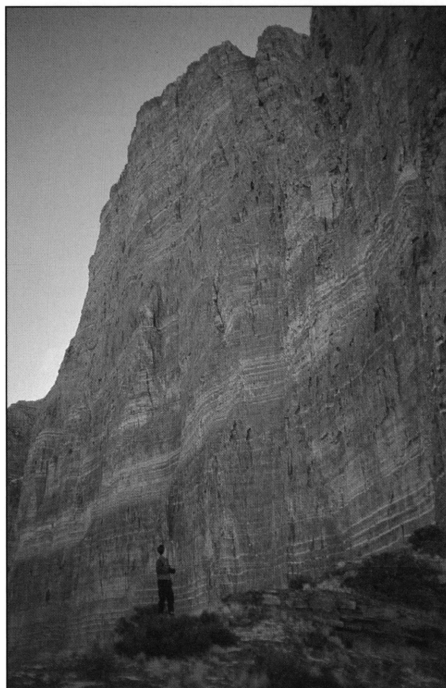


Jason Keith freeing the fifth pitch (5.12-) of *Appetite for Destruction*. Jim Howe

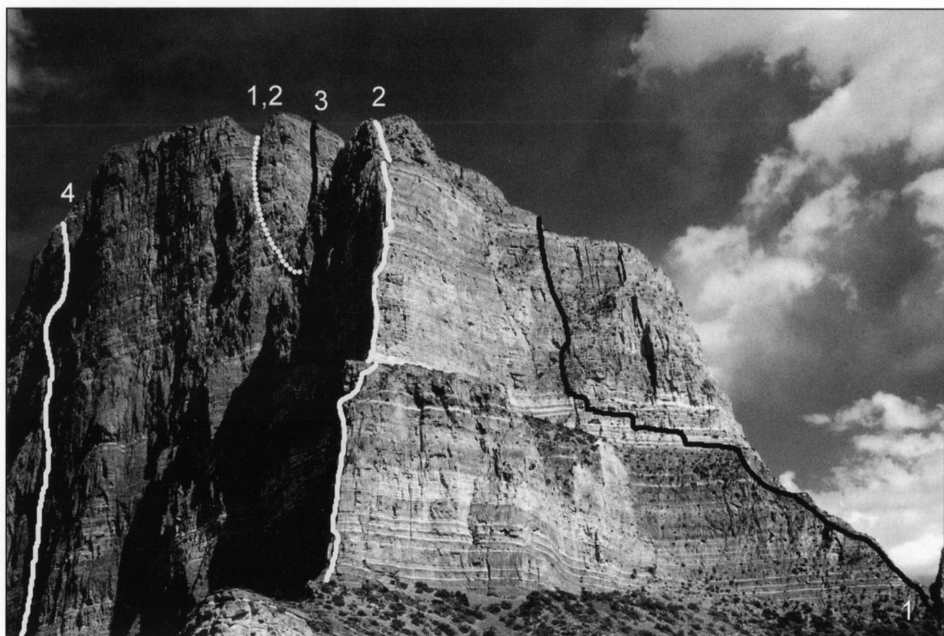


Under the 2,000' north face of Notch Peak. Jason Keith

Westwater Canyon, Arch Tower, Dry Heaves. In June Bill Duncan and John Burnham made the first ascent of Arch Tower, naming their route *Dry Heaves* (400', 6 pitches, III 5.10 A1). To reach this remote spire, float the Colorado River from Loma to Mee Canyon. Hike three miles up canyon and the tower will be obvious. Another wilderness experience!

ERIC BJORNSTAD

House Range, Notch Peak, Appetite for Destruction, La Fin du Monde, and Empty Sky. Notch Peak is located approximately 45 miles west of Delta on U.S. 6/50. Directions to it are given in James Garrett's *Ibex and Selected Climbs of Utah's West Desert*. Dave Shewell and I climbed *Appetite for Destruction* (IV 5.11 A0 or 5.12-) on Notch Peak over six or seven days, finishing in May 2001. We did this 300m route in ground-up style, hanging from hooks when necessary for bolt placements. A set of cams (TCUs to 3.5") is mandatory, to supplement the 50 protection bolts. All belays are bolted. *Appetite for Destruction* ascends the lower north face and tops out on the large band leading across the north face and around the northwest ridge. The route has four pitches that are 5.10 or harder. Jason Keith eked out the FFA of pitch five with the draws hanging. Mortals can aid that pitch or avoid it with a 5.11- variation. The route is approached as *Book of Saturday* is, but is reached after only 50 minutes of hiking up the drainage. It is marked by a cairn in the drainage. The wall remains hidden until the last 10 minutes of hiking before the cairn. Bolts are visible 20' up. The first two pitches ascend the left side of the lower band. The route crosses a large, low-angle band to the center of the face and is marked by a threaded red sling. Climbing is sustained through the first six pitches. The final two pitches are moderate and allow you to walk off or exit to the upper north face. Beware of the final moderate pitch, originally going in and around the chimney that splits the final wall. It



The north and west faces of Notch Peak (9,725', House Range, Utah) as seen from the top of Appetite for Destruction (IV 5.11 A0 or 5.12- ; a route on the lower north face). Note that in this foreshortened angle, routes 1 and 2 appear to finish atop a buttress, but they traverse to finish on the left, as indicated. See p. 177, 2001 AAJ for another perspective. 1. Empty Sky (III 5.8, Howe-Keith, 1998). 2. La Fin du Monde (400m, III/IV 5.10, Howe-Shewell, 2002). 3. Road to Perdition (3-pitch variant finish, 5.10+, Howe-Howe, 2002). 4. Book of Saturday (IV 5.11-, Lyde-Price, 1999). Not shown: Swiss Route (V 5.10+ A3, Deinen-Koch, 1986). The exactly location of the Swiss Route on the north face route is unknown, beyond, "...right of center to a prominent chimney, mostly on poor rock." (1987 AAJ, p. 178). Jim Howe

is loose, even by Notch Peak standards. A safer alternative is a left-facing corner system 60m to the right (5.7). By combining this route with one on the upper headwall, a limestone route of 18–20 pitches can be climbed! In June Dave and I climbed Appetite and La Fin in one push of 11 hours.

In April 2002, also from the ground up, Dave and I established La Fin du Monde (a.k.a. Northwest Ridge Direct, 400m, 9 pitches, III/IV 5.10), visible as the right skyline in the photo in the 2001 AAJ, p. 177. This beautiful route, on the extreme right side of the north face, nearly follows the crest of the northwest ridge. It gets more sun and has an airier feel than the north face routes. There are 17 protection bolts, placed on lead. Most of the belays are fixed. The route is accessed as Book of Saturday is, but head right along the base of the north face instead of left. La Fin starts right at the base of the northwest ridge; a bolt is visible about 30' up. La Fin joins Empty Sky (which begins to the right, or west, of the northwest ridge) three pitches from the summit, where both routes traverse to an exit chimney/gully over the north face. Descent is best done by abseiling from the top of Book of Saturday, which is not easy to locate unless you have been on that route.

In September Tommie Howe and I hiked up the back side of Notch Peak and abseiled 130m to the base of La Fin's final headwall. We led this, placing ten protection bolts and pins. This variation (Road to Perdition, 3 pitches, 5.10+) gives another two pitches of 5.10 climbing and is a worthwhile alternative to La Fin's exit chimney. Its start is marked by fixed anchors 40m

from the crest of the northwest ridge. The belays are fixed, but the variation includes a sporty, 30' runout on 5.10- terrain. Tommie and I summited in deteriorating weather and raced down the backside, only to spend a rainy bivouac huddled in a shallow overhang. We remain happily married.

The original route, Empty Sky, was established in February 1998 by Jason Keith and me, after we searched for a nonexistent ice route on the north face. In a 23-hour round trip from Salt Lake City, we climbed this route, made about a dozen abseils to get off the peak, and were stopped by the highway patrol in their quest to stem the flow of drugs through the Utah corridor. The route begins a few hundred yards right of the northwest ridge, in a notch between a large pinnacle and the west face. It follows the line of least resistance toward the north face. Expect moderate climbing and plenty of simul-climbing, with only a few short 5.7 and 5.8 bits. The crux is in the exit gully over the north face. We found a few pins, probably marking the descent route of the Swiss after their ascent of the north face in 1986 (1987 AAJ, p. 178).

Notch Peak provides high adventure. The rock quality is generally poorer than the classic limestone of the Dolomites and Yamnuska, but for those unfortunate souls attracted to this type of rock, these routes are entertaining. Do not take them lightly; though the pitches are often moderate in difficulty, they require competence in this type of terrain. Notch Peak has its loose rock, unappealing strata, and rockfall (particularly during and after rain and melt-freeze cycles). Divots and craters along the approach bands inspire you to contemplate the value of a helmet. A rescue here, if it ever came, would be long and arduous. That said, Notch Peak is a rare, remote place in the heart of the west desert offering beautiful position, grand vistas, a true summit, and good adventure value.

JAMES HOWE

Texas Tower, East Face. Texas Tower has a big reputation, as it is one of the tallest pure sandstone towers in the desert southwest. The only existing route, first climbed in 1987 by Tim Toula and Kathy Zaiser on the west face, still seems to see as many failures as ascents. It was originally 5.10+ A1, but was free climbed in 1990 by Derek Hersey and Steve Bartlett at 5.11cR.

The east face was just as formidable looking and was an obvious desert project. As Ross (AARP, ex-pat Brit) was now in his 66th year, and seeing how the young lads of today did not seem too keen to leave their single-pitch routes, he recruited a not-quite-as-old friend from his New Hampshire days, Jeff Pheasant, now retired in Hawaii. The pair spent a delightful two days on the spectacular east face.

The seven-pitch route went smoothly at 5.10 C2. It may go free at a higher grade. Nobody fell off, died, etc. The worst pain was hangovers at our campsite.

PAUL ROSS

ZION NATIONAL PARK

Kolob Canyon, Nagunt Mesa, Cos the Boss. In late October and early November 2001 I did a new wall route in Kolob Canyon with Steve Gerberding and Scott Cosgrove. The formation is called Nagunt Mesa, and we made the first ascent of the east-northeast face, following an obvious big corner system in the center of the face. The route involved nine pitches on the wall, plus a 5.9