

Alaska

KIGLUAIK MOUNTAINS

Seward Peninsula, various ascents. In April I climbed the east face of Mt. Osborne (4,714') with Phillip Hofstetter. The climb was 2,500' of moderate 45° snow, ice, and cliff bands. Osborne is the monarch of the Kigluaik Range, 35 miles north of Nome, along the spine of the Seward Peninsula. It is unclear whether the Kigluaik (called the "Sawtooths"

by locals) should be classified as large hills or smallish mountains; either way, they offer tors abounding with a hodgepodge of marble, basalt, schist, and granite. We approached via snow-machine up the Grand Central Valley. The summit ridge of Osborne is studded with a fence-like procession of tors (granite formations, typically no more than a pitch high, poking out of an eroded ridge); the highest, heavily rimed in winter, is surmounted via a short pitch of 5.6. During various summer attempts in 2002 and 2003, I climbed, solo, all three summits of Tigaraha (3,500'+). Tigaraha is capped with prominent granite tors, between the Sinuk and Windy drainages, almost Arrigetchian in proportion (though no Shot Tower, it's prominent and notable in quality). I climbed the north tower from an obvious notch in one long rope length of 5.8 A1. The south tower is a class 4 scramble. The main tower has a classic five-pitch friction arête (I found a lone rappel sling low on the route). The notch can be accessed from Windy via 2,000' of burly class 4 scrambling, or from the Sinuk via a loose ice gully. Tigaraha is likely mismarked on the USGS map, which locates it on the wrong side of the Sinuk drainage. I climbed the mountain the map says is Tigaraha, a lumpen choss pile with a scary class 4/5 summit block. I believe that all my climbs were first ascents, with the possible exception of the main tower of Tigaraha (I'm not sure if the party who left the sling continued).

IAN MCRAE

ALASKA RANGE

Geographical note: While the well-known peaks in Denali National Park are often called "the Alaska Range," these peaks form just one part of the immense Alaska Range, which contains many significant subranges, including the Hayes and Delta ranges, and the Revelation, Kichatna, and Tordrillo mountains.

HAYES RANGE

Various new routes. Between March 29 and April 7, 2002, Rich Chappell, Jose Rueter, Mike Sterling, and I made first ascents in the Hayes Range. Jim Cummings of Delta flew us to the west fork of the Gillam Glacier, beneath the west face of Mt. Hess. We were lucky to be able to land, given low snow accumulation and recent high winds. Temperatures ranged from -20 to +15° F during the trip.



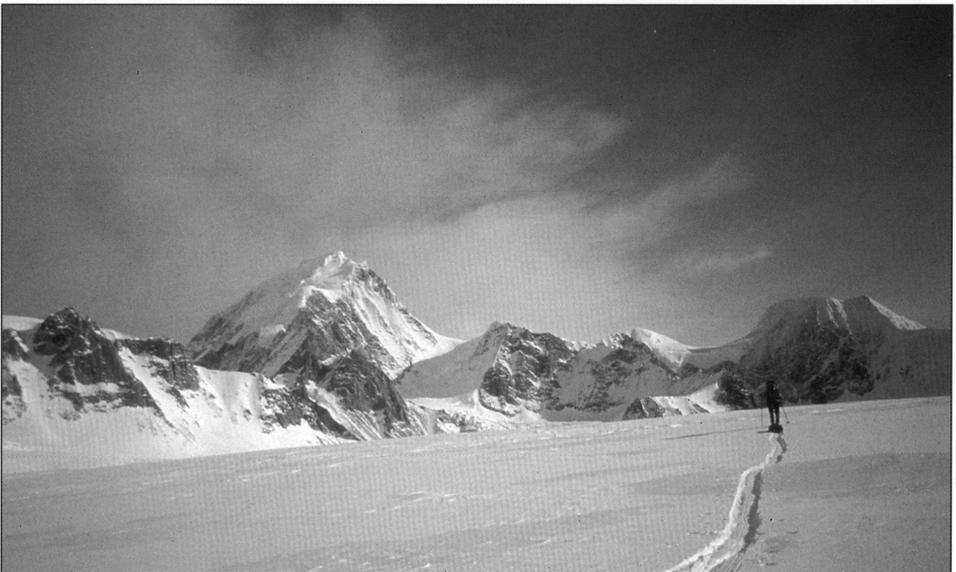
In two days we had our ski camp put in at 6,500' on the east fork of the Gillam and had completed a reconnaissance up to the 8,600' col southeast of the south peak of Mt. Giddings. Cramponing was excellent, but avalanche blocks off the west face of Mt. Geist crossed our ascent tracks.

On April 1 we made what is likely the third ascent of Mt. Giddings (10,180') via a new route up the south buttress. It took six hours to ascend, four to descend, being predominantly 3rd class snow, with a few sections of rotten-rock ridge that we 4th classed. On a pulverized rock band at 9,200' we discovered water ice and whiffs of sulphur—geothermal activity? We remained roped on the summit, due to large crevasses. The views to the Tanana River, Donnelly Dome, and Mt. Hayes (13,832') were magnificent, due to the peak's central location and the perfect weather.

After repositioning camp farther up the glacier, at 7,360', we headed back up to the col just west of Peak 9,610' and climbed three pitches of 45° blue ice to its top. We descended from this summit heading northeast on the rocky ridge to Mt. Skarland (10,315'), but fear of frost-bite turned us around despite fantastic views of the entire west basin of Mt. Hayes. Our retreat back over Peak 9,610', south to the col, and then west through the icefall went flawlessly.

Again we moved camp, down to 5,600', and on April 5 completed the first ascent of the north peak (10,065') of Giddings. We gained its west ridge at 9,200' by climbing a depression on the main southwest face. The upper ridge was 45°, protected with screws and pickets. The route took seven hours up, four down. Access to the base of the climb was by ski up the fine pocket tributary glacier beneath Peak 8,320' and northeast from the Gillam Glacier's east fork, upon which we had camped. We flew out on April 7 in continuing perfect weather. Such a blessing, on the heights, with the most agreeable of bergkameraden!

PHILIP S. MARSHALL, *Three Corner Round Pack Outfit*



The west face of Balchen is lit by the sun. *Jeff apple Benowitz*