

MOUNTAINEERS' OUTING TO MOUNT RAINIER.

ASAHEL CURTIS.

The third annual outing of the Mountaineers, with all its pleasures, its temporary discomforts and its final triumph in the ascent of the highest mountain in the United States has passed into history. Time only leaves a memory of the happy days spent in the flower-strewn parks or on the higher ice-clad slopes; of the equally happy nights around the great campfires; of the well-earned, well-enjoyed rest, and of the life-long friendships that here found birth.

The discomforts of the long marches are forgotten; the days when, storm bound, we lay inactive; even the bugle boy, who always sounded reveillee long before we thought he should, is forgiven. Almost we might forgive those who insisted upon that fearful line, which one from the far Atlantic Coast in sport called the human centipede, but which we in our own rebellious spirit derided as the "chain gang."

Yet he is a poor mountaineer, indeed, who has not returned to his home the better for the many lessons learned in the solitudes. The trivial things of life, the petty cares that to us seem so great, slink back in the presence of this majestic mountain. It is as if one heard from out the solitudes a voice: "Why all this haste? Why all this fret and care? A thousand years ere your impatient feet first trod the earth this same beauty smiled, unknown to man. The same flowers bloomed content to bloom and die, adding their mite to Nature's hoard of mold. The same streams of ice coursed their way down mountain slopes in awful majesty. A thousand years after you slumber in that last great sleep, your petty deeds and purposes un-

known, forgotten by the hordes that followed you, they will still bear their message to other sons of man, who as restless and resistless as yourself, found here a curb to their impatient, witless will."

To the majority of the club members who participated in this outing it consisted of two or three weeks spent on the northern side of the mountain. That they may for a moment see, as it were, behind the scenes, I wish to give a brief synopsis of the early work that made the expedition a success, and to give credit to those who contributed to this.

The outing was intended as a trip around the mountain, and this plan was not abandoned until after the first two preliminary trips had been made. The first trip was via Fairfax and the Evans Creek trail to Crater Lake and Spray Park, made August 27 to September 1 by the Outing Committee. The second one was via the Carbon River trail to Moraine Park, on which Mollie Leckenby and Mrs. Curtis joined the party. The great amount of trail work to be done convinced the Outing Committee that it was not possible for the club to make the preparations in so short a time. On the other hand, the amount of country on the north side to be explored was so great that a single season of three weeks was all too short for that alone.

As any trip to the mountain, to be considered a success, must include the ascent, it was necessary to find a route to the summit from some point on the north side. This could not be from Spray Park; therefore camp must be made in Moraine Park or some park farther to the east. Prof. J. B. Flett had twice made the ascent over much the same route by which Prof. I. C. Russell climbed, and we determined to attempt the ascent with the party.

The Moraine Park trail had been destroyed by the Carbon glacier, and it was pronounced a hopeless task to put it in condition for horses. The park rangers ad-

vised building a trail through the Sluiskin Mountains, but this would require a summer's work and would cost \$1,500. The only other alternative was a fifty-mile march up the White River Valley to Glacier Basin. To settle this problem the Outing Committee made the round trip from Fairfax to the camp ground in Moraine Park and returned through the Sluiskins on July 4, and determined to build a trail over the shifting moraine of the Carbon. This work was done for the club under the supervision of Park Ranger T. E. O'Farrell and practically finished in a week.

When every plan seemed to be working at its best, a feeling that there must be something wrong somewhere caused Mr. Nelson to go to Fairfax to investigate. He found that our worst fears did not do the situation justice. Spray Park was still deep in snow, and it was not possible to get horses farther than Crater Lake. In getting our first supplies to the lake Henry Loss had killed one horse and crippled others. The deep snows prevented repairing the trail beyond the lake in time for the party, and Nelson advised that we abandon the Spray Park part of the outing, or postpone it until the last.

To do this meant the entire rearrangement of the supplies of the outing, particularly the commissary outfit, and will explain to those who were with us the first week why there was a shortage of table utensils and a scant dinner the first night in camp.

The party left Seattle on the morning of July 17, reached Fairfax at 11 a. m., and marched to the first camp eleven miles out on the Carbon River trail. In a drizzling rain camp was made, and tents erected to protect everyone, and in spite of the discomforts of wet garments it was a happy party that gathered around the first campfire.

The following morning a number of the men were detailed to go in advance and complete the trail across



MOUNTAINEER CAMP AND MORaine PARK

Copyright 1909 by Asahel Curtis



MORaine PARK AND THE SLUSKIN MOUNTAINS

Copyright 1909 by Asahel Curtis

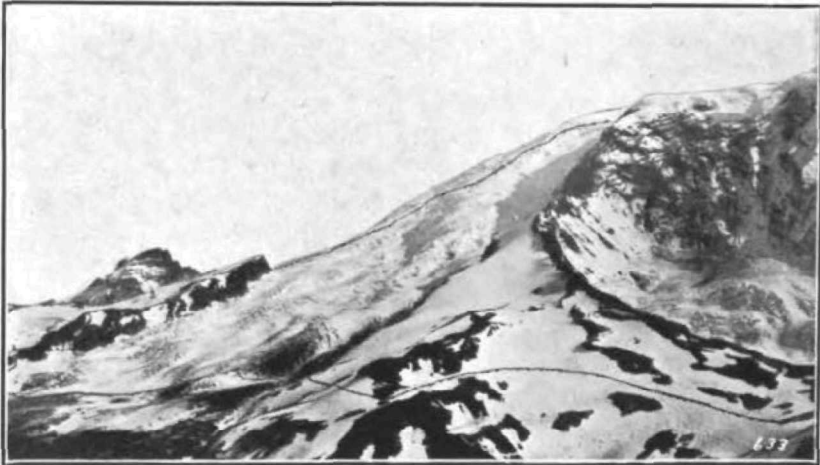


Photo by Dr. B. R. Stevens
EASTERN SLOPE OF MOUNT RAINIER SHOWING ROUTE TO SUMMIT



Photo by Asahel Curtis
MOUNT RAINIER FROM TEMPORARY CAMP SHOWING ROUTE TO THE
SUMMIT

the Carbon Glacier. This was accomplished in time to permit the advance part of the pack train to go on into Moraine Park without delay. Here camp was established, quarters assigned to the men and women, commissary housed in its own tents and plans made for the try-out trips. These served a double purpose, to see the surrounding country with the greatest possible dispatch and to drill members of the party and try their mettle. The first try-out trip was to the Winthrop Glacier, the second across the Carbon into Spray Park, the third with small packs across the Winthrop Glacier to St. Elmo Pass.

In the meantime Mr. L. A. Nelson, Mr. Grant W. Humes and myself had made a trip to the head of Inter Glacier and selected a site for temporary camp on Ruth Mountain. This camp spot had been suggested by Prof. J. B. Flett, who had previously climbed from here.

When making this preliminary trip we had hoped to make the ascent, but were unable to do so because of a storm. On July 28 Nelson and Humes went on to temporary camp, and on July 29 made the ascent, going up the ice field that forms the head of the White and Winthrop Glaciers. They were forced to cut steps considerable of the way because the snow slopes were steep and frozen. I was prevented from joining them in this ascent by a broken shoulder. This ascent, made over untried country by two men who had to break trail or cut steps so much of the way, ranks as the most difficult one made by members of the club.

While they were climbing the main party of seventy-seven came up to temporary camp and met them on their return from the summit. Their strenuous climb discouraged a number from attempting the ascent, and on the following morning seventeen turned back, leaving a party of sixty-two.

The spot chosen for camp was a ridge of boulders

and volcanic ash between Inter Glacier and the main White. (Plate 5.) Beds were made by laying a line of large rocks below to keep from rolling out and down the mountain. The looser earth was then dragged down to make a softer couch. The greater part of the party had sleeping bags, which afforded ample protection from the intense cold that followed the setting of the sun.

July 30 broke clear and beautiful, and the party in seven companies moved out from camp, dropping to the White Glacier and winding upward among long crevasses. The only object by which elevation could be judged or distance measured was the peak, Little Tahoma. As we slowly toiled upward we seemed to gain so little on the elevation of this peak that the effect was disheartening. At last it could be seen that we had topped its highest point of red basalt, and we knew we were nearing the 12,000-foot level. Only 2,500 feet above us was the summit, and in unbroken line the party was climbing easily. The try-out days in line had been irksome to many, but their value was proven here. But few could have stood alone on the slopes that now measured 45 degrees and ended in broken crevasses. Fewer still could have endured the strain of breaking steps in the hard snow, always with that white blur running upward to the blue sky, and downward until the eye grew dizzy following where miles away the ice and forest mingled. The only safety lay in watching the steps ahead and moving forward as the signal was given. At 12,500 feet I passed along the line to see how everyone was taking it, and reached Dr. Van Horn at the head of Company D. As he recognized me he said: "Curtis, this is no place for the father of eight children."

I could not help wondering how many more had reached the same conclusion. It had been impossible to rest for more than a moment, because there was no

protection from the fierce wind that swept down into our faces. At 13,000 feet a half-closed crevasse, large enough to shelter the entire party, gave a much-needed chance for rest and lunch. (By reference to Plate 5 this entire route can be traced and a clear idea formed of the ascent.) Above the crevasse we crossed over the head of the Winthrop, planning to enter the saddle between Crater Peak and Liberty Cap. Here the wind increased to a gale, still in our faces, and continued throughout the day.

Once in the saddle between the summits, the ascent was easy, the entire party reaching the crater in eight hours and forty minutes from temporary camp. Here, out of the wind, everyone sought a sheltered spot to warm themselves on the hot rocks and ashes. The A.-Y.-P. flag was fastened to its staff and an effort made to plant it among the rocks, but the wind tore it down each time, and it was carried to the snow dome of Columbia Crest and the staff set deep in the snow. It remained there only fifteen minutes, however, when the staff was broken by the wind. The flag was rescued and placed inside the crater by the Ingraham party, who passed the night on the summit.

The party that reached the summit climbed in the following formation:

General Staff.—Asahel Curtis, L. A. Nelson, Lulie Nettleton, W. M. Price, Grant W. Humes, F. O. Morrill.

Company A.—P. M. McGregor, Captain; E. W. Harnden, Prof. E. S. Meany, Nita J. Feree, Wayne Sensenig, Dr. Cora Smith Eaton, Lydia E. Lovering, Winona Bailey, G. D. Emerson, Lieutenant and member of General Staff.

Company B.—Dr. E. F. Stevens, Captain; John A. Best Jr., Roy Hurd, Mary J. Price, Henry Howard, Lieutenant.

Company C.—H. C. Belt, Mrs. H. C. Belt, John

Fahnstock, C. M. Farrer, Annie Farrer, Lulie Smith, Olaf Hansen, Charles Albertson, Lieutenant.

Company D.—Dr. F. J. Van Horn, Captain; May I. Dwyer, Anna Howard, S. L. Moyer, Elizabeth David, H. Hutchinson, R. Merrill, Alida J. Bigelow, Lieutenant.

Company E.—Blake D. Mills, Captain; Cora Garvin, Robert Van Horn, Dr. L. W. Clark, Stella Scholes, J. M. Jensen, Bertha Reed, H. V. Abel, Gladys M. Tuttle, Lieutenant.

Company F.—Murray McLean, Captain; Freda Sanford, Grace Howard, Rena Raymond, Anna Stauber, H. May Baptie, A. W. Archer, Mollie Leckenby, Robert Carr, Lawrance Carr, J. Fred Blake, Lieutenant; H. Otto Knispel.

Company G.—Major E. S. Ingraham, Captain; Kenneth Ingraham, Richard Buck, W. J. Colkett, Harvey Moore.

After an hour on the summit the descent was made safely to temporary camp, where a second night was spent. Twilight gave way to full splendor of moonlight while clouds formed in the valleys and rolled fragments of mist upward against the bulk of the mountain. The toil of the day and the discomforts of our beds were forgotten in the splendor of the scene. A mile above us the great White Glacier formed and wound its ten miles of ice downward into the dark chasm. From our eery crag we could not see where it passed the base of the cliff, but we could look straight down on the seamed surface of ice. More than a mile away across the ice, clear in the moonlight, rose the dark crag of Little Tahoma and from the depths occasionally came the boom of moving ice.

The following morning the clouds lay around the mountain in a vast sea that stretched on all sides to the horizon. A few peaks broke through, but they were insignificant in comparison to the dominating bulk of ice that we were on. The impression was of being

a float on a great iceberg. Major Ingraham and his four companies, who had spent the night on the summit, came down as early as they could see to travel, and rejoined the main party at St. Elmo Pass. Returning to camp, we walked down into this mass of clouds and found camp shut in by a dense fog.

During the last week of the outing, fifty-five members of the party made a knapsack trip to Spray Park, taking bedding, camp equipage and two days' provisions. They crossed the Carbon Glacier about midway in its length, and entered the lower part of the park, just where the meadows begin.

It had been found impracticable to move the main camp to Spray Park, and yet it was too great a treat to omit entirely. As day after day the eye feasted upon the beauties of ice-bound mountain crag or flowery meadow, the mind became satiated, and it required the unusual to attract attention. Yet nowhere else on the mountain had the effect been so strange as here. The park winds in and out among the crags, with small lakes; streams that course through meadows or plunge over rocks in beautiful cascades; trees bent and broken by the wind; flowers of every hue, so thickly strewn that it was impossible to step without crushing them. Each step brought a change of view, and at first the expressions of praise were lavish, but as we climbed and the view became more general all this gave way to a feeling of sadness.

The park was so beautiful that it seemed unreal, and one regretted that so few could see it. Nature had fashioned this playground much better than man could hope to, and had set it away here between two great glaciers at the base of a mighty mountain. Thousands on thousands of acres in extent, it stretched from the dark belt of timber 4,000 feet upward to the ice-clad slopes below Liberty Cap itself. The last trees clung low down to the rocks at an elevation of almost 8,000

feet, while flowers grew nearly a thousand feet higher. But in the lower park the effect of the wind was not so evident, and countless thousands of avalanche lilies, each with a dewdrop on every petal, nod gently in the mountain breeze. In time, when trails and roads are built, this great park will be open to the public, and thousands will be able to enjoy what has passed so long unnoticed. However, here as elsewhere, it will require the strong hand of the government to prevent wanton destruction.

Those who first visited Paradise Park wantonly set fire to the beautiful groves of alpine fir and hemlock, "just to see them burn," and today those same groves stand, bleached ghosts of trees, their beauty gone for ever.

It must always be the work of the club to assist in every way possible in the work of protecting the beautiful places of our state. A great part of this must be in educating those who, in greatly increasing numbers, go each year into the mountains.



BEDS AT TEMPORARY CAMP

Photo by Asahel Curtis



DAWN AT TEMPORARY CAMP, ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Photo by E. W. Harnden



Photo by Asahel Curtis
LUNCHING IN A CREVASSE AT 13,000 FEET



Photo by A. W. Archer
LIBERTY CAP FROM CRATER PEAK