

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,

right-leaning, easy-looking ramp and gully system. This “easy ramp” had steep chimneys and an unexpected snow-filled gully, taking far longer than expected. We reached the upper exit dihedral, just before sundown, and found the only real stand-in-your-stirrups aid climbing of the route. After a foolhardy attempt to climb the pitch clean, resulting in a 20' whipper, I placed a large pecker that remains as the only fixed gear on the route, followed by two drilled beak holes to get around a disagreeable bush.

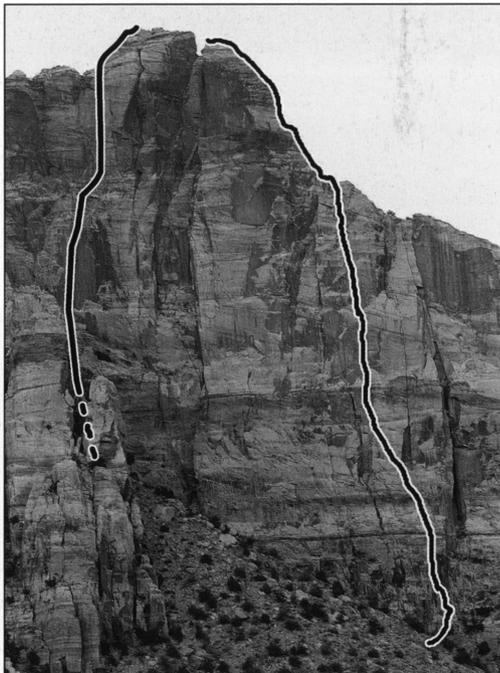
At this point the boys started to bonk. Our inadequate food and water supplies began taking its toll. Brody was leading a challenging pitch while Jared and I watched the sun drop over the Pine Valley Mountains. “Ever spooned with a man?” I asked Jared. He yelled at his older brother to “Hurry the #%@\$ up.” What appeared to be the final 50m was over 150m, and darkness washed over the west face. The final pitch, up a loose corner, remained hidden from us until the last possible moment. We topped out on the plateau well after dark and spent the night shivering in down coats. Morning finally came; we hiked to the summit, signed the register, and took a photo. We descended a zigzagging ramp system to climber’s right of our route, down-climbing with five rappels. About 30 hours after departure, our tired bodies relaxed in the sand back at our camp. The remainder of our food didn’t last long, nor did the vodka. We’d roped up for 14 pitches and soloed some 1,000' to find out How the West Was Won (V 5.10 A1).

BRYAN BIRD

*Mt. Johnson, Tree House of Horror and Force Boyle.* Zach Lee and I established the Tree House of Horror (12 pitches, IV 5.11) in winter 2007-08 with assistance from Bryan Bird and Jeff Richerds. This route is equipped with chains and can be rapped with one 60m rope. The approach is easiest from Springdale’s town park: across the bridge and up the dirt road. Continue uphill toward the reflector sign on the southwest face of Mt. Johnson, then around to the south face, about a one-hour hike. Gear: a quad set of thin hands to big hands up to 6”.

In the spring and fall Bill Ohran, Robbie Colbert, and Dan Snyder established the Force Boyle (8 pitches, IV 5.11+ A0) on the west face. The route starts with a splitter crack in a deep, wide chimney. It is equipped with chains and rap hangers at every belay; rapping the route requires a 70m rope or two 60m ropes. Make the same approach as for the Tree House of Horror but cut up left after passing the base of the outcrop that sits in front of Johnson. Then follow the outcrop to the base of the route; about an hour-and-15-minute approach.

JOE FRENCH



The Force Boyle (left) and the Tree House of Horror, on Mt. Johnson. *Joe French*