

A Tribute

to the Honorary Members of the Sierra Peaks Section: Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson & Jules Eichorn - Part V

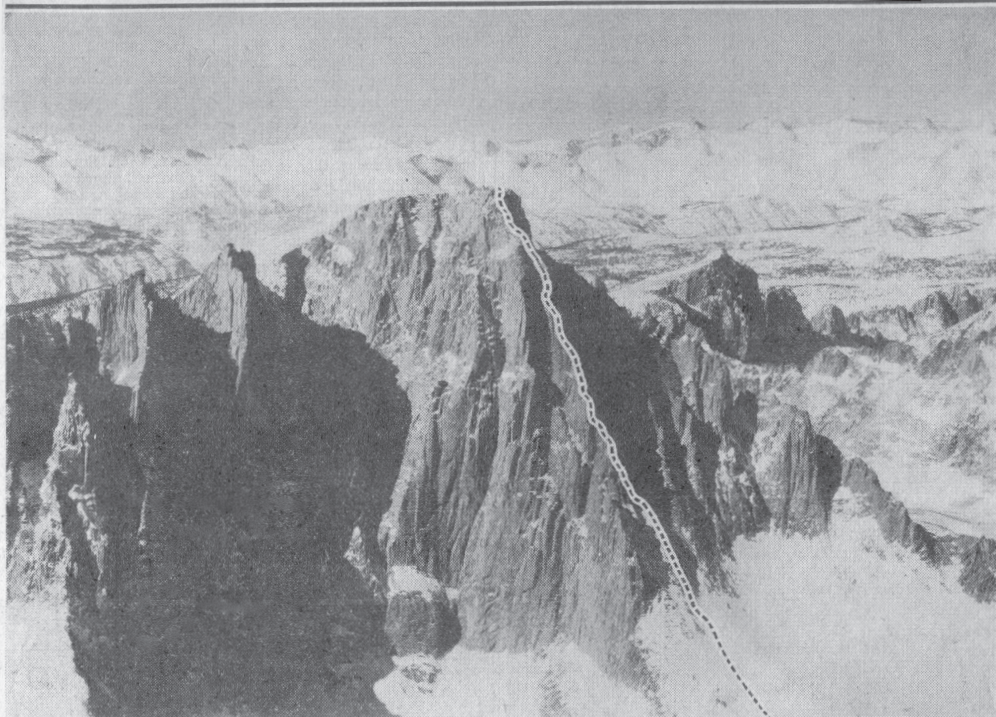


by Bill Oliver
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Atop Mt. Whitney after first ascent of the East Buttress, 9/05/37. L-R, front: Dick Jones (24), Muir Dawson (16), Glen Dawson (25); back: Bob Brinton (23), Howard Koster (25). [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

SIERRA CLUB MOUNTAINEERING PARTY TRIUMPHANT



Taking the most difficult route to the top of Mt. Whitney's frosty peak rising 14,496 feet above sea level, highest point in the United States, five young Los Angeles members of the Sierra Club last week scaled rugged

slopes indicated by the dotted line. This east-face route had never been essayed before, although easier parallel ascents have been made. California National Guard aerial photo

Showing East Buttress Route on Mt. Whitney. From Los Angeles newspaper article following the first ascent. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

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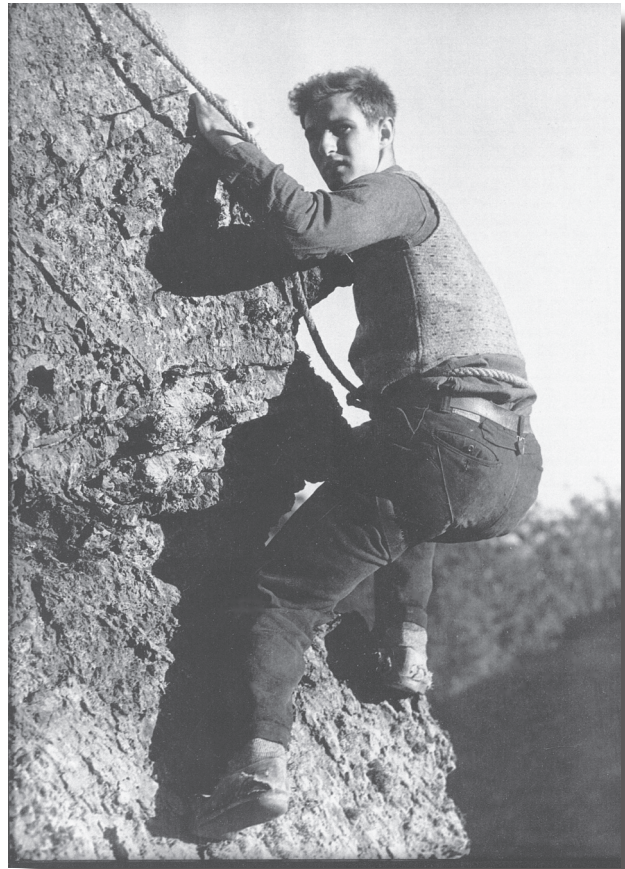
by Bill Oliver

Tribute Part V Return to Whitney

1937

New Beginnings

January of '37 was a big and very special month for **Jules Eichorn** – his wedding to Sarah Beckman. For sure, Jules would not have first met Sarah at the base of Cragmont Rocks or on a Sierra Club High Trip. Besides mountains, Jules' other life-long passion was music. Just short of 25, he was now in his senior year as a music major at UC Berkeley, where he was the student director of the Cal Glee Club and one of the madrigal singers. Sarah was a student at Mills College in Oakland, and they met

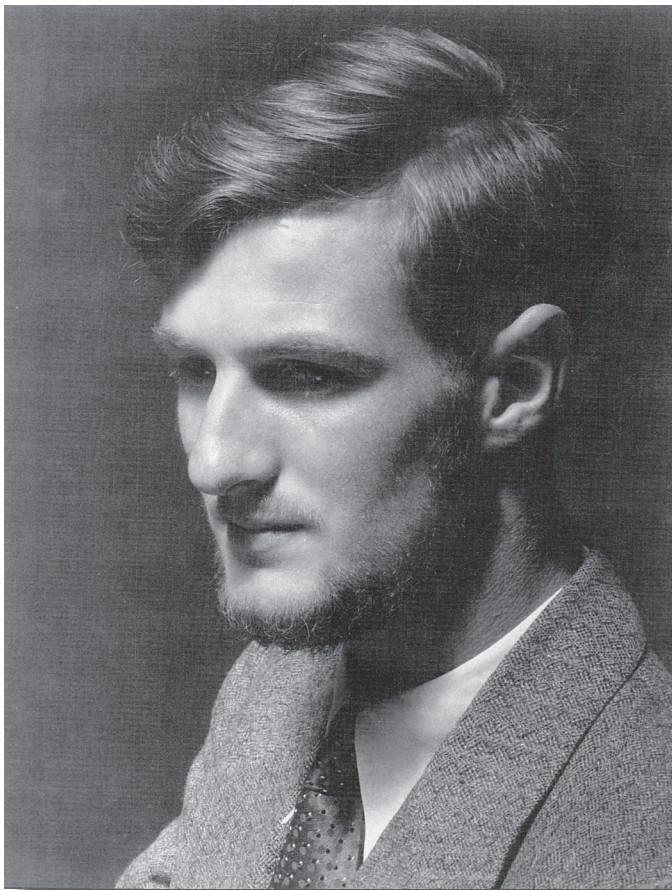


Jules Eichorn at Cragmont Rocks, Berkeley (with his favorite climbing shoes), c. 1934-35. [David Eichorn Collection]

through their mutual involvement in a chorale. Their first child, David, would arrive in August. There would be six offspring in eight years, including twin boys.

A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra

Having led High Trips since 1901, almost all of which were in the Sierra, and having published numerous articles and Mountaineering Notes in the Sierra Club Bulletin (SCB), the Club was at last ready to launch a series of guides in the Bulletin. The first to appear – Part I – focused on Sawtooth Ridge, and the primary editor was Dick Leonard (SCB 2/37). [A sketch of the Ridge from this guide appeared in Tribute III.]



Jules Eichorn, c. 1936-37, possibly by Marj Farquhar. [David Eichorn Collection]

From the Introduction by the Committee on Mountain Records: *The committee has given a great deal of thought to the formulation of a classification of standards of difficulty in climbing. The purpose of this classification is not to promote competition or to afford a means of grading climbers for public recognition, but, rather to give each climber an opportunity to judge for himself what climbs he should undertake under varying conditions. A classification is here tentatively advanced, subject to revision after further trial and discussion. ... In the examples which follow, reference is made to the easiest route of the respective climbs.*

Class 1 – Easy: Rock-climbing experience unnecessary. Examples: Whitney, Alta Peak, Dana, Conness, Clouds Rest.

Class 2 – Moderate: Ropes should be available on the climb. Examples: Russell, North Palisade, Ritter, Lyell, Clark.

Class 3 – Difficult: Ropes should be used in all cases – continuous climbing. Examples: Black Kaweah, Middle Palisade, Clyde’s Minaret, Half Dome from Mirror Lake.

Class 4 – Very Difficult: Belays should be used – consecutive climbing. Examples: East Face of Whitney, Echo Ridge, Three Teeth.

Class 5 – Severe: Pitons should be available on the climb. Examples: Washington Column, Panorama Cliff, Lower and Higher Cathedral Spires.

Class 6 – Very Severe: More difficult than fifth class. As yet undefined. Examples: none as yet.

[The now commonly-used “Yosemite Decimal System” would be developed in the mid-1950s by LA/Rock Climbing Section (RCS) stalwarts Chuck Wilts, Don Wilson, and Royal Robbins based on various Tahquitz routes.]

Climber’s Guides Parts II-VI would appear in subsequent consecutive annual issues of the SCB through 1942, each by various editors. All subsequent climbing guides to the High Sierra have their common ancestry in this series of Sierra Club guides.

Ski Mountaineering on the Move Up

Meanwhile **Dave Brower** and friends were happily occupied ski mountaineering in the High Sierra

– as related by Dave in “Beyond the Skiways” (SCB 4/38).

Before skiing made its relentless surge toward universal popularity, there were still persons to whom the inherent beauty in snowclad hills was in itself sufficient cause for winter mountain trips. Skiing was the most practical means of reaching snow country, where men could pause amid the majestic winter scene to contemplate their sublime surroundings. This was the golden age of skiing. It passed when bindings were mechanized with rigid toe-irons and severe tensions. Steeper and steeper slopes were sought. Caution was cast aside. Mountains became mere proving grounds for exhibitions of tricks and technique. ... Men admired their apparel, while the peaks went unnoticed. ... They conquered the wilderness. Men now ski superbly. But what have they lost?

“Ski-mountaineering” is a cumbersome term, but no other term so aptly describes the grand sport that results when skiing and mountaineering are combined. ... Out beyond the skiways one will find the timberline country. ... In such terrain even the most blasé of resort-skiers have been temporarily overcome with reverence.

Unlike the So. Calif. (now Angeles) Chapter, the San Francisco Bay Chapter did not have its own Ski Mountaineering Section (SMS), although something similar was the Club’s Winter Sports Committee. However, its RCS contingent certainly was not inhibited in getting high on their boards. As described in the above article, mid-February ’37 found Dave Brower, Hervey Voge, Ken Adams and Ken May embarked on the first winter ascent of Mt. Clark in Yosemite.

We left our snowcamp on the Starr King plateau. Crossing the confusion of canyons in the Illilouette basin took more time than we had anticipated, and it was quite late when we left our skis at 11,000 feet to traverse the steep snow slope east of the summit with rope and ice axe. ... A short vertical chimney, a bit of scrambling, and we were on top.

The sun was setting, and our anxiety to return to our skis before dark prevented giving due attention to the alpenglow along the Sierran crest. But perhaps nothing was lost, since to have remained would have meant losing a finer experience. We had just returned to our skis in time to whip down through a scrubby timberline “slalom” and out upon a broad open space before the western glory had faded. For luxurious minutes our skis carried us effortlessly

towards the fiery western sky. The smarting of cold wind on faces, the mad rush of air past tingling ears, the now somber peaks shooting skyward, the transition to amber and then to silver as the full moon rose and cast our racing shadows before us on the snows – these of the many sensations that whirled through our minds during that memorable descent will live longest.

Continuing the article, a couple of weeks later Brower was back for an ascent of Mt. Starr King (3/09/37): Joe Specht and I drove to Mono Meadow, skied down into Illilouette Creek, then, by climbing 2500 feet, arrived on the southeast saddle of Starr King. Here a long-threatening sky greeted us with a flurry of snow. We would have to change to tennis shoes for the final friction climb, and while tennis shoes are not uncomfortable in a snow storm, the low coefficient of friction is decidedly so. ... So prospects above were dismal. Below, the open slopes up which we had toiled looked most inviting. A few moments' run would return us to the creek before our morning tracks were obliterated. Starr King was after all a rock climb, not a ski-mountaineering objective. The ascent would be safe enough, but another time would be better. Having observed all this, we parked our skis and started up.

The cracks and the open chimneys relied upon for tensile and cross-pressure holds in summer climbs were filled with snow, and it was necessary to find an alternative, relying on friction alone upon rock much of which was wet as well as smooth. Arrival on the summit was more than a victory over snow and rock.

Certainly the members of the So. California SMS were also eyeing winter adventures in the Sierra – as detailed by **Dick Jones**: “Ski

Ascents of Whitney Crest” (SCB 4/38):

Bob Brinton, Muir Dawson, Bill Rice, Fred Stoffel and I left our car at Hunter's Flat, April 8, 1937, and, skiing to Ibx Park [aka Outpost Camp or Bighorn Meadow – near Mirror Lake], improvised shelter from an oncoming storm by assembling two screen doors, a wheelbarrow and our own storm canvas. Under this crude protection we spent fourteen hours waiting for the storm to clear. The morning of April 9, Brinton, Dawson and I crossed to the right of Mirror Lake, many times being tempted to turn our skis downhill and schuss the steep slopes that flattened out on the frozen lake. Passing the base of Mt. Muir, we turned up the east slope of Whitney Pass. Powder snow two or three feet deep made kick turns difficult and created some avalanche hazard. By mid-day we stood on the pass (13,500) and viewed once again the white heart of the High Sierra. If we had made an earlier start we might have continued toward Mt. Whitney with very little more difficulty. However, we made ready for the descent and, with a last look at the beautiful white panorama across the Kern, pointed our skis downward. Turn after turn, interspersed with an occasional cartwheel, brought us all too soon to the foot of the steep slope, where, on a large block of granite, we basked in the sun and finished our lunches. Returning to camp over varying kinds of snow – all fast – we were thankful that our skis had steel edges.

The next day Rice and Stoffel climbed to the top of the pass by the route of the summer trail, which was much shorter than our previous morning's ascent. Rice left his skis at the pass and climbed Mt. Muir. That night around our campfire we recalled past ski trips to Kearsarge Pass, Bishop Pass, Dunderberg

Peak, and the Mammoth Lake region, and voted this trip among the best.

Return to El Picacho del Diablo

Recall from Tribute Part II that the high point of Baja Calif was topped in mid-June 1932 by the gnarly team of Bestor Robinson, Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson, Dick Jones, Nate Clark and Bubs Brem. They managed this daring feat from the west, reaching the summit of “Big Picacho” (~10,200) along the unexpectedly complex and technical Pinnacle Ridge (returning back up Canon Diablo). Their day hike had turned into two bivouacs! Come early April 1937 and Norman was back in Baja – this time at the behest of Randall Henderson. Henderson had already made two failed attempts on the peak entering from the east via the San Felipe Desert. He didn't want to fail again!



Norman Clyde. Date & place uncertain, but probably during a Sierra Club High Trip in the 1920s-30s. [Glen Dawson Collection]

Their epic trip was penned by Clyde in *Westways* (formerly *Touring Topics*), 11/38. Both this story and the earlier one, also by Norman, were reprinted in 1975 by Dawson's Book Shop as #36 in its Baja California Travels Series: "El Picacho del Diablo – the Conquest of Lower California's Highest Peak, 1932 & 1937" by Norman Clyde, with intro by John W. Robinson.]

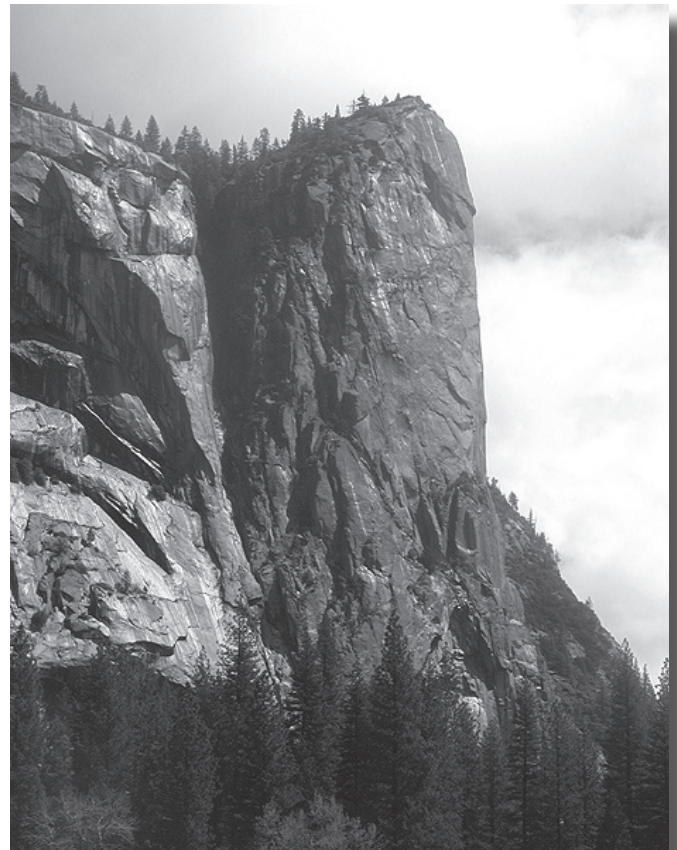
Day one they parked near the mouth of La Providencia Canon and headed up it, encountering some swims. Day two "... was spent in clambering over boulders, making detours along the canyon walls, and fighting our way through scrub oak, cat-claw, maguey, cholla, and other dense growths all armed with a multiplicity of thorns, usually very sharp." [As is well known by intrepid Desert Peaks Section climbers today.] Camp was made at about 6200 ft. Day three, leaving heavy packs behind, they continued with rucksack, rope and ice axe. Attaining the ridge, they encountered a 200-ft notch, which required an 800-ft descent to pass. "As we advanced over the great slabs of granite these gradually became tilted more and more to be interrupted in places by step-like walls broken sufficiently, however, to render them scalable. Just below the summit we faced a really difficult one. Twenty-five feet of energetic gymnastics was followed by an equal distance on which one clung to an almost vertical wall by hand and foot-holds which were neither sufficiently numerous nor sufficiently large to be very comfortable." Rats – false summit! However, the high point was now in view and the summit cairn was soon theirs.

Their descent was meant to be by a shorter route, but they would bivouac before reaching their cached packs – and after "wading through several feet of powder snow glazed over by a thin coating of ice." There would be another night's camp before regaining their car on their fifth day out. Randall Henderson was exhausted but elated – he had found the right man!

In April '37 Ernest Dawson, Glen's father, stepped down from the Club's board of directors. He had served 1922-25 and '26-37, and he was Club president '35-37. Glen was elected to the board at this time. He would serve 1937-51 (although he was not active during his Army service in WW II).

Adventuring in Yosemite Valley

The Memorial Day weekend period of 1937 again found the north and south RCSers jointly converging on Yosemite Valley (the fifth year for the Bay folks), as



Washington Column, Yosemite. [Image found by author.]

detailed by **Dick Leonard** in "Rock Climbing in Yosemite" (SCB 4/38):

Washington Column [Located on the north side of the Valley, just right of Royal Arches] – This seems to be established as the most popular fifth class climb in the Sierra. It has now been ascended twelve times, half of them this year. Its popularity is well deserved, but notwithstanding that three exceptionally competent feminine climbers [Marj Farquhar, Virginia Greever and Olive Dyer] have made the climb, one should not fall into the error of considering it "an easy day for a lady" and thereby lead the inexperienced into difficulty. It is still a fifth class climb, and requires commensurate training and experience. No variation in route has been made since the second ascent. [Fat Man Chimney route, 5/26/34, and Piton Traverse route, 5/31/35.]

One day the Higher Cathedral Spire was topped by Glen Dawson, Dick Jones and Bill Rice of the southern RCS. The next day the summit was visited by Dave Brower, Raffi Bedayan, Ken Davis and Hervey Voge of the northern RCS. A week later Bob Brinton and Bill Rice also climbed the Lower Cathedral Spire, and then made the second ascent of Royal Arches, which they

felt was harder than LCS.

As noted in Tribute Part IV, following an extended recon of Lost Arrow in 1935 by Dave Brower, Bestor Robinson and others, "It was unanimously agreed that we would never attempt it." Two years later their resolve was faltering!

Lost Arrow – This is at present probably the most fascinating unsolved problem in the state. Standing almost vertically 1200 feet above its base, its slender shaft is close to the horse trail and steel railing at Yosemite Point. The name "Lost Arrow," derived from Indian legend, has now been corrupted by facetious rock climbers into "Last Error." Hence the isolated ledges at 350, 750 and 1050 feet from the base are appropriately known at the "First Error," "Second Error," and "Third Error," reserving the "Last Error" for the summit. May 29, 1937, Dave Brower and Dick Leonard made the "First Error." To do so required thirty pitons for safety and about five for direct aid, although the direct aid was utilized for conservation of strength and to raise the factor of safety rather than through physical impossibility of climbing the pitch otherwise. The climbing was fifth class but would increase to sixth class from there on. We feel that the route to the "Third Error" from below is perfectly possible, but would require experts capable of ascending a very long chimney at a very high angle. One cannot say whether it is possible to make the "Last Error," for as Sir Leslie Stephen has pointed out, one must "rub his nose" against the peak in order to ascertain whether the minute cracks and holds are actually there or not. ... The solution of difficult problems is one of the major factors in the sport of rock climbing. So long as we stay clearly within the limits of our abilities, we can enjoy repeated attempts on even such problems as this with pleasure



NORTH PALISADE FROM MOUNT SILL
JUNE 1937
By Howard S. Gates

and adequate safety.

No mention is made by name of **Jules Eichorn** on this annual RCS weekend, nor on any of the many other events detailed in the SCB during 1937. However, he may still have been on this outing, as his climbing log shows an ascent of Washington Column sometime that year.

High Sierra Rambles

It is possible, of course, to venture into the High Sierra late in springtime for snow climbs without the benefit of skis, as demonstrated in "June Mountaineering in the Palisades" by **Carl Jensen** (SCB 4/38).

Although the grandeur of the Sierra, as seen on the usual summertime trip, may have instilled in you a love for them that seems boundless, an even greater enthrallment awaits you should you visit them in springtime, when they are still completely snow-mantled. ... On the peaks you will find snow-climbing at least as easy as talus-climbing, and the descending much easier.

Accompanied by fellow LA/RCSer **Howard Gates**, Jensen set off on June 3, 1937 from South Lake and over Bishop Pass on a fourteen-day odyssey that would finally bring them back to their start.

Our ascents of North Palisade, Sill and Split Mtn were the earliest on record for any season, but on Middle Pal Norman Clyde had, in a former year, beaten us by one day. ... As our packs weighed about seventy-five pounds each at the start, we had occasion to regret the hatchet, field-glasses, and certain sundries, which we found we did not need. ...

When we finally arrived at the top [of North Pal], only about half an hour of daylight remained. This we used in descending the ridge toward Mt. Sill, our next objective. Then, at 14,000 feet, with an icy up-draft blowing from the large glacier below, without food and water, and with only a parka apiece, we sat down to await the dawn. We sat on our rubber-soled shoes, the only use we found for them on the climb, partly insulating our bodies from the cold rocks. We hugged each other, chafed our legs, and stamped

our feet to stimulate circulation. At times, one of us would warm up enough to doze off for a few minutes, to be quickly awakened by the cold or by the movements of the other. ... At last, about 4:15, it was light enough for us to see. We loosened up our joints, uncoiled the rope, and descended to the col. There, as I began to continue our projected climb toward Sill, Gates called to me: "Carl, let's go down to our packs from here and get some breakfast, and come back and do Sill later." I needed no persuasion

...
[They succeeded in getting breakfast that day - and on getting Mt. Sill the next!]



LA/RCS Palisades Trip, 7/03/37. L-R: Bob Brinton, Mary Jane Edwards, Dick Jones, Muir Dawson, Jim Smith, Nelson Nies. [Dick Jones Collection, from Gwen Jones Rinehart]

Carl Jensen and Howard Gates' thirst for adventure was not yet quenched, however – as noted in *Mountaineering Notes* by Carl: "The Minarets in June."

Following our climbs in the Palisades region, we spent a week in the Minaret-Ritter region. We established basecamp near Iceberg Lakes and in the next few days made what we believe to be the earliest seasonal ascents of Clyde, Michael, Eichorn and Rice Minarets, and perhaps the earliest of Ritter and Banner. We also made what is, so far as we can ascertain, the first ascent of a double summit north of "The Notch" – shown on map and views elsewhere as "E." After one of our climbs we were caught by a cold moisture-laden wind and, with the way obscured, were forced to spend a foodless, fireless, and waterless night in a recess of the mountainside.

Seems like this gnarly duo saved a lot on food, water and wood. ☺ No doubt it was a consolation, at least to Carl, that Minaret E shortly became Jensen Minaret!

Another LA/RCSer was also out and about, as noted by **Chester Versteeg** in his *Mountaineering Notes* article: "Some Climbs in the Sierra in the Summer of 1937." Chester claimed the first ascent of Tinemaha Mtn on 1 July. Many other first ascents were on unnamed peaks identified by altitude. His climb of Langley was made a family affair: Mrs. Lillian Versteeg, Betty (13) and Janice (9). Lillian then joined her spouse on 9 August atop Mt. LeConte – becoming "the first woman to make the ascent."

A little over a month following their Memorial Day weekend in Yosemite Valley, Glen Dawson and crew were heading north again – as detailed in the *Mountaineering Notes* by **Jim Smith**: "Southern California Rock Climbers' Palisade Trip."

The Palisade region was visited July 3-5, 1937 by twenty-one members of the LA/RCS, including seven girls

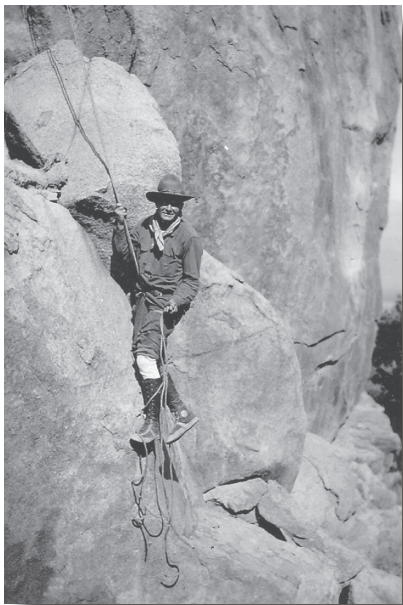
who did their own backpacking. Camp was made at Third Lake, on the North Fork of Big Pine Creek, six miles from the end of the road. July 3rd, Dick Jones and May Pridham climbed Temple Crag from the saddle to the east. July 4th, Glen Dawson, Muir Dawson, LaVere Daniels and Wayland Gilbert climbed Mt. Sill by the North Face. Two parties, consisting of Bob Brinton, Dick Jones, Mary Jane Edwards, Howard Koster, Nelson Nies and Jim Smith, in attempting North Pal by the Northeast Face from Palisade Glacier, reached the notch to the right of the highest peak, but were turned back by lightning. Other parties on Thunderbolt Peak and Temple Crag were also unable to complete their climbs. Although climbing was hindered by storms, the trip was highly successful and a similar trip is scheduled for summer of '38.

The High Trip of 1937

This year the Club would do something it hadn't done in awhile – a trip beyond the High Sierra. This time it would be to

Glacier National Park (Montana) and to Lake Louise, Yoho National Park and the Selkirk Range near the British Columbia/Alberta border in Canada.

As noted in Tribute Part I, in 1928 the Club adventured in Canada's Jasper and Robson National Parks – and Norman Clyde in a party of five achieved a stunning ascent of Mt. Robson. The year 1926 saw the High Trip in the Yellowstone area – with Norman leading a daring climb of the Grand Teton by the Owen-Spaulding route (the only known route at the time). Glen Dawson was on the High Trip but, at 14, was considered too young (by others!) to join the climb, although his father Ernest succeeded on it. And in 1924 the Club made its first trip to Glacier NP – so this would



Norman Clyde roping down, though not using Dulfersitz. Date & place uncertain. [County of Inyo, Eastern California Museum.]

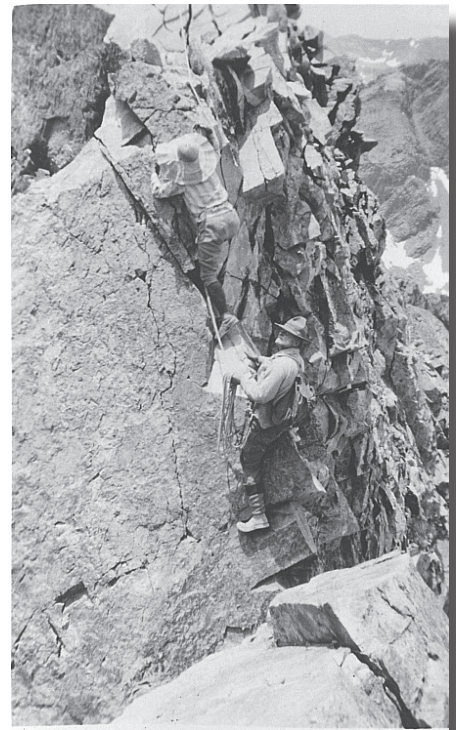
be a second round for a few High-Trippers.

[Will Colby had managed the Club's High Trips from the

beginning, initially at the request of John Muir in 1901. He did it for 36 years, risking any losses out of his pocket, with the strong assist of Ansel Adams and Francis Tappaan in later years. Then, in a tiff over financial accounting with Club president Francis Farquhar, all three resigned. Dick Leonard was appointed to head the Outing Committee and he took charge of the 1937 High Trip, with strong assist from Oliver Kehrlein and also Jack Riegelhuth. Leonard ran the committee for sixteen years, and he would introduce many changes to reduce the environmental impact of the then ~200 High Trippers (plus packers and stock) under Colby. For example, he introduced smaller knapsack trips, base camp trips and burro trips.]

A hundred and ten strong the High Trip party set out from Oakland by train in private cars on July 10th – to return August 8th. There were only a few RCSers along, the two from LA being Howard Gates (fresh from his Palisades and Minarets bivys) and Braeme Gigas, who subsequently wrote the trip report for Mountaineering Notes (SCB 4/38).

Norman Clyde, Leonard, Kehrlein and Rigelhuth led various glacier hikes in Glacier Park and several non-technical summits. Atop Mt. Cleveland, Glacier's high point at 10,466, five parties totaling twenty signed the Sierra Club register placed on the '24 High Trip. The only notable climb, and the climax for that segment of the outing, was Kinnerly Peak (9944), the highest unclimbed peak in the park and undoubtedly a target of Clyde. Norman led the knife-edge summit with Gigas and two others in an 18-hr climbing day, erecting cairns on the three highest points. This gnarly ascent was published in a short LA Times article (9/12/37)



Norman Clyde spotting lady. Date & place uncertain, but probably during a Sierra Club High Trip in the 1930s. [Glen Dawson Collection]

titled: "Sierra Club Men Scale Highest Peak in Glacier Park." The story then clarified that it was the "highest unscald peak." (Kinnerly ranks 8th in the Park.)

In the Lake Louise district Clyde and Kehrlein led a small party to the summit of Mt. Wapta (9115). They added their names to the tin can, also containing the name of Edward Whymper (of Matterhorn fame) from September 1901. "As a climax to the entire trip, fourteen climbers struggled for two stormy days, August 4-5, to ascend the 'King of the Selkirks,' Mt Sir Donald (10,816). Success met but two, Norman Clyde and Edward Turner. Bitter weather and inadequate equipment stopped the others." [For more info on this gnarly peak refer to Steve Roper and Allen Steck's "Fifty Classic Climbs of North America," 1979.]

Surely Glacier National Park must have held a special, if diminishing, interest for Clyde as this was his third, and least spectacular, visit. As mentioned in Tribute Part I, Norman first went to Glacier on a private trip in 1923. And he kept busy: climbing 36 peaks in 36 days, eleven of them first ascents. The LA Times (9/16/23) featured this feat, noting “the achievement, it is believed, sets a world’s record.” Clyde was back in Glacier the next year with the Club’s High Trip, but he extended his stay by at least a week. The Oakland Post (9/10/24) headlined his exploits: “23 Peaks Scaled in 18 Days by Berkeleyan.” *Twenty-three mountains in 18 days is the new world’s peak climbing record established by Norman Clyde of Berkeley, a member of the Sierra Club of California, according to an announcement made today by the bureau of national parks. According to the announcement, Clyde will send his notes of the climbing to the bureau’s headquarters in Washington, D.C., soon to have his unequalled feat officially certified as a record.*

The climbing took place in Glacier Park, which contains more peaks per square mile than any other area in the world, beginning July 16. In the ascent of several peaks Clyde was accompanied by other members of the Sierra Club, which this year visited the park in a body 210 strong. Included in the 23 peaks Clyde scaled was Mt. Merritt, which, so far as is known, has never before been climbed by man. [Source: County of Inyo Eastern California Museum]

Ski Mountaineers’ Great Loss

Recall, Walt Mosauer was the very affable and talented ski mountaineer, UCLA ski coach and professor, and the founding chair of the Club’s SMS. He did not limit his near-by and far-off wild adventures

to the snow-clad world, however. His professional interests led him often to the deserts of the SW and to Baja California – and on a second summer trip to Acapulco. Quoting from a University of California “In Memoriam” 1937:

Walter Mosauer, instructor in zoology at UCLA, died on August 10, 1937, while on a field trip to Mexico for the purpose of collecting reptiles and making photographic records of them in their native environment. This was his second reptile-hunting expedition to Acapulco, where the greater part of his work was being done. The collection and study of reptiles was the chief interest of his life. His untimely death at the age of 32 brought to a close a promising career.

It’s surprising that the cause of death was variously attributed: a form of plant poisoning, blood poisoning from a possible plant or reptile, and leukemia. The stricken researcher was taken to Mexico City where he died. He had been married to one of his grad students, but was divorced and childless at death.

The SMS had developed a keen interest in building a ski hut on another of their favorite snow peaks, San Gorgonio Mtn. It was now to be the Walter Mosauer Memorial Lodge, and fundraising began in earnest – as well as discussions with the Forest Service for a permit. The SMS got its second chair with the election of George Bauwens, a skilled architect, USC engineering professor and expert skier (and with a very German accent). He headed the team that would select the site on the north side of the peak.

Although there is no mention of it in the SCB, the climbing log of **Jules Eichorn** indicates that he climbed

North Palisade sometime in 1937. Harv Galic came to the rescue in uncovering this article from the LA Times of 8/26/37: “Harvard President Scales Mountain.” It has an AP (Associated Press) date of August 25.

Dr. James Bryant Conant, youthful president of Harvard University, was disclosed today as an amateur alpinist of more than ordinary ability.

Jules Eichorn, noted mountain climber, and Francis Farquhar, past president of the California Sierra Club, said today that they, Conant and another man last week scaled 14,254-foot North Palisade Mountain in the Sierra Nevada, third highest peak in California.

Farquhar was a Harvard alum with strong ties to the university. He undoubtedly made a special effort to enlist Jules in leading this climb, which they had done together in 1931 with Underhill, Dawson and others, along with Thunderbolt Pk and Starlight. (Side note: Jules’ first child, David, was born on August 14!)

Whitney by the East Buttress

The cream of the LA/RCS returned to Whitney over the Labor Day weekend with heady plans to further develop their efforts of a year earlier. **Art Johnson** wrote an article for Mountaineering Notes (SCB 4/38) on “Thor Peak” – a newly-proposed name. On Sept. 4th he, Jim Smith and Howard Koster left the group’s basecamp near Mirror Lake. A somewhat wandering and fairly difficult path up the great south face finally led to the top of their new route, Satan’s Delight. [Refer to “The High Sierra – Peaks, Passes & Trails” by R.J. Secor (1999), for a photo of the route.]

The next day Glen Dawson and team were prime for another crack at the direct route up the east face – as described by Glen in “Whitney by the East Buttress.”

Labor Day weekend, 1937, marked the seventh annual Sierra Club trip to Mt. Whitney. Dick Jones and I wondered if this time we would complete our “Sunshine Route,” midway between the usual East Face Route and the Mountaineers’ Route. At 5 o’clock, September 5, five of us left Mirror Lake and went up the steep, trailless canyon, with our first objective the right side of a prominent pinnacle seen on the skyline from the lake. Crossing Pinnacle Pass at 6:15 we clambered down steep talus, across part of the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek, and up to the plateau that holds East Face Lake [aka Iceberg Lake]. Here Mt. Whitney appears in its greatest grandeur. The northerly section of the east face stands forward from the remainder in a great square abutment. The original East Face Route starts up this abutment or buttress, then goes left by a large ledge. Our plan was to continue up the buttress – a more direct route.

About 500 feet above East Face Lake, Dick Jones, Howard Koster and Muir Dawson put on the rope and went around the tower by going up it and to the right. Bob Brinton and I make the exposed Eichorn Traverse to the left of the tower, to meet the others at the col behind. We went directly up a small arête, using two pitons placed the year before. With Brinton leading we went up a pitch just north of the buttress, then, on excellent holds, up the steepest portion of its crest. One of the most distinctive features of the East Face is a hanging rock [the Peewee], which, seen in profile from the trail below Whitney Pass, looks like a huge insect crawling up Mt. Whitney. Our route led so

close up the right of this rock that we could touch it. We then went up a series of cracks to the left of another block, and finally reached less difficult pitches. Near the summit we unroped. We arrived on top at noon, three and one-half hours after roping, and were greeted by many of our friends – more than 100 persons having come up the trail. The East Buttress is slightly more difficult than the usual East Face Route; both are interesting routes for experienced climbers.

Art Johnson also wrote a short piece about this climb, which he labeled the “Sunshine-Peewee Route.” He noted that a total of four pitons were used on the route for protection – not for direct aid. Two weeks later Art and Bill Rice were back and made the second ascent. They departed East Face Lake at 6:30 and topped out at 10:00. The pair then descended the route “making the first round-trip,” and arrived back at the lake by 12:30. (In his article Art also commented that the East Face Route was climbed by Dick Jones and Adrienne Applewhite the prior July 24th, “using both the Eichorn and Fresh Air Traverses.”)

The East Face Route is generally rated at 5.4 and the East Buttress at 5.6. Refer to Secor’s guide for a photo with the two routes; also in “Climbing California’s Fourteeners” by Stephen Porcella and Cameron Burns, 1998. The first East Face ascent in 1931 was extensively covered in Tribute Part I. (Good photos in “Fifty Classic Climbs of N America.”)

Glen recently observed the 70th Anniversary of this climb, at 95 the only living member of the five. Your author sent him a congratulatory note on 9/05/07 and asked him to compare the two routes for which he is most famous. His response:

Dear Bill:

In 1931 it was the vision of Francis Farquhar to climb the East Face of Mt. Whitney. He selected the participants. The real leaders on the climb were Underhill and Clyde. Jules and I did what we were told.

In 1937 it was my idea to climb the East Buttress. I was the leader and selected the participants, although it was a cooperative leadership. The East Face is a big undefined wall with lots of loose rock. The East Buttress is a clearer route with mostly solid rock. It is my favorite climb but, so far as I now remember, I made it just once.
Glen

A wonderful story by journalist **Jordan Rane** appeared in the Los Angeles Times (3/08/05): “The Climb of His Life - Glen Dawson’s First Ascent of Whitney’s Steep Side Remains a Formidable Feat.” The article, which is focused on the East Face Route of 1931 when Glen was 19, is based on a presentation Glen gave for the Sierra Club’s LaCrescenta Valley Group. Quoting in part with the author’s permission from his original draft:

Was he apprehensive? “No,” says Dawson. “I was just interested in going up.” Then as an afterthought, he adds: “Sometimes you really can’t tell whether a face can be climbed until you go rub your nose in it.”...

“A lot of climbers back then wore basketball shoes, but I didn’t like those,” recalls Dawson. “I could feel the rock better in an ankle-high lightweight tennis shoe.”

[Regarding their astonishing time of 3 1/4 hours.] *“I think one reason we made such fast time, that people still make note of, is that we didn’t want to get caught at night on the face. We wanted to get it done with, so we moved right along. I mean, everything was concentrated on getting over the difficult part in case*



These two youths and three companions scaled a new route up the eastern face of Mt. Whitney, considered the most difficult rock climb in the United States. Glenn Dawson is shown holding piton and caribiner while his brother Muir looks on.

Times photo

Los Angeles newspaper clipping of East Buttress of Whitney climb, September, 1937. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

it was going to take us a lot of time, which it didn't. So we made a fast trip."

[Concluding] "I've climbed in many parts of the world and published over 300 books. But of all the things in my life, that day in August in 1931 – well, I still get a

good deal of pleasure out of it."

Movin' on Up at Tahquitz

Jim Smith penned a two-page story on "Tahquitz Rock" that appeared in the Mountaineering Notes (SCB 4/38).

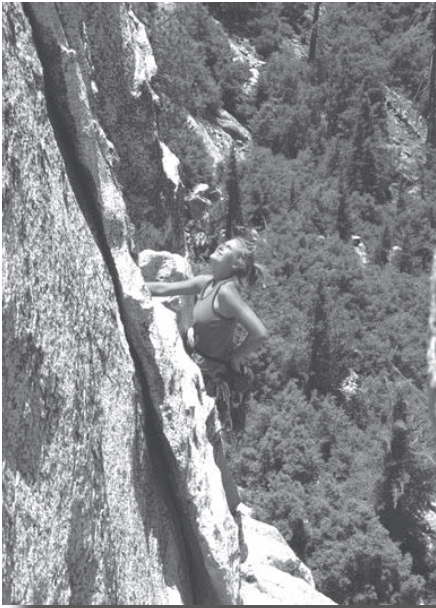
With the comparatively recent interest in highly technical rock climbing, and the resulting conquest of Sierra spires and faces, has come the increasing importance of local climbing, not only as training for major mountaineering, but as a sport in itself. Rock climbing is a sport that may be enjoyed – once one has learned a few tricks and methods – whether the rock is the East Face of Mt. Whitney, or is in the backyard behind the incinerator. While all true Sierra Club members would prefer an environment of whispering pines, sparkling waterfalls and granite peaks, still most of us would rather explore nearby hills than stay at home dreaming of the High Sierra.

The author goes on to note that "Fingertip Traverse" has become the best known route at Tahquitz, and he provided a rather detailed description of the climb.

Recall from Tribute Part IV, the first four Tahquitz routes were established in 1936. Two more would be added in '37 – as noted by Jim. (1) "White Maidens' Walkaway" - August 14, 1937, by Jim Smith and Art Johnson – "longest and one of the finest climbs." It was later rated 5.1 and considered an excellent beginner's intro to serious climbing.

(2) "Booksellers' Route" – October 3, 1937, by Dick Jones and Glen Dawson – "a terrific fifth class climb, involving the use of 16 pitons." For sure, those 16 pitons were not evenly distributed along the route, as there is a notoriously long, steep, unprotected "bucket" pitch.

More details are available in the Mugelnoos Newsletter of 10/03/40, which featured a Tahquitz History: "Glen Dawson and Dick Jones pushed the most exposed climb



Shot by Christine Ahn, while climbing the Open Book, of her friend Alison on the "Bucket Pitch" of Mechanics Route, Tahquitz.

on the rock to completion. 16 pitons. Previously, Bill Rice and Bob Brinton had gone up over the overhanging beginning; and Bill, Bob and Art Johnson worked nine pitons up to the pendulum traverse."

A large crowd of RCSers cheered on the climbers, among them Rob Roy McDonald, then 13, and just starting to get involved along with his much older brother Doug. Rob Roy later became quite active with the SPS, the earliest RCS climber to do so! [Source: recent email from Rob Roy.]

Ruth Dyar Mendenhall would pen a letter to a friend dated August 28, 1939. In it she wrote in part: "We (she and Johnny Mendenhall) climbed Traitor Horn, which is the worst climb on the rock except the Mechanic's or Booksellers' Route. This last has been made only twice: pioneered by Glen Dawson and Jonesy, climbed last summer by Carl Jensen and Johnny, and actually is so ghastly, and so utterly unprotected,

that there is no justification to it, and it probably will never be climbed again!" Source: "Woman on the Rocks – the Mountaineering Letters of Ruth Dyar Mendenhall," – full citation appearing later. Quoted by permission of the editor. The third ascent would be by Bill Rice and Clyde Nelson on 9/17/39. Much later on, John Mendenhall drilled and placed a large eye-bolt on the unprotected bucket pitch, which finally broke off after more than 50 years.

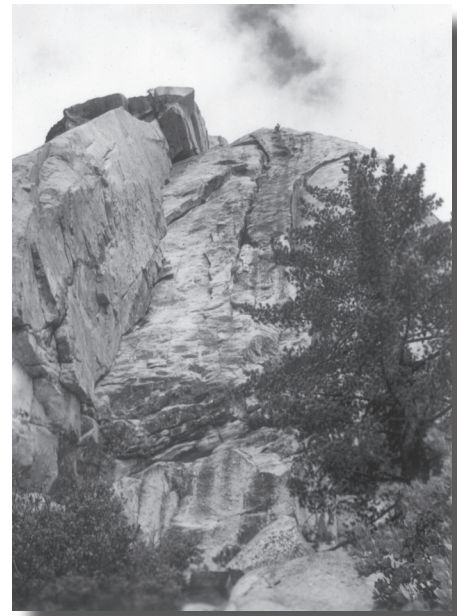
Noted American alpinist **Rick Ridgeway** wrote an article for Summit Magazine "Tahquitz: the Early Years," appearing in the June 1976 issue. Quoting in part from his interview with Jones :

Dick led all the pitches on the first ascent of Mechanic's. "What I remember most," he now says, "was lots of fresh air. I was hyped up. The adrenalin was going and I knew I had to finish – I couldn't down-climb that bucket pitch. When we got to the top Glen kept looking at me and saying, "Wow, what a lead!""

Bookseller's Route was the name preferred by Glen, as Dick had also worked at Dawson's Book Shop. However, **Mechanic's Route** eventually prevailed, reflecting the large number of pitons used (or possibly Dick's employment a couple of years later for North American Aviation). Both Glen and Dick were content with either name. Many years in the future this route would be hailed as the first 5.8 climb in North America.

Monument Peak

Mid-month that same October '37 Glen Dawson and Bob Brinton headed out into the desert near Parker Dam, as detailed by Glen in "Unclimbed Pinnacle of the Desert" in *Desert Magazine* (2/38).



Mechanics Route in middle of wall, Open Book to left – Tahquitz, 1939. [Angeles Chapt. Archives]

The pinnacle is Monument Peak, in the Whipple Mtns.

It was George Bauwens who first told me about a spectacular unclimbed monolith near Parker Dam. Then another Sierra Club member, John Mendenhall, showed me pictures taken during an attempt he made on the peak [earlier that April]. Bob Brinton and I decided that we would try it.

... There across the basin was an impressive pinnacle of rock which dominated the whole landscape. ... Its sheer walls were a challenge to any climber. ... Towering immediately above us was a great pile of rocks, brittle and loose to the slightest touch, yet rising in a vertical wall more than 360 feet overhead and 2446 feet above sea level.

A glance at the wall is enough to discourage anyone, but after coming across the state of California we had to go through with the formality of trying it. Using 90 feet of 7/16 inch yachting rope, Bob and I started the ascent.

... Two pitches up the face we came to a tin can containing the record of John Mendenhall, who had driven in an iron stake. ...

When Brinton began working his way up the next pitch over loose rock above a massive overhang, I began to think about our margin of safety. Brinton is a brilliant leader and I was anchored to a piton, but I felt that our experience in loose rock did not justify our going further. Geoffery Winthrop Young, leading authority on mountain climbing, considers consistent judgment the most important factor in leadership.

Since turning back on Monument Peak I have tried to analyze my own reactions to determine whether for the time being I was unduly frightened or justly cautious. The climbing is not difficult as climbing goes, but very dangerous. ... German mountaineers take their climbing so seriously that they attempt ascents which English and American climbers consider unjustifiable. Drawing the delicate line is one of the major problems of rock climbing and mountaineering.

We had spent two days finding our peak and in a few moments I had made the decision to turn back. The theory that it is better to be too cautious than not cautious enough was about the only consolation for our failure. ... Our trip was not disappointing because we did not reach the top. Rather, it was dismaying because we did not find good rock on which to work.

The Southwest is full of peaks which may have climbing possibilities. Ship Rock in New Mexico has been given up as impossible by more than one mountaineer. Picacho, near Yuma, is a delightful climb [refer to Tribute Part III], and for the expert the great flat-topped summits of southern Utah are climbs worthy of the highest traditions of Alpinism.

The summit of Pinnacle Peak finally felt human steps on December 31, 1939, when John Mendenhall returned, accompanied by Art Johnson, Paul Estes and Ruth Mendenhall.

Opening up Zion National Park

Late that same October 1937, Glen Dawson and Dick Jones, accompanied by Homer Fuller and Wayland Gilbert with Joe Momyer in support, were enroute to Zion National Park for new climbing adventures. This was not Glen's first visit to the wonders of the Colorado Plateau country – that occurred on a Zion trip in 1923

when Glen was eleven, followed by other family or Club outings. But they had ropes this time and the siren call of "the great flat-topped summits of southern Utah" could no longer be denied.

Glen authored the following article for the SCB (4/38): "First Ascent of East Temple." His story begins this way:

A bright spot of fire shone from the summit of the East Temple at six o'clock on the evening of October 26, 1937, indicating that another of Zion National Park's "Sky Islands" had been climbed. Although there was some evidence that Park



Great White Throne, Zion NP, October 1937. [Glen Dawson Collection]

officials were not very well pleased at having the peak “desecrated” by climbers, nevertheless, Joe Momyer was delighted, for he knew that his companions had safely reached the highest point. It is understandable that the Park officials were not very enthusiastic about our trip, for few organized climbing parties have visited Zion, and both ascents [1927 and 1931] of its most famous peak, the Great White Throne, have been connected with serious accidents. ... Our Sierra Club party, however, had [just] made the third ascent of the exceedingly difficult sandstone walls of the Great White Throne without undue risks, and was looking for another peak to conquer. In answer to Gilbert’s naïve question, “I suppose hundreds of people have been up **East Temple**?” Superintendent Patrow told us that it was unclimbed. [They had just found another peak to conquer!] ... While Joe Momyer, sitting on the opposite walls with field glasses, helped us determine the best route on the huge face, Dick Jones and I led two ninety-foot ropes of two men each. A steep pitch to the left of the huge overhang brought us to the base of the left of two prominent cracks seen from below. ... To reach the final flat top we selected a cove in a red layer on the south side – about 150 feet high at that point – the upper few feet a hard resistant stratum forming a holdless overhang. Not until we used a three-man stand [your author’s underlining] were we able to unrope on the pleasant forested summit area. The 1100 feet of elevation had taken five and one-half hours of unhurried climbing, much of it exceedingly difficult. ...

Near our signal fire we left a small cairn and a tin can with our names. Back on top Fuller doled out three dates, six figs and a few thimblefuls of water for supper. Between two blazing fires we talked and slept.

In the morning we walked around the rim watching the sunrise

bring color to the maze of canyons and walls. ... We roped down the way we had come, using 200 feet of 5/16-in rope, doubled. ... Although we had started the previous morning just to explore the approaches, we had stayed out thirty hours. ... New and unusual ascents still abound, and to anyone familiar with Yosemite or Tahquitz climbing, we can recommend Zion National Park for an ideal vacation. [Current climbing guides show several high 5th class routes on East Temple. The route taken on this occasion appears unshown and may be lost.]

Following this trip Glen also penned a long article with photos for *Desert Magazine*: “They Climbed the Great White Throne,” August ’38 – a fun read!

LA/RCS – Turnover in Chair

[A major reference for what follows is an extended article by **John Ripley** on “Starting Rock Climbing in So. Calif. – the Early Years of the RCS,” in the *Mugelnoos*,

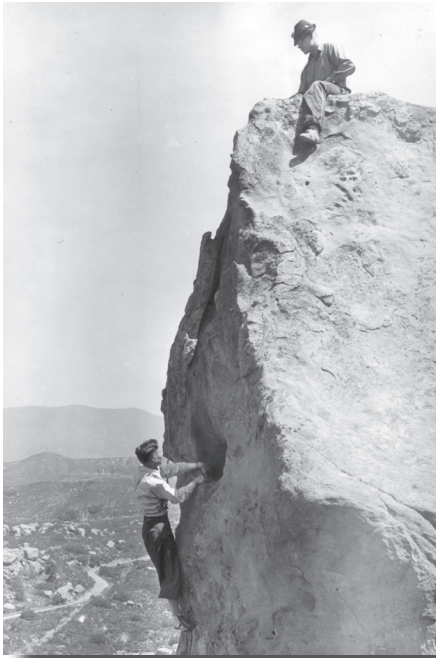
7/20/77.]

When the LA/RCS was originally authorized by the So. Calif. Chapter Ex-Com (9/34), Art Johnson, the driving force behind its creation, was appointed chair. Following the example of the SMS (admitted in 9/35), however, the RCS by-laws were changed in ’36 to provide for the election of officers. In that Nov. election the 1936 officers were retained for ’37: Art Johnson, chair; Jim Smith, vice chair; and May Pridham, secretary.

It is both illuminating and fascinating to read the RCS meeting minutes and correspondence of this early period. Chair Johnson often complained of the lack of support of other members, which placed a heavy burden upon himself. He was also concerned at what he perceived as an inadequate attention to safe climbing practices. The minutes of the



Posing at Stoney Point, c. 1938. L-R: Glen Dawson, Howard Koster, Phil Faulconer, Art Johnson, Dick Jones, Ray Ingwersen, Howard Gates, (?). [Provided by June Dawson McKeon, Angeles Chapt. Archives]



Nelson Nies belaying Glen Dawson at Stoney Pt, c. 1937. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

meeting of 10/25/37 demonstrated that things finally came to a head. There were repeated failures to get various motions passed, and difficulty in finally selecting a special committee to review and revise safety rules. There was, however, a single final item on which they could all agree (and which required unanimity) – the election of Norman Clyde as the first Honorary Member of the RCS! [Recall, Norman was elected in 1960 as the first Honorary Member of the SPS. Jules Eichorn and Glen Dawson are the other two Honorary Members, both elected in 1989 – thus this Tribute!]

Clyde was invited as the guest of honor for the Section's first annual banquet on 10 November. He sent a hand-written note on 1 Nov saying that "I feel flattered and honored in your extending me this invitation, but do not know at present whether I shall be able to be in Los Angeles at that time." Norman ultimately could not make it, being bogged down with setting up his care-taking

arrangements for Glacier Lodge. (Dick Leonard, Bestor Robinson and Randall Henderson were invited as guests but sent regrets.)

The annual election of officers took place at the Nov. banquet. Howard Koster was installed as chair with Dick Jones as secretary and Jim Smith continuing as vice chair. Thus ended Art Johnson's three-year tenure, longer than any subsequent chair. In a letter to the "honorable chairman" dated 11/22/37, Johnson observed that the election was "illegal according to the by-laws." He also gave notice of his refusal of the chairmanship of the Technical Committee, claiming that he would "not be permitted to exercise the full power of that chair." From the minutes taken by Dick Jones at the subsequent 12/23/37 meeting: "Newly-elected chair Howard Koster read the roll-call of the Section, after which the minutes of the Oct 25th meeting were read, laughed about, and finally accepted without corrections." Also: "Be it resolved that the members of the RCS hereby unanimously extend their sincere appreciation for energy, time, and thought expended in its behalf by its former chairman, Art Johnson, both in connection with the founding of the Section and the conducting of its affairs for the subsequent four years."

By far their most prolific trip leader each year in 1935-37, RCS records indicate that Art led no trips in 1938. However, he did resume leading trips the next year. If perhaps not always widely admired, Art Johnson was always widely respected, and his key seminal efforts in getting the RCS established have always been acknowledged. In a "History of the RCS" penned by Dick Jones for the 10/04/45 Mugelnoos, he wrote in part: "It is due to the untiring, ever diligent efforts of Mr. Johnson and his early committees that the

regularly scheduled practice climbs have become a permanent part of the So. Calif. Chapter's curriculum."

Bringing 1937 to a close – an amazing year of intense climbing near and far.

Sixty-five years later, in correspondence to Bob and Maureen Cates dated 2/26/02, **Glen Dawson** wrote: "The year 1937 was in many ways the apex of my climbing career – with the first ascent of the East Buttress of Mt. Whitney and climbs in Zion National Park of the Great White Throne and the first ascent of the East Temple and in Yosemite the Higher Cathedral Spire." Glen overlooked the Mechanic's Route at Tahquitz. **Dick Jones** passed away in 1995, but your author is quite sure that he would also date 1937 as the apex of his climbing career – as all of these climbs noted by Glen were in the company of Dick, his cherished boyhood friend since grammar school.

1938

The year started cold in the High Sierra and elsewhere – but then January there always comes in winter.

Advancing further in **Dave Brower's** article "Beyond the Skiways" (SCB 4/38), we find Dave, Morgan Harris and Arthur Blake meeting up with Norman Clyde on Jan. 5th at Glacier Lodge on Big Pine Creek. Three days later they attempted North Pal from the glacier. With air temps close to zero at the bergschrund below the U-Notch "... it was necessary to change from ski boots to frozen climbing boots. We soon concluded, therefore, that to continue might mean frozen feet, as well as a long descent after dark. So we retreated, with the situation

thoroughly rationalized, and enjoyed the matchless slopes of smooth dry powder that blanketed the Palisade Glacier.”

Mt Winchell was climbed two days later “in a partial spirit of retaliation for the repulse. ... A leisurely descent, part of which was roped, brought us to our skis. During moments of the run back to camp, when we were not fighting breakable crust or lowering skis with a rope and ice axe – that is, during those moments when we glided swiftly and almost noiselessly down perfect slopes of powder – we became aware of the great improvement skis are making in mountaineering. Not very long ago, the attainment of a summit was the climax of the climber’s day. Now there are two climaxes. Hail to the schuss!”

Farther to the south – rather farther to the southeast – new adventures awaited, as related by **Glen Dawson** in “Ship Rock,” (SCB 4/38):

Those who like peaks to remain unclimbed can rejoice in the majestic form of Ship Rock, elevation 7178 feet, in the northwestern corner of New Mexico. It rises 1600 feet from a flat, barren plain, unbelievably steep. No one has even reached the base of the summit pinnacle. In ‘Trail and Timberline,’ [publication of the Colorado Mtn. Club] 12/37, there is recounted an attempt by a strong climbing party, and in ‘Appalachia,’ 6/36, there is a good description of the Rock.

Forced to give up a weekend skiing because of a lack of snow, Bob Brinton, Bill Rice and I decided to look at Ship Rock. January 7 we drove almost to its base, 800 miles from Los Angeles, and shivered in light sleeping bags on the frozen ground. Our route, the first gully south of that described in ‘Trail and Timberline,’ probably leads to a cul-de-sac. Cold and difficult climbing prevented us



Bob Brinton and Glen Dawson, during aborted attempt to climb Ship Rock, January 1938. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

from reaching our first objective, a col between the third highest point and a black arête on the west. The only possibility is on the west side. Pitons are needed in the upper part, but piton cracks are very scarce.”

Less than two years later, October ’39, a strong team of SF/RCS climbers would take their first crack at Ship Rock, facing warmer weather – and bringing along a controversial new weapon in their hardware arsenal!

Mugelnoos

January 29, 1938 marked the appearance of issue #1 of the Mugelnoos. All subsequent issues were also numbered. (The November 2007 issue is #805!) “Published by and for the Ski Mountaineering Section of the Sierra Club, edited by the Agent for Programs and Propaganda [Glen Dawson]. Circulation Manager Dick Jones.” Issue #1 was less than a full page on the front, but the backside took a full page to list “Rules for San Antonio [Mt. Baldy] Ski Hut.” For example:

Rule #2 – During snow season skiers have preference over non-skiers.

Rule #12 – No smoking outside the hut nor in sleeping quarters. Smoking will be strictly restricted to the first floor.

The cool name is a corruption of the more commonly-used term mogel (snow bump) and George Bauwens’ German accent for news. It was produced out of Dawson’s Book Shop. Evidently it was an instant success, as #2 came out just four days later – both sides of the legal-size paper full of news items, gossip and ads plus the first cartoon. To wit:

- The Mugelnoos aims to be fearless and independent and to present news of interest to skiers and rock climbers of So. California.
- February special at Van Degrieff’s Ski Hut: hickory skis, bindings & poles - \$10.95.
- Ghosts & ski trips – We hear that Mr. Bauwens [SMS Chair] would like to get his hands on the Ghost of Ruth Dyar, for said Ghost signed the Baldy Hut register without putting in a stamp. Mr. Bauwens always says: “No Stemp, No Bed”!
- This weekend is the Inter-Collegiate Ski Meet at Yosemite. Several members of the SMS will be competing.
- Our circulation is now about 115 and goes only to Skiers and Rock Climbers.

A whole week would pass before #3 appeared on

Feb. 9th. FYI - "Results of the Yosemite Inter-Collegiate Ski Race at Badger Pass: more than 75 skiers from 15 colleges. Washington won the meet again, Nevada cleaned up in the jumps to take a good 2nd, Stanford 3rd, California 4th, UCLA 5th, Pomona 11th and Cal Tech 14th."

Before long, issues steadily came out at two-week intervals. Winter months were devoted to winter sports and summer months to rock climbing – and within two months it had become a joint publication of the SMS and RCS, reflecting the huge overlap in their memberships. As of issue #7, 3/15/38, Glen passed the editorship to Ruth Dyar with the support of her cousin Phoebe Russell with whom she then lived, and the "Noos" was produced at their home. (Side note: Phoebe would be the mother of Terry and Renny Russell, authors of "On the Loose," 1967.)

Ruth Dyar, who had graduated with a degree in journalism from the Univ. of Washington in 1934, joined the Sierra Club in LA with her cousin late in '37 and the SMS in January '38. She and John Mendenhall would first meet at Tahquitz later that spring, and both were elected to RCS membership on 6/29/38. Ruth and John would marry on 9/22/39 and continue a life-long passion for climbing and mountaineering both near and far afield. Ruth directly edited the Noos until the War took the couple out of state. After the War she continued as head of the Mugelnoos Committee (with a revolving editor for each issue) for forty years.

We will make occasional reference to "Woman on the Rocks – the Mountaineering Letters of Ruth Dyar Mendenhall," edited by **Valerie Mendenhall Cohen** (Ruth's younger daughter), Spotted Dog Press, 2007. The first letter,



Putting together the Mugelnoos - Phoebe Russell, left, and Ruth Dyar at their home on Marengo Ave, South Pasadena, c. June 1938. [Dick Jones Collection, from Gwen Jones Rinehart]

dated 4/19/38, relates her second visit to the Baldy Ski Hut. The letters, commonly addressed to her parents and siblings, are invariably entertaining and informative, and also delightfully insightful as to the many "characters" making up the early RCS and SMS.

About the first week of April '38 the high-altitude SMSers was back for their annual High Sierra spring ski tour. Nothing appeared in the SCB, but the event appeared in the LA Times with the headline: "Top of the United States Crossed for the First Time by Winter Ski Party," 5/22/38.

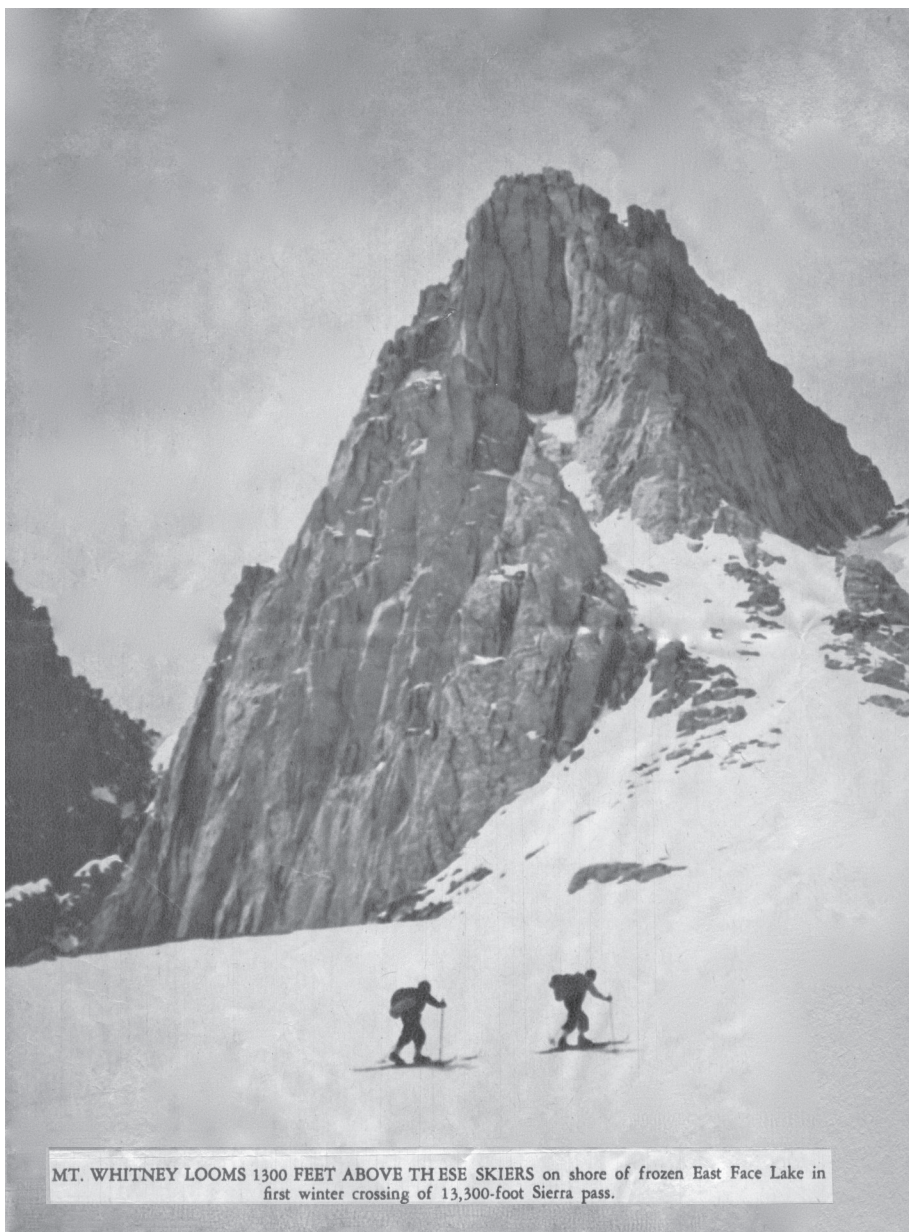
Perfectly conditioned for their arduous undertaking, five So. Calif. members of the ski mountaineering section of the Sierra Club recently completed a winter ski trip from Whitney Portal to the Upper Kern Cyn in Sequoia NP over 13,300-foot Whitney-Russell Pass. ... The epoch-making party consisted of Howard Koster, Dick Jones, Philip

Faulconer, Glen Dawson and Robert Brinton. [They then double-backed to Whitney Portal, having established this pass as a winter trans-Sierra route.]

The SCB of 4/38 published **Part II** of "A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra – the Ritter Range," by **Walter Starr** with assist by Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, Bill Rice and Ansel Adams, and the Climbing Notes of Walter Starr, Jr. [A map of the Range and a sketch of the Minarets from this second guide appeared in Tribute Part III.]

Swarming in Yosemite Valley

The annual joint RCS Memorial Day weekend had grown steadily. In 1937 over 75 participated of whom about 40 were climbers. Then, in 1938, the Club went ballistic with nearly 500 members camping together in the Valley, including 67 active members of "the three rock climbing sections." (Distinct



MT. WHITNEY LOOMS 1300 FEET ABOVE THESE SKIERS on shore of frozen East Face Lake in first winter crossing of 13,300-foot Sierra pass.

Los Angeles newspaper clipping, SMS team on way to Whitney-Russell Pass, May 1938. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

from the SF Bay Chapter's RCS, the Loma Prieta Chapter, founded in 1933, had recently inaugurated its RCS, your author believes.) Events are extensively described by **Dick Leonard** in "Climbing in Yosemite," (SCB 6/39).

... Through the generous volunteer leadership of the more experienced climbers, for which the High Trip is famous, many members of the Club who had never had the opportunity of enjoying mountaineering were

enabled to participate in some of the joys of the sport. For example, Glen and Muir Dawson's repeated ascents of Washington Column [half-way to Lunch Ledge] for the training of those less experienced.

Although both Glen and Jules Eichorn were re-united on this outing, they did not share a rope. Other notable climbs:

Arrowhead – Jules Eichorn, Jack Riegelhuth and Ted Waller made

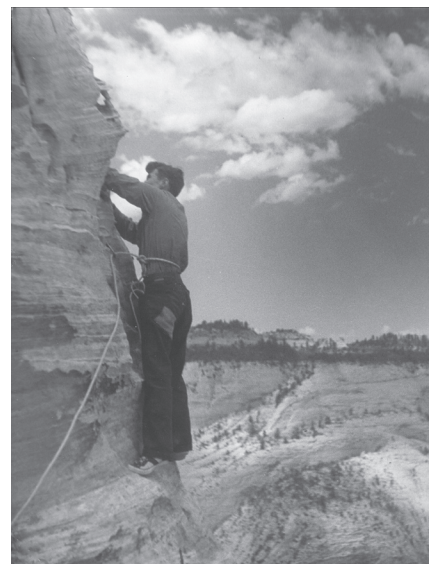
the third ascent of this interesting pinnacle.

Washington Column – This popular fifth class climb was again made by the route of the second ascent: Glen Dawson, Homer Fuller and Wayland Gilbert.

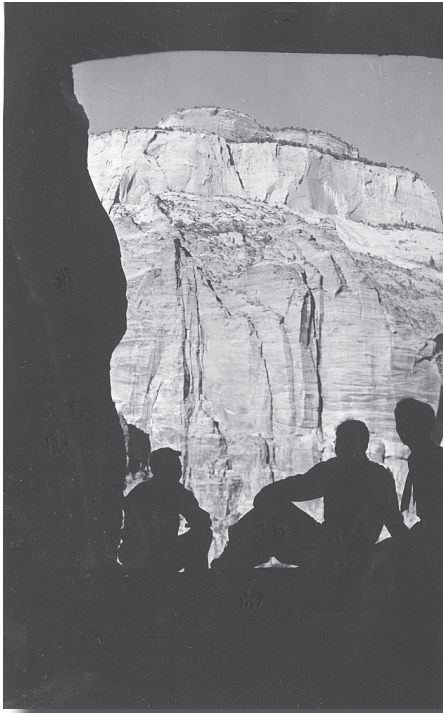
Lower Cathedral Spire – Climbed one day by Raffi Bedayan, Bill Hewlett and Howard Koster; the next by Ted Waller, Glen Dawson and Homer Fuller. (An example of the SF and LA RCSers sharing ropes, which was not wide-spread.)

Ruth Dyar also attended this Yosemite trip, her first, and she provides fascinating details in one of her longer letters ("Woman on the Rocks") – especially about her climb with Glen Dawson to Lunch Ledge on Washington Column. She was one of three women in a group of eight on three ropes. However, although Glen congratulated all three women, he told only Ruth that she had made "a good climb." ☺

Zion Redux



Glen Dawson on first ascent of the Sentinel, Zion NP, 6/05/38. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]



LA/RCS team resting and/or scoping out their next climb, Zion NP, October 1937. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

Within a few days of the Yosemite weekend, Glen Dawson was enroute back to Zion, this time accompanied by Bob Brinton and Bill Rice. Events of this trip do not appear in the SCB and they were only partially alluded to in Glen's 8/38 *Desert Magazine* article. The best source is a letter from Glen to Park Superintendent Patrow soon after the trip.

"As you know, Bob Brinton and I on June 5th made an ascent of the Sentinel. There was no indication of a previous ascent. The whole climb from the base requires great care as the rock is very loose and treacherous even for Zion." Glen also provided a detailed account of a two-day descent with Bob through the Narrows of the Virgin River, starting down a tributary of Kolob Creek. Their adventure involved some rope work as well as much wading and some swimming.

Glen wanted to get the OK from the Sup. to write his article for *Desert Magazine*. "I will, of course, stress the unusual dangers and difficulties of climbing in Zion and the need for proper training." Evidently, this appeal succeeded!

The High Trip of 1938

This year Dick Leonard and Oliver Kehrlein, with assist from Norman Clyde, would be leading a familiar HT route. The outing started July 2nd at Agnew Meadows and would end July 30th at Pine Creek Road, NW of Bishop. Jack Riegelhuth authored "Mountaineering During the 1938 High Trip" (SCB 6/39).

... The most noteworthy ascents were those of Lyell, the Minarets, the Abbot group and Humphreys. ... The climbing was quite different from that of recent years due to the large amount of snow. The management found it advisable to conduct lessons in snow technique – glissading in particular.

In the Minarets Point "A" would become Riegelhuth Minaret, Pt. "E" Turner Minaret, and Pt. "C" Kehrlein Minaret, "which, although first ascended 8/23/33 by Norman Clyde, is named after the leader of a subsequent ascent to avoid duplication."

The cream of the SF/LA RCS, however, in general were no longer content with High Trip mountaineering. They could assemble shorter term and more focused mini-expeditions on their own. Indeed, while the HT was just getting started over the July 4th holiday, the LA/RCS was collecting in the Palisades. As recorded by Ruth Dyar in Mugelnoos #16, 7/8/38:

An all-night bivouac at 14,000 feet, spring skiing, fine fishing, fireworks, super-commissaries, practice in snow and ice craft, and varied rock climbs marked the RCS Fourth of July knapsacking trip to the Palisade region, where 32 camped at Third Lake, 10,300 ft. Climbing was rendered difficult by snow unusually deep for the season.

Two ropes of three, including Bob Brinton and Johnny Mendenhall, leaders, Wayland Gilbert, Muir Dawson, Hensel Fremstad and Walter Hennies, climbed North Palisade (14,254') by the East Face Route on Sunday. Partway up the climb, they found three solo climbers, who, while apparently fast climbers, were unroped and inadequately equipped. The RCS climbers, after answering their calls for help, roped them to the summit, and also taught them to rope down, which so delayed the party that they were unable to get off the face by dark. The party of nine spent a cold night on a small ledge at the top of the snow chute. Leaders Brinton and Mendenhall, in bringing the large party safely through a difficult situation, clearly demonstrated the efficiency and safety of RCS standards compared with haphazard climbing by unequipped climbers.

Other climbs were: ...Mt. Sill (14,200') – First ascent by a new 4th class route up the Northeast ridge or buttress. Dick Jones and Spencer Austin led a sequacious group consisting of Ruth Dyar, Joe Momyer and Ray Ingwerson.

Dick Jones had expected to lead Sill by the "regular" route up the North Couloir. Due to the steep snow, however, he diverted to the north (or northeast) buttress. Spencer Austin made for a strong second rope leader, but it was a daring diversion considering the other three were comparatively inexperienced on a



THE PALISADES, FROM THE NORTH, JANUARY 1938
By Arthur H. Blake

big mountain. In any event, they pulled it off and the “**Swiss Arête**” is considered one of the classic High Sierra routes (5.7). They were congratulated on top by Howard Koster, who had managed the regular route. Their return to camp ended a 14-hr day.

[Route photos appear in Secor’s “High Sierra” guide and in “Climbing California’s Fourteeners” by Stephen Porcella and Cameron Burns, 1998.]

Ruth Dyar wrote a very long and detailed letter relating to this quite gnarly outing – a terrific read in “Woman on the Rocks.” Regarding her Sill climb, she noted that “Dick said there were no more difficult pitches on the famed East Face of Whitney.” Also, in a note to Phoebe Russell, Ruth’s cousin, after the climb, Dick wrote in part: “Your chum, Ruth, is not only an

excellent rock climber but a born mountaineer. ... The mental and physical ease with which she went up the various pitches is really remarkably outstanding.”

Climbing in the Bugaboos

By mid-August ’38 Glen Dawson had assembled a strong team for the first LA/RCS foray into alpine Canada. The account of their expedition appeared as a featured article in the SCB (6/39) by **Spencer Austin**, “Climbing in the Bugaboos.”

Deciding to try some climbing further afield, Glen and Muir Dawson, Bob Brinton, Howard Gates, Homer Fuller and I arrived in Spillimacheen, B.C., on the Columbia River, August 15, with our objective the Bugaboo group in the Purcell Range. This was the region so highly praised by the Swiss-Canadian guide, Conrad

Kain, who compared it favorably with the best of the minor climbing centers in Europe. He made many first ascents in this region in 1916.

The team didn’t get a lot accomplished the first several days due to persistent rain. However, they did establish their basecamp at a campsite used earlier that summer by Fritz Wiessner “of Mt. Waddington fame.”

After a few more days of unusable weather, Bob, Glen, Muir, Homer and I started for Bugaboo Spire, 10,250 feet, as our main objective. ... As the sky was completely overcast we hurried on up the first thousand feet of unroped climbing, sticking all the while to the east side of the ridge. This easy scrambling, however, petered out in a sheer rock wall ahead, so we put on crepe shoes, roped up, and went up onto the crest of the ridge. From here on it was difficult rock work, and we were glad that the Bugaboos were composed of granite, like that of the Sierra, rather than of the rotten



Muir Dawson stares across to Snowpatch Spire from summit of Bugaboo Spire, 1938. [Photo by Spencer Austin, Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

Flat-top

Snowpatch

Pigeon

Bugaboo

Howser



VIEW FROM BRENTA SPIRE
By Spencer Austin

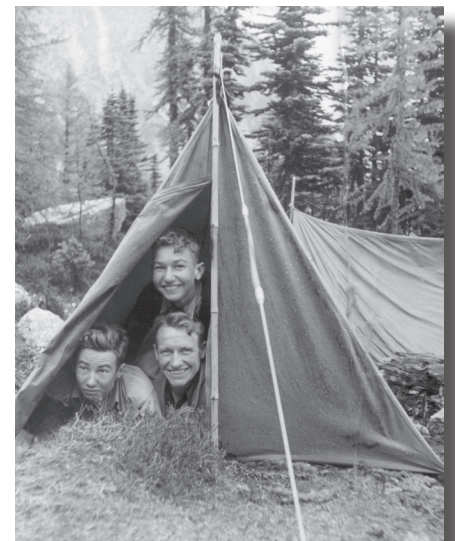
rock of Banff and Lake Louise. We encountered several chimneys and a few other bits that served to whet our appetite for the famous gendarme that lay ahead out of sight. There was not enough snow to bother us, but some of the rock was covered with wet lichen that was "fun" to skate on in rubber soles. Ahead lay the gendarme, a stark pyramid blocking our way along the ridge. Obviously the only way was to go over it half way up its shoulder. This pitch caused Conrad Kain to rank Bugaboo as his most difficult Canadian climb, and I can appreciate his point of view, especially when it is recalled that he led it without pitons and for the first time. He required an hour and a half to make the seventy feet involved. With Bob leading, we went across a ledge to the right of the gendarme, put in one piton about six feet up, and climbed eighteen feet to an airy seat half

way up the thirty-five degree knife-edge of the pyramid. On the other side we found a piton a few feet out on the almost holdless fifteen-foot traverse that led to a vertical crack. Each in turn stood on the piton and launched himself toward the crack, probably without looking at Warren Glacier 2000 feet below. It was, as Glen said, a short, delicate balance climb, but for me it approximated a quick breathless scramble.

With the five of us over this pitch it was a comparatively easy climb to the summit, or rather to the two summits, for Bugaboo has two, both according to Kain about the same height. As the weather was very threatening and a rope-down would have been necessary to reach the second summit, we were content to remain where we were and stopped there only long enough to register and take a few photographs. This was the third ascent. ...

[Following their rope-down.] When we came to the Bugaboo-Snowpatch Col we took a few minutes to go onto Warren Glacier to have a look at the west side of Snowpatch Spire. This peak is without doubt the great prize of this district. It has never been climbed. Conrad Kain said, though he did not make a real attempt, that it was beyond his powers. ... We were told that Wiessner had attempted it earlier in the year, and that he almost reached its distinguishing feature, the snowpatch. ... We were much impressed by this peak, but we decided not to attempt it.

In subsequent days different subparties climbed Crescent and Brenta Spires and Marmolata. Later we visited Banff, Lake Louise and the Tetons of Wyoming and enjoyed some fine climbing. None of the peaks, however, impressed us as did the Bugaboos. The latter country is wild, rugged and abounds in game. The scenery beggars description. ... Besides the fine climbing enjoyed,



Looking for better weather during Bugaboo Trip, 1938. Glen Dawson left, Bob Brinton, Muir Dawson above. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

the trip was made notable by the fact that six men could travel 4000 miles in twenty-five days in one car; climb six peaks, and return better friends than ever.

The Mugelnoos (#20, 9/1/38) elaborated somewhat more. The team also climbed Mt. Louis, an impressive rock spire near Banff. It was noted that Conrad Kain had made the first ascents of Bugaboo Spire and Mt. Louis in 1916. On completing his Louis climb, he looked back at the mountain and said, “Yo Gods, just look at that; they never will believe we climbed it!”

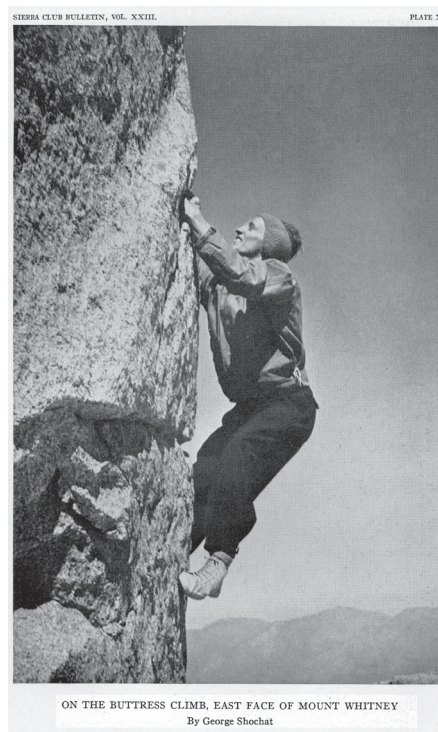
The next Noos, reporting their return home on Labor Day, also noted that another “outstanding event was the ascent of Mt. Victoria (11,365) on the Continental Divide above Lake Louise. ... A broken axle prevented climbing in the Tetons.” The party returned south via Zion NP, where they examined a projected new route on the Great While Throne. [As noted in the American Alpine Club Journal, 1939, the Dawson party on Bugaboo Spire climbed the lower of the two summits. This was the South Ridge (5.4), which would remain the only route on the peak for the next twenty years. (Excellent Bugaboo reference: Roper and Steck’s “Fifty Classic Climbs of No. America.”)]

Whitney by the East Buttress – Redux

The LA/RCS, and a large contingent of non-climbers, headed north again for their traditional Labor Day weekend at Whitney. The highlight of the weekend would be the 3rd ascent of the Peewee-Sunshine Route. This event was reported in the Mugelnoos (#21, 9/15/38), in Ruth Dyar’s letter to her mom (“Woman on the Rocks”), and by Agnes Fair



RCS group after climbing East Buttress of Whitney, Labor Day 1938: L-R, front: ?, Chet Errett (plaid shirt), Howard Koster, Agnes Fair, Ray Ingwersen, John Mendenhall; back: Walt Hennies, ?, ?, Ruth Dyar, Wayland Gilbert. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]



Dick Jones on first ascent of East Buttress, Mt. Whitney, 1937. (Probably posed as there is no rope showing.) [By George Shochat, Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

for the Mtneering Notes (SCB 6/39), “A Novice on the East Face.” Quoting Fair:

East Face Lake sparkled in the sunlight 1200 feet below. The block of gray granite upon which I stood was a mere wrinkle on the towering, precipitous East Face of Whitney. It was quite a sensation for a novice. ... Yet here was our party of two girls and nine men moving fly-like up those great cliffs. Climbing confidently and steadily up an almost vertical face of rock that had looked ominously smooth and steep from below, I marveled at the fact that the novice climbers out-numbered the experienced mountaineers. ... My subconscious mind drifted back over my training, which had begun only four months before – belaying, holding falls, balance climbing, and piton technique. Practice climbs had become more and more difficult, and only those who could conquer “Angel’s Fright” and “Fingertip Traverse” at Tahquitz

were permitted on this climb of the East Face. ...

Members of the regular Labor Day Outing, who had ascended Mt. Whitney by the trail, peered down the cliffs at our progress. The last obstacles fell rapidly, and we suddenly emerged upon the summit, 1300 feet above our camp.

Howard Koster, the only route veteran, led the first rope. The other rope leaders were Chet Errett, Don McGeein, Walter Hennies and John Mendenhall. Ruth Dyar was the other girl! For the Noos, Ruth added: "A hundred and two SC members camped at Ibex Park, most of them climbing Whitney by the trail on Sunday. They arrived in time to welcome the East Face climbers with a barrage of binoculars, cameras and cheers that made the Peewee ascent look like a football game."

Keller Peak Ski Hut

So, what's up with the Walter Mosauer Memorial Lodge on Mt. San Geronio? A lot! – as can readily be observed by tracking progress in the Mugelnoos.

By early May 1938, the SMS had managed to assemble \$500 and was hoping for a \$500 match from the Club's Board. The San Geronio Ski Hut Committee was reasonably hopeful of Forest Service approval. However, it wouldn't be a slam-dunk, as the area of interest was within a "primitive zone." So, in order to get something built before the next ski season, the committee had in mind a smaller hut in the vicinity of Keller Peak, if by chance a permit was delayed.

By early June the SC Board had approved the match (it didn't hurt that Glen Dawson was on the Board), and final site selection by George Bauwens was near at hand in the So. Fork Meadows /Dollar Lake area. Then, on June 22nd, a snag. The permit request was refused as the Forest Service wanted more time to survey the primitive area and develop a comprehensive plan.

Still hoping for eventual approval, the SMS set aside the Mosauer funds and began a second crash fundraising effort for the Keller Peak Ski Hut. The site, at 6800 ft, was in Snow Valley, about midway between Lake Arrowhead and Big Bear Valley on the Rim of the World Hwy and a little north of Keller Pk. [It's interesting how much a single dollar bill was worth back then, as many individual contributions of that most-common amount were duly noted by name in the Noos.]

Ground was broken on July 9th. A few people worked full-time on the project, and there were large work parties every weekend, in addition to normal maintenance work

parties for the Baldy Hut. (Side note: a good deal of effort went to re-working the trail to the Baldy Hut that had been heavily damaged by an unprecedented rain storm on March 1-2, 1938 – the same storm that also resulted in the "Bridge to No Where" up the E. Frk of the San Gabriel River, still a popular hike.) By mid-August the exterior was virtually completed. The basic structure was 15 x 35 feet and had sleeping quarters in the basement and attic to total 35 (a very tight 35). Work frantically continued throughout the fall on completing the interior and plumbing, aided by lack of major snow storms (a mixed blessing). However, by mid-December several storms had arrived, and the new Keller Peak Ski Hut was booked solid for the New Year's weekend. A 15 x 30 foot annex would be started the following summer. (The San Geronio permit would never be forthcoming – and it is still a Wilderness Area.)

[Excellent historical resources on the SMS may be found on its website and in "[Pray for Snow – a History of Skiing in So. California](#)" by Ingrid Wicken, 2001. <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt/text/history.htm>]



Howard Gates supporting Howard Koster during building of Keller Ski Hut, 1938. [Muir Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]



Cartoon in support of Keller Ski Hut, by Ruth Dyar, Mugelnoos #21, 9/15/38.



DeDe Cartwright (left), who would later marry Roy Gorin, and Mary Helen Johnston, then being courted by Glen Dawson, below the new Keller Ski Hut, December 1938. [Glen Dawson Collection, Angeles Chapt. Archives]

1938 had been a year of great growth for both the LA Rock Climbing and Ski Mountaineering Sections. This was due in no small part to the leadership of their respective chairs, Howard Koster and George Bauwens (both re-elected for '39), and in no small part to Glen Dawson's brainchild, the Mugelnoos. Under Ruth Dyar's very capable editorship, including terrific cartoons drawn by her and May Pridham, the Noos had become amazingly popular and a great recruiting tool and unifying force. It was highly commended by the SC Board, and it would soon spawn other newsletters throughout the Club – the next being a RCS/ski-type newsletter for the SF Bay Chapter edited by Dave Brower: the Yodeler.

It was also, however, about time now for many of the "veteran" climbers and skiers to settle down, get married and raise families. Some would retire from climbing before too long; a few would have life-long climbing careers ahead of them. Norman Clyde? Well, he had settled down in the High Sierra quite a while ago. He'd just keep climbing as long as he could - it's what he enjoyed doing and what he did best.

Tribute to conclude with Part VI
Passing the Torch.

As before, your author remains deeply indebted for the incredible support so willingly and expertly provided by Glen Dawson, John Ripley and Bob Cates (all of the Angeles Chapter History Committee). Appreciation is also gladly extended to: Christine Ahn, Wynne Benti, Valerie Cohen, David Eichorn, Harv Galic, Mark Goebel, Roberta Harlan (an amazingly helpful resource at County of Inyo, Eastern California Museum), Rob Roy McDonald, Jordan Rane and Gwen Jones Rinehart – and to Sara Danta, ever so wonderful to work with and whose generous and artful talents as editor are evident to all who read these pages.