
THE SIERRA CLUB AND THE HIGH SIERRA

On June 4, 1892, articles of incorporation were signed by twenty-seven residents of the San Francisco Bay area, bringing into being the Sierra Club.¹ Its purposes were declared to be: "To explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast; to publish authentic information concerning them; to enlist the support and cooperation of the people and the government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada." John Muir was elected President. By the end of the summer there were 182 charter members. In January, 1893, the first number of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* was issued and has ever since carried out one of the primary purposes of the club, publishing authentic information and serving as a record of the club's activities.

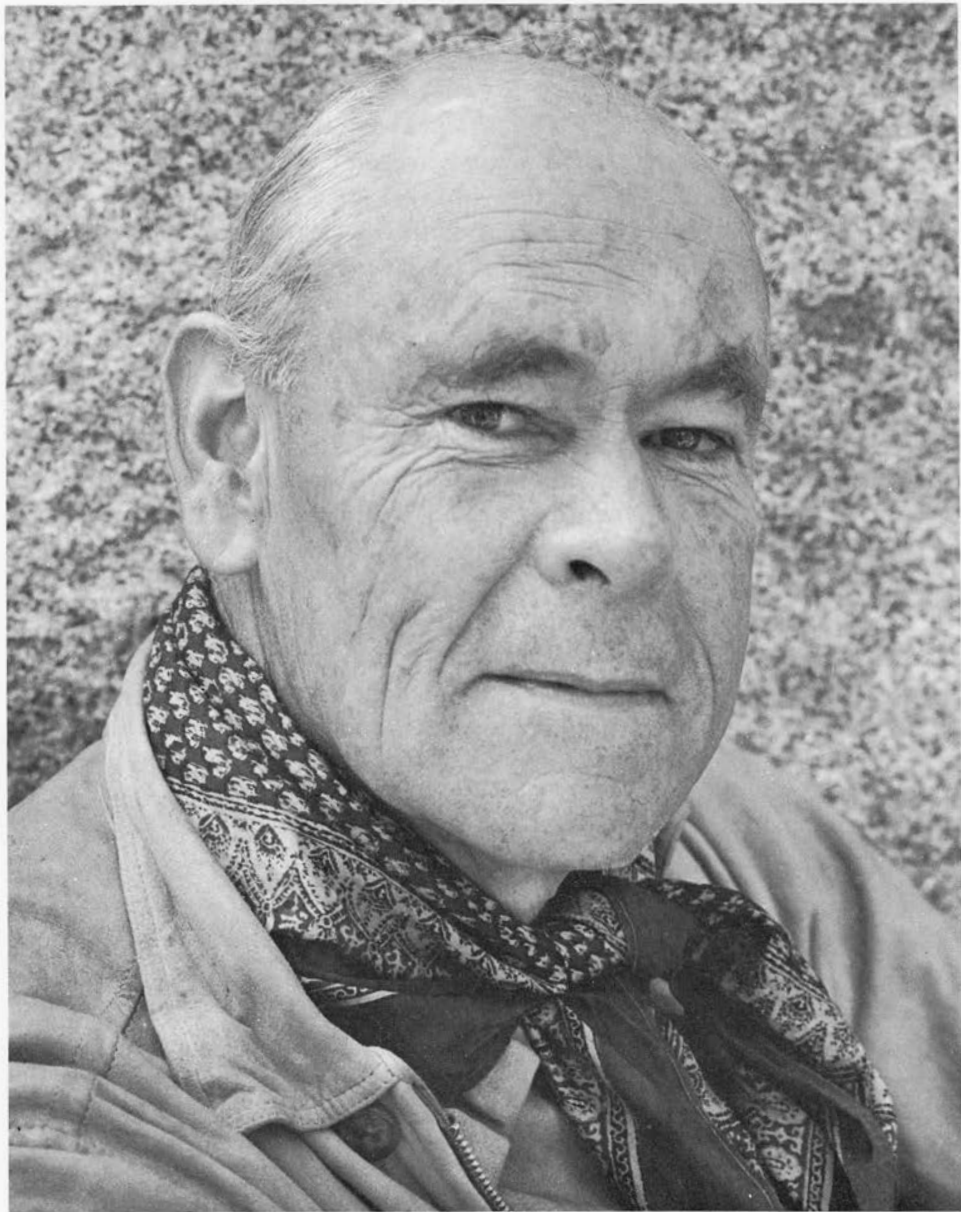
In fulfillment of another purpose, to help preserve the forest and natural features, the club carried on the work already begun by some of its members in establishing and protecting Yosemite National Park. Efforts of this character have continued and have never been more active than they are now.² Other purposes stated in the Articles of Incorporation—to explore and enjoy the mountains and render them accessible—have in the course of time attained a magnitude hardly contemplated by the Club's founders. To "render accessible" became obsolete when the automobile brought almost too much accessibility, and the words were eventually deleted. Exploration and enjoyment, however, have never ceased, nor will they ever cease. There will always be something new to explore in the ever-changing life and aspects of the forests and mountains, while enjoyment continues from generation to generation.

Even before the Sierra Club was formally organized, some of its future members were engaged in opening trails to canyons and passes and in climbing peaks. Foremost among them was young Joseph N. LeConte, son of the professor who had accompanied the "University Excursion Party" in 1870. "Little Joe," as he was frequently called, while still an undergraduate at the University of California, accompanied his father in 1889 on a camping trip to Hetch Hetchy, Yosemite, Tuolumne Meadows, and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, in the course of which he climbed mounts Hoffmann, Dana, and Lyell.³ Such was the effect of this trip that for the rest of his life the younger LeConte, like his father before him, remained enamoured of the High Sierra.⁴ The following year, with three college friends, he visited Kings Canyon,

Kearsarge Pass, and Mount Whitney. They returned to Yosemite by way of Owens Valley, Bloody Canyon, and Tuolumne Meadows.⁵ On this trip LeConte carried a camera and began a series of photographs which for many years were famous as the finest views of the Sierra published.⁶ Year after year he continued to camp in the Sierra and climb the peaks, with various companions but more and more with Miss Helen Marion Gompertz and some of her friends.⁷ A climax for the LeConte family was a trip in 1900, when the elder LeConte, then 77 years of age, accompanied the younger people on a camping trip to Kings Canyon. They spent six weeks in the mountains, and the Professor climbed to 12,000 feet at Kearsarge Pass. "I enjoyed intensely," he wrote, "every step of the journey, and in some parts, as we approached the summit, the exhilaration of spirit and the exultation of mind was such as I had not felt for ten years."⁸ In June, 1901, Helen Gompertz and Joe LeConte were married. She, too, was a charter member of the Sierra Club and for the rest of her life continued to share with her husband an unwavering devotion to the high mountain country.

There now enters into the history of the Sierra one of its greatest figures, William E. Colby, who was to lead the Sierra Club in action and in spirit for the next seventy years.⁹ He was nineteen years old in the summer of 1894 when he joined two companions in a trip to the Tuolumne country. He was the youngest of the three, inexperienced and overconfident. His education began with his first mountain, Mount Dana; after that, in his own words, he "acquired some sense and did not overdo."¹⁰ His next climb was Mount Conness, where he and his companion spent a night on top in bitter cold. The principal objective of the trip was a descent of the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, about which they had heard from John Muir and Robert M. Price. The latter had been through it from Tuolumne Meadows to Hetch Hetchy in 1892.¹¹ Just as they were starting, at the head of the canyon, who should show up but Price himself. A combined party of five made their way through to Hetch Hetchy in spite of a few minor mishaps.¹² The experiences of this first summer were of lasting benefit to Colby in preparing him for the years to come when he planned and led the long series of outings of the Sierra Club that brought thousands of people into the mountains.

Theodore S. Solomons, another charter member of the Sierra Club, was also active in the Sierra in the summer of 1894. He followed the Colby-Price party through the Tuolumne Canyon and took the first photographs of its splendid waterfalls.¹³ He had previously made some explorations at the head of the North Fork of the San Joaquin and had climbed Mount Ritter. He conceived the idea of a route from north to south nearer the crest than any that others had taken and was now ready to test it. With one companion and with food and equipment carried on a packhorse and two jacks he followed the well-known way from Yosemite and Wawona to the San Joaquin. From the



Cedric Wright

William E. Colby, founder of the Sierra Club outings and secretary of the club for nearly half a century.

junction of the Middle and South forks they continued up to Vermilion Valley, which Solomons named, thence over the ridge to Bear Creek. There they made their only contact with the true high mountain route, which in years to come was to be called the John Muir Trail. They climbed a picturesque peak of easy slope and gave it the appropriate name of "Seven Gables." There the year's exploration ended. It was the last week of September; a snowstorm caught them; they were obliged to abandon their jacks and with packs on their backs escape to lower altitudes.¹⁴

Solomons continued his search for a north-south route the following year, 1895. This time he decided not to take animals, believing that by going on foot with knapsacks he could examine more territory. With one companion, he went again up toward the headwaters of the San Joaquin and came to a high basin surrounded by peaks of varied form and hue. To these peaks Solomons gave the names of philosophers in whose theories he was interested—Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Spencer, Wallace, and Fiske—the "Evolution Group." This was as far as the two got in their search for a high mountain route. They now took a direction that no animals could follow. First they climbed Mount Goddard, then made a very rough descent southward down Disappearing Creek and Goddard Creek to the Middle Fork of Kings River, on the way passing through what Solomons called the "Enchanted Gorge." They continued down to Tehipite Valley, made a reconnaissance of the Dome, and resumed their journey over the Monarch Divide to Kings River Canyon. Although Solomons only partially succeeded in finding a north-south route, he should be given credit for the idea and for his initial attempts.¹⁵

Two University of California students of the class of 1897 now took the lead in exploring the Sierra. Walter Starr tells the story: "I spent the summer of 1895 in the northern part of Yosemite National Park with Allen Chickering. Having become infected with Sierra Club enthusiasm, we determined to make a trip of real exploration during the college vacation of 1896. We met Theodore S. Solomons, who was then as afterward tireless in exploring and mapping the High Sierra region."¹⁶ The following spring Starr and Chickering entered the Sierra by way of Lake Eleanor and at the end of June joined Solomons in Yosemite for a journey to Kings Canyon. Solomons brought along a large camera with glass plates. "Unfortunately the unusual weather we experienced," wrote Starr many years later, "prevented our getting many of the pictures we most wanted. The seasons during the eighties and early nineties were in a stormy, wet cycle. The high mountains then presented a wholly different appearance to what they do now. Huge snowfields and accumulated drifts lasted out the summer at high altitudes and the glaciers were much larger. Perhaps due to this condition, summer storms were much more frequent and more violent." The trio crossed from the Merced to the San Joaquin by way of Isberg Pass and came eventually to Mono Creek and Ver-

million Valley. Chickering and Starr climbed a peak above Mono Pass; but there Solomons became ill and the others were obliged to take him to a lower altitude. They went down to Blaney Meadows and on to a beautiful lake which they named "Florence Lake," for Starr's sister.¹⁷ There Solomons reluctantly concluded that he could not continue on the trip. Starr and Chickering went back into the mountains and came to Tehipite by way of Collins Meadow. They ascended the Dome, measured it, and took pictures. They took the Tunemah Trail¹⁸ up the north flank of the Middle Fork Canyon to Simpson Meadow, thence over the divide, by Granite Basin, and down Copper Creek to Kings Canyon. Starr and Chickering had thus made a continuous journey with animals from Yosemite to Kings Canyon.

It would occupy more space than is appropriate here to give an account of all the exploring, climbing, and camping trips of the 1890's. Many of them are recorded in the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, and there were doubtless many others of which no record exists. A few, however, of special interest should be mentioned. Bolton Coit Brown, Professor of Drawing at Stanford University, not only made several notable ascents but added to knowledge of the high country at the head of the Kings and the Kings-Kern Divide by his descriptions, his maps, and his fine sketches.¹⁹ He made the first ascent, solo, of Mount Clarence King in 1896 and the same year joined J. N. LeConte in the first ascent of Mount Gardner. Professor Brown and his wife Lucy then crossed the Kings-Kern Divide and climbed Mount Williamson. A little later that summer they returned to the Divide and climbed and named Mount Ericsson, after which Brown ventured out on a northward-jutting knife edge to its highest point, where he built a monument and gave the name "Mount Stanford."²⁰ In 1899 Professor and Mrs. Brown resumed their exploration of the headwaters of the Kings, this time with a third member in the party, their two-year-old daughter. "We put her on a burro, and wither we went she went also."²¹

Not many college presidents have stood on the summit of a high mountain named for their institution. On August 16, 1899, President David Starr Jordan, of Stanford University, did exactly that. "I have never seen a more magnificent mountain panorama!" he exclaimed.²² Dr. Jordan was well qualified to speak of mountain panoramas; some years before he had climbed the Matterhorn in Switzerland.²³ The Stanford party, which included Mrs. Jordan and several of the University's professors, spent many pleasant days at the head of Bubbs Creek, where Dr. Jordan gave names to a number of features, including "Ouzel Basin," suggested by Muir's description in *The Mountains of California*.²⁴

The rapid increase in the number of visitors to the High Sierra made the need for reliable maps more and more urgent. The Whitney Survey and Wheeler Survey maps, useful in their day, were quite inadequate, and other maps made by later explorers and by the National Park officers covered only



Mount Clarence King.

Ansel Adams

parts of the territory. J. N. LeConte recognized this at the very beginning of his Sierra experience and, with an engineer's mind, proceeded to gather all the scattered information he could find and coordinate it. The first of his maps was published by the Sierra Club in 1893, followed by an enlarged and improved map in 1896. Thereafter he kept the work up to date by a series of blueprints until the sheets of the United States Geological Survey became available. His friend James S. Hutchinson wrote in a memoir of Joe LeConte: "I helped him carry his transit and his plane table to the summits of many high peaks in the Sierra when he was making observations and rechecking locations for his valuable maps of the Sierra."²⁵

The greatest of the mountains they climbed together was the North Palisade, of which LeConte, Hutchinson, and James K. Moffitt made the first ascent in 1903.²⁶ LeConte was indefatigable in finding observation points for his mapping, particularly at the headwaters of the Kings River. One may share his enthusiasm by reading the accounts he wrote for the *Sierra Club Bulletin* in the years 1903 to 1909. The culmination of his explorations came in 1908 when, with James S. Hutchinson and Duncan McDuffie, he pioneered the first truly high mountain route from Yosemite to Kings Canyon. It was not quite as consistently high as the route ultimately attained by the John Muir Trail, but it linked together several sections that had been separately explored, such as Donohue Pass from the Tuolumne Meadows to Thousand Island Lake, Fish Creek to Evolution Basin, and from the latter to the Middle Fork of Kings River. The last of these links had been opened for pack animals the preceding year by George R. Davis, of the United States Geological Survey. "To be sure, the Geological Survey had crossed it at a time when everything above 10,000 feet was under snow," writes LeConte. "I myself had examined the gap when free from snow in 1904, and at that time considered it impassable to pack animals on the south side."²⁷ The critical day's trip is described by LeConte, in part, as follows: "We were stirring by earliest dawn, and long before the sun rose over the battlements of Mount Darwin were on the way. We passed around the east side of Evolution Lake, and at its head crossed to the west side of the creek. One bad, rocky place was encountered, and soft snow bogged one animal, but the top of the divide was reached by about 9 A.M. We were twelve thousand feet above sea level. Down the other side was an awful looking gorge in the black metamorphic rock, partly choked with snow. We went straight at it, and took our mules right over the talus piles. They did splendidly and we passed down into the rocky amphitheatre and around the south side of a little black lake, the extreme source of the Middle Fork of Kings River." The pass had been named by Davis "Muir Pass"; the canyon on the Middle Fork side is known as "LeConte Canyon," a fitting memorial to one of the greatest of High Sierra explorers. Let all who visit this remote and beautiful spot be reminded of Joe LeConte, little in



End of the 1908 trip from Yosemite to Kings Canyon: Duncan McDuffie,
Joseph N. LeConte, and James S. Hutchinson.

J. N. LeConte

stature but, in the words of his friend Jim Hutchinson, "a great and good man; a man who was fond of his fellow men, who loved his friends dearly, and who was loved by all who knew him, a man whose influence for good will last long."

James S. Hutchinson, besides accompanying Joe LeConte on a number of trips and climbs, made some notable explorations on his own account. In 1920 he led a party from Giant Forest to the Roaring River country, with Ernest McKee and Onis Imus Brown as packers, and made the first traverse of Colby Pass to the Kern Canyon. On the same trip Hutchinson, Duncan McDuffie, and Onis Imus made the first ascent of the Black Kaweah.²⁸ With his brother Edward, Jim Hutchinson made a first ascent of Mount Humphreys in 1904.²⁹

The personal experiences of the members of the U. S. Geological Survey parties are so rarely recorded that only occasionally do we get a glimpse of them. The examination of the glaciers and glacial phenomena in the Dana-Lyell-Ritter region has already been mentioned. Willard D. Johnson was a charter member of the Sierra Club and Grove Karl Gilbert a contributor to the *Bulletin*. In fact there was always close cooperation between the club and the Geological Survey. We meet Gilbert and Johnson again in the Evolution Basin in 1908, when Johnson and E. C. Andrews, of the Geological Survey of New South Wales, climbed Mount Darwin, Andrews completing the climb solo for a first ascent of the highest point, a detached pinnacle.³⁰ George R. Davis, Charles F. Urquhart, and others climbed many a peak in the Sierra while surveying for the maps that have been the admiration of all who have used them in planning and carrying out camping and climbing trips in the High Sierra.

Of the many independent trips that have contributed indirectly to the history of the Sierra, a few not recorded in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* are met with elsewhere. An instance is a series of articles by Theodore P. Lukens, "One Hundred Days in the Sierra Nevadas," published in a Pasadena weekly.³¹ Lukens, president of a bank and former mayor of Pasadena, with Walter Richardson, visited Mineral King, Golden Trout Creek, Mount Whitney, Kings Canyon, Owens Valley, Tuolumne Meadows and Canyon, Hetch Hetchy, and Yosemite in the summer of 1896. In Lukens' account there are many interesting observations. Another and better known account of a Sierra trip is that of Stewart Edward White, in "The Pass," first published in *Outing Magazine* in 1906, and later in book form.³² Although the story is slightly fictionalized, it presents a vivid picture of the country and the actualities of the trip, in which White and his wife Elizabeth, with a Forest Ranger called "Wes," found a way for their horses over open granite and steep ledges from Roaring River into the canyons of the Kaweah.

One of the major events in modern Sierra history took place when Will

Colby in 1901 instituted the long series of Sierra Club outings. It was very largely his idea, but he had the strong support of John Muir, who believed that people should go to the mountains and learn to be at home in them and perceive and understand the beauty and order of Nature. Colby tells of the beginning: "It was from John Muir, the President of the Club, that I received the warmest encouragement. He was highly enthusiastic, and told me that he had long been trying to get the Club to undertake just such outings. Without his support, I would not have dared to embark upon such an enterprise, with its multiplicity of new and untried problems."³³ Colby received important aid from Edward T. Parsons, who had recently come to San Francisco from Portland, Oregon. He was familiar with the outings conducted by the Mazamas and proved an invaluable second to Colby. "Pioneering on untrodden ground, the Outing Committee had much to learn, and it took several outings before the basic problems were solved." That the problems were solved and year after year the outings continued in popularity, with profound effect both upon the lives of the participators and upon the cause of Conservation, is attested by the number of Sierra Club members who experienced life in the open under most favorable conditions. One of the features was the presence of men distinguished for their knowledge of the natural sciences who generously helped others to recognize the trees, the flowers, the birds and animals and to understand the significance of glacial polish and moraines. Among such teachers, besides Muir himself on several of the earlier outings, there were C. Hart Merriam and Vernon Bailey, of the U. S. Biological Survey; John G. Lemmon and Willis Linn Jepson, botanists; Andrew C. Lawson, geologist, and many others. Campfires were made memorable, not only by discourse of instruction and inspiration, but by music of rare beauty from the flute, the violin, and voices ranging from deep bass to lyric soprano.³⁴

For a number of years the Sierra Club outings rotated between the Yosemite National Park, the Kings River region, and the Kern. Later the upper region of the San Joaquin was added. At first the outings were for four full weeks; then a few people began to come for the first two weeks or the last two weeks, until finally the pattern began to be a series of two-week outings, supplemented by a "base camp" and then by burro trips and knapsack trips. In part this change was brought about by problems of packing. Instead of one packtrain accompanying the club for the whole period, smaller packtrains coming in and out over the passes became the rule. Advanced roadheads on each side of the mountains also made it easier for people to come in and out on a shorter schedule. Yet in all these changes one thing has remained constant—the opportunity for young and old, mountaineers and "meadoweers," to visit the High Sierra under conditions that give them a maximum of enjoyment at moderate expense. A "commissary" provides excellent food in un-failing supply, prepared by skilled professional cooks, with aid, both volun-



Sierra Club outing in Kings Canyon, 1902.

J. N. LeConte

teer and paid, from the membership. The main object of the outings has never been lost sight of, however. Colby constantly reiterated that he and the other leaders could not afford to spend their time and energy merely giving people pleasant vacations; the important thing was to lead them to know and appreciate the beauty and inspiration of the mountains, and to educate them to become defenders of the wilderness. The results give ample testimony to the wisdom of this program. And, almost as a by-product, the participants, through three, even four, generations, have profited in physical strength and health as well as in an educated idealism.

The leadership of the Sierra Club has never been content merely to provide means of enjoyment for its members; it is incumbent upon the members to contribute something to the general welfare. Colby was an ardent fisherman, as were many of those who went on the outings, but it was not enough for them to take fish from the streams and lakes; for many years the club's pack-train was utilized to transplant fingerlings, particularly Golden Trout, to lakes and streams known to be barren yet good breeding ground. Of late years volunteers from the club have performed heroic service in cleaning old campgrounds and removing cans and broken glass to repositories outside the choice areas of the High Sierra. Over the years, moreover, there has been much building and improvement of trails, sometimes solely by members of the club, sometimes in cooperation with the Forest Service and Park Service. In many ways the Sierra Club has endeavored to give back to the Sierra something for what it receives.

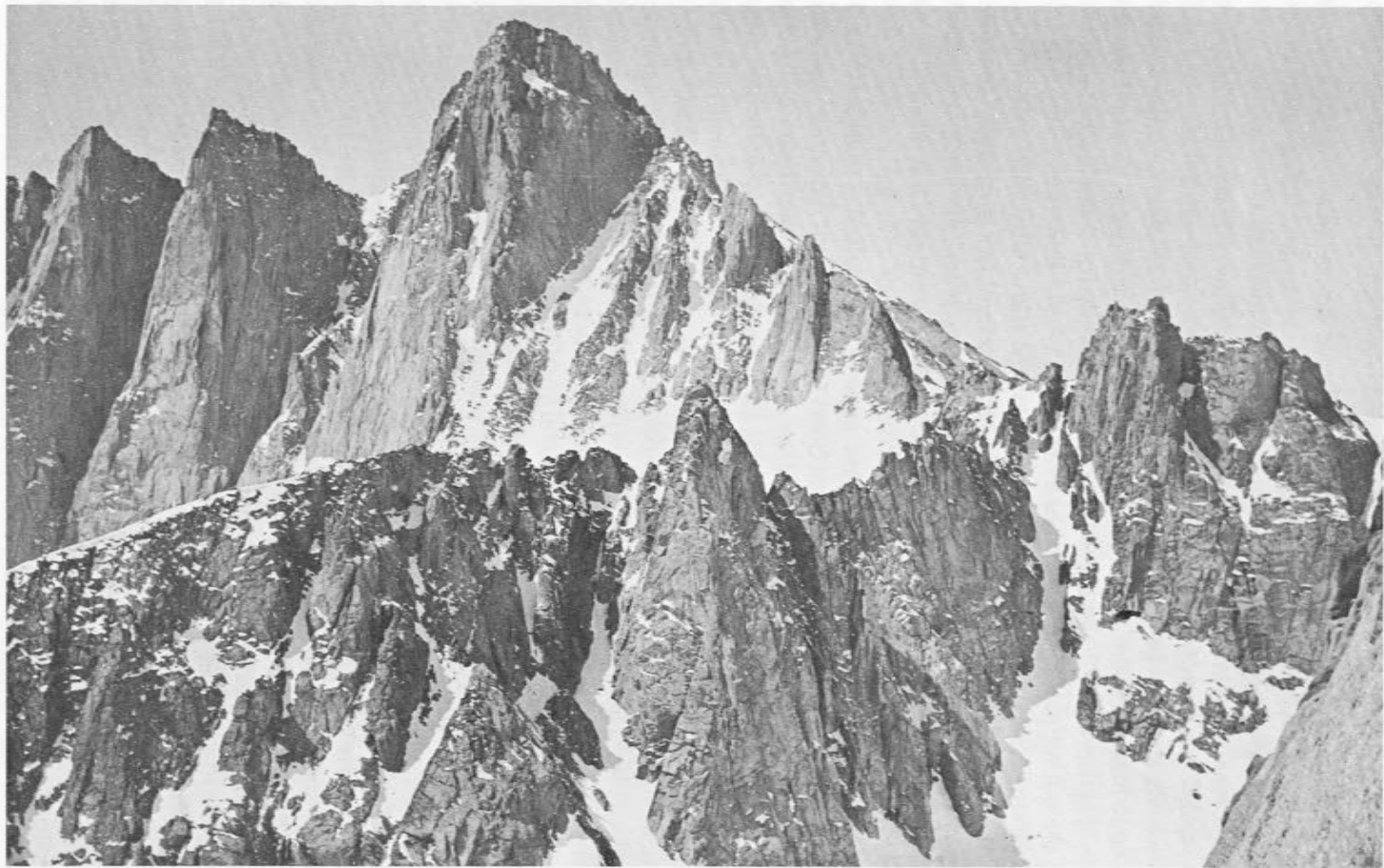
During the course of more than half a century of outings almost every peak and canyon has been visited, and in this there has been no distinction between the sexes, for women have become completely emancipated from their traditional handicaps. In the announcement of the first outing, in 1901, the following recommendation is found: "Women should have one durable waist for tramping and one light one to wear around camp. The skirts can be short, not more than half way from knee to ankle, and under them can be worn shorter dark-colored bloomers. For the women who ride horseback, divided skirts are recommended. It would be unsafe to ride otherwise than astride on portions of the trip." After ten years there was a slight modification—the bloomers under the skirt could be of the same color as the skirt! In 1914 there was a further change, this time a radical departure, a portent of the future: "bloomers or knickerbockers" should be worn under the skirt, as "the latter are essential for the more difficult mountain climbs where skirts are dangerous to wear." In 1920 the outing announcement went so far as to say that "many women prefer to wear the knickerbockers or trousers on the entire trip to the exclusion of skirts." Three years later the inevitable had arrived—"women usually wear knickerbockers or riding trousers." In 1925 they were called "hiking or riding breeches." After that the girls were left to do as they pleased;

skirts are now never seen, except occasionally at dinner time, and blue jeans have become the standard costume, substituted in an increasing number of instances by shorts, even at the expense of bruised knees.³⁵

The climbing of mountains during the earlier years of Sierra Club outings was remarkable both for the number of people who attained the summits and the nonchalant way in which they did it. Edward T. Parsons, Colby's chief assistant, brought from his experience with the Mazamas on Mount Hood a method quite new to the Sierra. On Mount Lyell, for instance, more than half the outing party, a hundred or even more, would line up at dawn behind two or three leaders, trudging patiently over the snow until they came to the summit rocks. There, in smaller groups, they scrambled to the top with no more aid than a friendly hand or an encouraging word. It was a marvelous experience for many of the participants who never would have been able to enjoy it by any other means. It required good leaders with patience and discretion, leaders who went on to achieve more difficult climbs, such as Walter Huber and James Rennie, the durable Scot. Greatest of all mountaineers who have participated in Sierra Club outings is Norman Clyde. For over forty years he was the most ubiquitous climber in America and probably has more first ascents to his credit than anyone else in the country. Although a great many of his climbs were done alone, he was ever ready to help others. Moreover, from his residence in Owens Valley, he was called again and again to search for lost climbers, and once in a while to discover their mangled bodies. Norman in his prime was a superb climber, whose strength and endurance have hardly been equaled by any other in the Sierra.³⁶

A complete innovation in Sierra climbing took place in 1931, when techniques long in use in Europe were introduced to the Sierra Club by Dr. Robert L. M. Underhill, of the Appalachian Mountain Club, who at the instance of the writer of this history had been invited to be a guest on the Sierra Club outing that year. Actually, the first properly roped climb made in the Sierra, so far as can be ascertained, took place just before his coming, when the writer led a small group directly up the face of Unicorn Peak on July 12, 1931. When Underhill arrived he organized a regular climbing school, practicing on the steep angles of Mount Ritter and Banner Peak. Progress from that time on was rapid. Half a dozen of the best climbers joined Underhill and Clyde for a postgraduate course on North Palisade, climbing from the east-side glacier. It was on this occasion that the climbers were caught on the summit of one of the peaks by a severe thunderstorm. As he was hastening to get off the crest to a place of safety, Jules Eichorn barely escaped electrocution when "a thunderbolt whizzed right by my ear," as he claimed. So "Thunderbolt Peak" was christened.³⁷

The climbing party, reduced to five, went on to the east side of Mount Whitney and followed John Muir's old route up the North Fork of Lone Pine



East Face of Mount Whitney from Mount Russell.

Norman Clyde

Creek. Next day, August 16, the first ascent of the East Face of Mount Whitney was made by Underhill, Clyde, and two others, Jules Eichorn and Glen Dawson, "young natural-born rock-climbers who had never seen the mountain; but neither had they seen any up and down the Sierra that they could not climb."³⁸

In this manner modern rock climbing was introduced to the Sierra Nevada. In a short time a host of young climbers acquired the necessary skills, ascending the East Face of Mount Whitney by a variety of routes, and soon the spires and sheer walls of Yosemite. In 1934 a superb climbing team, Bestor Robinson, Richard M. Leonard, and Jules Eichorn, pioneered in the use of pitons for direct aid in the first ascent of the Higher Cathedral Spire, and a few months later made the first ascent of the Lower Spire. Another ascent of the Higher Spire (the third) was made the same year by Ted Waller, Jack Riegelhuth, and Marjory Bridge.³⁹

Another event of the year 1931, repeated in 1934, is in striking contrast to the vertical rock ascents. Water was low in the Tuolumne River in both seasons, affording an unusual opportunity to investigate the mysterious Muir Gorge. John Muir and Galen Clark had passed through it many years before, in 1872, and a few others afterwards, but in later years powerful cascading water had blocked the entrance so that none of the current generation knew anything about it. However, in 1931 two small parties ventured into the steep-walled chasm and by swimming the pools came through to the lower end, where they met the fine trail that had been built to Pate Valley in the heart of the Canyon. Photographs were taken then and again in 1934, when another passage was made. To the few who have been there the central pool has been a goal fully equivalent to the summit of any of the highest peaks of the Sierra.⁴⁰

It is inevitable that history should have its moments of sadness, but in one such moment the sadness is tempered by a glimpse of beauty and the immortality of youth. Walter A. Starr, Jr. ("Pete" Starr), loved the High Sierra with a devotion that led him there on every possible occasion. He usually traveled alone, for few could keep up with him on the trails and few equaled him in the agility with which he climbed. One day in 1933 he failed to return to the San Francisco law office where he worked. Inquiries were made and a search was begun, which ended when his body was found on a ledge of one of the Minarets, near Mount Ritter. In words written by his father shortly afterward, referring to the guidebook which he completed from his son's unfinished manuscript, "May the traveler feel the companionship of that eager, joyous, and generous youth who loved the beauty of the mountains and wanted others to share his love."⁴¹

Starr's *Guide to the John Muir Trail* has indeed served to stimulate hundreds of lovers of the High Sierra and lead them to pleasant pastures along



The Minarets from the air,
taken during the search for Walter A. Starr, Jr., 1933.

Francis P. Farquhar

the high mountain route. The Trail received its name when the California legislature, in 1915, appropriated \$10,000 for its construction. The origin of the idea is stated by Colby as follows: "During the 1914 outing of the Sierra Club, a suggestion was made by Mr. Meyer Lissner of Los Angeles that a State appropriation should be secured for building trails with which to make the High Sierra more accessible. After Muir's death, the happy idea occurred of making this appropriation a State recognition of his inestimable service in bringing the mountains of California to the attention of the world." The route was selected by State Engineer Wilbur F. McClure, in consultation with members of the United States Forest Service and the Sierra Club. The major part of the work was carried out by the Forest Service, with Supervisors Paul G. Redington, of Sierra National Forest, and S. W. Wynne, of Sequoia. In subsequent years additional appropriations were made, sponsored by State Senator Arthur Breed, a Sierra Club member. Successive supervisors of the national forests continued to take charge of construction. For a while temporary routes were followed until ways could be found to cross certain key passes, particularly Muir Pass from Evolution Basin to LeConte Canyon and the Middle Fork of the Kings, then Mather Pass from the Middle Fork to the head of the South Fork of the Kings, and finally Foresters Pass, completed in 1931 from the head of Bubbs Creek to the head of Kern River.⁴²

With the completion of the John Muir Trail the exploration of the Sierra Nevada may be considered to have been completed. Every canyon and every pass has been made available. Moreover, every major peak has been climbed, and in Yosemite, where the "inaccessible" points had long ago been proved accessible, the "impossible" faces of El Capitan, Sentinel Rock, and Half Dome have been scaled after long sieges by the aid of mountaineering "hardware." These later achievements, however, belong under the heading of "Current Events" rather than "History."