

NORTH AMERICAN NOTES

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As might be expected Alaska was the objective of many of the major expeditions of 1964. One of the most interesting aspects, however, was the multi-national nature of these expeditions. There were German, French and many Japanese parties, as well as American and Canadian, in the field.

The Moose's Tooth, 10,335 ft., finally succumbed to assault despite many futile attempts in the past. A German party of four from Munich under Walter Welsch flew to a base camp on the Ruth glacier on May 22. They then moved this camp from the original point at 5,000 ft. to a higher position at 7,500 ft. nearer the South face, from which camp they made several abortive attempts. Here they were joined by three American climbers. They finally attacked the peak up the long West ridge, putting in a camp at 7,900 ft. From this camp, in a long forty-hour day they made the final ascent of the highest point, ascending the West ridge to the West peak, making the very difficult traverse from the West peak to the Central peak and then a somewhat easier trip across to the main summit, which was reached on June 2 at 4 a.m., the party by then having been on the go since 6 a.m. June 1. The return was made by the same route. Following this success, the party flew over to the Kahiltna glacier and established their Camp III for the ascent of Mount McKinley by the West Buttress route at 14,000 ft. Here, fearing the weather might break they made a dash for the summit of McKinley, 20,320 ft., in one day. From this camp they reached the summit at 11 p.m. on June 12; and following a six hours' bivouac on Denali Pass at 18,020 ft. they returned to their camp in a total time of rather over forty hours.

A French party under Lionel Terray made the first ascent of Mount Huntington, 12,240 ft., on May 25 and 26. This eight-man party flew in to the base camp on the Ruth glacier on May 8. This camp was established at a temperature of -10°F in a high wind. On May 10 they attacked the North-west ridge, which required very difficult climbing under adverse conditions. Finally on May 25 the first two members reached the summit, and the following day the rest of the party made the final ascent. The weather was poor and the conditions dangerous for almost the entire trip.

Mount St. Elias, 18,008 ft., first climbed by the Duke of the Abruzzi in 1897 and ascended by a new route in 1946, was attempted several times in 1964; once successfully by a Japanese party. An American

party of seven from California attempted the ascent of the mountain by the long North ridge, but was defeated by weather and lack of time. They did, however, make the first ascent of Mount Newton, 13,810 ft., in the attempt, as the route led over that summit. The Japanese party of nine plus one American, Scott D. Hamilton, picked up in Anchorage, drove to the end of the road at Chitina and on July 7 were flown in to the glacier at the base of the North face of St. Elias. They originally planned to climb the rib on this face which the American party had attempted in 1963 and had met reverses because of earthquakes. They decided, however, that because of avalanche danger they should first attempt the more reasonable route up the North ridge over Mount Newton. By July 14, they had reached Russell col and on the 17th placed two of the party on the summit, the third ascent of the mountain. On the way back they made the first ascent of the 12,000 ft. peak west of Mount Newton.

Mount Logan, 19,850 ft., the highest peak in Canada, just across the boundary from Alaska, was climbed by a new route. A group of five from Denver flew on June 12 from Chitina to the glacier below the North face. Here they were joined by a group of four from Seattle and Tacoma, whom they invited to accompany them. The combined party then attempted the mountain by a ridge on the North face, which they called the Independence ridge. From the glacier at 8,300 ft. the going was very difficult to Camp IV at 14,150 ft. Above here one more camp, Camp V, was established at 15,850 ft., and here the party sat out a four-day storm of terrific intensity. Finally on July 3, all except two of the party reached the North summit; one of the men became ill and another volunteered to return with him. The next day the entire party, again excepting two, the ill man the same as before, reached the highest, central summit with the temperature at -21°F . and the wind very strong. Two Japanese expeditions climbed the mountain by the East ridge and another Japanese expedition climbed it by the King col route, the original route.

In the Brooks range of Northern Alaska, a party of eight, three married couples and two men, made a number of interesting ascents. This region has been little known and only visited a few times by geologists or anthropologists, but the reports of fine granite peaks of 7,000–8,000 ft. whetted the appetites of the group and they spent several weeks in the region following an abortive attempt the year before. In this time they made the first ascent of seven fine peaks and brought back glowing reports of this region beyond the Arctic Circle.

In the Alaskan Panhandle, a four-man group entered the Stikine group and despite atrocious weather made the first ascents of Mount Ratz, 10,290 ft., Mount Russell, 10,260 ft. and Burkett Needle, *ca.* 8,500 ft.

Elsewhere in Alaska a group of four climbers flew to the Triumvirate

glacier on May 14 and climbed Mount Torbet, 11,413 ft., reaching the summit on May 16 for a first ascent. A two-man group attempted Mount Deborah, but because of conditions and lack of time accomplished only the first ascent of Mount Hess.

Two ascents in Canada are noteworthy. Mount Brussels, 10,370 ft., has been climbed only three times because of its extreme difficulty, not the least reason for which is the friable nature of the rock. In 1964, two climbers, Arthur Gran and John Hudson made the fourth ascent by a new route on the West face on August 10 and 11. A new route was also accomplished on the South face of Mount Louis, near Banff.

In the northern Cascades two ascents deserve special mention. Mount Johannesburg was climbed by the North-east face, and the abrupt North-east face of Mount Booker was at last successfully ascended.

The rock experts were again active in the Yosemite. Here the outstanding climb was a new route on El Capitan, the North American Wall. This route was attempted in October, 1963, and again in May, 1964, but the warm weather on the latter attempt precluded a successful outcome. Several of the same group returned in October, 1964, and in nine days of climbing, October 23 to October 31, accomplished the ascent carrying with them 200 lb. of food and equipment, including sixty quarts of water for the four climbers. An ascent of the Dihedral Wall on El Capitan was made by two men in five days, June 2 to 6. Two other important ascents in the Yosemite were the first ascent of the Washington Column by the South face on September 20 and 21 by two climbers who used 5 bolts and 175 pitons. The South face of Mount Watkins was perhaps an even greater *tour de force*, as it was made in the height of the summer season, July 18 to 22, and required the three climbers to carry 100 lb. of food, water and equipment.

Several ascents in the Rocky Mountains should not be omitted from this review. In the Wind River range, Mount Hooker was climbed by the North face. This 1,800 ft. face was an extremely difficult climb, perhaps the most difficult yet undertaken in that region, requiring four days, July 22 to 25, and taking 207 pitons and 13 bolts. Perhaps more in the manner of the grand tradition was the traverse of the main chain of the Tetons in less than one day. This nine-mile traverse, from Nez Percé to Teewinot, required 26,000 ft. of ascent and descent and was accomplished in 20½ hours by a team of three climbers, a truly prodigious feat.