



John Bragg on steep rock during the first ascent of Thunder Mountain's central spur. JIM DONINI

this point on their return via a snow ramp angling in from the large couloir right of this prominent buttress. Upon reaching this point, they continued to the top of the rock spur difficulties, forgoing the summit and rappelling when the climbing angled back to rotten snow.

Little Switzerland

Editor's Note: The name "Little Switzerland" was coined by Don Sheldon, who would often fly climbers through the area, wetting their appetite. Margaret Young and James Richardson, while climbing near the "big bend" of the Kahiltna in 1964, made the first ascent of the peak later named Your Highness. The area began to receive attention after Roger Robinson and Brian Okonek climbed multiple first ascents out of the Pika Glacier in 1976. As with all climbing and wilderness areas, climbers are urged to exercise sound environmental practices in this pristine place. More information is available from the Talkeetna Ranger Station.

Royal Tower, Arizona Highways, New Route, and Various Activity. John Mattson, Josh Zimmerman and I had originally started a route on the southeast face of the Royal Tower in June, 1999, calling the first seven pitches *The Jester*. On June 20, Mattson, John Burnhard and I returned and finished the route to the summit, renaming it *Arizona Highways*.

The first seven pitches offer 1,000 feet of excellent rock climbing with three 5.10 pitches. In June, 1999, Mattson and I climbed a variation first pitch (crack to the right, 5.10+), calling it *The Blade*. After the first seven pitches, the route is mixed snow and rock climbing to the summit. We summited at 1 a.m. under perfectly clear skies, then made at least 20 rappels to descend the route.

Down the Pika on the east side lies a small crag of rock known as Practice Rock. It looks small from camp compared to all the other formations but offers excellent climbing on clean granite. On the northwest side, we climbed a six-pitch route (5.9) on an exposed fin of granite. This was not a first ascent, as we found webbing at several belays. We may have added a couple of new pitches, one being a fun 5.9 finger crack.

In June, 1999, Mattson flashed the old aid route on The Plunger, a spire on the base of The Throne's southeast corner, making the FFA at 5.12-. The crux is a slightly overhanging two-inch splitter on the southeast side.

JOHN BURCHAM