Aconcagua; this issue brings that material up to date. The map was first published as a supplement to the *American Alpine Journal, 1987.*

The booklet describes the principal mountaineering activities on Aconcagua from 1981 to 1991. Among other useful information, it includes brief route descriptions of the 14 climbs by which Aconcagua has been scaled to date. For instance, the diagrams and illustrations of the technical ascents on the south face are extraordinarily valuable to anyone researching these climbs even if you can't read the Catalan text. Route drawings include UIAA grade per pitch, steepness in degrees and bivouac locations.

MICHAEL PELCHAT

Mount McKinley—Icy Crown of North America, Fred Beckey. The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1993. 319 pages, black and white and color photos. $29.95.

In the Shadow of Denali, Life and Death on Alaska's Mt. McKinley, Jonathan Waterman. Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. New York, 1993. 277 pages, 8 pages of photos, $7.50.

Mount McKinley Climber's Handbook, Glenn Randall. Chockstone Press, Evergreen, CO, 1992. 117 pages, maps, black and white photos, price coming.

These books look up at Denali, respectively, from the perspectives of the mundane, the intellectual, and the sublime. They'll be reviewed in this order.

In 1973 when my climbing partners and I stepped from high school classrooms onto the moraines of Glacier Bay, we held tightly to Boyd Everett's hand-typed expedition guidelines for junior mountaineers. Everett offered the simple and romantic promise that any fit and careful hobbyist could pull off an Alaskan expedition, and for us the promise was fulfilled. So it was with nostalgia that I read Randall's *Mount McKinley Climber's Handbook,* a compendium of the how-tos of expedition mountaineering so evocative of those early notes. It contains the first recipe for Logan bread I'd seen since Boyd Everett's.

The *Handbook* is ostensibly written for novices approaching Mount McKinley. This edition is free from the spoiled taste of a guide service promotion which marred the first. While McKinley provides a perfect example peak for expedition planning, all Alaskan mountains require the same attention. Considered generally, the *Climber's Handbook* provides a good formula for any Alaskan climb. Climbing a big mountain is mostly misery but, as the *Handbook* reminds us, climbing is a small part of a big trip. Putting the trip together, studying maps and photos, envisioning yourself in the adventures recounted by others, evaluating routes, drafting menus, gathering equipment, baking, bagging, sewing, gluing, sharpening, scheduling, training, packing, and ultimately setting off. This was always the fun stuff. For the experienced, Randall's list of raw ingredients may stir the sweet recollections of those wonderful trips where

everything went right. If you're a novice, the *Handbook's* reassuring cookbook approach will be tremendously empowering.

Fred Beckey's *Ice Crown of North America* is like a Peterson's Guide to mountaineering on McKinley, telling you everything Fred thinks you ought to know. Its dry, third person prose emphasizes that it's the information content that counts, no matter how slowly Beckey chooses to pace the book. It is a style that says, "if you're not interested, you should be!" In Beckey's book we get an encyclopedic review of the subject, from Cro-Magnon man to modern-day CB radio channels, all relayed with an impersonality that makes it seem at times as if the author has never seen a mountain, far less climbed one. You might think that Beckey never left the library when he wrote "the black bear of the interior . . . is usually a harmless clown in comparison to the much-larger grizzly." This "harmless clown" has chased Beckey's ass down at least one trail, and probably more. Yet even the description of a near attack on him by a big brown, as mentioned in a chapter on one of his own climbs, is related unemotionally through the words of a climbing partner who looked on at a distance.

Beckey is best recounting the historical material he obviously likes so much. And he treats it with a sensitivity only available to someone who really knows how hard it must have been to drag a team of horses through the bug-hell, knee-deep muskeg, toward unmapped headwaters below unnamed mountains. Once acclimated to his rarefied style I was happy to learn answers to questions I'd never thought to ask, such as the link between the ice age and the Bering land bridge, the shenanigans preceding the mountain's first ascent, and the original exploits that led to Don Sheldon's fame. The question that haunts but is not answered is the personality of the author, for he has given us a chronicle from which his presence is virtually absent. He never betrays any aspiration toward the sublime or transcendent even in describing his own ascents. This is not an issue of writing style or insensitivity, but an attitude that Fred consistently adheres to in his life, and which makes him such an enigma. In addition to being our most accomplished mountaineer, Beckey is also our most private. Here's a man for whom the wilderness is quite literally his only home. His inextinguishable enthusiasm is legendary. If it weren't for the fact that food runs out I don't think he'd ever descend below the tree line. Yet his writings give no clue about what motivates him. What about the man himself? He doesn't seem an extraordinary mountaineer: he's extremely cautious, following every rule in the *Climber's Handbook,* his technical skills are adequate, his route finding always good but rarely bold, his predictive abilities fallible. His penchant for irreverent clowning is superlative, and he knows the mountains of North America like the back of his hand. The Dineh (Navajo) have a character named Coyote. He is the trickster, the innovator, both the victor and the vanquished. Always pragmatic, rarely philosophical, he often fouls up but always survives. Coyote is not just an invention, but an embodiment of immortal human contradictions, a spirit that really exists. I believe Mr. Beckey is an avatar of Coyote.

Life and Death on Mt. McKinley is a compilation of stories whose common thread is a focus on the personal illuminations that can come through mountaineering. Two of the most evocative and poignant pieces concern Waterman's own transformative ascent up the Cassin Ridge in winter, a lyrical dance with the Grim Reaper, and his search for meaning in the brief life of a climber he never met. That climber was Johnny Waterman, the "other Waterman" with whom Jon shared a name, close ties to a father and stepmother, and an infatuation with Denali. I believe that the reason for climbing can be spoken, but not communicated. You will understand it if you already know it, but no amount of telling will enlighten you if you don't. On the Cassin I believe Jon found it, and in "The Winter of Our Discontent" he tells it. And whether or not you get it, the story is bewitching. It was an honor to read this eyes-open chronicle of being beaten to a psychological pulp and then reborn.

Jon's testament to Johnny is the archeology of a personality assembled from research, interviews and his own interpretations—a personality that drifted over a 10-year period from being a paramount mountaineer to being a troubled or, as most would have it, an insane mountaineer. Jon pictures Johnny in his early years as a paragon whose mountaineering goals were pure. Through a progressive decline we hear of Johnny losing his sense of purpose, becoming engulfed in a dark, troubled vortex until he's finally overcome with a sort of rapture of depression. At this point self-preservation becomes irrelevant and, in a manner of speaking, he leaves his body. I believe this interpretation is incorrect. The puzzle of Johnny Waterman is not how a great climber could go off the deep end, but whether the forces that killed him are part of what we accept to be the higher goals of climbing. From the times I spent with Johnny I believe they are.

Most climbers experience a sacred rush from climbing. The rush is incomparably satisfying but it passes and its origins are rarely explored. Pursuing the summit becomes worth every risk—mountaineering becomes "summiteering." But the path grows dangerous and its consequences are typically that the climber either finds the Holy Grail of fulfillment and stops risky climbing, or dies still striving. Johnny felt the same rush we have all felt, but for some reason he lost the trail to his rewards. Like all of us he believed in transcendence through climbing, yet for him the well ran dry. Sure he had a personality disorder, but it didn't kill him. What strikes me strangest about Johnny isn't that he died, but that he took such a long time doing so, and that he died with such self-consciousness. Several of our other partners, people who compulsively tempted fate, were able to do it in much less time and got a lot less for it. If we call all these people crazies, then there will be few sane among us. Death is not a climbing aberration—it is a consequence of the summiteering attitude.

These books all share two of the great themes of climbing literature: the mountain called Denali, and a refusal to see personal transformation as something more important than climbing itself. Randall's Handbook, like Everett's before, maintains the innocent promise to which young climbers become addicted. Jon Waterman's *Shadow of Denali* comes awfully close to admitting that the whole affair is just a stepping stone to higher consciousness,

but in the end Jon is still swaggering around with the hubris of a mountaineer. And Fred Beckey, whom I think has already reached mountaineering nirvana, won't talk about it. But then Coyote never does.

LINCOLN STOLLER

Mount Logan Map, Research and Reference Folio. G. Holdsworth and B. Sawyer. Arctic Institute of North America, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary AB T2N 1N4, Canada, 1993. Two sheets 50cm x 66cm, printed in color on four sides of poster-grade paper. Price: Canadian $15 to $20 depending on affiliation.

This very valuable folio will be of great help to anyone hoping to visit this highest region of Canada. It contains the following: *Side 1*: Historical background, introduction and layout of the folio; ordering information; acknowledgements; two fine aerial photographs of Mount Logan by Washburn and Post. *Side 2*: Map of Logan, 1:75,000, in color, showing lines of major ascent routes, location of main research sites: part of a larger format map (see below). *Side 3:* Summary of scientific research (geology, glaciology, physiology, natural history). Breathtaking color photograph of the southern aspect of the mountain, showing 4200 meters of relief. References are given for research and mountaineering activities. *Side 4:* Map of Mount Logan and vicinity, 1:100,000 with shaded contour relief.

Selected Climbs in the Cascades. Jim Nelson and Peter Potterfield. The Mountaineers, Seattle, Washington, 1993. 234 pages. 142 black-and-white illustrations, 26 topos, 4 line maps. $22.95

The Cascades offer some of the most varied climbing terrain found anywhere in a single range in the lower 48 States. From unique glacier climbs on solitary volcanoes to the rugged and remote peaks in the North Cascades, there are numerous routes that will appeal to climbers of all skill levels. To the beginner or newcomer to the Cascades, wading through the three volumes of Fred Beckey's *Cascade Alpine Guide* to pick just the right trip in this complex range can be intimidating and time-consuming.

This volume is intended to help climbers sort through this information by presenting route descriptions for 90 climbs that are, in the authors' opinion, the best in the Cascades. This book contains a good sampling of many fine routes that are located all throughout the range. Some of the climbs described in this book are easy walk-ups, and some are difficult technical routes. The types of climbs are varied as well, including routes that involve glacier travel, snow-and-ice climbing, alpine rock climbing, and crag climbing. As such, this book will appeal to those interested in general mountaineering as well as technical climbing.