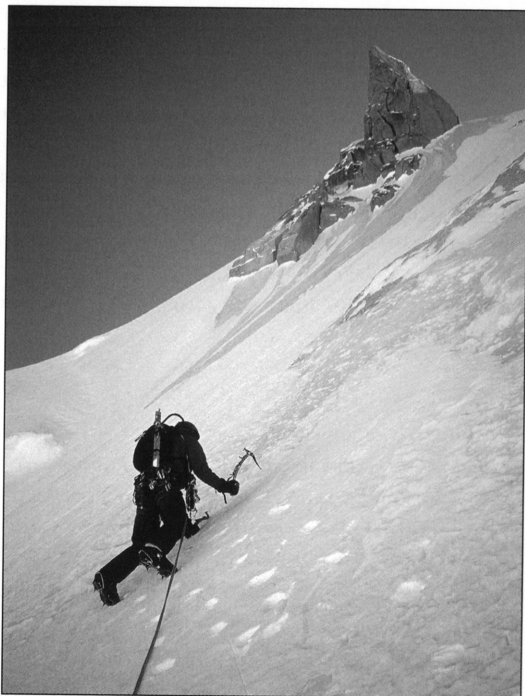


*Peak 11,520', The Flame.* After a brief reconnaissance up the Northwest Fork of the Tokositna and a week of bad weather, on May 6 Seth Hobby and I cast off onto what we believe is a new route on the north face of Peak 11,520', one of two peaks along Mt. Hunter's extended east ridge. Our line was to the right of the 2002 Keeling-McNeill route (which was close to nonexistent in 2005), both routes being on the northwest aspect of the broad face, and began in a narrow gully, before gaining the prominent ice face, which we climbed to its end at the summit ridge. The climbing, incredibly consistent at 60°, was primarily on blue ice, with disappointingly short sections of névé and snow. From atop the ice face we continued to the summit, finding the ridge to be a typical Alaskan cornice walk, with no real technical challenge save exposure and avalanche danger. The views to the east side of Hunter and larger-than-life Huntington were striking, to say the least. We counted about 15 70m pitches on the descent, and we climbed the route in 16 hours camp-to-camp. All rappels were via V-threads. The docile-seeming seracs that guard both edges of the face do, in fact, threaten both routes on the face. Also, John Fitzgerald, with whom we climbed the Harvard Route on Huntington a few days prior, soloed two-thirds of the route a couple of days before our ascent, but ran short of time and energy before reaching the top of the face.

We called the route *The Flame* (IV AI3) after the striking rock feature that dominates the skyline from anywhere on the face. The golden granite is often illuminated by afternoon sun. The nature of the climbing tends to make your calves feel as though they are on fire, so the name fits in more ways than one.

COLEY GENTZEL



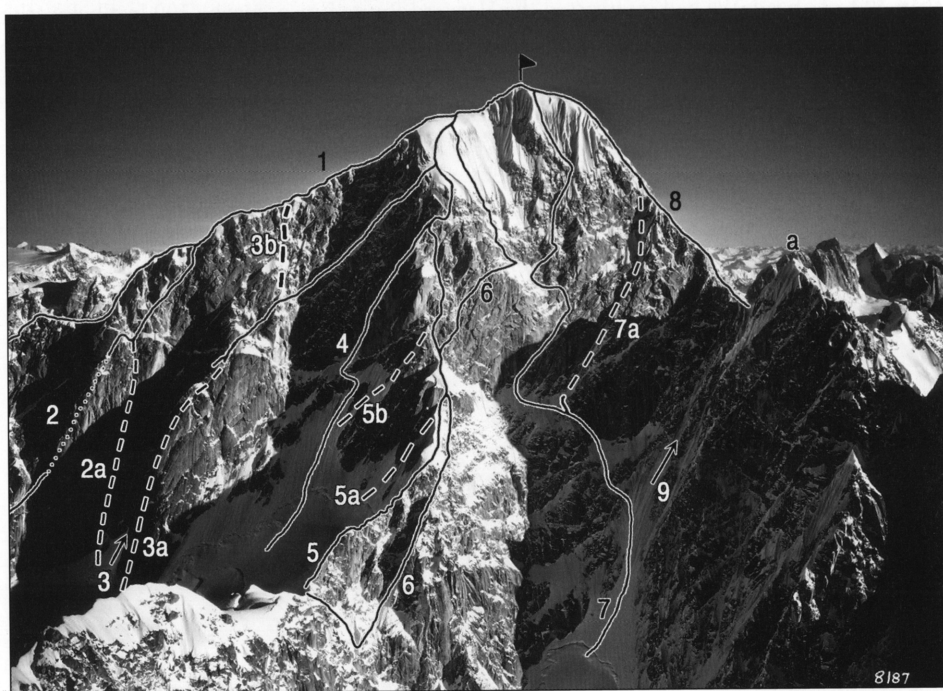
Seth Hobby traversing toward the feature for which they named their route, *The Flame*, on Peak 11,520'. Coley Gentzel

*Editor's note: Although Gentzel and Hobby have made no such claim, this may have been the first ascent of Peak 11,520', as the prior recorded climbing ended at the ridge, and the two known ascents of Hunter's East Ridge route gained the ridge farther west than 11,520'.*

*Mt. Huntington, The Imperfect Apparition to upper Harvard Route.* Twenty-six years ago I skied past the looming north face of Mt. Huntington on my way to attempt a route we'd later call the Isis Face. Perfect symmetry and complex faces always drew me to Huntington, but until May 2004 I had never attempted to climb it.

In 2005 I had spent a week in the Ruth with Kevin Mahoney attempting new ice lines, only to find out that GWB is clearly wrong about global warming. Slush, running water, and rockfall abounded wherever we went. Then, on May 15, Fabrizio Zangrilli and I landed on the west fork of the Tokositna with hopes of climbing a new route on the Phantom Wall, to the right of the Harvard Route but independent of the Smith-Teare route.

After two days of recon and assessment that global warming was affecting more than just the Ruth, on May 19 we started the route by rappelling into the face from the lowest point of the Stegosaurus [the serrated lower ridge of the original Harvard Route]. The terrain was moderate alpine climbing, including a prominent couloir just east of the ridge, and we simul-climbed all but one pitch up to the main rock headwall in the middle of the face. We struck out right onto beautiful brown granite, some of the best stone I have seen in the range, and got quickly consumed by “the business” of our objective. It was Fabrizio’s block, so he led two mixed pitches that followed a right-leaning, traversing weakness. By the end of the second pitch he found himself faced with an Alaska Range anomaly—a chimney system that was running with water at 4:00 p.m. at 10,200', a veritable shower stall. The thought of being soaked



Mt. Huntington (12,240'). (1) French Ridge (Batkin-Bernezat-Gendre-Gicquel-Martinetti-Sarthou-Soubis-Terray, 1964). (2) Polarchrome (Haberl-Rohn, 1984, no summit). (2a) Golden Granite West Face (Grohusky-Gruber-Thompson-Willard, 2000, no summit). (3) Colton-Leach (1981, no summit), start hidden. (3a) Count Zero start (Miller-Wadman, 1992). (3b) Hough-Lewis variation (1981, no summit). (4) West Face Couloir (Evans-Hogan, 1978, no summit; Nettle-Quirk, 1989, to summit). (5) Harvard Route (Bernd-Hale-Jensen-Roberts, 1965). (5a) Modern start, FA unknown. (5b) Puryear-Westman variation (2000, no summit). (6) Imperfect Apparition (Tackle-Zangrilli, 2005, no summit). (7) Phantom Wall (Smith-Teare, 1991). (7a) Shi-Shi (Ichimura-Yokoyama, 2005). (8) South Ridge (Jay-Woolums, 1979), starts from opposite side. (a) Idiot Peak, with start indicated to (9) The Mini-Intellectual (Thomas-Mayo, 2005). © Bradford Washburn, Courtesy Panopticon Gallery

to the skin and enduring a bivy higher up on unknown terrain being unappealing, we left our two ropes fixed and rappelled back to a snowfield where we could chop a bivy ledge, and spent the evening waiting for the water to freeze.

At 4:00 a.m. the second day, we left the bivy gear and went light for the summit, intending to just climb up and back in a single push. When we reached the former shower-stall chimney, it was a seized-up gorgeous section of mixed climbing for two more pitches, leading us to a ramp system. Fabrizio took over, and we pitched out and then simul-climbed six pitches across the face into the center wall, which led us to the second, and crux, rock band. I searched for a weakness and found an amazing flaring dihedral with a thin strip of ice in the back. It led to easy ground above but, although it was only 80 feet, it proved to be the most challenging part of the route. We lost time working on this pitch, first Fabrizio, then I. Finally, with some creative problem solving, I broke through our temporary barrier. It was now 6:00 p.m. and we started simul-climbing again up the throat of the main upper face, heading for upper summit ridge of the Harvard and West Face Couloir routes.

The weather deteriorated, and it was snowing and sloughing spindrift everywhere around us. We climbed until 11:00 p.m. and finally turned around when we could no longer see more than 30 feet ahead. We had intersected the Harvard Route finish, maybe 500 feet below the summit, but opted to start rappelling in light of conditions. As we descended our route, the snow became more intense. We lost two hours dealing with a hung rappel in the coldest and darkest part of the night, and stripped 40 feet of sheath off of our second rope with our Ropeman while trying to pull the rope.

Twenty-seven hours after we left the bivy, we lay down and slept for five hours. I was so tired, I fell asleep while devouring my food and awoke like a frozen Mastodon with unchewed jerky still in my mouth. After our short respite, we rappelled off the lower Harvard Route and a few hours later enjoyed a gracious reception from our base camp comrades.

The Imperfect Apparition seemed an appropriate name for our route, in light of the nearby Phantom Wall, the phantom summit, and the proper alpine etiquette—tell the truth.

JACK TACKLE, AAC

*Mt. Huntington, Shi-Shi, and Mt. McKinley, Denali Diamond, third ascent.* In April and May, Fumitaka Ichimura and I spent a substantial holiday in the Alaska Range.

On April 25 we made base camp on the west fork of the Tokositna Glacier at 2,500m. We had planned to first climb the Phantom Wall (Smith-Teare, 1991), but there was little snow or ice on the crux part of the route. We found a straight gully, filled with ice, that forked right off the Phantom Wall, and it seemed so interesting that we went there. On April 27 we departed from base camp at 4:00. After reaching the col of the west ridge,



Katsutaka Yokoyama climbing in the gully on Shi-Shi, just below its junction with the South Ridge, Mt. Huntington. Fumitaka Ichimura