



# A Pre-War Summer at Rainier

By Dee Molenaar

## I. INTRODUCTION TO PARADISE

"HELLO, Folks! I'd like to welcome you to Paradise Valley on behalf of the Guide Department."

You, who have visited Rainier National Park for the first time via the long red Park Company buses, will remember that last U-turn in the road before coming up to the Paradise Inn parking area, the athletic dash and leap to the running board of your bus with the above cheery greeting by a green-shirted lad of the Guide Department. He will follow this with a hurried and breathless——(he may have caught several buses before yours) description of the local points of interest, the scheduled daily foot and horse trips, and other doings in the valley, an all-too-brief description of what may be enjoyed in your usually all-too-brief sojourn here. These men are employed by the Rainier National Park Company during the Summer months for the express purpose of making trips and sights of the valley more easily accessible and enjoyable during the short stay of the visitor.

I was fortunate in the Summers of '40 and '41 to be employed as a guide in this beautiful park, and it has often been my desire to convey to others an impression of the happy months spent on The Mountain, under Chief Guide Clarke E. Schurman of the Seattle Mountaineers.

Since his first year at the park in 1939, Mr. Schurman has followed his natural endowments of creativity and ingenuity for new ideas and the department flourished as a result of his conscientiousness in giving the public what they wanted. Anyone who has visited the steep-roofed guide-house on a Summer evening will long remember the introduction to The Mountain as given nightly by the Chief in the small auditorium downstairs. The showing of kodachrome and colored lantern slides revealing the beauties of the mountain and its surrounding ridges, valleys, and parklands is greatly enhanced by Mr. Schurman's inimitable and vivid descriptions. His poetic interpretations of the great natural forces at work help to bring the mountain close to one's heart as a new and inspiring acquaintance. The desire is born here to meet at first hand these wild flower sprinkled meadows, alpine firs, dashing glacial streams, blue and cold ice-caverns, and to experience the thrills of "tin-pants" nature coasting down the long snow slopes along the glacier and to enjoy from the saddle a panoramic view of the lower surrounding mountain regions as seen on the Skyline Trail horse trip.

After the lecture many hurry upstairs to sign for the next morning's foot and horse-trips. Soon the guides are ready with tapes to measure the guests for size and to get as near as possible to that elusive "Perfect Fit!" in tin-pants (double wax-seated canvas pants), red and green plaid shirts, red hats and nailed boots. A size 54 pair of pants, if snugly fitted to any girth, guarantees to that lucky individual a chance to hike the four mile round trip to the Paradise Glacier ice cave with a guide, free of charge. Veteran and popular guide Les Yansen of Tacoma, also well-known to Rainier winter enthusiasts for his untiring work in outfitting skiers, is again with the department, with his ready smile and his deeply tanned face; he is always near to help some struggling visitor into a rugged looking pair of hobnailed climbing boots. The house is a picture of industry as the clothing is passed over the counter and the guides assist

*Mount Rainier from Eunice Lake. Photo copyrighted by Dwight Watson. The route of climb described by Molenaar is shown on page 64.*

in getting the folks ready for their early departure in the morning.

"Say!—What goes on in here? What are they trying to do—pull your leg off? Lucky I came by just now!" This booming voice comes sauntering into the crowded house in the form of one—"Polly" Anderson, horse guide. With this all guides stand aside and the popular, jovial, gray-haired Polly goes to work fitting an elderly lady with a pair of boots. Talking incessantly in a calming voice, serious-faced, he bends down and tugs at the obstinate boot as the old lady squeals with laughter. Finally, triumphant, he holds the limp boot aloft.

"See, Lady—never let these foot guides fool with you. They ain't got any sense at all. They're just horse guides with the brains knocked out. An'—just for that, you can accompany me over to the Inn. The evening's entertainment is about to start an' you don't want to miss anything. These 'greenshirts' don't know when to quit work!" At this, he turns and saunters out while the visitors stare after him, then back at the winking guides.

"Don't mind him, Folks—just a horse guide. You'll get used to them around here—and you'll love them all!"

The tourists are by now becoming acquainted with the immediate surroundings of the Inn and are gathering in the lobby and balcony overlooking the dance floor. An evening program of entertainment is sponsored by the vivacious and lovable "Tish" Jensen, head of the Souvenir Department and wife of Park ranger Larry Jensen. Talented college students, working in the Valley through the Summer, put on clever skits, tumbling acts, and furnish the orchestra for the later dancing. The horse guides, with guitars, harmonicas, and melancholy voices, bring songs of the range and the hills. Then a tall and angular blond-topped horse guide thumbs his belt, crooks his knee, and begins,

*"Skyball Paint was a devil's saint,  
His eyes were a fiery red.  
Good men have tried this horse to ride,  
Now all of them are dead.  
Now, I don't brag, but I rode this nag,  
'Til his blood began to boil.  
Then I hit the ground and ate three pounds  
Of good old western soil.  
Well, I —"*

This is as far as the ambitious chap is usually allowed to get before he is joined in his poem by the many who have had to listen to it every night. The discord following drives him from the spotlight as his place is taken by the familiar figure of Polly Anderson, who brings with him a stool, a knife and a stick of wood. He presently sets to whittling in long careful strokes and all attention is focused on him while silence reigns as he commences telling a story and as his words roll out he presents a Will Rogerian effect. During the Spring and Fall, Polly is a school principal. However, a story has been told about him that he does so well in his role as horse-guide that, at one time, an Eastern debutante became so interested in him and felt so sorry for him that she offered to put him through school.

The program closes with Tish's "prayer" for a clear tomorrow and the evening's dance starts to the strains of "Stardust" played by the orchestra.

## II. VALLEY TRAILS AND TRIPS

In the morning The Mountain will beckon the zealous and, after a good night's sleep, all will be raring to get started up the trail to the Paradise Glacier. But first, all will be hustled into a line-up for the party picture taken by the Park Company photographers. With grease paint smeared liberally on the face and arms, alpenstocks gripped firmly, chins thrust out, the party presents a truly formidable group. Then, after a word of in-



*Ice Cave, Paradise Glacier*

*photo by Molenaar*

structions by the Chief to "bring the guide back safely", the party responds to a yodel from the guide and is off in a cloud of dust. The leader takes up the head of the line with slow, easy strides and the colorful and motley line proceeds amidst the cheers of encouragement by well-wishers left behind.

Around the bend and into the verdant, flower-bedecked Edith Creek Basin the party moves, pausing for the view of the white veil of water cascading down Sluisin Falls at the head of the valley. The first rest stop is made on the Edith Creek Bridge and those not already "all-in" scamper a few yards to photograph Myrtle Falls flowing below in a deep rocky cut. The guide, upon further progress up the trail through the basin, explains the names of the many flowers met along the path,—the Western Anemone, Avalanche Lily, Mountain Dock, Phlox, Indian Paintbrush, and Red Heather are a few of the many flowers seen on the slopes and along the small meandering stream that comes down from a snowfield high on the Timberline Ridge. The Whistling Marmot, large dog-sized rodent, is seen running across the meadow ahead. Occasionally, high shrill whistles are heard and all eyes attempt to seek out their playful originators against the green of the grassy hillside.

After several more stops in the gradually steepening trail the "switch-backs" are reached and lead to the "Golden Gate" on the crest of Timberline Ridge. From here the first glimpse is to be had to the south of the three Guardians of the Columbia, Mts. Adams and St. Helens in Washington and Mt. Hood in Oregon. The jagged Tatoosh Range, lying across Paradise Valley, intervenes between these distant peaks and the viewer. The pause at this point, where the Paradise Glacier trail descends and crosses the Skyline horsetrail to the icefield now spread out below, enables all to enjoy and to breathe deeply of the crisp mountain air and to perhaps catch the too-rare feeling of a few moments of real living. Looking up the Skyline Trail, one sees the vast bulk of the mountain. The Nisqually Glacier, third largest in the United States, hangs at the icefall halfway down its journey from the summit and drops away from the amphitheatre in the mighty mountain cirque high above the climbers.

The trail goes down here and the party proceeds cautiously across the few remaining yards to the snow slope above the glacier's moraine. Their first objective, "tin-pants sliding", is now reached and soon all gather around for instructions from the guide on the safe and most enjoyable

way to get to the bottom of the slope. Proceeding first to test for thin or soft spots on the surface, the guide skis down on his boots gracefully, using his ice-axe now as a brake and third point of balance. When all security is proven he shouts up to the first, preferably widest and heaviest, adventurer to make a starting "chute". This is soon accomplished by the volunteered weight and width, along with natural gravity and slope—Yippeeee!

"Say, that was fun!"

"Are you sure it's safe for me to try?"

"Sure, come on—nothing to it. Just flop on your seat and relax. Guide with your alpie—feet together and raised. Wahoo! Right down the groove! Come on, Grandma!"

Upon the arrival of the various parties back at the Guide House a spirited discussion between members of the horse and foot trip parties is in progress. Each tries to outdo the other in the use of adjectives to describe his method of travel as the wiser, and to emphasize his feelings that the mountain couldn't have been seen or enjoyed to better advantage. In the meantime, the proof pictures of the respective parties, taken prior to their departures on the trails, are hanging on the bulletin board for all to gape over and exclaim, "Why—it doesn't look a bit like me!" Nevertheless, all will have prints made and sent to the folks back home, to show that the West is still wild and woolly and that they were a part of it all.

### III. THE SUMMIT CLIMB

Anyone who has the dormant spirit of adventure in his soul will at some time or other look upon a mountain and ask himself, "I wonder—is it possible that I could get up on that thing,—perhaps even to the top, and see what is up there?—wonder if it's ever been climbed. What an experience that would be!"

Rainier is no exception to that rule of attracting the aspirations of men to climb high, to gain perhaps an inner sight to things, a new and fresh outlook on Life from a closer-to-Heaven vantage point. Rainier has been climbed before, many times, by various routes, and by individuals of greater or less experience in this type of snow and ice and altitude climbing. However, the necessity of having along at least one capable and experienced ice climber and leader, proper equipment, excellent health, and proven abilities to follow instructed techniques with a minimum of lost energy, cannot be overly emphasized.

For this latter reason, Chief Guide Schurman has inaugurated at Rainier, as a prerequisite, the classes in ice-craft and consequent approval, by the guides, of the summit aspirant's abilities to handle himself on ice. Prior to the formation of a summit party the interested individuals will have a chance to experience and learn the useful techniques employed in snow and ice travel. A day spent with the guide on the snow slopes above the Paradise Glacier, or an overnight climb to Camp Muir at 10,000' followed by instructions on the surrounding glaciers and crevassed areas, will enable the teaching of the proper use of the climber's rope, the knots common in mountaineering, various types of belays, the use of the ice-axe and alpenstock in effecting a self or party arrest in case of a slip on a steep slope, the proper climbing with the aid of crampons, and how to conserve on energy by the controlled rest-step, the climber's pace. Not all the members of such ice-craft classes are primarily interested in a later summit trip, but many prove proficient pupils and later, upon the termination of the lessons, they leave with regret and a backward longing glance at the higher "playgrounds" of the mountains.

When the individual has proven his sustained interest and capabilities for the summit trip, he is issued the necessary equipment;—alpenstock, boots, several pairs of heavy woolen socks, a wool cap, khaki pants, gloves, canvas mittens, woolen shirts, crampons, windproof parka, dark or polar-

ized goggles, rucksacks, and food for the two-day trip. Then the climbers will register with the rangers, a very necessary National Park regulation agreed with, and enforced by, Rangers "Pat" Patterson, "Dar" Williams, "Larry" Jensen, and Bill Butler, whose rescue experiences on the mountain have shown them the importance of this procedure.

Early on the morning of the climb, and with the present good weather promising to hold, the party assembles at the Guide House for "the picture" and for final instructions and well-wishes by Mr. Schurman. Our particular party, consisting of three guests and the guide, is about the average size for one rope. With more climbers, two guides may go along, as two ropes will then be used,—any number in excess of four to a hundred foot length of rope is undesired. Now the Chief is ready with well-timed advice,—"And bring the guide back. There'll be quite a few boots for him to clean up and re-calk! Good luck, Fellows!"

With this future facing him on the return, the guide takes the lead and starts up the trail very slowly, swinging his axe in rhythm with a slow, hip-swinging stride. All talking soon ceases as the trail becomes steeper and rounds the grassy shoulder of Alta Vista hill for a last backward glance at the Inn and the Guide House. A short rest is taken to adjust comfortably the heavy packs. At a word from the guide the party climbs further and reaches the rim of the Nisqually Glacier's deep canyon. Here they descend through grassy meadows to the dusty trail leading along the crest of the moraine. A slow steady pace brings the party to the edge of the "black ice", where the dust and gravel from the moraine has mixed with the glacier ice. At this point they rope-up as several large crevasses can be seen ahead. Over the black rubble the guide leads cautiously, as a slip may result in a bad abrasion on the arm or leg. The thunder of the falls across the glacier grows louder as the party nears the clean, white ice in its center. This is crossed to the heavily broken, crevassed area at the other edge of the glacier. Over this they follow carefully the guide and the rope, and reach the lower end of the gully known as "the Finger", above the Nisqually's edge. A stop is made for unroping and for a well-earned rest upon completion of this first leg of the day's journey to the half-way camp.

A rushing stream dashes down the boulder strewn bed of the gully and disappears under an overhanging snow patch at the climbers' feet. The route from here follows generally the bed of boulders up the center of the Finger, from one rock to another, in a natural staircase that avoids the river beneath. The next snow is reached at the edge of the Wilson Glacier above and here the party starts shedding much of its outer garments of the morning. The sun is beating down and a slightly hazy horizon betokens several days of lasting good weather. Three hours have gone by in reaching this point and a light lunch is eaten while resting here. In later climbs of the season the snow will have melted off the surface of the Wilson Glacier and the crevassed, smooth ice will necessitate avoiding this glacier entirely by working around to the left from the top of the Finger and traversing a rocky slope to the flatter Van Trump Glacier. The route from here would then follow the many snowfields up the ridge to the foot of "the Turtle", which will be met later by our present party.

Now, however, the route traversing along the side and upper edge of the Wilson, to the foot of the Turtle-shaped snowfield above, is snow covered and measured as safe by the practised eye of the guide. Before any stiffness is allowed to settle in the muscles the party again proceeds single-file in the steps kicked into the snow by the leader. Slowly and steadily they follow the line of steps, pausing briefly now and then for a catch of breath. At this elevation of about 8,000', the altitude has not yet shown strongly the decrease in air pressure and oxygen. Two hours later the Turtle is reached, and the party relaxes awhile below the vast

neve' field to enjoy the coolness of a slight breeze that comes over the ridge to the west. A small trickle of water in the rocks nearby slakes the thirst in dry throats.

The mountain, as seen from the valley floor, has now taken on a far more rugged and imposing appearance in this higher, more intimate level of acquaintance. The ridges of loose, crumbling rock have grown in height and now stand out individually. Snow patches below these rocks are stained and dirty in paths of dust and rock avalanches. The snowfields here are wider and less steep than when seen from the detached view of the Pinnacle climber. Each patch earlier seen now represents several acres of snowfield rolling in broad sweeps upward between the ridges to the ice cliffs above. The deeply gouging glaciers are separated by steep sided "cleavers", ridges between the glaciers that have weathered their grinding paths. At this 10,000' level the mountain has its heaviest snowfall which results here in the gouging-out process on the mountain's sides. Huge cirques and cliffs are formed, separating, with perpendicular icefalls and hanging glaciers, the ice of the summit dome from the sweeping, crevassed, and dirt sprinkled glaciers which, octopus-like, spread arms to the encircling timbered countryside below. All this cannot be seen at a glance as from this close up the summit dome is out of sight beyond the present skyline of the Kautz Icefall, now looking so near but actually still about two hours climbing distance away. As one looks across the mountain he will see, at about this same elevation, the Camp Muir cabins and the Anvil Rock fire-lookout house, seemingly perched on the end of a huge, white anvil. The Nisqually icefall now is seen as a massive upheaval of broken ice blocks. In all this rugged scene the only sounds heard are the crunch of boots into the hard packed snow, the occasional distant snap of a block of ice high above, and the music of some small ice-bound but ambitious stream on some adjacent ridge.

It is about at this point that the "armchair climbers" back at the Inn will start their "expeditions" via the 33-power telescope mounted on the porch. When the small specks on the mountainside reach the middle of the Turtle in their ascent, they become visible from here. Prior to reaching this elevation, the tree-covered Alta Vista hill obscures from view the lower route of the climbers. As seen with the naked eye a party, if closely grouped and climbing near the summit, nearly five miles distant from the telescope, is barely visible as one indistinct dot. When seen through the 'scope, every individual stands out as if at a quarter mile's distance. The telescope platform, on a day of a summit climb, is the center of much interest and enthusiasm as those below root and cheer,—and rest, for those above.

Back to the climbers. After several rests and slow switch-backing, the party reaches the upper end of the Turtle. Here they find several nearly frozen waterholes under a thawing snowbank. Thirst is quenched and the climb is continued past the few remaining snowfields to the halfway stop at Camp Hazard, a flat, rocky ridge directly below the gleaming white ice-cliff.

This high camp is reached at five o'clock in the evening and soon all packs are cast off. The climbers step around drunkenly under the effects produced on the suddenly unweighted shoulders. This wears off however, and the preparations for the night are made by the building of rock-ringed windbreaks. Sleeping bags are found in a small canvas tent. This is left here throughout the summer to protect the bags and primus-stoves that are not necessarily brought from below on each climb. The sleeping-bags are unrolled and spread in each windbreak. These protections from the weather play a big part in the comforts of Hotel Hazard, where "every room is a corner room, and air-conditioning is of the finest." Meanwhile, the guide brings water from the small stream flowing from the cliff, before the now

increasing cold freezes the water over for the night. The primus stove is finally started up and hissing, after the usual amount of oral persuasion, and hot tea and soup are soon warming the body. Meat sandwiches and chocolate bars fill the menu and the climbers relax after supper to enjoy the scene spread out below and on each side of their camp.

The sun has nearly completed its arc in the sky and is turning to a ball of red in the west. The sharp, black silhouette of Success Cleaver forces itself boldly and obliquely into the right edge of the colorful picture. Upon closer scrutiny into the darkness of the ridge, cold neve patches are barely discernible. Long icicles hang from rocky ledges in the gathering darkness and add to the frigidity of the scene. The Kautz Glacier, comparatively narrow at this point, possibly a quarter of a mile across, flows steeply from the icefall and, in its narrow channel, disappears in the distance over another cataract of ice. As the sun sinks lower, a few scattered clouds in the west, golden-lined, present an unforgettable picture that brings to mind here the short poem by Mr. Schurman;

*Into the cloud-sea far below,  
I, lonely, watched the red sun go.  
Then turning, miracle of glad surprise,  
Enchanted, saw a full moon rise.*

The night is drawing near and the still coldness of the upper regions settles in as the men, after having their packs made up and ready to go, prepare to catch a few hours of sleep and to rest weary muscles. An early start at 2:30 A. M. is anticipated and the guide lays out the rope, knots ready, to avoid a later unnecessary fumbling and seeking ends in the frigid morning air. The individual shelters and sleeping bags now resemble so many cocoons. Darkness comes slowly and with this the snow domes of Adams and St. Helens, no longer rosy in the afterglow of sunset, turn purple, then only the gray summits are visible through the dusk and distance. Stars come out slowly and give one a vague feeling of intimate nearness to Heaven, while far below in contrast the lights of the valley indicate the presence of the human element.

Suddenly a bright light is flashed up from the valley. It is 9 o'clock and time for the pre-arranged signal back to the Guide House. The link with friends below is momentarily connected as the guide flashes back that all is well and going according to schedule. Soon all is again silence about, save for an occasional snap and tinkle of a frozen fragment of ice breaking and falling somewhere in the cliff above. A faint rustle of wind whips up the pumice dust about the shelters and the sleeping bags are drawn closer about the shoulders. The constellations in the vast firmament above blink down over all, and a small, big-eyed mouse, proprietor of Hotel Hazard, scampers among the metal pots in his watch to see that all guests are resting well.

Chuk-chuk-chuk—tinkle! The ice gives way to the point of the swinging axe as the guide steps up a 70-degree slope leading to the first terrace in the wall of ice. The climbers have arisen at the appointed early hour and are now tied into the rope at the junction of the rocky ridge and the cliff. By the light of his head lantern the silhouette of the guide above presents a weird picture as he industriously works his way slowly up the ice. Presently, he disappears from view and only the flash of his light on the ice above is seen. A voice comes down to those waiting patiently in the stillness and coldness below, and the second man on the rope steps up to the cliff and follows the steps cut by his predecessor, as his rope is drawn in on the belay held by the guide above. In turn, all are belayed and climb up until they all stand together on the shelf.

The frigidity discourages any desire to spend more time in resting than is required to catch the breath and to relax muscles strained to tenseness in the steep balanced climbing to this shelf. Around an overhanging ice block



they work their way cautiously to the next pitch leading upward. This one, being longer, requires that all climbers are eventually strung out on the hundred-foot rope, after a system of belaying and moving of one man at a time. In the same order, each man then is belayed to the top of this pitch, as the strung-out rope climbs and closes up, and climbs, each movement separate. The small levels cut by the guide enables only two men to stand in the one spot at the same time, and this only when the belayer and belayed meet. When they have all again assembled on the broad terrace above they pause and relax. All this procedure has taken necessary time and each man has had to depend on the light of his head lantern playing on the steps cut by the leader.

In some years the route through the icefall must be made by way of the "chute", a narrow finger of glare ice leading into the cliff directly above the glacier. The present route is preferred, but at times is too perpendicular, and the chute route is taken by dropping from the head of the rock ridge down to the Kautz, then climbing the glacier to the icy slope ahead. Steps are cut up this chute and then diagonally across into the maze of ice pinnacles at the upper edge of the ice cliff. From here a safe route is followed to the level glacier above.

The climbers in the present route have now reached the top of the cliff and they stop to notice a faint glow on the eastern horizon as the skyline is sharply silhouetted against the coming of daylight. The cliff now

eases up to a series of rough crevasses. Icicles hang from their under-cut lips. The snowfield beyond is covered by suncups of two and three feet depth and takes on the appearance of a frozen, choppy white sea. The party now relaxing from the tenseness of the cliff climbing feels relief in the view of comparative levelness of the glacier ahead. Cans of fruit juices are opened and a handful of prunes is eaten slowly.

Excelsior! The party again moves as a whole, strung out on the long rope and following the route picked between and around gaping crevasses to the more open, suncapped expanse above. By now the sun has risen and on the southern horizon the three snow sentinels of the Columbia receive their morning bath of pink, then orange, light. Here, still in the long shadow cast by the Wapowety Cleaver on the east, the party continues moving slowly higher with the rest-step,—a moment's pause on each foot. This step is



*Crevasses near summit  
photo by Molenaar*

necessary to the conservation of valuable energy at the rapidly increasing altitude and decreasing oxygen. The orange tint is now spreading over the snowy dome on Point Success high above. The light descends slowly, casting long shadows across the rippled glacier. Working up the center of the glacier and then traversing to the right, the climbers, after several short stops, reach the upper end of the Wapewety Cleaver. This broad ridge of crumbling lava-rock divides the flow of the Nisqually from that of the Kautz at this 13,000' elevation. A slow, sliding scramble brings the party on top of the ridge for their first baptism of sunlight. The exertion of the climb still hasn't created enough warmth to allow the comfortable removal of any clothing and a chill breeze across the ridge encourages the climbers to dodge down into the protection of a veritable labyrinth of extremely deep and sharp-edged suncups. The rope is temporarily loosened and a meat sandwich and chocolate bar is taken with the drink of fruit juice.

The sun now shines brightly upon the arctic scene. From this rocky promontory to the summit a clear and unbroken view is had to the bare crater rim, which appears now as a long black line on the rounded skyline. It is about one and a half miles in a direct line, but still almost two hours climbing time. The glacier up here presents a series of gently rolling humps, each one hiding the presence of a gaping ten to thirty foot crevasse, icy, blue-walled and seemingly bottomless. The suncups directly ahead are deep, but gradually lessen in size and, near the 14,000' level, they are negligible as a climbing hindrance. The view downward to the flat, boulder-covered top of Gibraltar Rock, now a broad plateau, gives a highly different angle view than that seen from the valley below. Above this massive cleaver the rounded white dome falls off and is split into the Ingraham Glacier on the left and the Nisqually Glacier on the right. They flow steeply to the icefalls on each side of "Gib".

With rest and breath restored, the roped party follows the guide's previous knowledge of the route through the maze of crevasses above the end of the cleaver. Some of these are short and wide, filled with fallen ice-blocks, and the route loses little time in skirting the ends. Higher up, others visibly without end or bottom present a problem. New cracks may have opened up and old ones widened, and the route to the summit varies with each ascent. Overhanging lips of bergschrunds, sometimes mile-long crevasses below the crater rim, must often be crossed by narrow snow bridges. On the descent some of these same bridges, now frozen and solid, may have collapsed under the sun's rays and another way down must be sought.

Today the party climbs steadily with short rests at regular intervals and in two hours time after leaving the rock behind they win through and past the last obstacle and ahead lies only a gentle slope upward to the rim of the crater. In exuberant spirits, now only slightly dimmed by the lethargic effects of the high altitude, they push onward and reach the rock. A short rest for unroping and for taking off the crampons is made and they then scramble the remaining distance to the flat top of the rim. A short walk along a segment of the rim brings them to the mountain's summit at Columbia Crest, 14,408' above sea-level, highest point in the State and fourth highest point in the United States.

Many and varied sensations are experienced by the individual upon successfully reaching this highest point. Awesome and widespread, the view on all sides is manifest in its effects on the climber's feelings. The crater depression lying at their feet appears much like a huge saucer one third mile in diameter. The snowfield lying within its rim is round and dips gently to the center. Between the snow and the rim, heat still arising from fissures in the rocks creates, by a melting-out process, steam caves which have in the past saved the lives of weather-bound climbers caught on the summit by sudden fierce winds and blizzards. Looking about from

Columbia Crest, the climbers see the other two of Rainier's three summits, Liberty Cap (14,112') on the northwest side, and Point Success (14,140') on the south-west corner of the triangle thus formed. Between each peak the glaciers dip and sweep downward to disappear from view over the rounded dome of the summit. Far below, they are seen to continue to timberline as so many long, white-banded ribbons. Summit ascents are also made from the Sunrise Park side, up the Emmons Glacier, largest in the United States. This glacier is viewed from the east side of the crater. From here the 11,117' spur of Little Tahoma can be seen far below, splitting the flows of the Emmons and Ingraham Glaciers. On the mountain's west side the seldom-used Tahoma Glacier route is occasionally taken by climbers familiar with that side of the mountain.

In the north the snow covered peaks of Mts. Baker and Shuksan and Glacier Peak stand above the blue horizon haze, while beyond, the white peaks of British Columbia can be faintly seen. On rare days, the Olympics may be seen over the haze usually obscuring the outlines of the Puget Sound. On the southern skyline, a fourth mountain can be seen as Mt. Jefferson takes its place with the Guardians of the Columbia. Below these horizons the lower timbered ridges appear as wrinkles in the surface of the Cascade Range.

After the customary congratulations all around, the register box is found chained to a pipe on the inner slope of the rim. The National Park Service, the Seattle Mountaineers, and the Mazama Club of Oregon each has a book here, to be signed by the climbers, and filled with additional information on the route taken, the date, the prevailing weather conditions, etc. It is always interesting to read through the books and learn about, and compare notes with, other successful parties. Every climb proves different. Often the summit is reached in a heavy wind and cloudcap, or in a chilling fog, and the routes back must be followed by the placing of orange or red-tipped wands throughout the ascent.

After satisfying their curiosity for others' experiences, the climbers relax back against the slope and catch a few winks. The morning has been wonderfully clear and the sun's rays beat down warmly on the prone figures. After a half hours rest the time of 8:30 A. M. beckons the climbers to investigate the presence of life in the valley below. The guide pulls a large mirror from the register-box and with the aid of the sun, starts flashing to the Yakima Park area far below. After a short pause, answering flashes come back, from the Inn, the cabin area, and the campgrounds, from anyone who catches the summit flash. To them this means the presence of climbers on the summit, and much excitement prevails on the valley floor. The guide then walks to where the rim overlooks Paradise Valley, barely discernible far below, and repeats this maneuver. Again a pause, and soon a mirror flashes up from the direction of the Guide House, where Mr. Schurman and the other guides have been waiting and ready.

After an hour's rest spent on the summit the guide prepares the party for the descent by a very necessary cautioning against carelessness in the return trip. In many ways the descent is more dangerous and difficult. This is due often to the over-confidence gained by some climbers in making successfully the ascent. In coming down, the weight will move with gravity and, if not handled properly by a comfortable degree of control, it may result in over-exhilaration and sliding will result. In this expanse of ice one must always be in a position to come to a sudden halt if a hidden crevasse is discovered ahead.

It is about 4:30 in the afternoon when the climbers stomp into the Guide House. With a beaming smile, Mr. Schurman is the first to greet and shake hands with the climbers, and after the questions of gathering friends have been answered briefly but enthusiastically that the now visibly tired climbers are allowed the relief of sitting down and drawing off the heavy and dust-caked boots and hot socks.

"Say, would you fellows like to take a shower and get back into your own clothes? By the time you're dressed and washed up, it'll be time for dinner."

Soon after, another guide comes running from his errand to the Inn soda fountain with four big, double-decker ice-cream cones.

With the coming of evening The Mountain draws the eyes of the valley. The round, icy dome of the summit is glowing for the few fading moments of the day with a ruddy tint of the alpenglow. Across the valley to the west the Tatoosh stands out sharply, a silhouetted series of jagged teeth. The western sky changes from orange to pink, then fades to a gradual turquoise above the horizon. The summit now turns a pale pink as the blue and purple of the lower ridges climb up to extinguish this last light. The Mountain now stands dark and silent in cold grandeur while above stars become faintly visible. From the lighted Inn, the orchestra sends the quiet strains of "Stardust" out into the gathering darkness.

After the busy last week and Labor Day the coming of Fall brings the inevitable and reluctant parting from the mountain. College books and classrooms beckon many back to the cities and towns. Others will take up again in Fall businesses that, Summer-slack, enabled them to enjoy a restful two months in the Park. The horse guides will go east of the mountains to prepare for the outfitting of Fall hunting and pack trips into the Okanogan wilds. Still others will stay on here or below at Longmire working as maintenance crews until the coming of the Winter's busy ski season.

But one thing is certain. They will all remember the glorious Old Hill and will carry back with them to the rush of "civilization" a portion of what the mountain has entrusted to them individually and personally;—perhaps this is in the form of an inspired new confidence in the certainty and conclusiveness of the really important things in life;—or perhaps a cherished memory of a campfire party particularly enjoyed, or of a walk up the trail to a newly discovered flower in some grassy slope, or a hike to the blue depths of an ice cave and over the glacier to where the "melt-water music" plays sweetly and brings peace to the listener and tells him "All is well."

Mr. Schurman has put all our feelings into the lines:

*Last campfires never die,  
And you and I on separate trails to Life's December,  
Will dream by this last fire,  
And will have This Mountain to remember.*

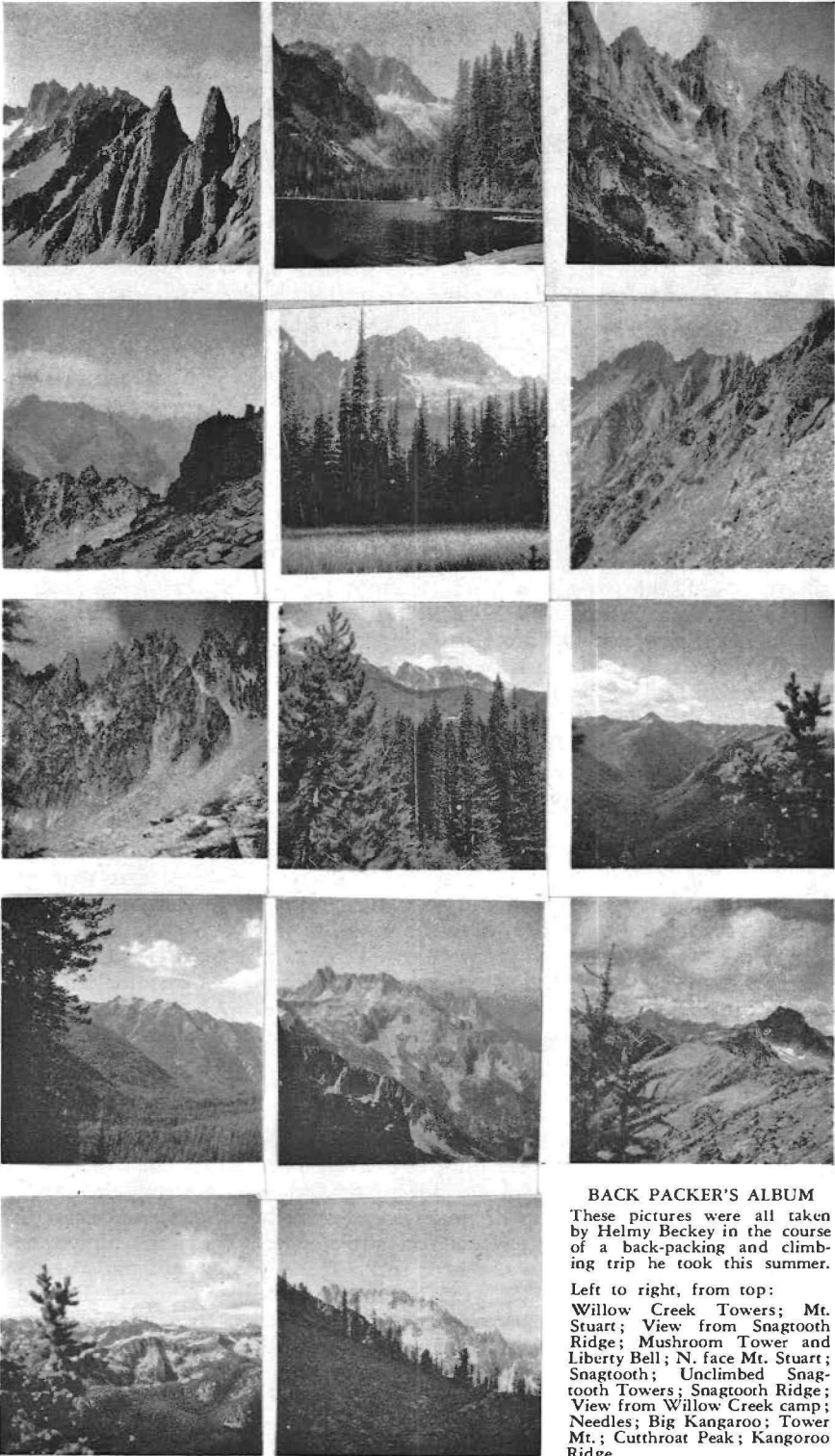
*Liberty Cap from Crater Rim*

*Molenaar*





AN ALBUM SHOWING WHAT MOUNTAINEERS DO  
Left to right, from top: Roped glacier skiing (Cehrs); Skiing (Klos); Rock climbing (Klos); Camping (Klos); Glacier technique practice (MacLean); Kitsap days (Fitch); Snow climbing (Anderson); Tacoma cruise (Klos).



**BACK PACKER'S ALBUM**  
 These pictures were all taken by Helmy Beckey in the course of a back-packing and climbing trip he took this summer.

Left to right, from top:  
 Willow Creek Towers; Mt. Stuart; View from Snagtooth Ridge; Mushroom Tower and Liberty Bell; N. face Mt. Stuart; Snagtooth; Unclimbed Snagtooth Towers; Snagtooth Ridge; View from Willow Creek camp; Needles; Big Kangaroo; Tower Mt.; Cutthroat Peak; Kangaroo Ridge.