

of the route, rappel down the face to our high point and climb the 1,200 feet of ice to its top.

The trip around the Tralieka and Muldrow glaciers was 30 miles with heavy loads. On May 9, we descended down the face in marginal weather. We spent half the day rappelling the face in a snow storm. Descending down a face that you weren't sure you could climb out of was one of the most intimidating events of the trip. After ten or 12 rappels in a blinding snow storm we finally stopped; Jim Blow recognized our previous high point up and left. We headed back up. The approximately ten pitches to the top of the route followed an obvious gully of mixed rock and ice ranging from 5.5 to 5.8 rock climbing and WI2-3. The final pitch of ice leading to the safety of the ridge above was WI4. The climb back to the camp at 12,000 feet was approximately one mile.

We spent the next six days moving up Karstens Ridge, then onto the lower Harper ice fall at approximately 16,500 feet. On May 16 we were hit by a storm that pinned us down for ten days. The wind blew at more than 100 mph and we encountered the worst temperatures of the trip. During the storm we began rationing our food to a meal a day between us. On May 25 (day 38 on the mountain) the storm broke and we headed for Denali Pass. By nightfall, we had made the pass, but were too weak to continue down to the 17,000-foot camp. The next day we ate our final meal and spent the better part of the day hydrating. We heard on our small radio that the weather was going to be good for several days so we discussed our options for the summit. We knew that the summit was a six-hour round trip; even though we knew we had no business trying to do it, we decided to give it a go.

On May 26 we made the summit, returned to Denali Pass and crawled into frozen sleeping bags and no food. The next three days we made our way down the West Buttress, receiving food from many climbers. After 43 days on the mountain and with each of us 40 pounds lighter, we returned home to Montana. We named the route *Butte Direct* for the people of Butte, Montana.

JIM WILSON, *unaffiliated*

*Denali, Winter Ascents.* Two winter ascents were made in the winter of 1997-'98, both of which merit considerable note. On January 16, 1998—when Denali receives five hours, 41 minutes of sunlight per day—Russians Artur Testov, 32, and Vladimir Ananich, 40, topped out on the West Buttress route to become the first to stand on the top of McKinley in “the dead of winter.” (Their partner, Alexandr Nikiforov, 29, remained in a snowcave at 14,200 feet.) A first try at a mid-winter climb the year before by Testov and another man failed at around 12,000 feet. Over four weeks in February and March, Masatoshi Kuriaki, 25, of Japan, made the first solo of Denali in winter in nine years.

*Denali, Wickersham Wall, Continuous Ski Descent.* Adrian Nature made a continuous and complete ski descent of the Wickersham Wall, adding 7,000 vertical feet of new terrain on his descent. Ice cliffs prevented him from skiing the Harvard route as he had intended, forcing a one-mile traverse to the Canadian route.) He had climbed the mountain via the West Buttress, then skied the Wickersham solo in seven hours, an accomplishment that included a bad fall at the top and a subsequent jettisoning of his backpack, which he then skied roughly a mile down the face to retrieve. From the Peters Glacier at the base of the face, he then hiked 25 miles to the road. His was the first solo traverse of the mountain.

*Denali, West Rib, Variation.* Jason McHam and I climbed the West Rib route on Denali, sum-