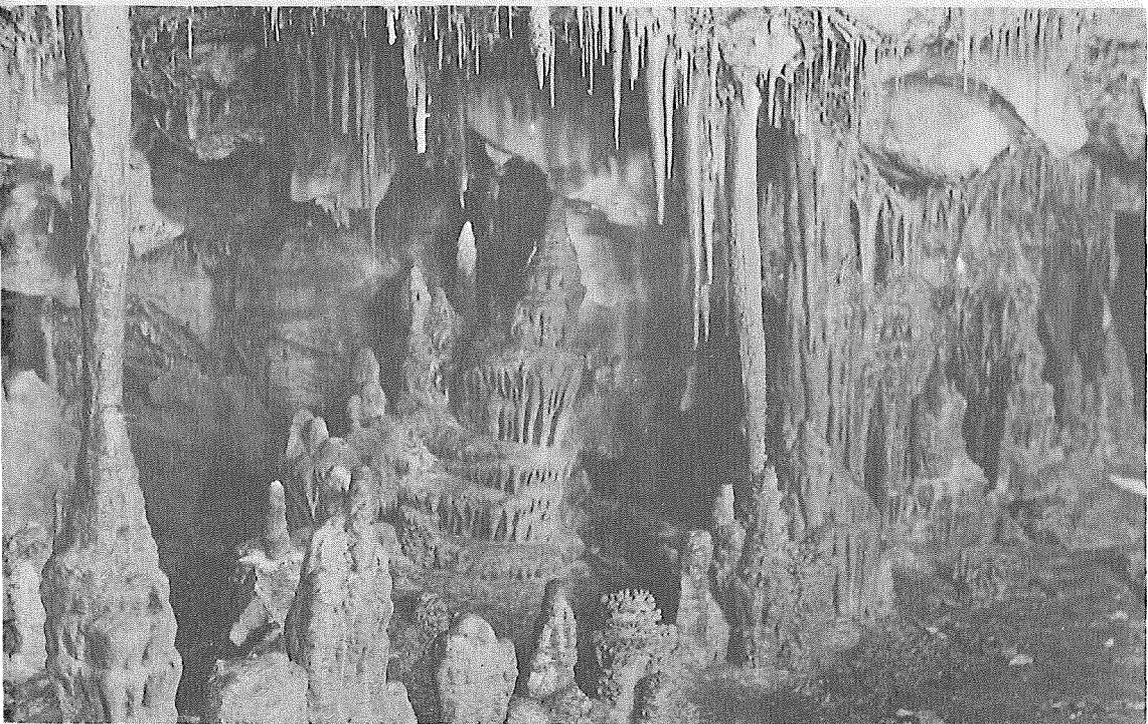


NEVADA
Historical
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Quarterly



Summer • 1973

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EDITOR

JOHN M. TOWNLEY

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THE COVER

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Lehman Caves,
White Pine County

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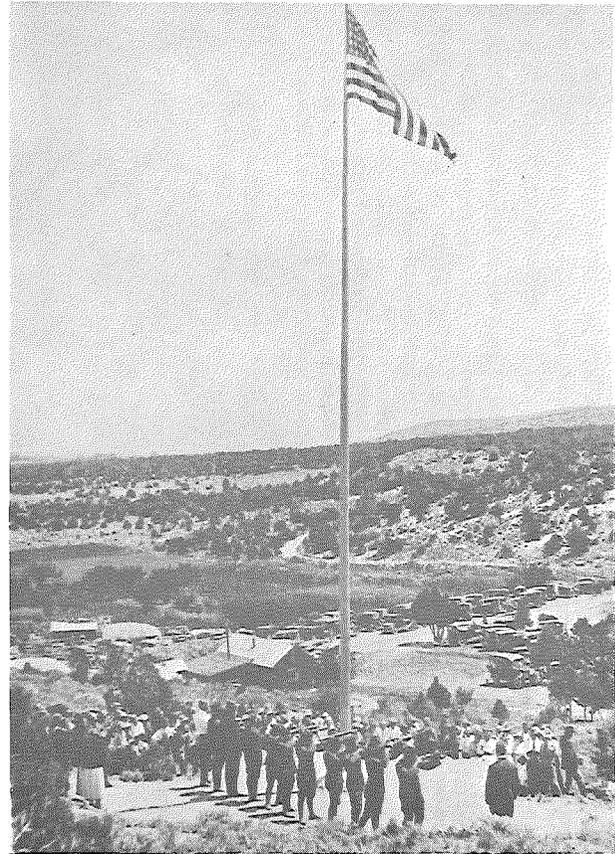
HARRY WILDER
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Cada C. Boak.



Dedication of Lehman Caves National Monument, August 6, 1922.

*Dedication of Lehman Caves
National Monument:
Ascent and Perilous Descent of
Mount Wheeler, August 1922*

by Cada C. Boak

“THRILLING EXPERIENCE IN EXPLORING NEVADA’S HIGHEST MOUNTAIN” was the headline appearing above an interview with the writer, in the *Tonopah Times*, August 19, 1922 after Mrs. Boak and I returned from our summer’s auto outing trip which took us into eastern Nevada and southern Utah.

The headliner little knew how aptly the words “thrilling experience” defined the entire trip. There was the thrill of peril, the thrill of adventure, the thrill of conquest, the thrill of accomplishment, and that undefinable thrill one experiences upon beholding the marvels, the wonders, and the beauties of nature. In short it was just one thrill after another from

Editor’s Note: Born March 15, 1870 in Hamilton County, Iowa, Cada C. Boak first came to Nevada in 1904 when he moved to Tonopah and engaged in business as a mining broker. During his half century of residence in Nye County, Mr. Boak was intensely active in the affairs of his adopted state. He was an active promoter of better highways for Nevada; he served as an assemblyman from Nye County for ten terms; he filled the position of secretary of the Tonopah Midway Mining Co.; he organized the Tonopah Chamber of Commerce; and he was postmaster in Tonopah for four and a half years during President Hoover’s administration. C. C. Boak died in 1954 at the age of eighty-four.

In the following article only minor corrections in spelling, etc. have been made where necessary to clarify the author’s meaning. However, nothing has been altered which would in any way change content or style.

beginning to end; and when thrills were not running down our spines, mud, or streams of perspiration, or cold chills, were.

When one starts something he is frequently placed in the position of being expected to finish it. I had suggested to government officials that Lehman Caves National Monument be formally dedicated with appropriate ceremonies and a flag raising. My suggestion was adopted and I was invited to co-operate with the National Forestry Service in putting it into effect. Invitations were indited from my office to President Harding, Nevada's senators and congressman, state officials, and other high personages and the general public, to be present at the caves on Sunday, August 6 for the big blowout. Governor Emmet Boyle graciously accepted the invitation to deliver the dedicatory address, and the writer with appreciation accepted the honor of raising the flag. Governor Boyle at the last moment was compelled to send Colonel J. G. Scrugham, state engineer, (later, governor) as his personal representative from the state of Nevada.

Accordingly, Grace and I polished our new Franklin 'til it shone and on the morning of August 4 we bedecked ourselves in the niftiest of auto traveling apparel, and started on our 260 mile journey to the caves.

With clocklike regularity we clipped off a mile every two minutes for the first few hours, and were figuring with mathematical precision the exact minute of our arrival in Ely when—"Say, Mister, we are stuck in a mud-hole down here about four miles, been there ever since last night; won't you please run down and pull us out?" Right there the wheels of our calculations slipped their first cog. By the time we had strapped our mudhooks on the rear wheels of the Californian's car and attached a tow-line, and drove in front of him while he unknowingly pulled himself out, we had lost an hour. The other fellow got the thrill that time.

We were wise to the roads, we were; no mudholes for us. We turned round and took the Hot Creek-Silverton road. We found, however, the heavy rains and cloudbursts of the day before had been general throughout that locality, dodged such rutsful of water as we didn't drive through, and as we only had to stop twice to wipe the mud off our windshield, we drove on with confidence, glorying in our wisdom in the selection of a road. That thrill was ours; but, oh, so fleeting!

We drove thirty miles of trackless road, then even the ground where the road used to be disappeared. We came to a "dry lake" covered with water. It was being treated to a plunge-bath, and judging from the complexion of the water, it needed it. Yes, even the desert takes a bath once in a while. Guess that is why Nevada always has cloudbursts instead of gentle rains. A shower bath will not do the work.

We could see far ahead, on the other side of the lake, a silver thread denoting the road winding its way up and over the slopes until it was lost in the distance. But that was looking into the future; the present was under the water in that lake. We sighed for, and we sighted for, the future

a couple of miles ahead—and plunged in. I knew the road alright, only I did not know where it was—and we had forgotten to bring our diving suits. The car felt its way pretty well for about a mile and a half, wading through water from six inches to a foot in depth the while. All at once a narrow, swiftly running channel confronted us. We plunged in, but the poor car could not swim. It buried its nose in the mud of a submerged bank, and expired.

Cold drops of perspiration bedecked our noble brows as we contemplated, among other things, the ignominious finish of our strictly proper, nobby, and spotless sportsuits. Grace was soon to demonstrate how perfectly her new, tailor-made, high top, guaranteed watertight moccasin boots would hold water, once she got them full. As for me, I changed my shoes and trousers right there, ate a sandwich, took a drink, put an automatic in my pocket, kissed Grace goodbye, cautioned her to watch the car so it would not get out and run away while I was gone, and waded ashore.

As Hot Creek Ranch was about twenty miles back, I had in mind a ranch on ahead which I thought would be in the valley beyond the first range. A walk of six miles to the summit through the boiling midday sun, and a survey of the desert valley beyond, disclosed no ranch. It was evident the ranch was in the valley over the second range, and about thirty miles distant. A cheerful prospect for two weary legs and an empty stomach gone dry. All I had to make the hike on was enthusiasm, and that had developed a limp. I returned to the car.

During my absence the ever-present flivver drove up, and contrary to Grace's advice, and with proverbial flivver confidence attempted a crossing below our car, and stuck stucker than we were. Theirs being the lighter car, we decided to get them out first. My first benevolent act was to put our mudhooks on their rear-wheels, then push. The mudhook on the wheel I was behind functioned immediately, for with the first speedy revolution of the wheel it hooked about ten pounds of oozy, sticky, slimy mud and with the force of a catapult planted it squarely in my face. After I had mucked out my eyes, ears, and starched collar, and had unchoked myself, I considered myself fittingly initiated for the work which demanded our unceasing efforts the remainder of the day.

About that time a touring car from Washington, D.C., containing four men and a lady, drove up. The men all came in and helped, and late in the afternoon we got the flivver out onto a little mud island between the main channels. The water had been receding steadily, and about dark we got my own car onto the same island of mud. There we rested from our labors and prepared to spend the night as best we could. A second channel deeper than the first yet remained to be negotiated on the morrow.

Our friends, not being accustomed to the vicissitudes of the desert, had no provisions. Grace and I, following our "safety first" rule, had our usual emergency lunch in the car, and with four small sandwiches we

“fed the multitude,” oh, golly! But it is not within the perview of this narrative to assert to what extent the “multitude” was filled. Had we had plenty of water we might have run a bluff on our stomachs, but we had exhausted our united water supply during the afternoon, and had to emulate the camel until the following forenoon. It was literally “water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink.” I became so desperate in the middle of the night that I got up and filled a canvas bucket with the hot, muddy water from the channel, in hopes that by morning the mud would settle to the bottom and the water be drinkable. Of course we had no fire, we didn’t want to risk burning up the lake; our clothes, when we scraped the mud off and got to them, were what one would call in ordinary parlance, wet—yes, more than that, they were water-logged. Our bedding, strapped to the running board of the car, had been immersed.

The woman in the moon looked down upon us, but she had just had her hair bobbed and had no thought for anyone but herself. The coyotes, lest they contribute entertainment, maintained a sepulchral silence. Nor was there heard the twitter of a bird or the croaking of a frog, and certainly not the rustling of leaves, or the murmur of wind through the trees, for we were not within speaking distance of a bunch of sagebrush. The few fleecy clouds which floated lazily by seemed almost ethereal. The stars danced and twinkled, or paler grew when intervening clouds sought their brilliance to obscure. The sluggish, oozy flow of pasty water added not a sound. So, wrapped in silence, for we had little else that was dry, we sought respite from toil and oblivion in sleep.

The morning dawned. The twinkling stars, one by one, oblivion sought and found. The moon, now clad in Palm Beach hues, paler grew with the onrush of the hosts of light, and reclined on the horizon. But ere the morning sun, the miracle of the desert had been performed. The waters had receded, and the “multitude,” nothing baring, proceeded on its way; and when the warm sun arose, paused we all and our garments dried; and, when about noon, a watering-trough we found, proceeded we all to ablutions.

The town of Ely, situated in a gulch, had a few days previous been visited by a cloudburst. Many houses had been wrenched from their foundations, and filled with two or three feet of mud.

From Ely, sixty-five miles to the little village of Baker, near the caves, was a pleasant drive. We crossed the Shell Creek Mountains over Connor’s Pass, an easy grade of about nine miles, thence across Spring Valley to the lofty Snake Range, which we crossed via the difficult but scenic Osceola Pass with its steep grades and numerous winding hairpin loops. On its summit, and in little coves, nestles the now deserted but picturesque town of Osceola with its vine covered brick houses and stone-quartz mills—once the busiest of gold camps.

We were met in Baker by forestry officials, and urged to accept their

hospitality. People from far and near had gathered there for the dual purpose of attending a meeting of the Farm Bureau Extension, and the dedication of the caves on the following day. A big dance was staged for that night in the basement of the hotel, and of course we had to go and meet the people. Grace got herself into an evening dress, and I donned professionals and leggings—and we danced. Senators, congressmen, and officials, and near officials—for it was just before the primaries—mingled with cowboys and cowgirls in chaps and riding apparel—they all danced. Women with babies in their arms, and there were a score of them, placed a mattress in one corner of the dancefloor for the babies, and all entered into the festivities of the dance. The night was warm, and Saturday. Off came coats and vests, then the men rolled up their sleeves, and they danced as the sleepy little village had never danced before.

The music—well, it was funny. A lean, lanky cowboy at a tin-panny piano, a freak corneter with a pompadour and the movements of a comic moving-picture saxophonist, and a high-heeled cowboy with a banjo comprised the orchestra. They inflicted the jazziest of jazz, and nothing but jazz.

Most of the girls were fair-haired Mormons from the nearby ranches in Utah, gay and untiring dancers with vitality to kill an ox. All danced and ate until dawn ushered in another day, then breakfasted and prepared for the day at the caves. Grace and I stayed at the dance until driven by sheer exhaustion from the two hard days on the road to seek a little rest and sleep, but our heads danced merrily on—you know. Methinks the little town of Baker is still reliving in memory that one night of nights, for never before had there been to exceed fifty people in the town at once, and that night there were hundreds.

August 6, the Dedication

The day was auspicious. By 10 A.M., eighty-six fine, large autos, carrying 428 persons, had arrived at the little park of cedars and pinions near the caves. For that number of people to assemble in a remote mountain fastness, in a sparsely settled portion of the most sparsely peopled state in the Union, was beyond our fondest hopes, and was something to be proud of. A level terrace had been graded out and built up on the slope for a stage, and a beautiful flagpole erected in its center.

Supervisor McQueen presided. The oratory began. It was all very interesting. The history of the caves was recited, and brought down to the time when I interested myself in them. Then I received bouquets with the perfume thrown in. Congratulatory telegrams addressed to me from Senators Oddie and Pittman, government departmental heads, members of the supreme court, Governor Boyle, and many other state and other officials, were read; upon our return home I found letters from President Harding and Secretaries Wallace and Fall.

We had taken Colonel Scrugham through the caves before the exercises, and when he delivered his address he sprung a surprise on me by reading to the assemblage most of my own written description of the caves, with the complimentary remark that he could find no other language which so fittingly portrayed their marvelous beauty. Then, reaching the climax in his oration, in the name of the governor and the great commonwealth of Nevada he dedicated the caves to "all the people of America, forever."

Then came the flag-raising, which at my request was done with formal military observance. As I took my position at the base of the flag-staff the company of American Legion, in full uniform, came to "present arms," and at a command three color-bearers stepped forward with the flag. I then raised the flag slowly, while Mrs. Anthony Jurich of Ely, in her beautiful, clear soprano voice, sang two verses of "The Star Spangled Banner." As she finished, and the flag reached the mast-head, the soldiers fired the regulation salute of three volleys to the flag, and all was over.

We then went through the caves, 325 in one crowd; we were so few and so scattered that all got lost, save the guide, and he was several hours rounding up his flock. I made repeated illuminations with my magnesium blowtorch, to the intense delight of the crowd, who, I was pleased to note was as enthusiastic over the unsurpassed beauty of the caves as I had been myself.

Ascent of Mount Wheeler

That evening a party was made up for the ascent of Mount Wheeler the following day. Saddle and pack horses were procured, and all made ready for the start in the morning. The party consisted of Forestry Supervisor Alexander McQueen, Ranger G. S. Quate, Ranger C. R. Townsend and wife, Miss Roorich, Mrs. Boak, and myself. As we strung out single file, we formed quite a cavalcade. Our route for fourteen miles lay up Lehman Creek Canyon, to a cluster of little lakes at the foot of Wheeler Glacier, where we camped for the night. At noon we lunched in a grove of "quakin'-asp." Mr. Quate arranged that he, with the ladies and pack animals, proceed on up to the lakes, while the supervisor, Townsend, and myself followed more leisurely and did some "wild trout" fishing, as the supervisor put it. The creek was not well stocked, and the few fish were certainly of the wild variety. The supervisor and Townsend between them caught seven, and I hooked enough more—all wild ones—so that we had a bully good trout supper that night. That was the only fishing I had on our entire trip.

By the time we reached camp, Quate and the girls had all the beds made on mattresses of pine boughs, and a roaring camp fire going. Soon supper was under way. All forestry men are excellent camp cooks.

Supper over, we gathered about the campfire, for we were at an elevation of 10,500 feet, and just under the peak. The crisp night air was

laden with the aroma of pine, spruce, and balsam. Fleecy clouds floated lazily overhead and mirrored themselves on the motionless surface of the lake. A big, yellow moon rose up out of the underbrush atop the ridge, and nothing daunted, lazily climbed the pines and spruce trees, and mounted high into the azure blue above. It was a scene such as only a like position could duplicate. A night such as one experiences but rarely in a lifetime.

Townsend, with an inexhaustable fund of humor, was the star storyteller. For years he had been a mountaineer and guide in the "Big Horn Country," and had never treated his anecdotes to an alum bath. Nor was that all, he was ever ready to concede the other fellow's yarns and to compliment him for his prowess, as was exemplified when I essayed to narrate my experience in seining for deer one dark night in the little lakes in the Canadian north woods during mosquito season, and how I caught three deer in one haul of the seine. Townsend's ready and animated declaration "I believe you," showed him the royal good fellow he was.

Just how many mountain lions and porcupines the girls imagined they heard prowling about during the balance of the night they never told us. Their imaginings, however, were of short duration, for at three o'clock in the morning all hands were out and making ready to resume the ascent.

A hasty breakfast, and we were off. The summit is always enshrouded in clouds from nine in the morning for the remainder of the day; and it was to avail ourselves of the unimpeded early morning view that we made the early start.

We pursued a corkscrew route up the slope of the mountain. Daylight overtook us on a plateau just above timberline at 12,000 feet. Here we paused, and caught the first pale glint of the rising sun far beyond the eastern Rockies, and were riveted to the scene by the ever-changing play of colors. In the east, for a moment, a heavy pall of purple hung like a shroud on the mountains, changing in quick succession to the various shades of lavender and rose and paler pinks. To the west, softest tints of lavender bathed the valley in their glow, then softened to the tints of cream and ivory-white, as the great, round yellow orb rose in all its majesty, dispelling the iridescent haze, then burst upon the landscape in a flood of glorious light.

We mounted again and hurried on as fast as our horses could be urged to go, which was a deplorably slow walk, interrupted with halts for breath every few rods. The flowers on the higher reaches, rare in specie, vigorous, stolid, waxlike, resisting chilling blasts and nightly freezes, bathed with brilliance unpolluted, fairly dript their colors.

We soon came under the last steep pitch of the summit, where we were compelled to abandon our tired horses and made the ascent of the last thousand feet, climbing over huge blocks of lime and shale with little detritus to cushion our footing.

We were now in the habitat of the mountain sheep, and while we saw none, we were forcefully reminded how nature by a clever subterfuge

ever strives its offspring to protect; how, lest their presence by their odor be betrayed to an enemy, an innocent little weed whose function it is to exude an odor indeterminable from that of its animal prototype, stands sentinel on the mountain slopes. The jester was heard to mutter something about our incumbent duty to render thanks that the polecat needed no vegetable assistant. Mrs. Boak and I were soon in the lead and reached the summit considerably ahead of the others. The wind blew a gale, and it was cold.

The peak is a sharp ridge about 300 yards long. On the highest point was the stone igloo erected by the U.S. Geodetic Survey in 1886-7, where we found much important data inscribed on the stone monument. When Mr. McQueen came up with the instruments and we fixed them to the monument, we were able to accurately discern most of the high and prominent points in four states—Nevada, Utah, Arizona and southern California. We were the first to use these records in all those years.

We were at the tip of our portion of the world. The panoramic view was magnificent. To the south, we looked down upon an amphitheater of peaks comprising the Snake Range which we were atop of. Immediately in the foreground, but beneath us, its northern slope blanketed in snow, and itself a formidable mountain, were the peaks of Mount Washington. Far beneath us in the valleys on either hand, emerging from neighboring canyons, dark streaks coursing into the somber gray of the desert marked the brief span of its watercourses; watercourses that flow into, but never out of, the desert. In the sump of the valley, white as snow, parched and dry, was the bed of an ancient lake; while hovering above it like a spectre, or dancing in the waves of heat, was the ever present but elusive mirage. Highways, mere silver threads on the landscape, faded away in the distance. Diminutive checkers of green marked the estates of ranchers; or, when in their midst, by the aid of our glasses, a steeple was discerned, we knew a village nestled there in the green. But now, encompassing the broader view to the east like an etching of the horizon, rose the lofty Wasatch Range of the great Rocky Cordillera; and to the west, in a blur of somber haze, the sawteeth of the mighty Sierra. While in the space intervening, range after range in parallel procession, the lesser corrugations of mother earth gave reality to distance.

My own geological observations revealed that the mountain had originally been at least a thousand feet higher, and that as a result of seismic disturbances the top had slid off, forming the plateau upon which we had camped the night before. The peak had then split from north to south forming one of the most beautiful scenic gorges I have ever seen. Near the summit its walls are nearly perpendicular for a depth of 2,500 feet. In answer to my query as to whether or not the gorge had ever been photographed, Mr. McQueen assured me that it had not, that it was not even named. My suggestion of "Castellated Gorge of Mount Wheeler" seemed most appropriate, and was adopted. I then decided to attempt the

task of photographing the gorge from various points on its rim, and Messrs. McQueen and Townsend volunteered to accompany me.

The rim forms a horseshoe lying between the two peaks of the mountain, its closed end resting in the saddle and several hundred feet below the summit. It was an arduous and steep descent over huge boulders to the loop, but when reached the loop commanded an incomparable view of both walls of the gorge for its entire length. Owing to its immense size and depth, all one could do was photograph a section of one wall at a time. We did, however, have eyes that were not limited in scope of vision, as were our camera's, and we all agreed that we had never before beheld more beautiful scenery of its type.

We men did not wish to appear selfish, so while I continued my work of photographing, the other two men returned to the summit for the ladies, and more films. They found the descent to, and the trip around the end of the gorge to the east rim where I was working, very arduous; and none of us relished the idea of returning again to the summit and back to camp the way we had come. After consultation, it was decided to go up over the eastern summit, called by some "Jeff Davis," and descend to camp from there. We dispatched a messenger to Mr. Quate, in charge of our horses, to advise him of our plans, and to meet us at camp.

We set out boldly, but the farther we went the larger the boulders were, and the more difficult the going; so that we began to question the ability of the ladies to negotiate the route we had chosen. About this time we reached a narrow break in the eastern rim, filled with loose slide rock, down which it looked possible to descend to the bottom of the gorge. As the little lake where we had camped the night before was at the mouth of the gorge this route seemed the nearest, easiest and quickest way back to camp. It seemed to be a providential means of avoiding a tiresome ten mile walk.

We started down. At each step the loose slide talus would carry us from ten to twenty feet; and although it was death on shoe leather we rather enjoyed our new and novel mode of locomotion. We made good time, too, and all were in high spirits. Of course we realized after we took our first few steps downward that to return to the rim, had we wished to have done so, was an utter impossibility. With deference due the supervisor, who was showing himself such a royal good fellow and sport, I christened it "McQueen's Slide." But it was not fifteen minutes before the name had been corrupted to "My Queen's Slide," and fittingly—also plurally, as all the "queens" slid. The thread of snow in the gorge below meant nothing to us at the time. Not so later. The talus slide, probably a third of a mile long, landed us squarely on the head of Wheeler Glacier, for such our imagined thread of snow proved to be.

Here we were confronted by a peril both real and menacing from which there was no escape. The gorge walls rose 2,500 feet above us on either side, and were nearly perpendicular. The glacier filled the gorge

from wall to wall, and extended downward to its moraine a mile below. We had no alternative but to take our lives in our hands, trust to providence, good fortune, and strong bootheels—that the pieces would all be intact when we reached the bottom.

Fortunately it was midafternoon, the sun was full on the glacier, and the month was August. We were able by considerable muscular exertion to jab the heels of our shoes into the crust. This we were compelled to do for each and every step, and our steps were necessarily short ones for we had neither ropes, picks, pike poles, or any of the aids common to Alpine climbing. We helped each other as best we could, and followed in the heel prints of the one in front. The occasional boulder embedded in the ice afforded a firm foothold and an opportunity to pause for rest. Frequently if a good sized boulder showed up in our course, we would sit down and slide to it, feet first; but we rarely risked a slide of over five or ten feet, for the descent was very steep, and the momentum one acquired in a ten foot slide was disconcerting.

About half way down the gorge narrowed for a few rods, and the glacier steepened so that it was impossible to stand at all, or to maintain a foothold. That portion of the descent was made by wedging our bodies, feet foremost, into the crack between the ice sheet and the wall of the gorge, and letting ourselves down from one slight projection or irregularity to another. The reflection of the sun against the wall of the gorge had melted the ice back from it for a distance of from eighteen inches to three feet deep, and it was down this crack that we slid. It was ticklish work. At one place I missed my own toehold and shot down about fifteen feet before my leg wedged and stopped my "shoot." Here was one more place where long legs were a real convenience. A fat person never could have made it without ropes. Fortunately none of us were fat, and our ladies were all properly dressed, and game.

This negotiated, but with many thrills and narrow escapes, we emerged onto the lower half of the glacier, which had a much more gradual slope; and we were able to once more stand up and walk—when we were not falling down and sliding—and to take time to examine the red snow which characterized portions of the glacier. Mr. Townsend had met with the same phenomenon before in the northwest, and assured us it was due to the presence of myriads of microscopic insects in the snow. From here on to the end of the glacier our going was much easier, and it was a relief to be able to relax our muscles and nerves even a little bit.

While none of us had given audible expression to our fears, we had all realized the dire peril we were in, and that one misstep would have resulted in almost certain disaster. But even at that we did not realize to the full the extent of our peril until the following day, when we related our experience to some of the old-timers in the valley and noted the degree of incredulity with which our united and corroborated statements were received. Their skeptical rejoinder was that "no man had ever come

down Wheeler Glacier." Whether we were believed or not we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had been making history.

Nor was our descent of the glacier without its humor. The surface of the blamed thing was wet, and wet with the kind of wetness that is penetrating. More than that, we all were wet; wet all over, and penetrated with wetness. Even after that, it was funny to see how each one of the ladies insisted on being permitted to bring up the rear. "Vanity, vanity," sayeth the sage, "thou art ever on the job."

The number of amusing predicaments members of the party found themselves in from time to time would be clover for a humorist. As we neared the end of the glacier Townsend sat down on a flat rock to rest. The rock instantly became animated, and away it went like a toboggan, with Townsend sitting on top of it, whirling round and round, until perhaps a couple hundred yards from where they started, it bucked him off, and gave him a beautiful roll.

At the bottom of the glacier we encountered half a mile of particularly hard going, over huge sharp boulders that further taxed our powers of endurance. But the lake was in sight, and a mile farther brought us to camp just at dusk.

Mr. Quate, who knew the mountain, had been very much exercised ever since our messenger had apprised him of our plans for getting off the mountain. He was preparing to wait in camp until morning, but he said "he never expected to see us come into camp." Instead, he expected that as soon as we realized the difficulties of getting over the north rim, we would be forced to stay out over night and then make our way down the long eastern slope ten miles to the caves; and if he failed to sight us next morning he had his plans made for organizing a rescue party with ropes and picks, to haul up what might be left of us, from the gorge. He had not the remotest idea that, if we were so foolhardy as to try to get down into the gorge, we would ever be able to get out. But, "fools and infants for luck," we fooled him.

I could never advise anyone unprepared as we were, to attempt the same trip. But to an experienced mountaineer properly equipped with spiked boots, pike pole or Alpine pick, and undertaken during the month of August while the snow is softened and rock slides are less frequent, it would not be unduly difficult.

We prepared a hurried supper, and as we were all wet we voted to ride back down the mountain, eight miles by saddle and six miles farther by auto, that night. The moon was full. The night was calm and grew steadily warmer with each diminished foot of altitude, our mounts needed no urging, and with it all, we actually found rest and relaxation in our saddles—the same saddles that were so unmercifully hard and wide the day before. Then a moment, only vaguely remembered, of divesting ourselves of our worn and heavy garments; then that sweet forgetfulness, the recompense for a day of unremitting toil.