

Chapter 12

Mountains

As you may have deduced from frequent references in this book, the mountains are more than just an interest or hobby of ours. They are our passion. Ever since our first exposure to them through Bob Godwin's slides of the Tetons during our university days we have been enthralled and captivated by them. Perhaps the culmination of this fixation occurred during our backpacking trips to the Bugaboos of Canada and the Cirque of the Towers in the Wind River Range of Wyoming.

This passion for the mountains even influenced my professional life. My web site, designed in the 1990s, reflect this. The first page shows my photograph of the Grossglockner on a particularly beautiful day. The second page of my website shows the Cathedral Group of the Grand Tetons (Teewinot, the Grand, and Mt. Owen L-R). This sublime mountain range is the most scenic in America and has been our family's summer (and winter) vacation more times than we can count. I have climbed at least



twelve of the main peaks between Buck Mountain on the south to Mt. Moran on the north, several of them multiple times. On most of the climbs, Steve was my climbing partner.

In Colorado we climbed about twenty of the fifty three 14,000 footers. In Washington state I climbed Mt. Rainier, and, with Steve, Mt. Adams, Mt. Baker, Glacier Peak, and Mt. Shuksan. In the Selkirk Range of Canada, I climbed Bugaboo Spire and the whole family climbed East Post Spire in the Bugaboos. Even in Alaska I had time to climb three 3,000 foot "mountains" (hills?) near Sitka, Juneau, and Anchorage.

The mountain climbing gene seems to be heritable (or is it environmental?). Steve and his boys have re-climbed mountains previously climbed by both him and me. This includes both Gannett Peak (the highest in WY) and Mt. Saint John in the Tetons. All four grandchildren seem to enjoy our rock climbing outings at Devil's Lake.

Clearly there are too many adventure stories to relate in this book. For purposes of this chapter I want to recall four or five of the stories which remain most vivid in my memory. These can be summarized as:

- The climb of Mt. Ranier
- The exploits in the Bugaboos
- The climb of Gannett Peak



- A rainy day on Mt. St. John

My climbing career began in the Tetons the year after Bob Godwin gave his slide show. Basic climbing school was offered by the Glen Exum Climbing Concession at Jenny Lake and cost \$5.00. It took place on the rocks near Inspiration Point. Following it, I hired a guide to climb a pinnacle called Cube Point for \$25. The following year I took Intermediate Climbing and went on a guided climb of the Grand.

These climbs were good training for my hardest climb, Mt. Rainier. However, to climb this mountain I was required to take Snow and Ice School. This was particularly appropriate because the the winter before our climb, it had snowed a record 1,122 inches. The walk between Paradise Lodge and the youth hostel was a tunnel beneath the snow. The school was conducted in a complete white out. We had to kick snow with our boots to discover where the steep slopes were. On these slopes we jerked our classmates into a fall so they could practice ice ax arrests. This all occurred on July 3 of 1972.

July 4 dawned clear and blue and we began our two-day climb. Our party of four was led by John Sherpa and consisted of a M.D. from Portland, a Geology Professor from Harvard and me. The hike from Paradise (elevation=5400') to the Muir Camp (elevation=10,188') was quite uneventful. At the Muir Camp the fun began. We had been instructed to bring a can of soup - any kind would do. Our leader mixed all the cans together and the result was surprisingly good! Another party was there also, and as we went to sleep that night we were regaled with stories by Lou Whittaker, brother of Jim Whittaker, the first American on Mt. Everest. We eventually fell asleep but were



Paradise Lodge on Mt. Ranier

awakened at 3:00 a.m. to begin the final climb up the Nisqually Glacier.

One thrilling aspect of the visit to Muir Camp was the presence of Sherpa Nawang Gombu, Jim Whittaker's companion on the first American climb of Mt. Everest. He was related to our guide, John Sherpa, who kindly agreed to photograph Gombu and me. At the time, Gombu had the distinction of being the only human to have climbed Mt. Everest twice. The popular joke was that Gombu had forgotten his goggles the first climb



Parking Lot at Paradise



Hiking to Muir Camp

of Mt. St. Helens from the Nisqually Glacier just as the sun was rising. This photo has an interesting history. When we were giving our Mt. Rainier slide show to our friends, Ben and Nancy Greenebaum, Nancy made me pause the show and said that she would like to paint this slide as an oil painting. I gave her the slide, and her painting has been one of our prized possessions ever since.

As we topped the glacier, my climbing partner, the Harvard man, pleaded exhaustion. With continuous encouragement from our guide, John, we all made it to the summit. However, we found the summit of Mt. Rainier rather ill defined.



Nawang Gombu and Me

and had to retrieve them on the second!

Of course we needed flash lights to get from the Muir Camp onto the Nisqually Glacier. Mt. Rainier has 27 major glaciers covering 35 square miles of the mountain. Torrential rains frequently cause outburst floods consisting of debris flows similar to wet concrete. The rumor was that one such debris flow from the Nisqually Glacier had been so violent that it had reached the Pacific Ocean.

On the next page is a photograph I took



Muir Camp (10,188')

However, we found the summit of Mt. Rainier rather ill defined. This is due to the fact that Mt. Rainier is considered an active volcano. Because of the heat produced the summit has a very complex configuration of caves. If one has time, one can actually traverse the caldera, all the while actually staying beneath the snow and ice.

However, we were all tired and getting off the summit was uppermost in our mind. So we headed out, descending the Emmons Glacier on the east side of the mountain. We were told that ours was

the first successful climb of that season due to the record setting snowfall. Since the mountain may be climbed year around this may be difficult to verify.

John, our guide, indicated that, due to the increased risk of avalanche caused by the high snowpack, we should not make any loud noises as we descended. This was no idle threat since 421 deaths have occurred on this mountain due to falls or avalanche. We were careful and all made it down safely. Before the climb we had all been advised to take good sun screen. Most of my partners had fancy glacier creams, but I had only a lowly tube of "Sea and Ski"



Mt. St. Helens from the Nisqually Glacier



Near the Top

from sun burn within hours of our return. I was afraid of the pain these patches would cause, but about a day later, I peeled the blackened skin from these patches almost pain free. I must give credit to Sea and Ski. Where I applied it, it worked!

Again, it is hard to estimate the value of luck in this great adventure. We were lucky to arrive at Mt. Rainier the last day of overcast weather for a

commercial sun tan lotion. During the climb, my partners ran out of their glacier creams and asked to borrow my Sea and Ski. I offered it to whoever needed it.

However, that evening, as I returned to camp with my family, I noticed an interesting thing. I had covered most of my face with Sea and Ski, but had missed two triangular patches of my cheeks near my mouth. Both patches turned black



Beginning the Decent



Emmons Glacier

whiteout in Snow and Ice School. We were lucky to have two days of perfect weather for the climb. We were lucky to have a team of four who could do it.

Some others haven't been so lucky. I want to mention my hero, Willi Unsoeld who died a tragic death in an avalanche on Mt. Rainier in 1979 at an age of 52. In his early life he had been a climbing guide in the Grand Tetons. As a member of the first American climb of Mt. Everest he and Tom Hornbein led the first traverse of a Himalayan peak. He

served in the Peace Corps and Outward Bound and helped establish Evergreen State College in Washington state. He died on Mt. Rainier as a leader of their Outdoor Education Program. He climbed Mt. Rainier over 200 times. So it is a dangerous mountain!

From our earliest days of skiing we began getting brochures from Canadian Mountain Holidays (CMH) about the wonders of heli-skiing in the Canadian moun-



Years Later

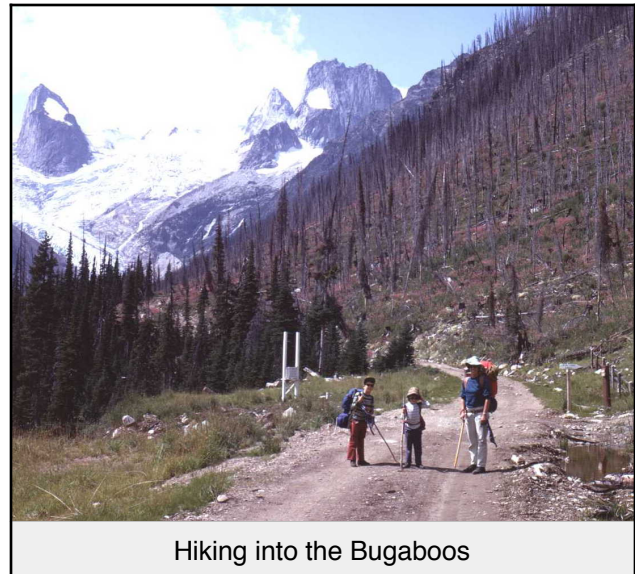
tains. An Austrian mountaineer, Hans Gmoser, had developed a sophisticated system of helicopter skiing in the Bugaboos, Cariboos, and Monashees of the Selkirk Range. The first few brochures claimed complete safety with no fatalities. As the years went by the brochures claimed just one fatality, then only two, and finally quit making any safety claims. But the wonderful scenery so intrigued us that we determined to backpack in and explore the Bugaboos, as a family, in the summer of 1973

It turns out that that particular region of the Purcell Range had serious wild fire problems that summer. Tourists, like us, were forbidden to enter the Bugaboos according to well-posted signs. So I called Hans Gmoser, as a potential future customer of CMH, and explained our dilemma and promised to be careful with fire. He told me to tell the police to let us pass, and we did. We had no problems with fire, but you can see the ravaged mountainside.

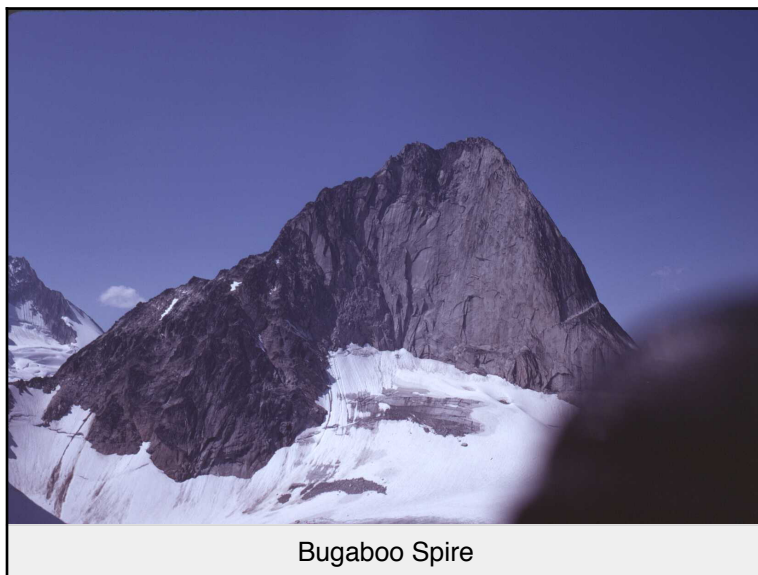
We were tremendously impressed! The Bugaboo Provincial Park is filled with glaciers, mountain lakes, and monolithic peaks. It is a climbers paradise. We set up our tent next to the Conrad Kain Hut. Again, through a stroke of luck, the NorthStar Mountaineers from Minneapolis were camped in the hut. We befriended them and inquired about their plans. They were planning on climbing Bugaboo Spire the next day. I asked if I might join them, citing my climbing experience in the Tetons. They politely agreed, and I joined them the next morning.

The climb was a classic. It started as a Class 3 scramble over rocks, increased to a Class 4 climb where a rope might be necessary, and ended with a Class 5.10 move on a cliff near the summit.

The last pitch on Bugaboo Spire was difficult. It stalled us out for several minutes, till the leader directed the most competent climber in the group to



Hiking into the Bugaboos



Bugaboo Spire

lead. He did a fine job, I was the second up, and soon we were all on the top.

The social dynamics of the climb were interesting in retrospect. We were all committed to making the climb a success rather than making friends. So, somewhat sadly, I failed to learn their names or stay in contact after the climb.

Somewhat the same social dynamic prevailed on my second climb of the Grand with a group of Hoofers from Madison. This mixed group of high school and college kids took me along since I was the only one who had ever climbed it before and knew the route to the top. We climbed the 7,000 vertical feet in seven hours.

Back to Bugaboo Spire. The decent was a joy, with several rappels, one of which I got on film. Then it was back to



Climbing Bugaboo Spire



The Top of Bugaboo Spire

camp with the primitive services it provided. These included an outhouse between to huge boulders shown in the photo below. At least it was a well define destination with a well defined purpose. It avoided the need to dig our own pit or turn over rocks.

The second adventure of which I'm extremely proud, but probably opens me up to charges of child abuse, is our family's climb of East Post



Rappelling off Bugaboo Spire

Spire. This major peak was not as difficult as Bugaboo Spire but did involve roping up as we crossed the glacier to climb it.

The following four photos document our climb. From the expressions on their faces every one seemed to enjoy the climb. The only trepidation was the approach over the glacier. No one but I had ever climbed on snow and ice before. The only difficulty we had was when

Steve had to go to the bathroom in the middle of the glacier, and I don't want to remember the details.

The summit photos show Steve with the summit register. They are usually a metal pipe, with a rolled up scroll inside, which is both weather and rodent-proof. One records name and



The Outhouse



Climbing Eastpost Spire

date and any climbing observations.

It turns out that all the climbing registers for Teton climbs from the 1920s through the 1980s have been photographed and are available at teton-climbinghistory.com. But recently the "back to nature" movement frowns on such "desecrations" of the mountains and removed them. Whether or not this movement affects Canadian mountains or the Tetons is unclear. However, it is satisfying to see your signature from the

mountain top some fifty years later!

Steve and Susie climbed East Post Spire when they were eight and six years old, respectively. Just as we assured Susie that she was the youngest climber of Windom Peak in the Needle Mountains at four years old, I'm sure she was the youngest climber on this mountain. The NorthStar Mountaineers were impressed.

The final photograph of our Bugaboo perambulations is of the Conrad Kain Hut, our camping location. Conrad Kain was an Austrian moun-



On the Glacier

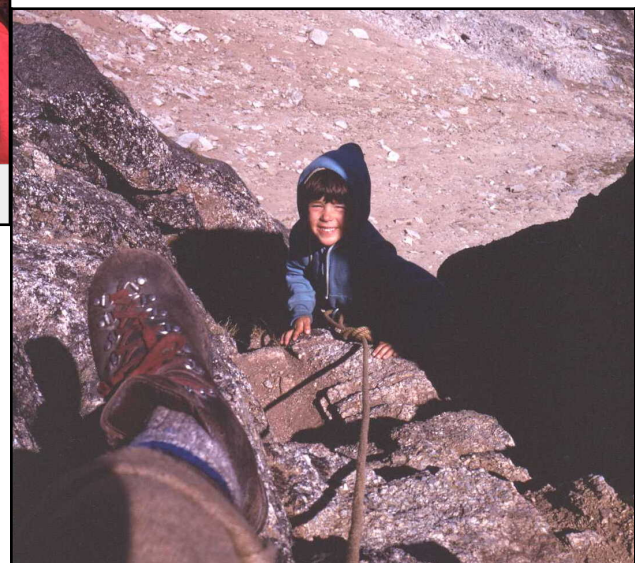


The Summit Register

taineer who made 30 first ascents in New Zealand and 69 first ascents in the Canadian mountains. Among them are Bugaboo Spire and Mount Robson, the highest mountain in Canada. Both Conrad Kain and Hans Gmoser are heroes in Canada. On our recent visit to the Whyte Museum in Banff, we saw a huge poster commemorating Hans Gmoser and the ice

axes he carried.

I simply had to show the picture of SnowPatch, Pigeon, and the shoulder of Bugaboo Spire to illustrate what monolithic peaks these mountains are. The only comparable mountains in the U.S. are in the Cirque of the Towers region of the Wind River Range of



Descending Eastpost Spire



SnowPatch, Pigeon and Bugaboo Spire

Wyoming.

Even the central Wind River Range peaks in the Rocky Mountains are not as monolithic. This is apparent in the next picture of Fremont Peak, the last major mountain I climbed with Steve and his boys in 2007. I had climbed it with my graduate school friends in the early 1960s and again with Steve in the 1970s. It is also the scene of my third climbing ad-

venture, the climb of Gannett Peak.

Throughout the years we have had a number of backpacking/climbing partners. As I mentioned, my first climbing partners were three of my graduate school colleagues. Since then we have teamed up with Jack and Vonnie Elmore and their boys, Van and Polly Bluemel, Don and Linda Piele and their girls, Dave and Carol Pucely, and Lon Ruedisili and his boys Steve and Bob.

Following our collaboration on the energy book, Lon and I decided that



The Conrad Kain Hut as we Depart



Fremont Peak and Island Lake in the Wind Rivers

it would be a great adventure to backpack into the Wind Rivers with his boys and my son. He and his boys were primarily interested in fishing and Steve and I in climbing.

Leaving our cars at Elkhart Park, we spent two days hiking into the Titcomb Basin via Island Lake where I had camped previously. The trail from Elkhart Park to Island Lake

is 11.7 miles and to our campsite between the Titcomb Lakes, over 12 miles. About half the way is through pine forests, and the last half is past high mountain lakes. So we



Lon, Steve and Bob Ruedisili

camped the first night on the bluffs at the north end of Hobbs Lake. This was the same campsite we had used on our trip with the Elmores years earlier. The next photo shows Steve and the three Ruedisilis hiking across the open meadows leading to Hobb's Lake. The second night we set up our tents between upper and lower Titcomb Lakes at the base of Fremont Peak, the third tallest peak in Wyoming.

At 13,804' Gannett Peak is the tallest mountain in Wyoming. It is 34' taller than the Grand Teton, often mistakenly considered the tallest. It is surrounded on all

sides by glaciers. The climb is not too technically difficult. But we did rope up with another couple, in their 20s, on Gooseneck Glacier. They were good companions, and we finished the climb together. On the descent, we all four down climbed a new portion of the glacier, roped together, and chopping steps with our ice axe. It was pretty exciting.

Another incident on our return trip from climbing Gannett Peak occurred on Dinwoody Glacier. This is the huge glacier that fills the valley from Bonney pass at the end of Titcomb Valley to the foot of Gannett Peak. On the descent of the mountain, I found my steps on the morning's approach and was following them on our descent. All of a sudden, a snow bridge, warmed by the sunshine, gave way and I fell into a crevasse up to my waist. Unfortunately, we were not roped up at the time, but it was no problem climbing out of the crevasse and continuing towards Bonney Pass.

We were so tired going down the snow on the Titcomb Basin side of Bonney Pass that Steve fell and dropped his flashlight which smashed into pieces. Since it was dark I led the rest of the way down the snowfield.

As soon as we



Hiking in to Titcomb Basin



Me, Friend and Steve

reached the flat part of Titcomb Basin we found a big boulder which was still warm from the days sun. We laid down and were asleep in ten seconds. After a few minutes we each woke with a start, realizing what was happening. We were at the upper end of upper Titcomb Lake, and soon we reached our camp between the lakes. We slept well that night.

Later this trip Steve and I climbed Mount Helen which provided a marvelous view of Gannett Peak. Still later, Lon and I tried to climb one of the towers due west of the Titcomb Lakes. However, we were driven off by a sudden thunder/snow storm which made our hair stand on end. This is nature's way of telling us that the risk of lightening is increasing



Steve in Bonney Pass



Cold Weather Moving In

and that it is time to leave.

Including earlier trips with my graduate school buddies and the Elmores, I have climbed eight major peaks in the Wind Rivers, six of them with Steve. What makes this trip with Lon and his boys so poignant is Lon's recent death. Lon and his family had moved to the University of Toledo after our first edition. After his boys were

grown he and his wife, Sue, took a Fulbright Fellowship to Pakistan and India, and we stayed in touch only through Christmas letters. More recently, he and Sue moved to Ferryville, Wisconsin, and built a beautiful 10,000 square foot home on their 500 acre property. We had the good fortune to visit with them in the summer of 2017, and Lon died in the fall of 2017. We are so glad that we did the Wind River trip with him and had the opportunity of this last visit in Ferryville.

The final climbing story I wish to relate has two unique features. The first takes place in 1975 when Steve is ten years old. He and I signed out at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station as all climbers did in those days. It was a welcome safety feature, since if we did not sign back in in a day or two, the rangers would come and rescue you. I understand that, since then, they have abandoned this procedure. Climbers are on their own, and, if you need rescuing, you pay for it!

The weather was rather grim that day. As you will see from the photos, it was mainly overcast. It was O.K. as we started, but soon after we got on the mountain, it rained. We sat out the shower under our ponchos, and it soon passed. Then we resumed climbing. Then another shower. Then climbing again. And so on. Later, recalling our experience, Steve said, "I was sure you'd gone crazy!"

Since there was no apparent reason to quit we kept going. Eventually we reached the top as the pictures show. We signed the register and headed back down.

When we returned to the Jenny Lake Ranger Station to sign back in we were in for a surprise. And that's what makes this climb unique. The ranger said, "Well, did you make it?" We said, "Of course. We signed the register." Then the ranger said,



Mount Saint John (Center,Right)



Starting the Climb

took our grandson, Max, out to the Tetons to meet up with Steve and our other grandson, Ray. Our first day we did a nine mile hike into Cascade Canyon. The next day, Steve and his boys set out to climb Mount Saint John and did so successfully. I had hoped to go along, but the previous days hike so tired me that I declined. However, it was a tremendous thrill to watch the next generation “take up the torch” of the climbing tradition that I started! Even more impressive than the Saint John climb was the Gannet Peak climb that



Along the Way

“Congratulations! You’re the only ones to climb a peak today!”

Of course, our initial reaction was one of elation - we were brave while all the other climbers in the Tetons chickened out! But I am also nagged a bit by the possibility that all the other climbers had the good sense to stay put while we two recklessly ventured out. However, it was a unique day.

The second major reason Mount Saint John stands out in my memory occurred in 2015. That summer Joyce and I



Jenny Lake from the Mountain Side

Steve and Ray did a few days earlier.

It is probably appropriate to close this chapter by summarizing my climbing experience in the Tetons. I have climbed thirteen major peaks from Mount Moran on the north to Buck Mountain on the south, and even more if you count Cube Point, Baxter’s Pinnacle, Storm Point, and Ice Point. Several mountains (the Grand, Teewinot, and Symmetry Spire) were climbed multiple times. My very first (guided) climb was Cube Point on 6/17/63.

I am certainly aware of the sage advice, "He who blows his own horn often plays solo instrument". However, I am proud of this climbing record. Most of this record can be verified by the simple act of asking Google for "Teton Climbing Registers". This will take you to www.climbinghistory.com on which the photographs of climbing registers are stored.

My guides of the first climb of the Grand Teton were Al Read and Pet Lev. They were active environmentalist at the dawn of the environmental age. Al went around the summit of the Grand Teton kicking over rocks to expose orange peels and oyster cans that "environmentalist" had buried under rocks on the top of the mountain. He picked up all these and plopped them in our back packs to take down the mountain. We were glad to help him clean up the mountain.

As I was searching the climbing history of the Tetons I continually ran into the name "Bill Briggs". He had climbed the Grand several times that year and the day before our climb. I actually met Bill one of the years I skied in Teton village. However, the interesting point to my story is that, on June 15, 1971, a New York lawyer and I climbed the Middle Teton. As we were descending we ran into another climber, very excited, who told us, "Bill Briggs just skied the Grand!" Curiously, as I tried to confirm this date for our climb, the record given in the Teton Summit Register quit on September, 1970

and resumed on June 24, 1971. Bill Briggs not only skied down the Grand but he also made the first ski descents of the Middle Teton, the South Teton, Mount Moran, and Mount Owen. In his younger years he and three of his friends made a 100 mile traverse of the Bugaboos of Canada. And he did this all with the handicap of a fused hip. He is indeed one of my heroes!

Just to confirm part of my story, here is a portion of the Teton Summit Register of 1964. I'm on line eight.



Near the Summit



Summit Register

I hope these four climbing stories give you some insight into our love of the mountains and the exciting experiences we had with them. They will remain as some of my most rewarding memories!

GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK Climbing Register for				
DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	Peak	Elevation
			City or Town	STATE
8/16/64	Roland Bergman	Milaca	Minnesota	
	Chuck Dunsen	Topeka	Kansas	EXUM
8/16/64	PAUL WINKLER	Wheaton, Ill.		EXUM
"	DON MAC EWAN	210 HIGH	WARREN	OHIO
8/16/64	Con Rafferty	17 Squire Hill Rd.	Castwell, N.J.	
"	William R. Wiley	Buffington Ford	West Chester	Pa.
8/16/64	Robert A. Dandberg III	800 SLOANETOWN Rd	West Chester, Pa.	
8/16/64	Morris W. Firebaugh	420 Fairlawn	Urbana, Ill.	
8/16/64	Dale A. Williams	54 E 1 st St	NYC	NY
8/16/64	Mrs Irene R. Wilkins	"	LL	n1
8/16/64	Arthur H. Fitch	47 Bellvale Rd.	Mountain Lakes	N.J.

Climbing Register on the Grand Teton