

heat-induced naps and hallucinations. A tricky traverse put us within a pitch and a half of the top, but Greg bonked, effort, heat, and illness taking their toll. We retreated to the bivouac terraces begging for the coolness of night. While ingesting atomic tortillas (torts with tuna fish and Uranium Peak sand), we witnessed a fantastic aerial duel in which two ravens battled two peregrines but lost.

After exchanging winks with a trillion stars, we ascended our ropes again before sunrise. A last tricky pitch put us on the summit. The monoliths of Monument Valley shimmered to the south, while the waters of Lake Powell twinkled to the west.

Heat mirages danced with the horizon as we descended. Slowly, carefully, we glided down our lines, cold beers taunting us from the distant camp, prompting a mental warning: stay alert and focused. This place is harsh and will punish us if we're too cocky, if hubris and haste exceed caution. This is No Country for Bold Men (350m, 5.9 A3).

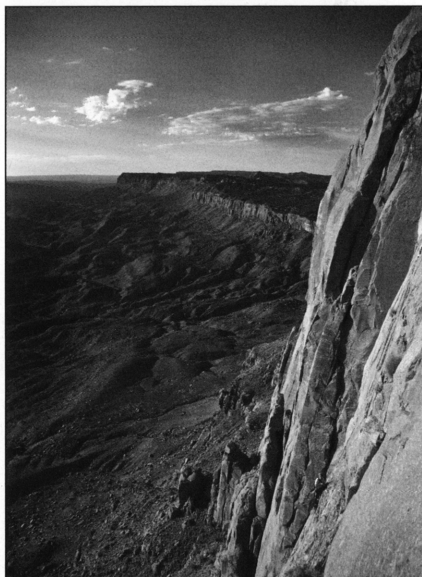
JOHN CATTO

ZION NATIONAL PARK

Meridian Tower, first ascent. Over five days in April Dave Everett and I did the first ascent of Meridian Tower, one of the last major unclimbed formations in Zion National Park. The formation is to the right of the Altar of Sacrifice and most prominently visible from Oscar's Café in town. On the 27th we hiked the West Rim Trail from Angel's Landing approximately to Camp 4 and rappelled into Phantom Valley, drilling two rapel stations. We found water in Phantom Valley and filled up. A stove would have been an asset, because there was snow in places where there was not water.



No Country for Bold Men, the only route on the northeast face of Uranium Peak. John Catto



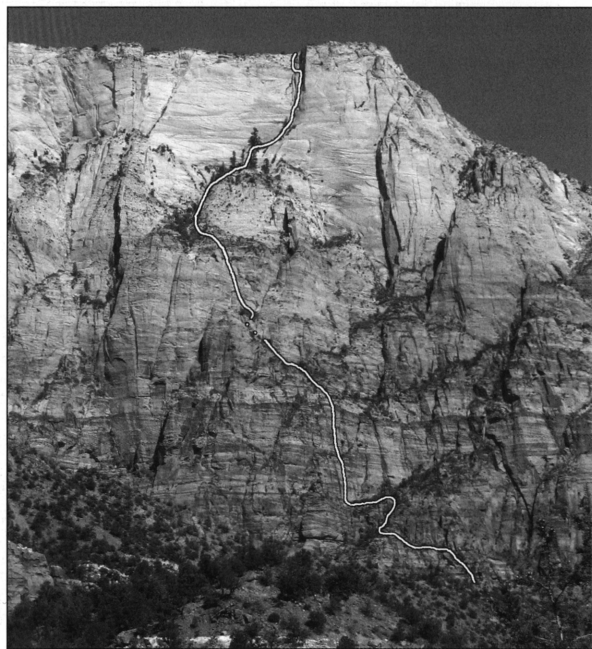
Greg Child at a belay on No Country for Bold Men. John Catto

We hiked to the top of Church Mesa and descended the gully east of Point 7,375' via many rappels into Birch Creek (the creek that ends at the waterfall in the Court of the Patriarchs that is the descent from Abraham). If we had descended farther east and tried to hike up Birch Creek, we would have been blocked by deep pools where the canyon narrows to a slot. This also made our position committing. While descending Church Mesa, it had appeared that the formation across the way was Meridian Tower. We climbed several pitches up this formation and bivouacked close to the summit before realizing we were on the wrong formation.

In the morning we descended back to Birch Creek and continued scrambling up the creek to the base of Meridian, the tower next door. Steep waterfalls and deep pools forced us into dangerous scrambles up loose scree on the side of the canyon. We finally traversed onto the north side of Meridian Tower and bivouacked midway up. We found the climbing harder than expected. After hauling our packs on a few pitches, we reached the base of an unclimbable-looking wall and bivied. In the morning we left our packs and found the climbing on the final ridge and summit not too difficult (5.8 A0), but the white sandstone was extremely rotten and protection minimal. We descended by rappelling into the gully on the west side of the tower, into the valley between the Altar and Meridian and rappelling into Oak Creek Canyon, behind the old visitors center.

We climbed eight pitches on the tower, and made about 20 rappels on the approach and descent. Of all the Towers of the Virgin, Meridian Tower is probably the most difficult to access, but the approach is worth the effort. This is one of the most beautiful locations in the park.

DAN STIH



How the West Was Won, on the west face of West Temple. The Mountaineer's Route, the only other route visible in this photo, is the right skyline. The descent route enters the photo from top-right. *Bryan Bird*

West Temple, How the West Was Won. In April I teamed up with the Greer brothers, Jared and Brody, to attempt the previously unclimbed 2,000'+ west face of West Temple. We started with the path of least resistance in the center of the face, following 4th-class terrain with an occasional 5th-class boulder problem for 500'. The route then has three steps, interspersed with vegetated ledges, which we climbed in five pitches (taking the cleanest 5.10-ish looking crack) to the major vegetated ledge. We then scrambled skier's left down a ramp system, fixing three ropes, and returned to the ground. On day two, above the previous day's climbing, we followed a left-angling crack system for three pitches, aiming for a prominent,