and outdoors women on their own. In a sense, however, the Mendenhall family was bigger than that—it included hundreds of beginners who learned to love and respect the mountains through John. He was a warm, patient, and intelligent mentor who never hesitated to repeat climbs with the neophytes of each succeeding generation. The affection and respect that RCS climbers felt for both John and Ruth were symbolized by the Honorary Memberships bestowed on them when they left Pasadena for Seattle. That same year, 1978, they jointly received the Sierra Club's Francis P. Farquhar Award for

“achievements in climbing, leadership, techniques, and contributions to the Club.” John also was co-author with Ruth of a climbing instruction book for beginners, which was published in its third (revised) edition in 1983 under the title *The Challenge of Rock and Mountain Climbing*.

John continued to be active in the mountains following their move to the Pacific Northwest. His ascents during those years included Mount Olympus and a solo ascent of Glacier Peak (1979), the West Peak of Mount Stuart (1980), Mount Index solo (1981), and the West Ridge of Forbidden Peak (1982). An AAC member from 1966, he served as Cascade Section Chairman in 1980 and was Chairman of the Nominating Committee in 1982. He was posthumously awarded the Club's Angelo Heilprin Citation at the 1983 Annual Meeting. He was also a member of The Mountaineers.

Few climbers have equalled John's combination of distinguished ascents and dedicated club service. That he never lost the desire to meet new friends and help others find joy in the mountains was a great gift to us all.

JOHN G. RIPLEY

HERMAN HOERLIN 1903-1983

Dr. Hoerlin was one of the leading European climbers during the late 1920s and 1930s. With Erwin Schneider, he made many notable first winter ascents in the Alps, for example that of the Peuterey Ridge of Mount Blanc. In those days even a straightforward ascent, as of Monte Rosa, might require starting with skis from near Visp, a fitting task for hard men with little vacation time. In 1930 Hoerlin was chief photographer for The International Himalayan Expedition to Kanchenjunga and made the first ascent of Jonsang Peak, at that time the highest climbed summit. In 1932 he made first ascents of Chopicalqui, Copa and other summits in the Cordillera Blanca, Peru as a member of an Alpenverein expedition.

Hoerlin studied at the Institutes of Technology in Berlin and Stuttgart and took his Ph.D. degree at Stuttgart in 1936. For his doctoral research he made cosmic ray measurements over distances extending from Spitsbergen to the Straits of Magellan. During this work he established the highest earthbound cosmic ray observatory station at the summit of Nevado Copa in the Cordillera Blanca staying there for weeks by himself and subsequently making periodic solo ascents of the peak to collect data.

In 1938 he came to the U.S. as manager of the physics laboratory at General Aniline and Film Corporation in Binghamton, New York. Hoerlin joined the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in 1953 where he became leader of an outstanding group of scientists studying the phenomenology of nuclear explosions, especially those at high altitude.