



ELSEVIER

Journal of Historical Geography 32 (2006) 190–219

JOURNAL OF
HISTORICAL
GEOGRAPHY

www.elsevier.com/locate/jhg

Mapping adventure: a historical geography of Yosemite Valley climbing landscapes

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Abstract

Climbing guidebooks are invaluable resources for examining how modern recreation has inscribed values onto public landscapes. The history of rock climbing in Yosemite Valley is particularly instructive because it was a principal location for modern rock climbing and influenced modern environmental thought. Examining climbing guidebooks for Yosemite Valley also reveals a cultural shift during the 1960s in how climbers represented themselves and their deeds. New trends in route descriptions and naming practices reflected shifts in social mores, environmental conditions, and sporting behavior. Guidebooks produced since 1970 suggest a coarsening progression in sport and an altered community demography, yet these texts also illustrate how change reinforced climbing's values and customs.

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Keywords: Yosemite; Guidebooks; History; Gender; Recreation

In August 1933 a young San Francisco lawyer named Peter Starr hiked into the Sierra Nevada wilderness and disappeared. A huge search ensued, complete with elite climbing teams and the first ever use of airplanes in a Sierra search and rescue. Three weeks later another climber found Starr's body on a ledge of the steep, previously unclimbed northeastern face of Michael Minaret. Peter Starr's death rocked genteel California. News reports and polite society obsessed about him, but at the service Francis Farquhar, president of the Sierra Club, transformed Starr from victim to hero. 'It is a grand company', he told mourners, 'those who have not come back. There are Englishmen — Mummery, of Nanga Parbat, Mallory and Irvine, of Everest; and the Americans — Allen Carpe and Theodore Koven, of Mount McKinley, Norman Waff, of Robson, and now, Pete Starr,

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doi:10.1016/j.jhg.2004.09.002

of the Minarets. The young men of today know them, and the young men of tomorrow will not forget them. We all salute them!’¹

The apotheosis of Starr reveals an important lesson about sport and gender: climbing’s ultimate price is not death. Such accidents are personal tragedies, but longer perspective suggests that they can also be segues into myth and legend. Even a brief review of the many biographies on doomed climbers and dangerous mountains illustrates how the dead, and even the foolish, gained a measure of immortality through their follies.² Rather, climbing’s harshest penalty might be deliberate, collective amnesia. There is no greater censure than the conscious erasure of a climber’s achievements, and nowhere are such slights more conspicuous and meaningful than in the published guidebooks for climbing areas. These texts contain vast amounts of information about how people negotiated the material and cultural terrain of nature play, and why climbers obsessed over seemingly arcane issues such as the style of a climb and the technologies used for ascent. In short, guidebooks cast light on why Peter Starr’s death confirmed heroic status, and how sport inscribed private values on public spaces.³

Guidebooks have played a complex role in adventure sports, and their impact defies simple categorization. Although authors need to convey directions for ascent, they must also guard against giving so much information that they undermine the sense of adventure. This tension has fostered perennial debates about how much information is too much, but on the issue of ethics many authors resisted any limits.⁴ In the 1960s guidebooks evolved into quasi-official chronicles that celebrated pioneer climbers, major routes, and key formations. Some guidebooks created a powerful sense of place.⁵ Others became platforms for debating values, reputations, and trends. All left deep impressions in readers’ minds because, as Ian Heywood notes, ‘a current guidebook is almost as important as a rope’.⁶ Some authors worked as hard to prescribe behavior as to describe an ascent, and debates raged as partisans cheered and censured climbs, climbers, technologies, and techniques. These were serious and consequential contests, and their outcomes influenced behavior in public recreational spaces throughout the last half century.

Thus, much has been at stake in the production of guidebooks. By their arrangement and commentaries, they have had the power to create or erase and celebrate or damn, yet guidebooks were more than forums for the sport’s moral and spatial politics. They also shaped, often consciously and selectively, evolving athletic and aesthetic norms. Modern climbers were only partly obsessed with summits. As important was how a climber reached the top. Mastering the physical meant little if the style of ascent defied local mores, and the extent of reliance on technological aids was a crucial concern. Careers were made or broken depending on how many bolts, pitons, or fixed ropes had been used. Some climbers acted as though these were rules written on tablets, but standards were hotly contested, varying both among locals as well as across space and time, and always highly contingent.⁷ Guidebooks were thus particularly important because they portrayed a far more consensual culture than actually existed.

How such issues were represented revealed the sport’s richly textured and dynamic meanings. For example, while debates about technology focused on material and ethical issues, how climbers defended or disparaged peers illustrated the sport’s classist and gendered culture. Founded by Victorian men who cherished ideals of fair play and adventure, the sport had long been inscribed with genteel, masculine sensibilities.⁸ Even today, many climbers still regard physical vigor, self-sufficiency, and sober restraint as fundamental values, insisting that ‘giving the mountain a fair chance’ is a first principle of sport. One consequence is that climbing seemed to offer a stable metric of

masculinity, but evolving social and natural conditions destabilized this belief. Technical innovations, demographic shifts, cultural disruptions, and environmental fluctuations repeatedly undermined continuity, and each time manhood as much as sport seemed in flux. Guidebooks illustrate these tensions and the ensuing conflicts when climbers tried to enforce timeless ideals in an inherently fluid context.

The sport has changed drastically over time, evolving from an exclusive pastime of genteel men into a heterosocial recreational activity, and from a bastion of amateurism into a professionalized industry. Such changes were incremental and complex, but events during the 1960s and 1970s were especially revealing of shifting relationships among sport, identity, and space. Many areas saw change, but Yosemite Valley (Fig. 1) was particularly important. Located in Yosemite National Park, the Valley has been both an environmentalist touchstone because of John Muir, Ansel Adams, and David Brower, and an epicenter of modern technical climbing. So much has seemed at stake there that locals were especially active. Their deeds and words revealed that, while many yearned for the ‘freedom of the hills’, all nevertheless functioned within a stridently-patrolled social system. Wayward climbers could suffer opprobrium and even expulsion, yet after the mid-1960s younger climbers began to act and express seemingly apostate values.

Guidebooks were a key source of contention during this period because of their role in inculcating norms. A shifting semiology of route description and changing aesthetics in naming practices exposed new, generational tensions. As new routes and values made their way into guidebooks, older climbers began to fear that pop culture, consumerism, and professionalization were supplanting the sport’s genteel traditions. Change was paradoxical, however. The more young climbers behaved irreverently, the more they sustained a traditional idealization of

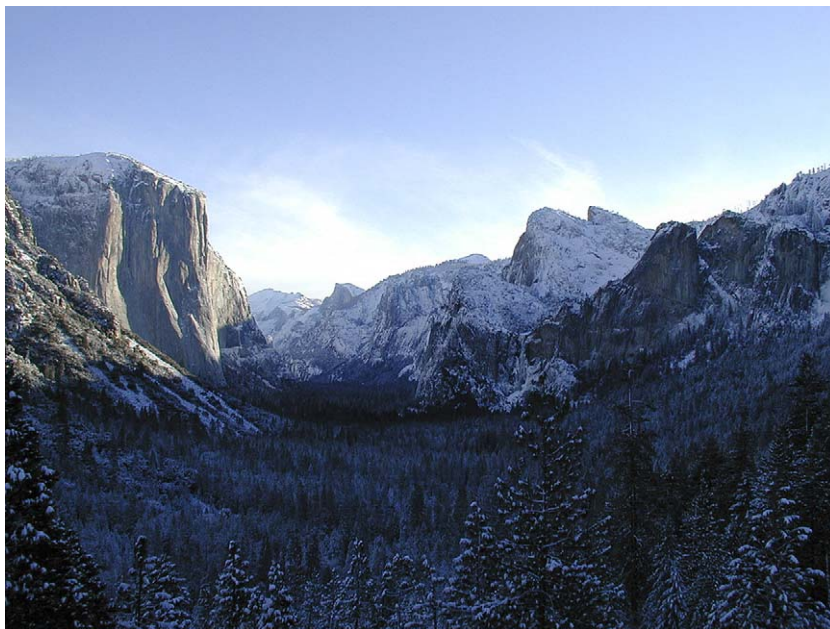


Fig. 1. Yosemite Valley looking eastward from Artists Point. El Capitan is the dominant feature in the left foreground. Half Dome is at left-center in the distance. Photo by author.

masculine adventure and authority. Guidebooks thus illustrate complex relationships between cultural norms, spatial practices, and social power in a modernizing sport.⁹

A common misconception about guidebooks is that their purpose is simply to give directions. Rarely has this been the case. For example, in the Spring of 1940 a Sierra Club outing ventured to Yosemite Valley with a draft of the club's *Climber's Guide to the High Sierra*, but as a club newsletter explained, chaos ensued: 'During long winter evenings the Yosemite Climbing Guide was born, with its detailed instructions for finding each handhold. With the Guide for handy reference, rock-climbers attacked Yosemite aretes, faces and spires. Eight parties got lost.'¹⁰ Five leaders lost their way on route, another never found the intended route, and two failed even to locate the formation they wished to climb.

Read an early guidebook and it is easy to sympathize with these lost souls. Take, for example, the premier route of the 1930s – Higher Cathedral Spire. The original instructions noted that the route 'lies up the SW. face of the Spire at an average angle of 77°. A short Class 4 crack brings one to the wide ledge known as "First Base".' The 1954 edition added that the start was 'from upper scree slopes south of the Spire'. The 1964 edition (Fig. 2) advised to 'climb to the high point of the talus under the south face', while the 1971 edition said: 'Walk north up a sandy slope to the first

Higher Cathedral Spire

Route 1. Southwest face. III, 5.8. First ascent on April 15, 1934 by Jules Eichorn, Bestor Robinson, and Richard Leonard. This is the standard route on the Higher Spire. Walk up the long talus slope to the west of the Spires and climb to the high point of the talus under the south face. Rope up and proceed up a class-4 crack to the wide, vegetated ledge known as First Base. From the western end of this ledge climb up steep rock just right of the edge to a point some 30 feet above the belayer. Move left around the corner (5.8) and climb up to a bolt located near some solution pockets known as the "Bath-tubs." This pitch is the crux of the climb. A variation (Royal Robbins) of this pitch is to continue straight up instead of traversing left, but this is quite difficult and strenuous. From the bolt step left into a crack which leads up 20 feet to a tree and then up and right to another tree. Work up and left on broken rock to a tree just below and south of the "Rotten Chimney." Although it resembles a chimney in no way whatsoever, it is easily recognizable by the vertical, orange wall which abounds in solution pockets and knobs. Climb up this wall for 15 feet, then traverse around a corner to the left to a ledge. As with the crux pitch, a more strenuous variation is to continue straight up. From the ledge, a steep open book may be ascended using chimney technique. This leads to a tree on a sloping ledge. From here work up a long class-4 pitch leading up and left to ledges just below the summit. The summit block has been climbed by many different routes, the easiest probably being a chimney on the east face. It may be

Fig. 2. Portion of the verbal description for the Regular Route on Higher Cathedral Spire. S. Roper, *A Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, San Francisco, 1964, 160. Courtesy Sierra Club Press.

clifflet, which can be climbed 3rd class at the far left. This ends on First Base, a large sloping ledge with several trees.¹¹ For those unfamiliar with Higher Cathedral Spire, which was by 1970 a majority of the climbers, the problems with these descriptions were manifold. Telling someone to find a ledge with foliage, let alone a clifflet, is not helpful on a spire hundreds of feet in diameter and riddled with ledges, bushes, and trees. Moreover, the first pitch was rated either an easy scramble or an exposed, technical, and dangerous climb. Eventually someone resolved the confusion by painting a white cross at the base of the route (Fig. 3).¹²

Few climbers resorted to paintbrushes, but the desire for more reliable descriptions led by degrees to a radical change in guidebooks. Starting in the late-1950s, climbers began to make and share graphical representations of their rock climbing routes. Initially, they borrowed a technique from mountaineers by drawing lines on photos that indicated the direction of their route (Figs. 4 and 5). Some climbers also began to draw abstract maps of their routes. At first these maps, called

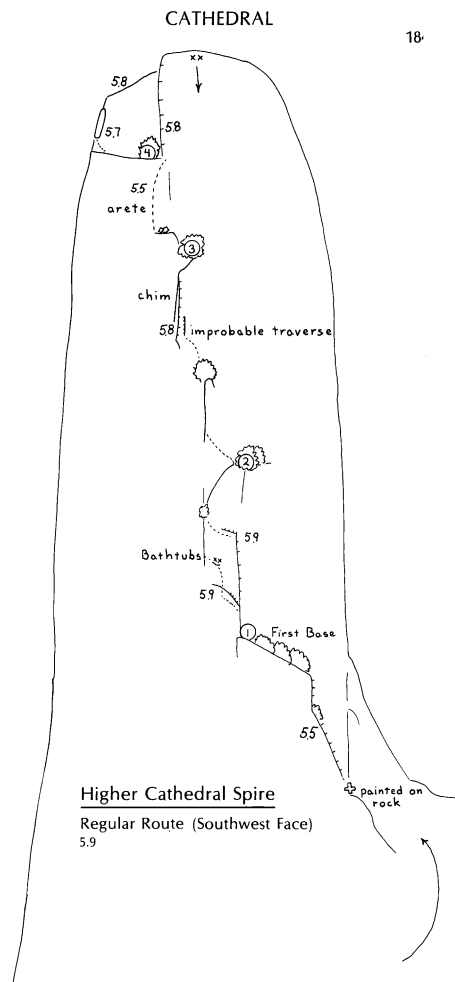


Fig. 3. This topo describes the same route as Fig. 2. Note the cross painted at the base of the route. G. Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, La Crescenta, 1982, 184. Courtesy George Meyers.



Fig. 4. This photo of Ushba in the Caucasus Range illustrates mountaineers' practice of graphically representing their climbs by drawing lines on photos and marking camps. *American Alpine Journal* 1 (1931), opposite p. 278. Courtesy of Edith Overly.

'topos', were simple line drawings, but within a decade the community had developed a set of arcane symbols to illustrate rock features and climbing tools (Figs. 6 and 7). By the mid-1970s climbers had a standardized topo lexicon, thus solving many of the problems inherent in verbal descriptions (Fig. 8). Yet topos' greater precision inspired scorn. Although the 1971 edition of *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley* included a symbol key (Fig. 9), the author, Steve Roper, derided topos for oversimplifying the game and making 'climbing a bit easier on the brain'. He was seconded by Royal Robbins, a top climber of the era. The essence of their complaint was that topos removed 'part of the adventure of climbing', yet this masked a more fundamental problem.¹³ Roper and Robbins's principal, and principled, objection was not with topos per se — they belonged to that group who had exchanged graphical descriptions for a decade. Rather their truck was with publication. They feared that wider availability would unleash the barbarian hordes.¹⁴

Popularity was only part of the problem, though. By the mid-1960s rock climbing was growing rapidly. In 1966 Royal Robbins noted that 'more climbers visited Yosemite Valley than ever

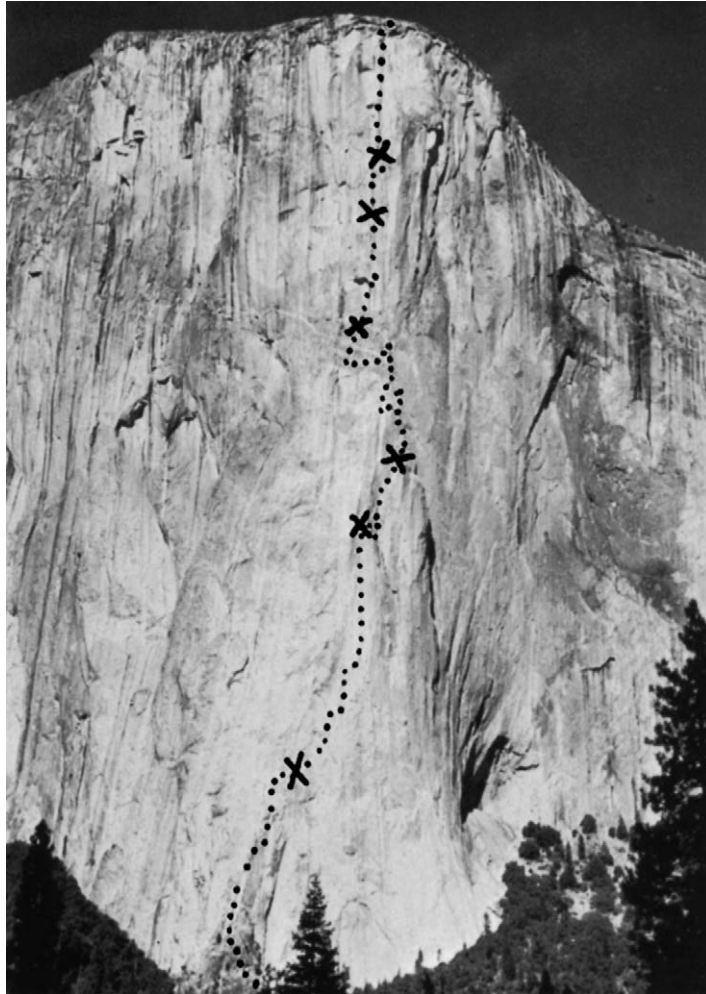


Fig. 5. As the photo of the *Nose* route up the 3000-foot face of El Capitan illustrates, at first rock climbers simply borrowed mountaineers' graphical techniques. *American Alpine Journal* 11 (1959), plate 21b. Courtesy Ellen Searby.

before', and in 1968 he dubbed them 'pilgrims of the vertical'.¹⁵ Sheer numbers was less an issue than how this new generation was redefining the rules of the game. In camps and on walls, younger climbers were asserting a new cultural framework for nature play, one that seemed to conflict with the traditional values of older climbers. The transition most concerned Roper and Robbins, and guidebooks were central to how they contested change. Arguably, the most important function of Roper's guidebook was its ability to acculturate outsiders to local mores. Roper instructed readers not only on where routes went but which sections had been climbed using hands and feet (called *free climbing*) or technology (called *aid climbing*). He admonished climbers to at least equal, if not surpass, the style of first ascent parties. The inability to meet such standards was a moral as well as physical weakness.¹⁶ 'Style' was an obsession, and graphical descriptions were particularly vexing because they lacked the verbal cues Roper used to inculcate neophytes. Demographic growth and semiological shifts threatened a strategic loss of cultural control, and *that* was the issue.

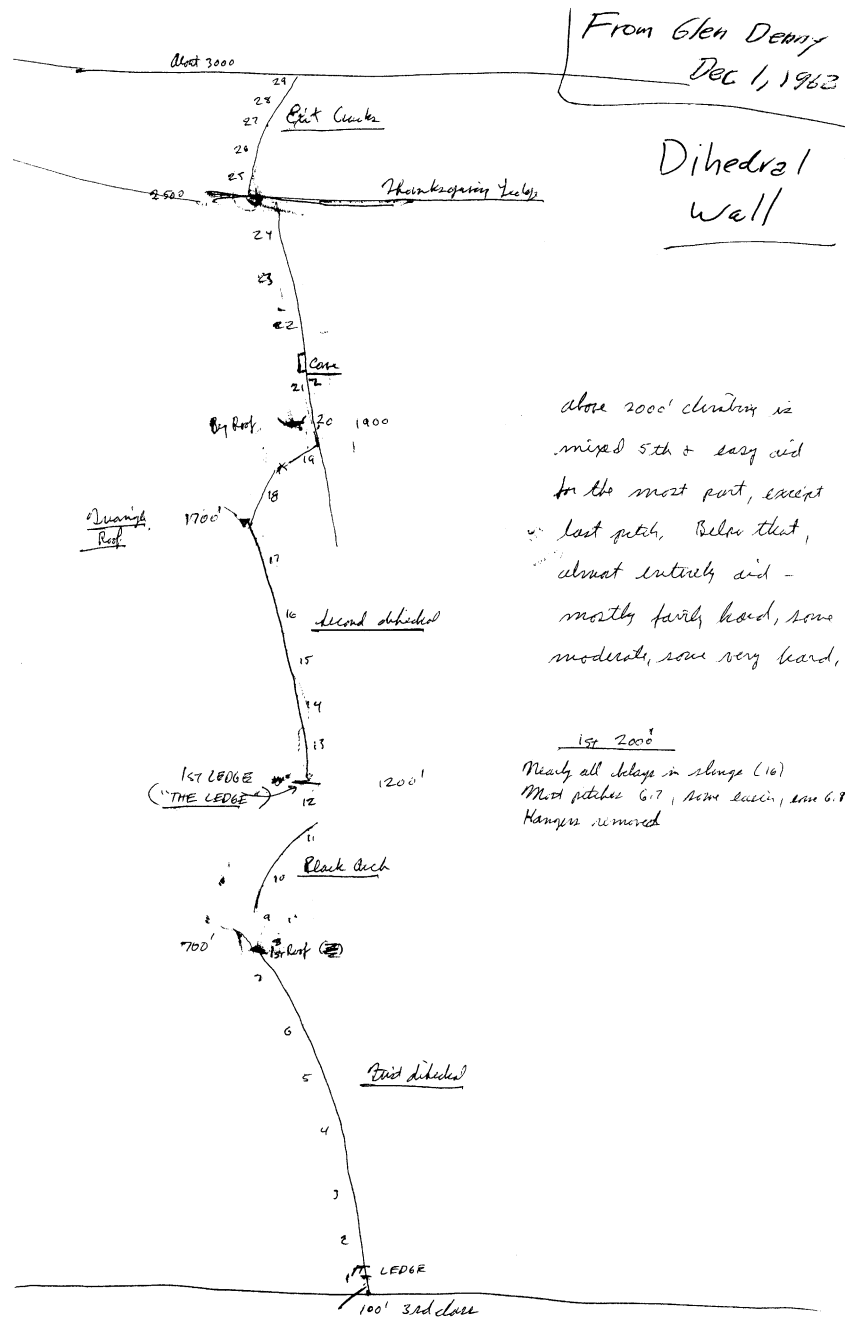


Fig. 6. Compared to the formalized topos of the 1970s, Glen Denny's 1962 drawing of the *Dihedral Wall* route on El Capitan's southwest face conveys relatively simplistic information about major crack systems and belays. Photocopy courtesy Steve Roper and Glen Denny.

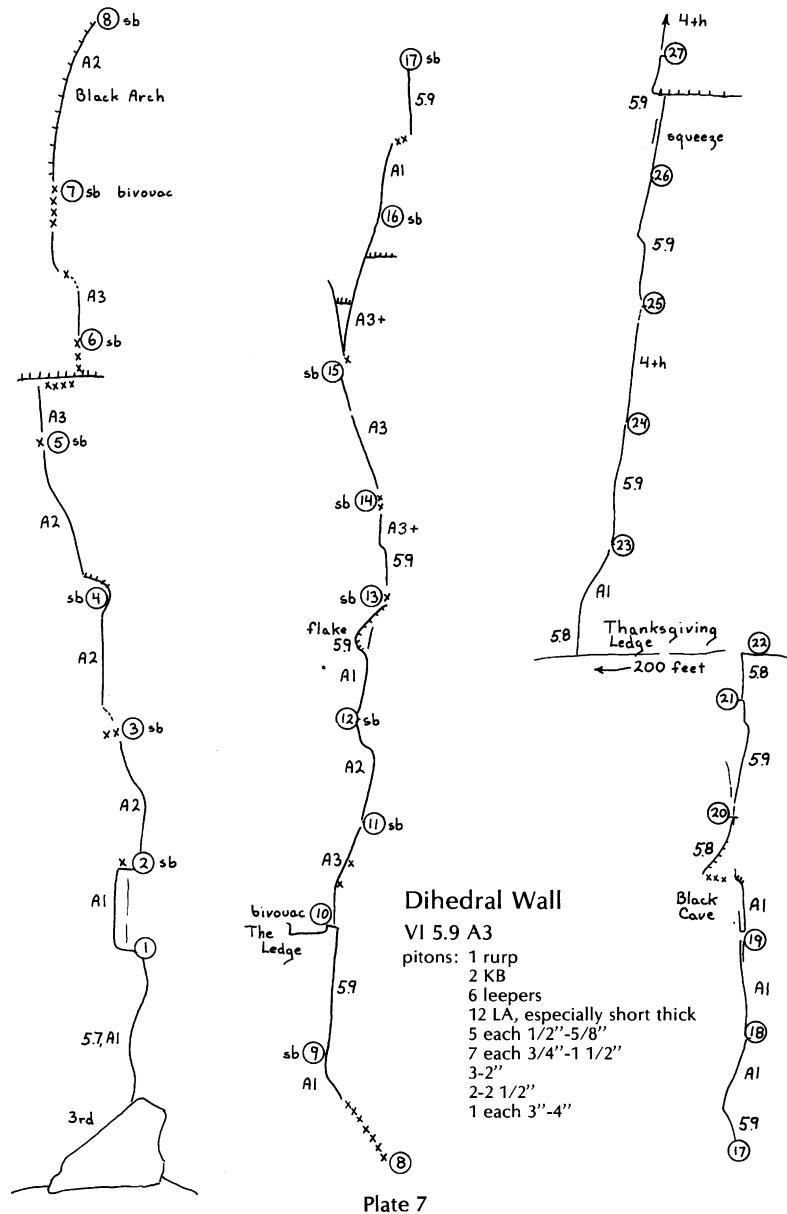


Fig. 7. This topo, produced in 1982, of the same route as Fig. 6 reveals a far more elaborate graphical lexicon to describe the direction of corners, seams, ledges, roofs, and technology. G. Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, La Crescenta, 1982, 54. Courtesy George Meyers.

To understand exactly what was at stake, a brief review of Roper's impact is necessary. Guidebooks may have begun as clunky directions on how to get up cliffs, but Roper redefined the scope of a guidebook in 1964 with *A Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*. In addition to the occasionally-opaque description, he included a meta-history of Yosemite climbing with mini-histories of important routes. Unlike previous authors, Roper was openly partisan, celebrating those who had pushed limits, minimized technological reliance, and remained true to what he considered pure

Key to the Drawings

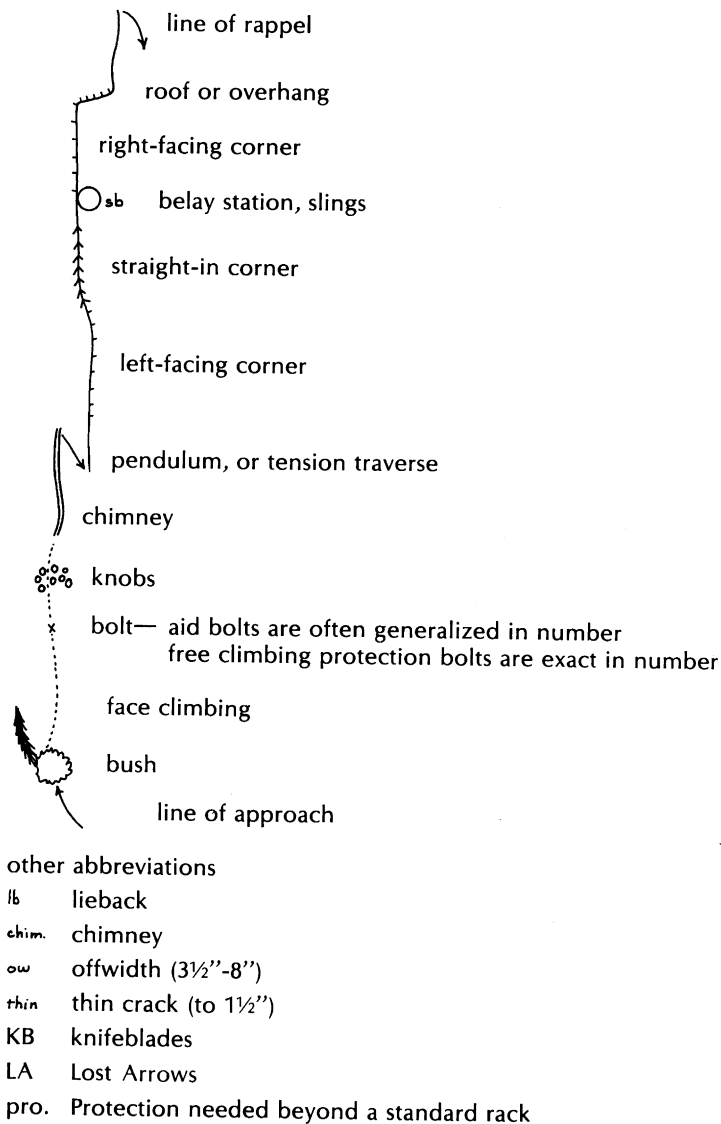


Fig. 8. This topo key illustrates the enriched language of formal, published topos by the early 1980s. G. Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, La Crescenta, 1982, 8. Courtesy George Meyers.

adventure. He championed amateur ethics and chastised those who climbed ‘for personal publicity’ rather than private fulfillment, insisting that true climbers ‘pertinaciously cling to their belief that climbing is pure and noble’.¹⁷ In doing so Roper naturalized an ideal of genteel masculinity, rooted in nineteenth-century British mountaineering clubs, that celebrated overcoming oneself as much as conquering nature.¹⁸ Central to this outlook was a willingness to eschew tools that eased ascent, thereby ensuring as much as possible an elemental physical and psychic testing.¹⁹ Thus, despite significant material and cultural changes by 1960, Roper fought to ensure that the sport’s

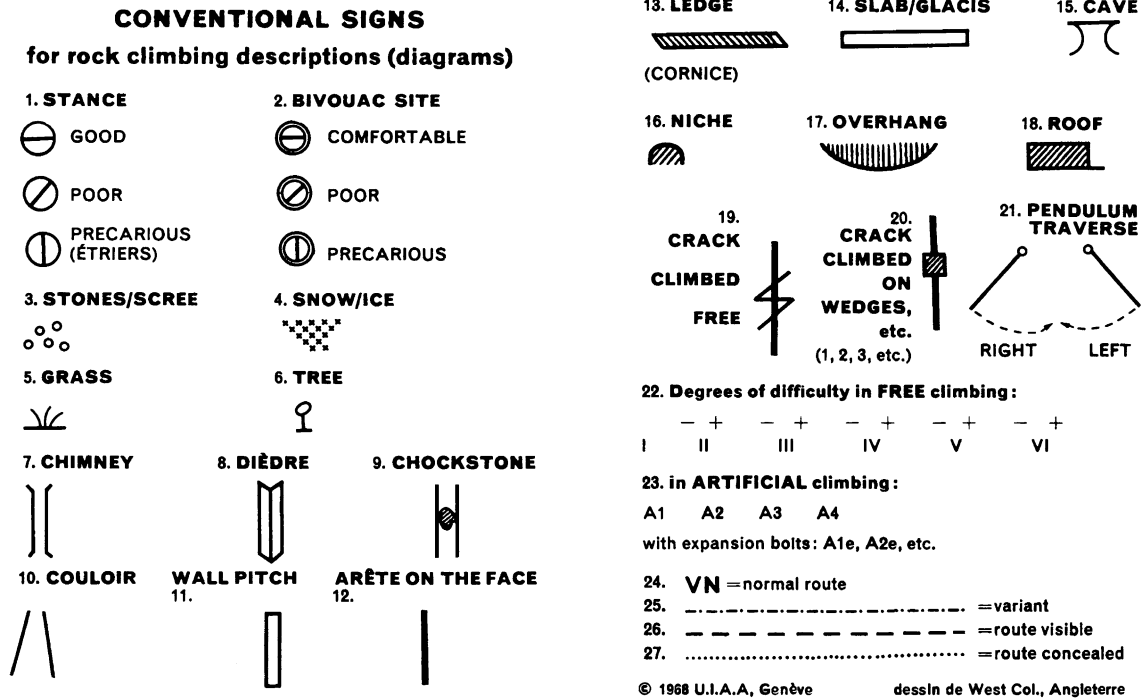


Fig. 9. As someone who used and produced topos yet protested their publication, Steve Roper was in an ambivalent position as a guide-book author. Despite his objections, he too presented a formal key for topo makers in his 1972 edition. S. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, San Francisco, 1971, 31. Courtesy Sierra Club Press.

Victorian conceits remained climbing's version of the Rock of Ages. He projected a timeless essence that proved powerfully influential over subsequent generations.²⁰

Roper's interpretation stood uncontested in print through two editions and twelve years, but the absence of rival publications was not a sign of consensus. Many did demur, but it was expensive to publish a rival guide and potentially devastating to challenge certain climbers.²¹ Such costs were revealed in several incidents. In 1963, Ed Cooper and Galen Rowell began a new route on the face of Half Dome (Fig. 10), but the team had to descend after a couple of days to attend business and school matters. Before leaving they secured ropes to the face to ease return to their high point. In 'fixing' ropes, Cooper and Rowell ignored declarations that siege tactics were outmoded.²² Robbins and Dick McCracken immediately bypassed the ropes and completed the route before Cooper and Rowell could return. In the process Robbins was doubly rewarded, rebuffing a rival (Cooper) and claiming another line on a wall he already dominated. Ironically, Robbins violated two of his own principles – that an attempt should be honored until success or concession, and that the style of ascent should be respected – but his stature shielded him from accusations of hypocrisy.²³ The same year a weekend named Al MacDonald was harried from the Valley because he wanted to climb a new route on El Capitan (Fig. 11), and in 1971 Robbins and Don Lauria tried to erase Warren Harding's *Wall of Early Morning Light* by chopping thirty-four bolts on the El Capitan route.²⁴ In each instance a few, highly motivated individuals demonstrated the costs of defiance.



Fig. 10. Half Dome's sheer northwest face, which is 2000 feet high, begins about 3000 feet above the Valley floor. Photo by author.

Similar battles unfolded in other sports, but guidebooks lent a unique dimension to the contest for recreational space. Sports such as surfing in southern California and backcountry skiing in Utah developed comparable patterns of tribalistic territoriality. As Tom Wolfe and Mark Spence argue, possessing beaches and waves was critical to local identity in southern California.²⁵ In the Wasatch Range and the Grand Canyon, tug-of-wars erupted as skiers and rafters argued whether nature would be reserved for individual or commercial activities. Unlike on the beaches, however, the key issue for skiers and rafters was the consequences for experience. Telemark skiers claimed that airlifting wealthy skiers into the backcountry via helicopter shattered their communion with nature, while whitewater enthusiasts argued that the Colorado River had become a demesne of for-profit outfits.²⁶ Yosemite contests shared several facets with other conflicts. At times Valley climbers did develop a gang-like presence similar to what Wolfe found with the Pump House Gang at La Jolla's Windansea Beach, and debates over tools such as expansion bolts, especially when Yvon Chouinard ranted about an 'average Joe' invading his granite sanctuary, were as much about preserving elitist status as ecological integrity.²⁷ But while the next wave or snowfall



Fig. 11. El Capitan's southwest face is a massive expanse of granite rising abruptly from the Valley floor. Some portions of the face are relatively free of cracks, and the rock face is unusually stable and reliable. Photo by author.

effectively erased previous performances, guidebooks inscribed climbers' deeds for all time. First ascents by climbers thus gained a legacy that first descents by surfers, skiers, and rafters never equaled.

Under Roper, guidebooks also began to politicize Yosemite's climbing landscapes. Roper was an unabashed partisan who lionized Robbins. He called Robbins's *Northwest Face of Half Dome* 'one of the great, classic climbs of this country', the *Salathé Wall* 'one of the major climbing problems in Yosemite', and *Nutcracker Suite* 'one of the finest short climbs in Yosemite'. Roper even made an unusual note of Robbins's second ascents on *West Face of Leaning Tower* and the *Muir Wall*.²⁸ By portraying Robbins as a paragon of talent and virtue, Roper set up Robbins's rivals for ridicule. He denigrated Ed Cooper several times, underrating his *Dihedral Wall* in the 1964 guide, relegating its description to an odd place in the 1971 guide, and ignoring other feats.²⁹ Roper also slighted Warren Harding, dismissing some of his routes as 'contrived' and 'unnatural', mocking Harding's puns on another route, hardly mentioning the *Wall of Early Morning Light*, and ignoring Robbins's controversial vandalizing of the route.³⁰ Roper often strived for objectivity, but his treatment of Robbins revealed how he had expanded the guidebook's political and moral functions.³¹

What Roper did for Robbins in particular he did for Yosemite in general. His guidebooks invoked a partisan heritage of sport, posited a solitary standard for excellence, and aggrandized those who shared his values. Although Roper had local critics, readers missed the discord. National and international observers rated Valley climbers among the very best, and Valley values the sport's most important.³² Roper played no small part in this. His elitist text dissuaded many non-locals from even trying Valley climbs, and pilgrims who did make the *hadj* to this rock climbing Mecca genuflected reflexively to his partisan history.³³ This was the real power

and significance of the word, and why Roper and Robbins so passionately opposed graphic representations. Through sheer assertion they — along with Tom Frost, Yvon Chouinard, Glen Denny, TM Herbert, and Frank Sacherer — had imposed a standard. They were without doubt among the most gifted and driven climbers of the era, but their stature partly resulted from ruthlessly patrolling the social and cultural boundaries of sport. Topos were a threat because maps lacked a mechanism to comment on style or enumerate bolts, let alone to call a route ‘excellent’, ‘aesthetic’, ‘ugly’, or ‘worthless’, as Roper did repeatedly.³⁴ Topos seemed so...value free, and Yosemite locals were anything but cultural relativists.

In some respects they need not have worried. Roper did his job well when he mapped adventure, and Jim Bridwell, who lorded over the Valley in the 1970s as Robbins had the 1960s, reinforced the reining value system with similarly intimidating tactics.³⁵ Their assertions worked as a selection mechanism. Most climbers internalized Yosemite values long before arriving, and, when they did come, they could be hazed mercilessly.³⁶ Outsiders also could not help but view Yosemite as a landscape already deeply inscribed with history. In *Lighting Out*, for example, Daniel Duane muses on

how thirty years ago El Capitan was a barely charted Louisiana Purchase; now it was impregnated with stories and route names: The Shield, Genesis, the Muir Wall, the Heart Route, Jolly Roger, and Magic Mushroom — the latter climb put up by two teenagers from Canada who ate hallucinogenic mushrooms en route. A climber of the sixties may have had the fear and pleasure of the unknown, but now the psychic universe of the wall was overwhelmingly rich.³⁷

Jeffrey McCarthy argues that climbing can be understood as ‘a mode of perception’. A dialectic unfolds as climbers ‘shape and are shaped by their environment’, but this misses the crucial role of guidebooks in shaping perception. As Richard White notes, nature was already ‘fully stocked with expectations, fears, desires, and meanings’.³⁸ The initial dialectic was not between the climber and nature but, rather, between the individual and the community with the guidebook as a crucial mediator.

The power of guidebooks emerges in how change did occur after 1970. Younger climbers such as Henry Barber, Beverly Johnson, Ron Kauk, John Long, and George Meyers did figure out how to chart new territory.³⁹ There were only five routes up the face of El Capitan when Roper published his 1964 guide. By 1971 there were nine; by 1976 there were twenty-eight big-wall routes and many many shorter routes. This creative burst necessitated a new guide, but verbal descriptions no longer seemed tenable. There were simply too many routes to accommodate in the old format (Fig. 12), and topos conveyed information far more efficiently. Paul Harmon led the way in 1972 with a poster of Yosemite’s major routes. Then, in 1976, Meyers published a topo guide of ‘The Best Rockclimbing Routes in Yosemite Valley’.⁴⁰ Although *Yosemite Climbs* dispensed with Roper’s verbal format, Meyers remained a traditionalist. His introduction affirmed Roper’s values, and the book’s selective approach ignored many routes, including Harding’s *Wall of Early Morning Light*.⁴¹ In his own way, Meyers created powerful commentary by omission. Even more than Roper, he produced a guide by and for elites, and average Joes were hard pressed to find any routes that they could climb. Later editions maintained this approach, and in 2000 a ‘definitive’ guide revived the use of route histories and commentaries, including charts illustrating ‘mandatory’ free-climb pitches (Fig. 13).⁴²

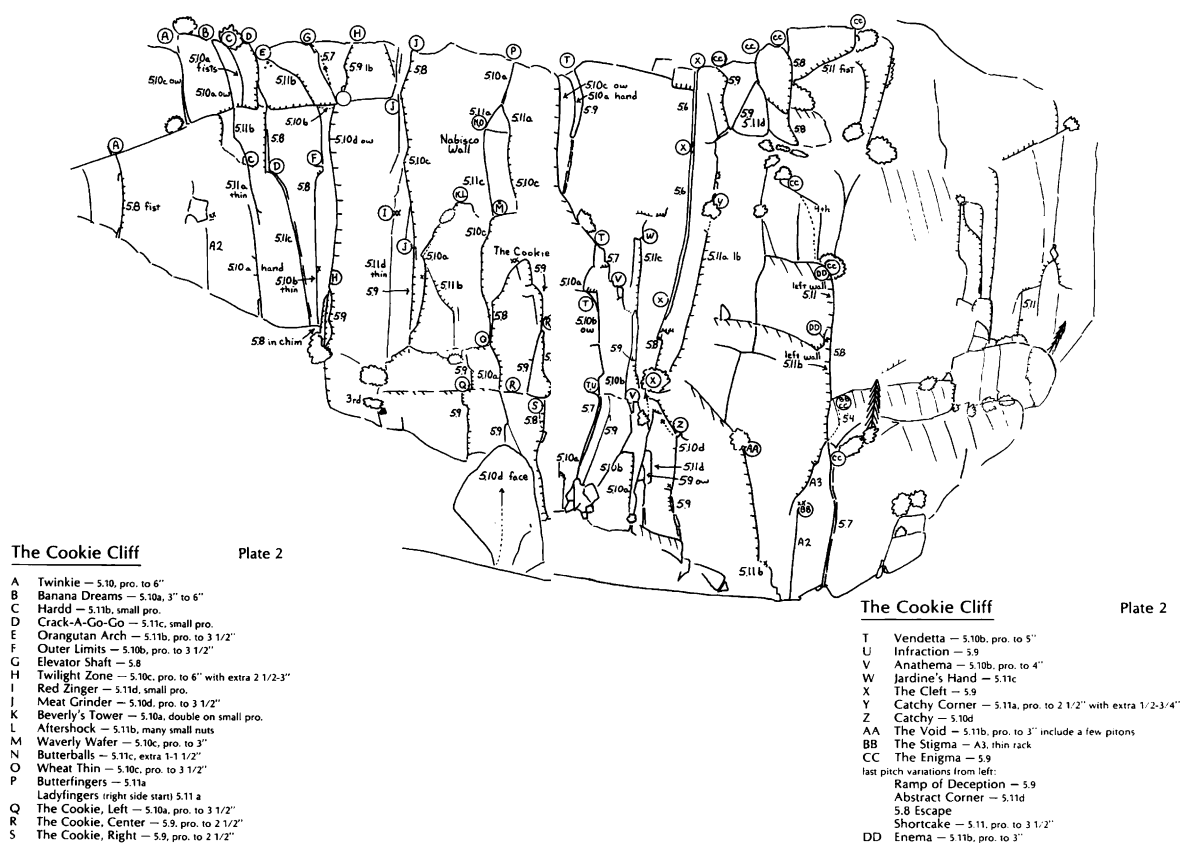


Fig. 12. This topo of a small climbing area on the Merced River known as the 'Cookie Cliffs', illustrates the growing problem for guide-book authors in the early 1970s. The number of routes was mushrooming, and the topo form conveyed information far more efficiently than the verbal format. G. Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, La Crescenta, 1982, 15–16. Courtesy George Meyers.

Although topos did not destroy traditional values, they did expose important generational shifts. To begin with, newer routes elevated climbing's physical and technical standards. The hardest free climb of the 1930s had been Higher Cathedral Spire, now rated 5.8 in the Yosemite Decimal System. By 1954 the ceiling was 5.9, then 5.10 in 1960, and 5.11 in 1970. By 2000 the hardest Yosemite free climb was a 5.13d. Aid climbing rose similarly from A1 in 1934 to A5 in 1960. After 1970 a new, unofficial grade emerged: 'fall-and-you-die'.⁴³ That development, as much as any, revealed the extent of change. From 1933 to 1970 the only consensus among Valley climbers was the importance of safety, but by 1970 the best climbers increasingly felt compelled to shave the margins. Young climbers desiring their own first ascents had to climb ever more liminal landscapes — the less important cliffs with extremely thin or awkwardly wide cracks, and El Capitan's southeast face, which was a vast wall of decomposing rock (Fig. 14).⁴⁴

This evolving assault on vertical space bared basic tensions in sport. Adventure had been an intrinsic element of manly play since Victoria's reign, but the content of adventure was changing. In the nineteenth century a signal quality of genteel manhood was responsibility. No matter how spectacular the feat, a gentleman risked his reputation if he acted irresponsibly. The *Edinburgh Review* noted this succinctly when it asked rhetorically, 'Has a man a right to expose his life,

Aurora

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EL CAPITAN

Approach and descent on pages 38–39

Starting in large corner systems, the route climbs progressively smaller features joined by a minimal number of copperheads. It is a little harder than Zenyatta Mondatta but easier than Sea of Dreams.

First ascent history

In 1981, he same month after making the first ascent of Zenyatta Mondatta, Peter Mayfield teamed up with Greg Child for another El Cap first ascent. To Mayfield, the feel of the two climbs was much different: "On Z.M., Bridwell planned things out to the last detail. He scrutinized the line with a Celestron telescope to the point that he had all the belay spots mapped out. On Aurora, however, we briefly checked out the line through some binoculars and then went for it. This gave the route a much more unknown feeling."

One of the scariest moments of the climb was not an A5 lead but the second night's bivvy. As Mayfield explained, "At dusk, hundreds of bats emptied out of a crack right next to my portaledge. Their flight path was six inches above my face and the ledge gently vibrated as many of them bumped into the straps. After what seemed like an eternity the bats stopped pouring out, my terror subsided and I was able to go to sleep. Then, a few hours later the same scenario unfolded in reverse as the hundreds of bats returned to the flake."

Child spent all of the next day leading the crux of the route that involved a mantle off A4 copperheads followed by tenuous heads and pins. As Mayfield described, "Greg was doing some pretty athletic stuff up there. He would call for tension, then lean way to the side, his body horizontal, toeing on a scallop of rock to just barely reach the next placement. It was a wild lead."

Overall the ascent went smoother than expected as features materialized in sections that, from the ground, appeared blank. Only 58 bolts were needed on the route, partially due to the team's use of intricate natural belay anchors that received bolts on later ascents. Mayfield explains the anchor ethic of then versus now: "I think it is a shame that anchors get bolted no matter what. Creating intricate and natural anchors used to be part of the game, but now that is out of style. It is assumed that on a wall

you have to have three bolts at a belay."

The pair topped out after nine days on the wall and named the climb Aurora because they were amazed at the swirls of color they climbed through, the bright sunsets, and their mutual intrigue with the Northern Lights.

Strategy

After fixing to Pitch 4 or 5, most parties spend five to six nights on the wall. Except for Belay 7, which has a decent ledge, all anchors are hanging and accommodate at least two portaledges. Most of the anchors have two "W" bolts. The sun hits the wall mid-morning and departs in late afternoon.

Retreat/Storm

All but the last pitches, when Aurora joins Tangerine Trip, are on steep rock and are clear of major watercourses. The route is not recommended in early spring, however, as water seeps out of Pitches 4, 5 and 9. To retreat, rap the route. From Pitch 5, tie two 60-meter ropes together to barely reach the ground.

Reference: World Mountaineering.

SOME PEOPLE MAY THINK THAT CLIMBING IS A SORT OF FORCED ENTRY, A VIOLATION, A POUNDING OF SPIKES AND SMASHING OF THE ROCK INTO SUBMISSION. BUT HERE I FELT THAT I WASN'T DOING ANYTHING THAT EL CAP DIDN'T LET ME DO. EVERY MOVE AND PLACEMENT FLOWED AS NATURALLY AS THE STONE THAT ACCEPTED IT.

GREG CHILD

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Aid																
Aid/C5																
Aid/C4																
Aid/C3																
Aid/C2																
Aid/C1																
Mandatory free																
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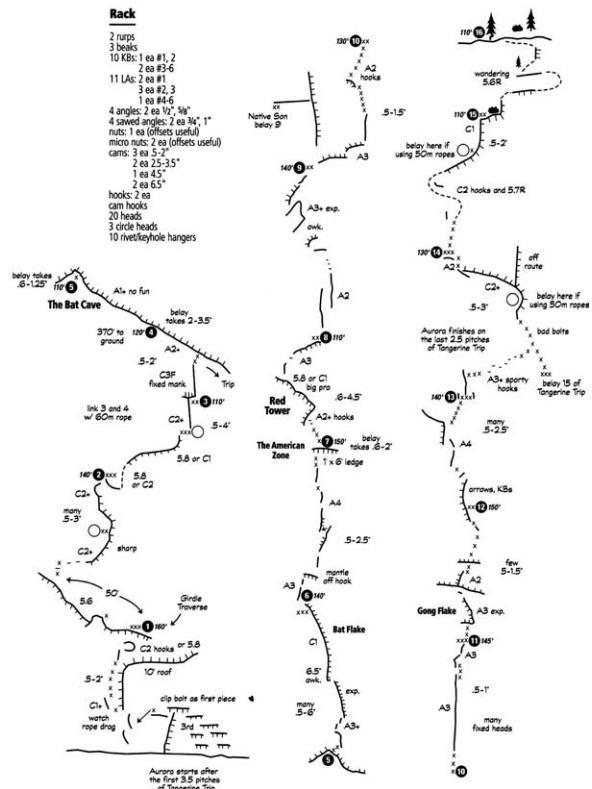
Yosemite Big Walls Supertopos

Aurora

VI 5.8 A4

EL CAPITAN**Rack**

2 raps
3 bolts
10 KRs: 1 ea #1, 2
2 ea #2-6
11 LAs: 2 ea #1
3 ea #2, 3
1 ea #4-6
4 angles: 2 ea 1/2", 1/4"
4 saved angles: 2 ea 3/4", 1"
nuts: 1 ea (offsets useful)
micro nuts: 2 ea (offsets useful)
cams: 3 ea 5-7
2 ea 25-35"
2 ea 45"
2 ea 6.5"
hooks: 2 ea
can hooks
20 heads
3 circle heads
10 rivet/hole hangers



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Fig. 13. This topo of the big-wall route *Aurora* on El Capitan's southeast face illustrates the integration of old and new. The polished graphical representation marks an artistic high point in topo design, while the inclusion of a historical narrative returns route descriptions to Steve Roper's era. Most novel is the chart at the lower left denoting which pitches must be free-climbed or aid-climbed, and which sort of technologies must be deployed. C. McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls: Supertopos*, San Francisco, 2000, 92–93. Courtesy Chris McNamara.

and the lives of others, for an object of no earthly value, either to himself or his fellow creature? If life is lost in the adventure, how little does the moral guilt differ from that of suicide or murder?⁴⁵ Victorian climbers demanded sober behavior and disciplined restraint, and climbing clubs reprimanded members for recklessness. The most famous example was the scorn cast on Edward Whymper after four rope mates died during his 1865 ascent of the Matterhorn, but many others were also scolded for ignoring guides or flaunting danger.⁴⁶

In the late-nineteenth century climbers began to abandon this formula. With summits and easy routes conquered, notoriety came only to those who pushed the boundaries. Top climbers began to embrace risk, and soon they *expected* peers to eschew guides, tools, partners, even ropes, for adventure's sake.⁴⁷ In Yosemite a philosophy of testing-by-divesting eventually inverted Victorian notions of virtue. In the mid-1950s a handful of climbers began to reside in the Valley and climb



Fig. 14. El Capitan's southeast face contrasts starkly with its other sides. Riddled with diorite intrusions, the southeast face is darker and far less stable. Much of the face is concave and overhanging. Rock fall is more regular, and tends to strike the ground 15–50 feet away from the base of the wall. Climbing on this face is much more dangerous. Photo by author.

full time. Their skills rose to a point that success became a foregone conclusion. Their very proficiency was killing adventure, so in 1960 climbers began to pare their use of siege tactics, tools, and partners. The process culminated in the early 1970s when Robbins and Jim Dunn made the first solo-first-ascents of Sentinel and El Capitan. Chouinard remarked that this was a 'purer form of climbing' that required 'more of a complete effort, more personal adjustment, and involves more risk, but being more idealistic, the rewards are greater'. For elites, though, what they risked was less safety than success. Most had learned to climb through mountaineering clubs such as the Sierra Club, and all still idealized adventure, self-possession, and responsibility. The manly Victorian values remained salient, but increasingly climbers could maintain them only by radically reworking the cultural equation. By the 1960s purity required embracing risk in ways that Whymper's generation never tolerated. The bar had been raised, and mortal danger was incrementally becoming an essential element of adventure.⁴⁸

In other ways, Yosemite's climbing landscape underwent even more radical change. Valley landmarks had long reflected genteel values. Features such as Cathedral Rocks, Cathedral Spires, and Royal Arches were products of that nineteenth-century tendency to link monumental nature and spiritual sublimity. Sites such as Washington Column, Kat Pinnacle, and Rixons Pinnacle memorialized historical figures. Climbing routes such as the *Muir Wall* and the *Salathé Wall* honored local heroes, and there were literary and mythic allusions. Pinnacles on El Capitan were

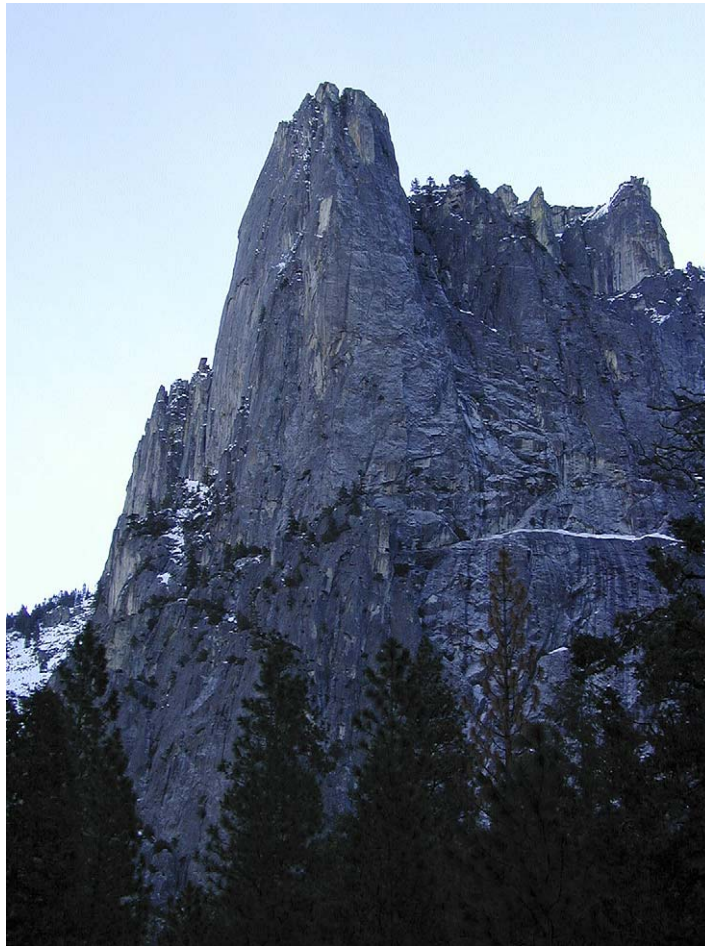
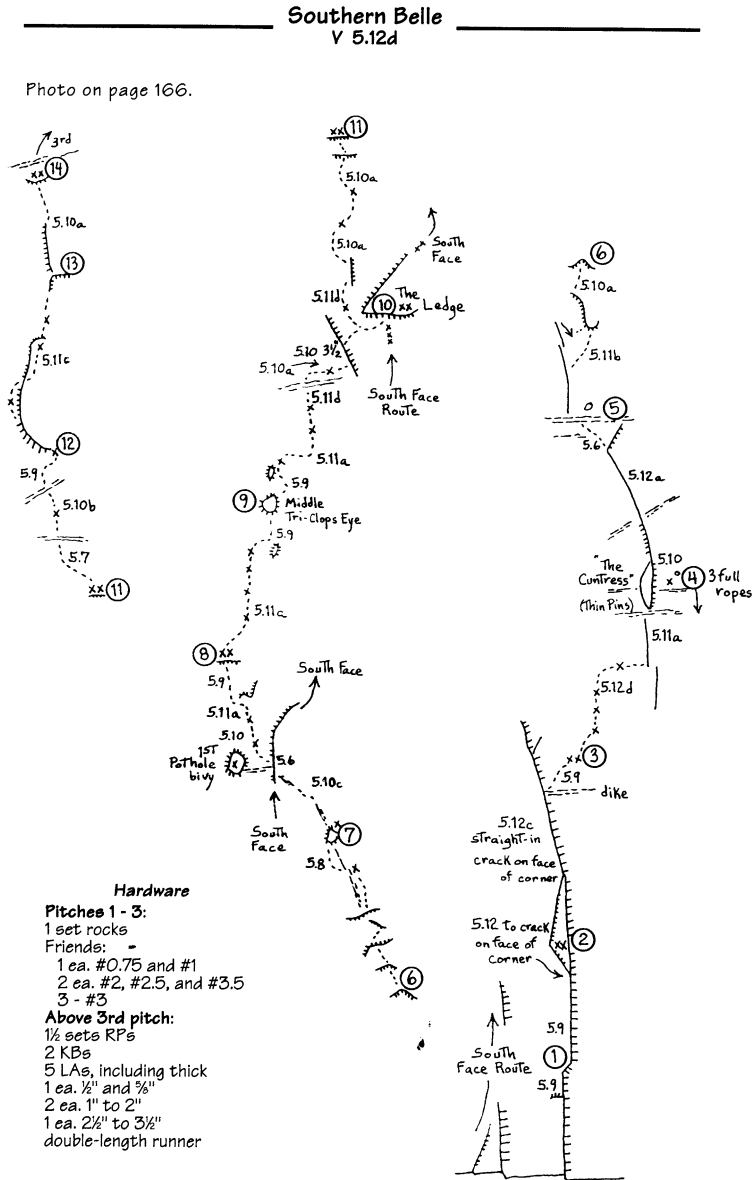


Fig. 15. Sentinel Rock rises 1500 vertical feet from a bench above the southern side of Yosemite Valley. It was an important site in the development of big wall climbing, and some routes are still regarded as important benchmarks for modern climbers. Photo by author.

named *Moby Dick*, *Ahab*, *Peter Pan*, *Tinkerbell*, and *Gollum*. Sentinel Rock (Fig. 15) had a route named *In Cold Blood*. Park rangers repeated a Miwok tradition that lichen streaks on Half Dome were the tear stains of an Indian lover named Tis-sa-ack. Spires near Yosemite Falls were called Lost Arrow and Arrowhead Pinnacle. Until 1960, Yosemite only evoked values consonant with that highbrow culture which had framed the American West as a repository of national identity.⁴⁹

But during the 1960s climbers began to reshape Yosemite's landscape.⁵⁰ The opening salvo was political in nature. In 1960, Roper named *Chessman Pinnacle* to protest California's death penalty, and in 1970 two Stanford students christened *Tower to the People* on El Capitan. Then things got flaky. In the mid-1960s pop music began to inspire new route names such as *Brown Sugar*, *Lay Lady Lay*, *Positively 4th Street*, *Sea of Dreams*, and *Zenyatta Mondatta*.⁵¹ Sexual innuendo surfaced via routes such as *Dog Dik Lik*, *Short But Thick*, *Pink Banana*, *The Shaft*, and *Liz Is Tight*. A Valley full of (mostly male) sexually-frustrated climbers began to objectify the female anatomy with *Jugs*, at least three *Nipples*, and *The Cuntress* (Fig. 16). They celebrated sex



170 ————— **HALF DOME: SOUTH FACE** —————

Fig. 16. Topo of the route *Southern Belle* on the south face of Half Dome. The rock feature adjacent to pitch 4 underscores the changing aesthetics of rock climbers, and the explicit rise of misogynist tendencies within the community. D. Reid, *Yosemite Climbs: Big Walls*, Evergreen, 1996, 170. Courtesy.

with *Jump for Joy*, *Handjob*, *Sloppy Seconds*, and *Gang Bang*.⁵² Crassness hit new lows when climbers renamed Ranger Rock as Manure Pile Buttress and authored routes such as *Fecophilia*, *Shit on a Shingle*, *Doggie Do*, and *Anal Tongue Darts*.⁵³ After 1960, Yosemite climbers riddled the Valley's genteel landscape with a graffiti-like counterpoint.⁵⁴

The changing aesthetics of Yosemite's climbing landscape revealed a disturbing integration of new and old values. Annette Kolodny, Carolyn Merchant, and Peter Hansen argue that adventure writers had long sexualized landscapes, and that mountaineers were keen to portray their activities as virginal conquests.⁵⁵ Older Yosemite climbers were no exception. Robbins once likened El Capitan to a 'virgin', and Washington Column was 'Tantalizing, the slender wall rose above us in sinuous undulations of smooth granite. A sensuous wall, as smooth to us as Aphrodite's thigh to a flea'. He felt a powerful 'lust to tattoo my name in indelible ink' in its 'flesh'. Tom Higgins fondly remembered a fellow climber's 'witty love for those soaring virgin walls' that held them 'like a mother', and Robert Byhre reinforced this gendering when he wrote an essay titled 'Why do Men Climb Mountains?', thus effectively erasing women's presence.⁵⁶ Yosemite's patriarchal climbing culture was hardly novel, yet the ejaculation of routes like *Siberian Swarm Screw* and *Mongolian Cluster Fuck* represented an aggressively misogynistic turn, this despite Beverly Johnson's participation in the first ascent of the former route.⁵⁷

The changes occurring in Yosemite highlight the links between recreation and society. Yosemite climbers had been influenced by the counterculture since the 1950s when, as Jeff Foott remembered, 'everyone had a copy of *The Dharma Bums* in their back pocket'.⁵⁸ As Bruce Schulman notes, rebelliousness in the 1970s 'remained knowing, jaded, circumspect' but 'lacked the utopian naiveté' of previous generations.⁵⁹ One weird result was that younger climbers redefined the Beat generation as an Establishment. Robbins, for example, noted how younger climbers' impatience ran 'up the rope like a continually goading electric current'. How much of that tension stemmed from frustration, envy, or other prosaic feelings is unclear, but many of the ensuing affronts seemed like youthful boundary testing, almost calculating in their irreverence and similar to the Vulgarians, a clique of eastern climbers who mocked the genteel Appalachian Mountain Club by making debauchery a virtue.⁶⁰ Among the Vulgarians' more notorious feats were climbing naked and urinating on AMC members' cars.⁶¹ From this perspective, the outrageous route names seemed to reflect a shift in American culture that extended far beyond Yosemite Valley.

Some older climbers were scandalized, but most were more constrained. Roper complained in 1971 that Yosemite had 'the most unimaginative names of any climbing area in the country', and Robbins selectively celebrated the 'growth of wit and imagination in the naming of routes' at another area. He singled out 'Toe Bias, Jonah, Pas de Deux, and Black Harlots Layaway' as preferable to 'The Uneventful, The Swallow, The Gulp, The Consolation, The Sham, the Long Climb, [and] The Illegitimate'.⁶² Yet for all their criticism of staid names, neither endorsed the extreme offerings beginning to emerge. The most risqué route names before 1970 were the 1949 double-entendre *Harris's Hangover* and the oblique insult *C. S. Concerto*, which had been a friendly retort to Robbins's evangelizing on behalf of artificial chocks.⁶³ It was significant that, when listing his favorite new routes, Robbins did not praise such titles as *Baby's Butt*, *Hair Lip* [sic], or *Limp Dick*.⁶⁴

Nature was another element contributing to changing landscape practices. Climber attitudes also shifted in part because what remained 'pure and noble' seemed less obvious in an increasingly dangerous sport. The best lines in the Valley had been claimed. All that remained were awkward or dangerous cliffs. For younger climbers, embracing these options destroyed their bodies at an unrivaled pace. By the 1970s applying athletic tape to hands and fingers *before* climbing was a mandatory ritual, and in the 1980s some climbers resorted to Super Glue to repair shredded skin.⁶⁵ Older climbers also enjoyed nearly pristine conditions, but the sport's rising popularity

dramatically changed things. Growing usage wore away the lichen from many faces, leaving conspicuous streaks of white granite that made the routes obvious and inspired some to call popular climbs ‘trade routes’. On big walls ledges were increasingly drenched in feces and urine. For those wishing to claim their own first ascents, pickings were slim. Tom Higgins griped that there were no more ‘good lines between lines between lines between lines’. The remaining untrammelled frontiers were expanses of blank or rotten cliffs, either of which required huge risks and questionable methods.⁶⁶ New climbers faced a harsher setting and waning prospects, and new routes reflected this coarsened dynamic. Nature and culture were twisting in an unpleasantly reinforcing spiral, and Yosemite’s climbing landscape became baser as its environmental context grew more degraded.

Off-color humor was one way to cope, drugs were another. Some older climbers saw drug use as a further sign of decline, but the younger cohort was hardly the first to self-medicate.⁶⁷ Climbers had long relied on caffeine, alcohol, and amphetamines to stimulate and relax, and usage bridged generations. Some younger climbers preferred beer and wine; some older climbers experimented with mescaline, peyote, and LSD. What changed most was climbers’ willingness to inscribe their desires on Yosemite cliffs. Again, the only older allusion to drunkenness was *Harris’s Hangover*, but a rash of routes commemorated intoxication beginning in the mid-1960s. During the ascent of the *Wall of Early Morning Light*, the forty-something Harding and twenty-something Caldwell christened one pillar *Wino Tower*. Shorter routes were named *Stoners Highway*, *Reefer Madness*, *Free Bong*, *White Line Fever*, *Bad Acid*, and *Mainliner*. Big-wall routes were dubbed *Psychedelic Wall*, *Magic Mushroom*, *Mescalito*, and *Tangerine Trip*.⁶⁸ Paralleling usage in society as a whole, most drug references before 1980 focused on alcohol and marijuana, while allusions to cocaine and pain killers emerged after 1980.⁶⁹ By 1990 these trends resulted in guidebooks presenting a significantly less genteel landscape to readers.

Less evident, yet intrinsically related to such developments, was the sport’s changing demography. Pre-1965 climbers pursued a game that was as much intellectual as athletic. Debates on ethics and aesthetics revealed a community obsessed with the meanings of achievement. Many attended grad school, more had college degrees, and almost all were introduced to rock climbing through college or mountaineering organizations. Clubs and post-secondary education had created a common culture that considered climbing a youthful diversion and imbued it with ideals of genteel masculinity. After 1965 these trends inverted. Elite climbing required considerable dedication to training. By the mid-1970s the best were much more likely to be accomplished athletes interested in making a living from sport. They were also less likely to have college education, alternative prospects, or membership in any sort of organization.⁷⁰ Younger climbers were neither dumber, crasser, nor more antisocial than their predecessors, but their desire to be elite climbers siphoned their energy to pursue anything but climbing. As one observer remarked, the post-1970 community was ‘a rough crowd’, far more likely to be in the sport for life.⁷¹

Guidebooks illustrate how generational change was mapped onto Yosemite’s landscape, how route names spatialized ‘identity and status’.⁷² A revolution had occurred with classist and gendered implications. The declining influence of climbing clubs resulted in a weakening of social strictures and an opportunity for young climbers to articulate new prerogatives. Genteel decorum crumbled under an avalanche of homages to sex, drugs, and rock & roll. The last edifice of Victorian propriety, a paramount consideration for the upwardly-mobile British mountaineer of the 1850s, fell before a cohort that was functionally working-class rather than upper-middling.⁷³ In the process manly comportment was redefined. The sexual and drug revolutions had merged,

and a horde of younger climbers rushed up Yosemite cliffs ready to testify to their hormonal and chemical desires.⁷⁴ The older generation regarded such acts as anathema. No self-respecting individual would have behaved this way before 1960, but a new order had emerged. Men and women slept together and slept around without compunction, and women, who had participated in Yosemite climbing since 1933, finally gained a measure of equality on rock. Beverly Johnson, Barb Eastman, Sibylle Hectell, and Lynn Hill effectively destroyed many of the gender boundaries within the sport, and they killed the conceit that men were innately superior climbers.⁷⁵

What they did not change was the patriarchal bias. Johnson regarded Yosemite's Camp 4 as 'the merry men in Sherwood Forest', and she and other women joined the fraternity by internalizing its values. In camp this meant not balking at the public display of pornography; on cliffs it meant submitting to the same scrutiny and ranking games male climbers had played since the 1850s. In 1974, Sibylle Hechtel remarked that climbing with women was a respite from the sexism, that it was 'incredibly comfortable', but Hechtel had few female partners and, regardless, all women felt 'a certain pressure to prove that women can do things'.⁷⁶ In this Yosemite reinforces themes in other studies of women mountaineers. Although Sherry Ortner calls female climbers 'gender radicals', for most of the sport's history women have tended to share the socio-cultural background and values of their male counterparts, and usually they reinforced rather than challenged the sport's classist and imperialistic impulses.⁷⁷ Thus, it is not surprising that Yosemite guidebooks have not evinced a stronger feminist counterpoint to the post-1970 hyper-macho trend.⁷⁸

The conservative implications of change extended even to the way risk became a central motivation after 1970. As climbing evolved from a genteel avocation to a blue collar vocation, elite climbers turned risk into a positive good.⁷⁹ This was partly due to the evolving nature of adventure, which encouraged elites to seek new challenges. In earlier decades this one-upmanship had been tempered by concerns for safety, but escalating abilities eroded absolute standards. By 1960 the best occasionally climbed solo and even untied from ropes to maintain a sense of adventure. Climbers such as Robbins were circumspect in this, careful not to lead novice climbers astray, but after 1970 Henry Barber, John Bachar, and others turned unroped soloing into a marketed specialty. Others embraced the spectacle of sport climbing on artificial walls, and for a time Lynn Hill was the best paid and most famous American climber. The trend of professionalization was mocked in 1985 by a new route called *Fifteen Seconds of Fame*, but slowly, inexorably, a Victorian exercise in masculine self-definition was becoming a materialistic enterprise.⁸⁰

The best Yosemite climbers were learning to convert play into a fungible commodity. European climbers had been capitalizing on their feats for decades, enjoying both materialistic rewards and nationalistic acclaim, when a few Americans began to commodify the sport as well in the 1950s. By the mid-1960s Chouinard, Robbins, and others were writing, manufacturing, guiding, and endorsing products.⁸¹ Turning pro leavened their standard of living, but it also exacerbated the sport's coarsening trends. Each success was raising the bar for aspiring climbers, and those who wished for similar fame and fortune had to up the ante to gain notice in an increasingly competitive business.⁸² This was the darker force also driving escalating physical and technical achievements, and it marked a watershed in the sport's progression from avocation to vocation. Yet for all that changed, the post-1970 era was less a stark break with the past than a fairly predictable evolution of local and global trends.⁸³ The cultural tensions that accompanied extreme

performances in degraded conditions had been clear to many observers. What they had not anticipated was how guidebooks would represent these developments.⁸⁴

Roper and Robbins had good reason to oppose publication of topos. As geographer Richard Phillips argues, ‘stories share with other maps...a measure of authority, a power to naturalise constructions of geography and identity’. The ‘taken-for-granted world of the map naturalises ways of seeing’ and ‘the social relations embedded within those ways of seeing’, but a shift from verbal to graphical representations threatened to empty route descriptions of critical cultural flags. While topos gave useful directions about rock, they offered few cues about style. This was why some rued their publication. By the 1960s guidebooks functioned as both geographic texts and technologies to discipline behavior, and topos threatened to obscure the social relations some climbers had worked very hard to create. Attempts to ensure that particular values governed an entire community bared both the intensity of climbers’ passions and the cultural implications of guidebooks in a modernizing sport.⁸⁵

One ironic result of these developments was that, under the wrong circumstances, Yosemite climbing became unintentionally more adventurous. In 1982, for example, Richard Jensen and Mark Smith attempted a new route up a particularly blank area of El Capitan’s southwest face. Jensen and Smith were outsiders who, like Cooper and Rowell, had ignored other climbers’ aesthetic sensibilities. The two were unknown to locals, and rumors spread that they were simply bolting their way up a blank wall. Jensen and Smith tried to focus on climbing, but one night someone cut the pair’s ropes and defecated on their gear and food. The two moved onto the wall to escape this harassment, but later other climbers bombed them from above with bags of human feces. As they continued, the climb became an epic test of faith and manhood. A born-again Christian, Jensen began to view each challenge as an allegory of Christian suffering and manly endurance. Thirty-nine days later they finally reached the top, overcoming an array of social and environmental obstacles that Roper and Robbins likely had never anticipated in their conception of adventure.⁸⁶

Yosemite’s climbing landscapes also reveal how context and identity shaped recreational experience across time. Although women were always active in Yosemite, men dominated a cultural process ‘informed by interrelationships among hegemonic masculine constructions of sex, gender and nature, and ideals and values associated with individualism, achievement and competition’.⁸⁷ The result was a historical geography of masculinity shaped by general trends and idiosyncratic weirdness. Climbers were influenced by cultural events, including the Beats, pop culture, drugs, and the sexual revolution, that reached far beyond the Valley. Yosemite’s climbing landscape thus reminds us that even a remote community of climbers was strongly tied to the larger world. Yet how climbers reacted to these forces underscores the importance of attending to individual actors. The energy of Steve Roper in collating and publishing routes, the talents of Royal Robbins, and the intensity of their views helped channel an entire community toward a very particular orientation to sport and nature. Robbins, Chouinard, and Rowell later channeled these energies into marketing products and supporting environmental causes, and they created legacies matched by few of their peers and none from later generations.⁸⁸

For these reasons it is tempting to liken Yosemite climbing before 1970 to a romantic affair, and after to a grim marriage, but the dichotomy obscures crucial continuities. Several authors have called the period from 1945 to 1970 a ‘golden age’ – a phrase of tremendous rhetorical force – but the declensionist connotations falter.⁸⁹ By every objective measure the technical

achievements in Yosemite only increased with time, and even by the subjective standard of risk, elite climbing only grew dicier.⁹⁰ Nor is it possible to understand the decline of amateur ideals without considering the entrepreneurial activities of the very people who fervently espoused Victorian values. The main distinctions were instead cultural and ecological. As each cohort marked Yosemite's walls to reflect their passage, local guidebooks incorporated an evolving cultural and natural geography. Before the mid-1960s, climbers had been engaged primarily in an aesthetic quest to scale untrammelled walls; after 1965, they grew more professionalized, more interested in physical challenge, and more attracted to the least stable, most dangerous cliffs. In the process genteel romance gave way to more calculating passions. The men and women who wooed Yosemite's walls had gone from writing sonnets about summer love to scrawling graffiti about latest lays, yet it is also important to notice that all continued to pursue a sense of adventure by remarkably stable rules and conceits.⁹¹

For these reasons a seemingly esoteric activity illustrates themes that extend far beyond sport. Guidebooks helped to define the terms of access to public spaces. Yosemite's cliffs did seem open — at least to anyone with sufficient desire and skill — but the rules of comportment that guidebooks posited, and that locals zealously enforced, narrowed access. As the history of surfing and skiing demonstrates, Yosemite was not unique, but climbers bear particular scrutiny because they left a far more permanent legacy. Like their European predecessors, Yosemite climbers believed that first ascents conveyed a right to dictate how others should climb. They insisted that being the first to tread virgin territory, and to do so without resorting to unfair technologies, earned a moral right to expect others to follow suit. Such claims emanated from a masculine and classist code that was remarkably similar to the sporting ethics that nineteenth-century genteel hunters deployed to convert public lands to private playgrounds.⁹² This is how the first ascent became a cultural claim on nature, and how Yosemite walls ceased to be purely public spaces.

Although the cultural and environmental implications of the first ascent were important, the ascent did not speak for itself. Peter Nettlefold and Elaine Stratford note that the 'first ascent... links space with biography', but it has been guidebooks that 'recorded rockclimbers' conversion of "space into place".⁹³ First ascents linked nothing until they were (re)presented. Guidebooks were thus essential to legitimate deeds as facts, narratives, and possessions. It is through guidebooks that we ultimately remember both great achievements and accidental heroes such as Peter Starr, who before his death created a legacy of bold climbs in minimalist fashion, and thus gained a permanent place in *A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra*.⁹⁴ If climbers did not literally own the cliffs, their routes nevertheless became a weird form of private property by proxy because guidebooks not only mapped adventure but served as a recreational deedbook.

Like the rest of Yosemite, the Valley's climbing landscape contains a complex cultural geography. The difference is that, in addition to the genteel vision of rangers, the Miwok geography of native descendants, and the romantic perspective of environmental advocates, there is also a sporting scape that expresses a strange mixture of Victorian, Beat, and stoner sensibilities. Like Henri Lefebvre's croissant simile, Yosemite Valley offers a multiplicity of social spaces, intertwined and simultaneous yet independent.⁹⁵ Accessing these landscapes necessitates moving across texts, from state and NGO reports to native stories, nature writings, tourist brochures, and the spatial information left by recreationists.⁹⁶ And as long as rock climbers persist in Yosemite, their guidebooks will continue to chart the concomitant technical and cultural currents of sport and society.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Mark Allister, Lloyd Athearn, Lara Braithwaite, Glen Denny, Matthew Evenden, Mark Fiege, Matthew Klinge, George Meyers, Nick Clinch, Edith Overly, Steve Roper, Bob Wilson, Ken Yager, and the anonymous reviewers for JHG.

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12. The cross first appeared in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Originally etched in the rock along with the initials 'CAI,' it was apparently left by members of a club. Only later was it painted; email communication with Steve Roper, 3

- August 2004; telephone conversation with George Meyers, 5 August 2004; G. Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs: Topographic Drawings of the Best Rockclimbing in Yosemite Valley*, Modesto, 1976, 76.
13. For “brain” and topo lexicon see Roper, *Climber's Guide*, 1971, 15–16, 31; for other criticisms see Tejada-Flores, The guidebook problem. Roper's inclusion of the topo symbols in the 1971 guide was done at the behest of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA).
 14. G. Meyers and D. Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, Denver, 1987, 24–25, 34; Steve Roper allowed me to review his sizable collection of privately made topos.
 15. R. Robbins, Yosemite climbing, *Summit* 12 (July–August 1966) 22; R. Robbins, Talus of Yosemite, *Summit* 14 (June 1968) 33.
 16. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1964, 25.
 17. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1964, 23, 25; Roper, *Camp 4*, 211–213; for criticism see C. Wilts (Ed.), *Climber's Guide to Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks*, Los Angeles, 1973.
 18. George Mallory offered the classic expression of this when he supposedly pronounced atop Mont Blanc, ‘Have we vanquished an enemy? None but ourselves!’ J. Ring, *How the English Made the Alps*, London, 2001, 218; see also G. Mallory, The mountaineer as artist, *Climbers' Club Journal* n.s. 1 (March 1914) 28–40.
 19. For European climbing see F. Fleming, *Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps*, New York, 2000; Ring, *How the English Made the Alps*; for genteel adventure see R. Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure*, New York, 1997, 3; for gender and climbing see G. Young, *Mountain Craft*, New York, 1920, 1–55, 65–79; R. Underhill, On the use and management of the rope in rock work, *Sierra Club Bulletin* 16 (1931) 67–88; J. Ullman, *The Age of Mountaineering*, Philadelphia, 1941, 15–23.
 20. For social and cultural history of Valley climbing see Arce, *Defying Gravity*; for timeless see Y. Chouinard, Modern Yosemite climbing, *American Alpine Journal* 13 (1963) 319–327; D. Robinson, *Camp 4*, *Mountain* 4 (July 1969) 24–25.
 21. Chuck Pratt alluded to the dissenting voices in a review of Roper's guidebook in *American Alpine Journal* 14 (1965) 501–503, but Pratt was an insider and thus arguably immune to potential backlash. It needs mention, however, that despite their zealotry many of these climbers were and are amazingly generous. I could not have done critical research for this article without access to Roper's extensive correspondence and records on Yosemite climbing. My point is not that they were vindictive or mean but that they carried their passions to such extremes; Robbins admitted this in K. Wilson, A. Steck and G. Rowell, Mountain interview: Royal Robbins, *Mountain* 18 (November 1971) 32–33; Roper noted it in S. Roper (Ed.), *Ordeal by Piton: Writings from the Golden Age of Yosemite Climbing*, Stanford, 2003, 118.
 22. Despite such proclamations, siege tactics remain in use. Parties climbing big wall routes often affix ropes to the first few pitches while camping on the ground, and there have been cases of local climbers leaving ropes on partially-climbed routes for over a year at a time to maintain their claims.
 23. For principles see R. Robbins, *Basic Rockcraft*, Glendale, Calif., 1971, 61–62; Wilson et al., Mountain interview: Royal Robbins, 33. Robbins later amended his philosophy in R. Robbins, *Advanced Rockcraft*, Glendale, Calif., 1974, 78–83. For varying renditions of events see Arce, *Defying Gravity*, 55–58 and Roper, *Camp 4*, 173–175. Pronouncements about the end of siege climbing were overstated. Since 1970 climbers have used a version of siege climbing on most first ascents of El Capitan and Half Dome, fixing ropes to the first pitches while camping on the ground or other convenient bivouac sites.
 24. Roper, *Camp 4*, 141–143, 226–232; Arce, *Defying Gravity*, 84–92; Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 137.
 25. T. Wolfe, *The Pump House Gang*, New York, 1968, 4–6, 15–30; M. Spence, My wave, my beach – get off! surfing, localism, and the nature of residency, paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, Kanapali, August 1999.
 26. M. Peruzzi, Fightin' for scraps, *Skiing Magazine* 56 (February 2004) 64–69, 98; Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association, The grand wait, or life on the Grand Canyon Waiting List, http://www.gcpba.org/access/grand_wait.php3 (accessed 2 August 2004).
 27. For ‘average Joe’ see Y. Chouinard, Coonyard mouths off, *Ascent* 1 (June 1972) 50; for gangs see D. Robinson, *Camp 4*, *Mountain* (July 1969) 24–25; T. Stableford, The wild bunch, *Climbing* 172 (November–December 1997) 96; J. Reitman, Groveling around Yosemite Valley with Bullwinkle, Singer and other miscellaneous gods of rock, *Los Angeles Times* 21 (January 2001); for bolting see J. Taylor, The moral economy of bolts: ethics,

- egos, and economics in the Yosemite Valley climbing community, paper presented at the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, Kanapali, August 1999. The process of cultural segmentation was broadly experienced in postwar America, and integral to the production of commodified identities: L. Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, New York, 2003, 292–344.
28. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1964, 58, 117; Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971, 71, 95–96, 271–272.
 29. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1964, 55; Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971, 76–77.
 30. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971, 83–84, 131–132, 180.
 31. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971, 83–84, 176–177.
 32. Wilson et al., Mountain interview: Royal Robbins.
 33. For “Mecca” see D. Whillans and A. Ormerod, *Don Whillans: Portrait of a Mountaineer*, London, 1971, 244. Even Peter Croft, a premier climber in the 1980s and 1990s, was seriously intimidated by these writings before his arrival in the Valley in 1979 (interview with author 8 July 2001). Roper reinforced this in 1964 with a unsubtle threat: ‘Many climbers from out of state have left the Valley with no desire to return. There are reasons for this, and occasionally it is the fault of the outsider himself. No matter who he is or how good he is in his own area, if he arrives in Yosemite with even a faint trace of arrogance, he is in for an unpleasant time: not only will he not gain the respect of the Valley climbers, but it is unlikely that he will ever fulfill his ambitious climbing schedule.’ Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1964, 25. Roper wrote this passage when he was twenty-two. By 1971 the world had changed. Climbing standards seemed consistently high, and Roper was more reflective, less inclined to impose his views. Steve Roper, part 2, private email message to author, 8 September 2004.
 34. For style see 71; for bolts see 81, 178, 180; for ‘excellent’ see 67, 206, 226, 257; for ‘aesthetic’ see 143; for ‘ugly’ see 149, 160, 183; for ‘worthless’ see 230, all in Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971.
 35. For Bridwell's influence see Arce, *Defying Gravity*, 92–95. For his participation in stylistic debates see J. Bridwell, The innocent, the ignorant, and the insecure: the rise or fall of the Yosemite decimal system, *Ascent* 2 (July 1973) 46–49.
 36. Whillans and Ormerod, *Don Whillans*, 245–249.
 37. D. Duane, *Lighting Out: A Vision of California and the Mountains*, Saint Paul, 1994, 121.
 38. J. McCarthy, A theory of place in North American Mountaineering, *Philosophy and Geography* 5 (2002) 186; R. White, Discovering nature in North America, *Journal of American History* 79 (December 1992) 874.
 39. Arce, *Defying Gravity*, 92–93, 98–100, 108–118; Meyers and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, 27–28.
 40. P. Harmon, *Climbing Routes on Yosemite's Walls*, Berkeley, 1972; G. Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs: Topographic Drawings of the Best Rockclimbing Routes in Yosemite Valley*, Denver, 1976.
 41. Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, 1976, ii. Statements on ethics grew longer with each edition; see Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, Denver, 1982, 7; Meyers and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, 36–37.
 42. In 1987 Meyers revised his guide with the help of Don Reid (Meyers and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*), but thereafter Reid carried on, publishing *Rock Climbing: Yosemite's Select*, Denver, 1991; *Yosemite Climbs: Big Walls*, Denver, 1993; *Rock Climbing: Yosemite Free Climbs*, Denver, 1994. For the most recent guidebook see C. McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls: Supertopos*, San Francisco, 2000.
 43. McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls*, 56, 70, 80, 88, 90.
 44. A note at the bottom of a recent topo for the *Atlantic Ocean Wall* warns climbers that the ‘First 60m of original start fell off in late '80s. First 100 feet fell off again in 1999.’ McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls*, 87.
 45. *Edinburgh Review* quoted in Ring, *How the English Made the Alps*, 78.
 46. A. Lunn, *A Century of Mountaineering, 1857–1957*, London, 1957, 85–87.
 47. Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 134–136; M. Johnston and E. Pawson, Challenge and danger in the development of mountain recreation in New Zealand, 1890–1940, *Journal of Historical Geography* 20 (1994) 175–186.
 48. For “purer” see Y. Chouinard, Muir Wall – El Capitan, *American Alpine Journal* 15 (1966) 46; McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls*, 46.
 49. A. Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820–1920*, New York, 1990; D. Robertson, *West of Eden: A History of the Art and Literature of Yosemite*, Yosemite, 1984, 1–143; S. Demars, *The Tourist in Yosemite, 1855–1985*, Salt Lake City, 1991, 1–54; P. Browning, *Yosemite Place Names*, Lafayette, 1988, 6, 22, 122–123, 155.

50. The arguments which follow are based on analysis of 2083 Yosemite Valley routes recorded in R. Leonard and D. Brower, A climber's guide to the High Sierra: Part IV, Yosemite Valley, *Sierra Club Bulletin* 25 (February 1940) 41–63; D. Brower (Ed.), *A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra: Parts I–VI, Sawtooth Ridge, Ritter Range, Plaisade Group, Yosemite Valley, Whitney Region, Evolution Group and the Black Divide*, Reprinted from the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, San Francisco, 1949; H. Voge (Ed.), *A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra: Routes and Records for California Peaks from Bond Pass to Army Pass and for Rock Climbs in Yosemite Valley and Kings Canyon*, San Francisco, 1954; Roper, *A Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1964; Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971; Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, 1976; Meyers, *Yosemite Climbs*, 1982; Meyers and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*; C. Falkenstein, *Yosemite Valley Sport Climbs*, El Portal, 1992; C. Falkenstein, *Yosemite Valley Sport Climbs*, 3rd edition, 1992; Reid, *Yosemite Climbs: Big Walls*; D. Reid, *Rock Climbing: Yosemite Free Climbs*, 2nd edition, Helena, 1998; C. Wadman, *El Capitan*, Telluride, 1999; C. Wadman, *Southeast Select: El Capitan's Right Side*, Telluride, 2000; McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls*.
51. For 'Chessman' and 'Tower' see Roper, *Climbers Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971, 74, 217; Roper, *Camp 4*, 112, 225; for music see Meyers and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, 155, 167, 178; McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls*, 71, 80.
52. For sex see Roper, *Camp 4*, 159; G. Zim, *The View From the Edge: Life and Landscapes of Beverly Johnson*, La Crescenta, Calif., 1997, 11–15; for formations and route names see Meyer and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, 392, 394–395, 402; McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls*, 85, 103, 105; Reid, *Yosemite Climbs: Big Walls*, 170.
53. Meyer and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, 396, 402–403.
54. For masculinity and space see R. Longhurst, Geography and gender: masculinities, male identity and men, *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (2000) 439–444; Erickson, The colonial climbs of Mount Trudeau; P. Jackson, The cultural politics of masculinity: towards a social geography, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* n.s. 16 (1991) 199–213; Duane, *Lighting Out*, 86.
55. A. Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*, Chapel Hill, 1975; C. Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, New York, 1980; Aitchison, New geographies, 32–34; P. Hansen, *British mountaineering, 1850–1914*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1991, 288–293; Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 133–134.
56. For 'virgin' see R. Robbins, The North America wall, *Summit* 11 (May–June 1965) 3; for 'Aphrodite' and 'lust' see R. Robbins, The prow, *Summit* 16 (July–August 1970) 5; for 'witty' and 'mother' see T. Higgins, In thanks, *Ascent* (1975–1976) 23; R. Byhre, Why do men climb mountains? *Summit* 11 (November 1965) 25.
57. Meyer and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, 77. There were only two all-female first ascents in Yosemite Valley.
58. Interview with author, Kelly, Wyoming, 18 August 2002.
59. B. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*, New York, 2001, 146; G. Lipsitz, Who'll stop the rain: youth culture, rock 'n roll, and cultural crisis, in: D. Farber (Ed.), *The Sixties*, Chapel Hill, 1994, 206–234; K. Cmiel, The politics of civility, in *The Sixties*, 263–290; for Beats see B. Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, Garden City, NJ, 1983, 52–67. M. Tenderini's, *Gary Hemming: The Beatnik of the Alps*, trans. Susan Hodgkiss, Glasgow, 1995, suggests links between the Beats and the climbing community, but she does not develop the theme. Climbers from the era were more emphatic about this connection. Interview with Steve Roper, 28 July 2001; Interview with Jeff Foott, 18 August 2002.
60. For 'impatience' see R. Robbins, Tis-sa-ack, *Ascent* 17 (May 1970) 18; for Vulgarians see R. Dumais, *Shawangunk Rock Climbing*, Denver, 1985; C. Jones, *Climbing in North America*, Seattle, 1997, 204–206, 269–271; Roper, *Camp 4*, 145; for anti-establishment see G. Grey, Why Americans climb, *Climbing* (July–August 1976) 16–19; for mocking see J. Kelsey, The rock gods, *Ascent* 2 (July 1974) 34–37; R. Dumais and J. Kelsey (Eds), *The Climbing Cartoons of Sheridan Anderson*, Schenectady, 1989.
61. For Vulgarians see Roper, *Camp 4*, 145–146; http://www.traditionalmountaineering.org/FAQ_Vulgarians.htm, accessed 17 July 2004.
62. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1972, 20; R. Robbins, Climbing guidebooks, *Summit* 20 (May 1974) 22.
63. For 'Harris's Hangover' see Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1964, 154. For complaints see D. Duane, *El Capitan: Historic Feats and Radical Routes*, San Francisco, 2000, 101–112. Several climbers commented on C. S. *Concerto*, some thought 'C. S.' stood for 'cock sucker,' others insisted it was 'chicken shit,' but all agreed that the route, which rises adjacent to *Nutcracker Suite*, was a response to Robbins's evangelizing for artificial chockstones.

64. For routes see Wilts, *Climber's Guide to Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks*, 151–156.
65. P. Piana, *Big Walls: Breakthroughs on the Free-Climbing Frontier*, San Francisco, 1997, 61.
66. For 'lines' see Higgins, In thanks, 23; L. Hamilton, Modern American rock climbing: some aspects of social change, *Pacific Sociological Review* 22 (1979) 295; for degraded conditions see Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971, 12; B. O'Brien, Climbing Half Dome: twenty years after, *American Alpine Journal* 21 (1978) 466–470; S. Blackwell, *Environmental impacts of rock climbing in Yosemite National Park*, MA thesis, San Diego State University, 2001; A. Cilimburg, C. Monz and S. Kehoe, Wildland recreation and human waste: a review of problems, practices, and concerns, *Environmental Management* 25, 6 (2000) 587–598.
67. Roper, *Climber's Guide to Yosemite Valley*, 1971, 12–16.
68. Meyer and Reid, *Yosemite Climbs*, 131, 138, 140, 167, 229; McNamara, *Yosemite Big Walls*, 105.
69. D. Courtwright, *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*, Cambridge, Mass., 2001. Guidebooks added 48 drug references from 1966 to 1999: psychedelics in 1966 (1), 1972 (1), 1973 (2), and 1985 (1); alcohol in 1970 (1), 1973 (1), 1974 (4), 1976 (1), 1987 (2), 1988 (2), 1989 (6), 1990 (2), 1991 (2), 1992 (1), 1993 (1); marijuana in 1973 (2), 1975 (1), 1976 (1), 1979 (1), 1981 (1), 1982 (1), 1983 (1), 1990 (2); intravenous use in 1977 (1); pain killers in 1980 (1), 1987 (1); cocaine in 1982 (1), 1987 (1), 1989 (1), 1990 (1); and allusions to intoxication in 1981 (1), and 1991 (1).
70. This discussion draws from Roper, *Camp 4*; Arce, *Defying Gravity*; and Duane, *El Capitan*.
71. Daniel Duane, interview with author, 27 July 2001.
72. Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 138.
73. For cultural roots of climbing see Hansen, Albert Smith. For demography see D. Duane, *El Capitan*, 76–78, 100.
74. For homosocial world see Roper, *Camp 4*; Duane, *El Capitan*; Gabriel, Valley boys.
75. For gender boundaries see S. Ortner, *Life and Death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering*, Princeton, 1999, 217–227. For women in Yosemite see G. Zim, *The View from the Edge: Life and Landscapes of Beverly Johnson*, La Crescenta, 1996; Arce, *Defying Gravity*, 105–107, 120; L. Hill and G. Child, *Climbing Free: My Life in the Vertical World*, New York, 2002, 81–126.
76. For pornography and 'Sherwood' see Zim, *The View from the Edge*, 14, 45; for 'comfortable' and 'pressure' see S. Hechtel, Untitled, *American Alpine Journal* 19 (1974) 63; for scrutiny see Hansen, *British Mountaineering*, 280.
77. K. Morin and L. Berg, Emplacing current trends in feminist historical geography, *Gender, Place, and Culture* 6 (1999) 319–321; G. La Force, The Alpine Club of Canada, 1906 to 1929: modernization, Canadian nationalism, and Anglo-Saxon mountaineering, *Canadian Alpine Journal* 62 (1979) 39–47; G. Kearns, The imperial subject: geography and travel in the work of Mary Kingsley and Halford Mackinder, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* n.s. 22 (1997) 450–472; K. Morin, Peak practices: Englishwomen's 'heroic' adventures in the nineteenth-century American West, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89 (1999) 489–514; P. Reichwein and K. Fox, Margaret Fleming and the Alpine Club of Canada: a woman's place in mountain leisure and literature, 1932–1952, *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36 (Fall 2001) 35–60; Ortner, *Life and Death on Mt. Everest*, 217.
78. Analysis of 1,624 route names and descriptions in Yosemite guidebooks for the period since 1970 revealed but one example that could be interpreted as a feminist statement: *Uppity Women*, which was one of two all-women first ascents in Yosemite Valley; Reid, *Yosemite Free Climbs*, 199. There were 141 routes that included women in the first ascent party, 121 of which were climbed after 1969 and 9 of which had route names or features with sexist or misogynist connotations.
79. N. O'Connell, *Beyond Risk: Conversations with Climbers*, Seattle, 1993; A. Todhunter, *Dangerous Games*, New York, 2000.
80. F. Meyers, The case for solo mountaineering, *Summit* 4 (December 1958) 18–19; Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 135–136; T. Gabriel, Valley boys, *Rolling Stone* (28 April 1983) 36–40, 73; Arce, *Defying Gravity*, 124–125; J. Hosie, Hot Henry, *Climbing* (May–June 1974) 2–5; Hill and Child, *Climbing Free*, 191–247; Reid, *Rock Climbing: Yosemite Free Climbs*, 104.
81. B. Johnston and T. Edwards, The commodification of mountaineering, *Annals of Tourism Research* 21 (1994) 459–478.
82. Hamilton, Modern American rock climbing, 290; R. Mitchell, *Mountain Experience: The Psychology and Sociology of Adventure*, Chicago, 1983, 104.

83. Many of these trends were predicted in Tejada-Flores Games climbers play, in: K. Wilson (Ed.), *The Games Climbers Play*, London, 1978, 19–27; see also Heywood, Urgent dreams, 179–194.
84. Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 137; Heywood, Urgent dreams, 181–182. For a contemporary commentary see C. Jones, The end of the mountains, *Summit* 16 (Spring 1970) 28; see also comments by Yvon Chouinard and Patrick Callis in S. Gardiner, *Why I Climb: Personal Insights of Top Climbers*, Harrisburg, 1990, 73, 107.
85. Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, 14–15.
86. R. Jensen, *Wings of Steel*, Hagerstown, 1994, 70–71, 77–96.
87. Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 140.
88. C. Vetter, He's not worthy, *Outside* 22 (January 1997) 48–52, 108–110; E. McGowan, Behind the label: Royal Robbins, *Backpacker* 13 (May 1985) 17–18; N. Santelmann, Touring Pro, *Forbes* 157 (3 November 1996) 43–45.
89. D. Robinson, Grand sieges and fast attacks, *Mariah/Outside* (September 1979) 28; Rowell, *Vertical World*; Roper, *Camp 4*.
90. J. Bridwell, Free climbing, 1980, *American Alpine Journal* 22 (1980) 464–467.
91. H. Cantelon (Ed.), *Leisure, Sport, and Working Class Cultures: Theory and History*, Toronto, 1988; J. Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity*, Ithaca, 1995.
92. I am indebted to Matt Klinge for help with this passage. For hunters and western spaces see L. Warren, *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-century America*, New Haven, 1997; M. Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, New York, 1999; K. Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation*, Berkeley, 2001.
93. For 'conversion' and 'biography' see Nettlefold and Stratford, The production of climbing landscapes-as-texts, 137, 138, and 133–139 passim.
94. For Starr's first ascents see e.g. H. Voge, *A Climber's Guide to the High Sierra*, San Francisco, 1965, 70, 72.
95. H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith, Oxford, 1991, 86.
96. For Yosemite's landscapes see P. Browning, *Yosemite Place Names*, Lafayette, Calif., 1988; for Yosemite politics see A. Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness*, Lincoln, 1990; J. Sax, *Mountains Without Handrails, Reflections on the National Parks*, Ann Arbor, 1980; National Park Service, *Final Yosemite Valley Plan*, 4 Vols, Yosemite National Park, 2000.