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## *Intoduction to SNOW PASS - GMC 2003*

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Welcome to Snow Pass. This is the first GMC to be held at this location, and as far as we can ascertain, you are only the second group to have ever camped amongst this group of lakes.

Many GMC's are situated in valleys; however, this site is unusual as you are on the Continental Divide at an E-W "pass" between the Sullivan and Athabasca rivers, this is the arbitrary division between the Columbia Icefield to the south and the Chaba/Clemenceau Icefields to the north. But, you are also at a N-S pass between the Wales and "Watershed" glaciers, so you are at a "four way intersection" and from Base Camp you can access seven (7) different glacier systems.

An intriguing local feature is the snout of the "Watershed" glacier, which actually divides so that it flows both west to join the Wales Glacier and thus drains to the Pacific and also turns east and feeds to the Arctic, which is why it is called the "Watershed" Glacier.

In 2003, it may not be too obvious why in 1919 the Alberta/British Columbia Interprovincial Survey called this location "Snow Pass" but in the 1930's (and even ? the early 1950's) your Base Camp was still completely ice covered! There was permanent ice/snow from the "Aqueduct" to the "Watershed" to the "Toronto" Glaciers, an area of snow 5 km E-W and 10km N-S. Thus, in 1919, it really was a "snow pass". See the appended "deglaciation" map. There is a wonderful photograph taken from the summit of Sundial peak in 1919 in the A/BC Volume, p. 77 showing the degree of glaciation at that time.

Attached are four (4) appendices containing material which maybe of interest:

- (i) [What has been climbed and what is still unclimbed](#)
- (ii) [A highly selective annotated mountaineering history of the northern Rocky Mountains: who's been here before, when, how did they get here and what did they do](#)
- (iii) [The "enigma" of the Lower Wales Glacier, the largest single error by the Alberta/British Columbia Interprovincial survey: they missed" a 7 km long glacier!](#)
- (iv) [How the physical setting of the area has/is changing.](#) Route finding at Snow Pass is partly a study in deglaciation!

In the summer of 2000 we camped at the Tsar/Somerell col for a week. Looking east we could see Chaba Peak-Watershed-Aqueduct Mtns. and so we said, "next year, lets go there". In 2000 Wally Joyce, the Toronto Section's gentleman mountaineer, who has participated in more than 40 GMC's, then in his 85<sup>th</sup> year, was with us. He would have been with us in 2001 on our trip to Snow Pass but the year 2000 was to prove to be his last active year in the mountains; however, Snow Pass is a place Wally really would have enjoyed. We hope you do.

Roger Wallis  
Toronto Section,  
ACC,  
March, 2003

## *THE SNOW PASS AREA Climbing Notes for the 2003 GMC*

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! **Base Camp:** at +/- 7450 ft./2270 m is on a high bench lying to the south of and above the “Lower” Wales Glacier. It is west of “Snow Pass” (7300 ft. = 2220 m) and thus is west of the continental divide and so is in British Columbia **not** in Jasper National Park.

! **Summit Heights:**

**Note**, the heights given in the 3 editions (1966, 1974, 1985) of the guidebook to the Rocky Mountains North are: (i) contradictory to one another, and (ii) are different from the contours of **both** of the “imperial” (Edition 1, 1966) and the “metric”(Edition 3, 1996) 1:50,000 maps. They are also different from the surveyed heights of the A/BC Interprovincial Survey. **So** I have provided a suitable compromise height.

! **Mountain Names:**

(i) In this area of the Rockies there are only a few “real” names, i.e. as sanctified by the Canadian Geographic Names Board

(ii) however, there are a some “given” names often used in the guidebooks and in journal articles

(iii) and, for ease of description, I have “created” names for the rest.

! There are new route possibilities on many mountains in the area. Possibly the “South Summit” of Wales Peak and “SW Sundial” are unclimbed >10,000 ft. “peaks”.

The north/south line of peaks-Chaba Peak, Wales Peak, Wales Peak “South Summit”, North and South Watershed Mtns. and Omega Peak all consist of a major cliff forming unit of black (bituminous) stromatoporoidal limestone. This unit provides lots of steep rock of fairly reasonable quality (by Rockies standards!) and gives the best possibilities of new (rock) routes in the area. There are fewer possibilities of new steep snow/ice routes, the most obvious are on Aqueduct Mtn. There are unlimited possibilities for ice climbing on seracs in the numerous icefalls, extremely photogenic! See plate IX in *“Columbia Icefields, A Solitude of Ice”*.

**From Base Camp one can access seven glacial systems as follows:**

(i) **“Aqueduct” Glacier** (named by Kruszyna, 1978): lies immediately due south of camp. On a cold morning its worth putting on crampons about two minutes from camp. Ascend north facing snow slopes which lead first to a rocky knoll, then higher snow slopes (crevassed) rise steeply to a col on the north edge of the “Aqueduct” Glacier (+/- 30 minutes) from camp. First reached by Thorington party in 1931 and crossed by Thorington party in 1936.

(ii) **“Watershed” Glacier** (named by Thorington, 1931): head east out of camp and in +/- 5minutes you are on the dry ice (or snow) of the Watershed Glacier. First traversed by a winter ski party in 1967, It is not obvious if anyone has been up/down the glacier in summer prior to 2001.

(iii) **“Toronto” Glacier** (named by Habel, 1901): again head east out of camp and either **descend**

the Watershed glacier to its snout (crevassed) and then traverse northeast up and down over moraines/rock to reach the lower Toronto Glacier (1-1 ½ hrs.); or, **ascend** the Watershed glacier (crevassed) for 2-3 km and then turn east and then north up slopes to join the upper Toronto Glacier (2-3 hrs.). First ascended by Thorington party in 1936.

(iv) **“Upper” Wales Glacier** (named by Ostheimer, 1927): again head east out of camp, **descend** to the snout of the Watershed glacier (crevassed). Cross some moraine and then head steeply up hill via a snow gully cutting up through rocky bluffs lying to the **east** of the Wales Glacier. This gully system leads past the icefall and comes out on a high bluff. Here one can traverse west through crevasse systems to reach the upper Wales Glacier (2 hrs.) NB: in descent, the turn point to traverse east back to the bluff is **not** obvious (especially in cloud/white out), it maybe worthwhile to leave a couple of wands to mark the turn point and direction of travel on this convex slope. First descended by the 1967 winter ski party. First summer party, the Petroske’s in 1979.

(v) **“Sundial” Glacier**, (named Ostheimer, 1927), descend to Snow Pass, then descend the uppermost valley of West terminal fork of the Athabasca River, rock/moraine; snow, cut N across moraines to reach the lowest part of “Sundial” Glacier, which ascend, best (?) on its east side moraines to reach the upper snowfields. First ascended in 1931 by Thorington party, first descended in 1927 by some of the Ostheimer party.

(vi) **“Col” Glacier:** (RHW name), as for “Sundial” Glacier, but descend even lower down the west terminal fork of the Athabasca to reach a large muddy lake, pass on its north side and make a steep rising traverse to reach a ridge separating two glacial tongues follow ridge to upper snowfield. First ascended in 1931 by Thorington party.

(vii) **“South Chaba” Glacier** (RHW name), head NW out of camp, descend steep grass and rock bluffs and look for the line between the lower and upper icefalls on the “Lower” Wales Glacier. There is a zone about 0.5 km wide which is relatively flat and less crevassed that provides a crossing to the moraines on the north side of the Wales Glacier and then to the east side of the South Chaba Glacier (1-2 hrs.). NB: It’s a long way back uphill from the Wales Glacier to camp in the evening! As yet there has been no recorded ascent of the South Chaba Glacier.

Interestingly Ostheimer (1927) suggests that the Sundial Glacier is “the source of the west fork of the west (terminal) branch of the Athabasca River”, **“Every Other Day**, p. 227. I have no idea how such a “source” is defined but one could make at least as good a case for the Toronto Glacier, or even the Watershed Glacier, as being the “source(s)” now that glacier retreat has occurred as much as it has.

## **A PEAKS NORTH OF SNOW PASS (7300 ft.)**

### **i.e. up the “UPPER” WALES GLACIER**

(1) **“Mt. Chaba” RHW Height 10,250 ft. (3125 m)**

**(named by Habel in 1901, but no longer an “official” name)**

**(A simple trudge by the vaie normale but a great viewpoint)**

The only peak climbed by the **“Jean Habel 1901 Expedition”**, the first European explorers to reach the “inner” reaches of the Athabasca and Chaba Rivers. Habel ascended by the subsidiary glacier to the

east of the East Chaba glacier and so reached the “Chaba Col” from the north and then continued up the SW slope/ridge,.

**1<sup>st</sup> ascent** Jean Habel, Fred Ballard, Dan Campbell. Habel’s summit record was found by the 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent party.

**2<sup>nd</sup> ascent** 1936 via route of first ascent, , by Cromwell, Cromwell, North and Thorington.

**3<sup>rd</sup> ascent**(?) 1979: by B., J., J., J., Petroske from Snow Pass and then up the upper Wales Glacier to reach the 9250 ft. “Chaba Col”, i.e. from the south, and then up the SW ridge.

The “**Centennial**” ascent, (August, 2001) same route as Petroske’s; Mark McDermott, Bill McKenzie, Joe Piccininni, and Roger Wallis.

This was clearly **not** the **4<sup>th</sup> ascent**, as the summit has multicairns, wands and a ski pole but we failed to find a summit register.

\$ **“Chaba Col” RHW name/height 9250 ft. (2820 m)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, **from the north**, by Habel’s party in 1901

1<sup>st</sup> ascent (?) **from the south** by Petroske’s in 1979

1<sup>st</sup> crossed on ski’s by Don Gardner and party going from north (Jasper) to south (Banff) in 1967.

1st (?) crossed on ski’s from south to north in 1986 by R + J. Tivy, Anne Brogdan and Bob Saunders

(2) **Chaba Peak (10,540 ft. /3210 m) A/BC Boundary Survey height**

(“Mt. Eden” of Habel 1901, name changed by the A/BC Boundary Commission in 1919/1920)

(a fine mountain)

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent, 1928: E. Schoeller/J. Rahmi

Via the E fork of the Chaba River and then via E. Chaba glacier and icefall, and then they turned the W ridge and **then ascended up the S ridge** (last 100 ft. narrow). Their summit record was found by the 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent party.

2<sup>nd</sup> Ascent, 1936: Cromwell, Cromwell, North and Thorington, via route of first ascent

3<sup>rd</sup> Ascent 1979 (?): B., J., J., and J. Petroske, via the upper Wales Glacier then **cross the divide** between Wales Peak and Chaba Peak just **north** of the “Deamon Horns” and then cross glacier to climb the south ridge.

Therefore, the **east ridge** from Chaba Col is **unclimbed?** Which is **not** surprising when one sees the ridge in profile when ascending the upper Wales Glacier. It would make a great route.

The col between the “Deamon Horns” and Chaba Peak is that used by ski parties coming from the Grassi Hut at Clemenceau when going south to Snow Pass and the Columbia Icefields. The east side

descent is an abseil in winter.

(3) **“The Deamon Horns” 9800 ft. (2990 m) (named by the Petroske’s)**

**(or fun in the sun)**

**(and it is their spelling)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascents, 1979: Bill and Jim Petroske, rock climbing up to F5, of both the South and North Horns.

(4) **Wales Peak RHW height 10,150 ft. (3100 m)(named by Ostheimer party, 1927)**

**(A fine mountain)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1927: John de Laittre, Rupert Maclaurin, Jean Weber from the East

Chaba Glacier, they flanked Chaba Peak to **the west** and ascended the **west snow**

**slopes** – NB: check out the fossils on way to the summit, these impressed the first ascent

party!

No second ascent ? or by any other route? therefore it appears that Wales Peak is **unclimbed** from the Wales Glacier via its N or SE ridges or E face? (this is **not** surprising when one traverses the upper Wales Glacier).

Wales Peak could be reached from the south, descend from camp, cross a flat section of the lower Wales glacier between the icefalls, scramble up the east side of the “South Chaba Glacier” to reach the western slopes.

(5) **Wales Peak “South Summit” RHW height 10,050 ft. (2980 m)**

Unclimbed? (seems so, and again **not** surprising when one traverses the upper Wales Glacier and looks at the E and SE ridges, the obvious route (?) is up the SW slopes or S ridge from the “South Chaba Glacier”)

## **B “SUNDIAL” GLACIER AREA**

(6) **Sundial Mountain 10,438 ft. (3182 m) surveyed height by A/BC,**

**named in 1919 by the A/BC**

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent: 1919 by the A/BC Interprovincial Survey, with Conrad Kain, by the west slopes, reached from the west, by ascending a creek flowing down to the Chaba Glacier

2<sup>nd</sup> Ascent: 1927 Jean Weber, John de Laittre, Rupert Maclaurin; same route as the 1<sup>st</sup> ascent, then they descended the Sundial Glacier to the Athabasca River.

2<sup>nd</sup> Route, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ascent (?) 1975 ACC party from the **south**, up the Sundial Glacier.

3<sup>rd</sup> Route, has been climbed from the east from Warwick Creek.

4<sup>th</sup> Route, 1975 Dane Waterman (solo) N face, 200 m of steep snow and ice.

(7) **“S.E. Sundial” 10,100 ft. (3090 m) (RHW name)**

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent: July 1931, E. Cromwell Sr. E. Cromwell Jr., N. Spadavecchia, Monroe Thorington, ascend the “Sundial” Glacier and then climb up the west slope on steep scree/snow. Described as very fine viewpoint.

2<sup>nd</sup> Ascent: 1975 ACC party, found 1<sup>st</sup> ascent party’s summit record.

(8) **“S.W. Sundial” 10,000 ft. (3050 m) (RHW name)**

To the SW of Sundial Mtn., across a snowy col is a subsidiary summit. This may not have been climbed (?).

**C “COL” GLACIER AREA**

(9) **“S.W. Warwick” 10,300 ft. (3120 m) (RHW name)**

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent: July 1931, E. Cromwell Sr. and Nicholas Spadavecchia from a camp at 5,000 ft. in the west terminal fork of the Athabasca to the col (9,400 ft./2860 m) follow west ridge to SW face and follow steep chimneys to the summit.

2<sup>nd</sup> Ascent (?) 2<sup>nd</sup> Route

1975 Art Maki/David Whitburn, from the lake SE of Warwick Mtn. ascend to the base of the NE ridge, climb ridge, bypass a vertical step and follow airy ground to summit.

At the southern end of the long S.S.W. ridge of “SW Warwick” is A/BC survey station #108, at Pt. 9412. In 1919 the A/BC took a magnificent photograph from this view point, from Mt. Alberta to Mt. King Edward. This maybe one of the best hiking viewpoints in the area.

(10) **“Col” Peak 9,500 ft. (2890 m) (RHW name)**

Curious flat topped rock table between two cols at summit of “Col” glacier. This may not have been climbed (?).

(11) **Warwick Mountain 9,535 ft. (2,906 m) named by A/BC in 1919,  
surveyed height by A/BC**

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent: 1919 by the A/BC Interprovincial Survey, with Conrad Kain. By the SE slopes from the Athabasca Valley.

**D PEAKS EAST OF SNOW PASS ON THE “TORONTO GLACIER” (glacier name first used by Habel in 1901)**

(12) **“NW Toronto” RHW name/height 9,200 ft. (2800 m)**

**(a bump on a ridge, but an enjoyable scramble with a great view)**

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent 1979: Bill Petroske (solo) from his camp just N of Snow Pass to the N.

ridge, 2½ hrs. there and back

2<sup>nd</sup> ascent (?) August, 2001, Mark McDermott, Bill McKenzie, and Roger Wallis via the N ridge, and fun knife-edge slab for the last 500 ft.

From the GMC base camp it is best to take a “low” line to both reach and then cross a relatively pleasant zone of the lower Toronto Glacier, ascend its N. moraine and then follow a NW facing snow slope to the summit ridge.

(13) **“Toronto”**                      **Height 9,600 ft. (2940 m)**

(Originally called “Mt. Ontario” by Jean Habel in 1901, Toronto is the name in Thorington’s 1921 Guide book)

**(an interesting excursion along multicoloured friable slabs)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1975: P. Benson, A. Maki, H. Microys, M. Rosenberger; (as part of the ACC camp) up the King Edward Glacier to the 8600 ft. col, then west to the 9320 ft. col, then follow south ridge to summit

2<sup>nd</sup> ascent 1979: by B., J., J., J. Petroske, from Snow Pass up the Toronto Glacier to the 9320 ft. col and then along the S ridge, i.e. same ridge as 1<sup>st</sup> ascent

3<sup>rd</sup> ascent (?) 1986: April 1<sup>st</sup>, on skis Bob Saunders/Robin Tivy, from the 9320 ft. pass, (after a ski ascent of Triad Peak)

**9320 ft. Pass** (2840 m) from base camp via the “Watershed” Glacier and the upper Toronto Glacier to the col and then descend to the Triad Glacier (Columbia Icefield). This is the route to Mt. King Edward from base camp. In summer first crossed (?) SE/NW in 1975, first crossed (?) NW to SE in 1979; used by Don Gardner’s ski party in 1967 from N to S. (Jasper to Banff)

## **E      PEAKS SOUTH OF SNOW PASS ON THE**

**“WATERSHED GLACIER”** as named by RHW after Thorington (1931).

(14) **“Divide”**                      **RHW name/height                      9,650 ft. (2940 m)**

Unclimbed?

**(An undistinguished bump on a the divide between Toronto and Triad)**

(15) **Triad Peak**                      **RHW height 10,040 ft. (3060 m)**

**(named by Thorington in 1936, on basis of its drainage being in 3 directions)**

**(A bit of a snow slog but the best viewpoint of the standard route on King Edward and to mountains to E and S)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1936: Cromwell, Cromwell, North and Thorington, via the Toronto Glacier, to the 9300 ft. col, and up SW snow slopes

2<sup>nd</sup> ascent (?) 1975 ACC Party, no description of route taken

3<sup>rd</sup> ascent, (?) 1986: April 1<sup>st</sup>, on skis via the Toronto Glacier, R. & J. Tivy, and Anne Bogdan, Bob Saunders, Klaus Haring, Tom Jensen, no description of route taken

**9300 ft./ (2835 m) Pass** between Triad Peak and Omega Peak

**(16) Omega Peak RHW height 9,940 ft. (3030 m RHW)**

(named by the A/BC boundary surveyors because it was the last peak of their 1919 summer survey). Interestingly this peak has the largest height difference between the 1919 survey height (10,230 ft.) and the 1966 and 1996 topo maps of <10,000 ft.

**(A fine rock peak)**

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent, 1975: Route 1, P. Benson/A. Maki - **NW ridge**, difficult to cross ice moat/bergschund, then “easy scrambling” (doesn’t look that easy!)

Same day Route 2, H. Microys/M. Rosenberger, **E ridge** 200 m of F3 rock to summit (we can believe the F3 bit)!

One could climb Omega from the **west**, via the “Aqueduct Glacier”, and then either join the Benson/Maki route, or climb the W. ridge or S. ridge, see photograph, p.52, in “*Columbia Icefield, A Solitude of Ice*”.

**(17) “Watershed Mountain”**

**South Peak 10,340 ft. (3150 m)**

**(named in 1931 by Thorington because it is the Watershed)**

(fine looking mountain)

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1931: Cromwell/Spadavecchia, via the “Aqueduct Glacier”, to base of the SW rock ridge at 9,500 ft. “followed by an hour of interesting rock climbing” to summit.

New route possibilities: there could be a tough climb directly up from the Watershed Glacier, up the NE face, or the South ridge or East ridge, or traverse both Watershed

N/S peaks.

**(18) “Watershed Mountain”**

**North Peak 10,160 ft. (3090 m)**

**(climb starts five minutes from camp, fine introductory scramble and great orientation view point)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1931: Cromwell, Spadavecchia, and Thorington, via West or NW ridge, (the two accounts differ!) “sharp slabs below summit”, they descended the south slopes.

2<sup>nd</sup> ascent (?), 1949: George Livingston (route unknown) summit record found by the Petroske’s

3<sup>rd</sup> ascent (?) 1979: B.,J.,J.,J. Petroske by west ridge. They found both Thorington’s/ Livingston’s summit records.

4th ascent, (?) August, 2001, Mark McDermott, Bill McKenzie, Joe Piccininni, Roger Wallis, from camp up snow slopes to the col on “Aqueduct Glacier” followed by a scramble up the West ridge. We found no summit records.

One could take a direct line up the NNW ridge or the NE face or traverse both Watershed N/S peaks in either direction.

**F PEAKS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE “AQUEDUCT GLACIER”**

as named by Bob Kruszyna in 1978

**(19) “Aqueduct Peak North” RHW name/height 9,700 ft. (2930 m)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1936: Cromwell, Cromwell, North, Thorington via “Aqueduct Glacier”, up the icefall between the north and centre peaks, to a snow plateau, then up the south slope, steep shale, to summit. On the same day the first ascent party also climbed Centre Peak, this took 2 hours from N peak and 6 hours to climb both. **NOTE:** “drastic changes” to Aqueduct Glacier since 1936 have made the approach a more interesting affair.

**(20) “Aqueduct Peak Centre” RHW name/height 10,300 ft (3130 m)**

**(summit an interesting knife edge ice crest, sits one person only)**

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1936: Cromwell, Cromwell, North, Thorington, via Aqueduct Glacier, and then up icefall between North and Centre Peaks, ascend final narrow snow/ice

north ridge

2<sup>nd</sup> Ascent, 1979 Route 2: J. Petroske and 3 sons. South Ridge, reach col between Centre and South Peaks, (i.e. Aqueduct Mtn.) climb snow to summit, 4 hours from Snow Pass

3<sup>rd</sup> Ascent (?), Route 3: August 2001, Mark McDermott, Bill McKenzie, Joe

Piccininni, Roger Wallis. Straight up east face, then a short traverse towards the south and up the final ice face to summit.

(21) **“Aqueduct Peak South”** 10,450 ft. (3180 m)

**or “Aqueduct Mountain”**

**(named by Bob Kruszyna in 1978 because of the numerous water falls out of huge holes in the cliff wall below the glacier on its SE side)**

(a fine snow/ice mountain from all directions)

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1978: H. & R. Kruszyna, A. Maki, H. Mutch, P. Vermeulen, D. Whitburn – via the **North Ridge**. They approached from the south via the east edge of the spectacular SE icefall to gain glacial basin above (“Aqueduct Glacier”) then crossed **to west side** to gain ridge (between Centre and South peaks) then followed the N ridge over snow/rock to the “fore peak” (pt 9,900 ft./3020 m) and continued along a horizontal section (gendarmes) and finished up steep snow/ice crest, grade II, F4.

2<sup>nd</sup> Ascent

via South Ridge, 1979: J., J., J., and B. Petroske. From Snow Pass, 6 km down Aqueduct Glacier, cross SE ridge; traverse SE glacier, gain S ridge, then easy scree to summit (6 hrs. up from Snow Pass). This was their 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt. The other routes they tried were the 1st ascent route along N ridge; then the NE face; then the SE ridge to a false summit. But all of these variants were double corniced.

Thus, Aqueduct Mtn. has only had 2 ascents (?). Neither routes have been repeated and the SE ridge is unclimbed. Neither successful party had an easy time with this peak.

**G PEAKS BEYOND i.e. 9,320 ft. PASS to the COLUMBIA ICEFIELD (“Triad” or “King Edward” Glaciers)**

There is an excellent photograph of the 8,600 ft. pass, and Mt. King Edward (SW, S, SE ridges) and “South Triad Peak”, on page 8 of *“Columbia Icefield, A Solitude of Ice”*.

(22) **Mount King Edward** 11,400 ft. (3475 m)

(named “Mt. Manitoba by Jean Habel, 1901 renamed Mt. King Edward by Mary Schaffer in 1907)

1<sup>st</sup> ascent, 1924: Joseph Hickson, Howard Palmer, Conrad Kain. They ascended the “King Edward Glacier” (the “Ontario Glacier” of Jean Habel, 1901) to the upper basin (to the 8600 ft./2620 m pass) and then passed around the base of the peak on snow to the **SW ridge and S face** (1 ½ hrs. from pass) gaining rocks at 9000 ft. Up loose scree to summit cap (2 hrs. up scree), **traverse east** and **cross the SE arête by a narrow fissure**, beyond this a 100 ft. broken chimney, which pierces the upper cliff belt and gives access to S peak (which is 80 ft. higher than N. peak) (3 hrs.). So 6½ hrs. from the 8600 ft. pass.

2<sup>nd</sup> (?) ascent 1951: George Bell and D. Michael (via route of 1<sup>st</sup> ascent)

3<sup>rd</sup> (?) ascent 1973: NE ledges - H. Mitchell (alone) from the forks of the Athabasca River

4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> ascents (?) 1975: ACC Parties (included Wally Joyce) by route of 1<sup>st</sup> ascent

6<sup>th</sup> (?) ascent 1975: NW Ridge – Dale Waterman (alone) from W. branch of the Athabasca.

To reach the start of the Mitchell or Waterman routes is along way from base camp.

Mt. King Edward could be climbed from the Snow Pass base camp in a long day by a fast party or with a high bivvy either at the 9320 ft. pass between the “Toronto” and the “Triad” Glaciers or on rocks at the base of the peak.

(23) **“South Triad Peak”** Pt. 9400 ft. (2865 m)

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent 1979, J., J., J., and B. Petroske to the 9320 ft. pass at the summit of the Toronto Glacier, descend to the west to the 8600 ft. pass between the “King Edward Glacier” and the Columbia Icefield and descend the “Triad Glacier” and climb the north slopes of the W ridge west of the summit and then traverse to the summit.

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## **SNOW PASS a highly selective annotated mountaineering history to some parts of the Northern Rockies**

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Snow Pass (7,300 ft.) is the name first used by the Alberta/British Columbia Interprovincial Boundary Survey in 1919 and then adopted by J. Monroe Thorington in 1931 for the low point between the Sullivan and the Athabasca Rivers. In 1936 Francis North referred to it as the Toronto Pass; however, with regret, we will resist the temptation of popularizing this alternative, and let first use take precedent! The name Snow Pass is rarely seen in print; a notable exception is the map, p.17 in Columbia Icefield, A Solitude of Ice.

There is nothing remarkable about the mountaineering history of the Snow Pass area, but, from its summits one is in an ideal position to observe the terrain that dominated much of the exploration and climbing history of the northern Rockies; the three 12,000 footers Columbia, N. Twin and Clemenceau; three major icefields, Clemenceau-Chaba-Columbia; the valley of the upper Athabasca and the great mountain dominating its eastern flank Mt. Alberta.

Many of the well known Rockies explorers/mountaineers have passed through the country within your gaze David Thompson, A.P. Coleman, Norman Collie, Jean Habel, James Outram, Conrad Kain, Monroe Thorington, A.J. Ostheimer, etc.

Hence, it maybe of interest to some who havent been in this part of the Rockies to provide a highly selective and severely annotated history.

**1807:** David Thompson was the first known European to cross (June 25, 1807) and describe the location of Howse Pass, 5020 ft. Howse Pass became the route of choice for the North West Fur Company to travel between Rocky Mountain House (in the Alberta foothills), via the Saskatchewan River to the pass and then the Blaeberry River to the Columbia River.

The Pass is named after James Howse who crossed in 1810. Howse built the only Hudson Bay Company post west of the Rockies.

Late 1810 the local Piegan Indian Band made it clear that they opposed the fur trading companies use of Howse Pass and basically closed passage. Hence, David Thompson on behalf of the North West Company needed to locate a new route from the Prairies to the Pacific.

**1811:** David Thompson entered the upper Athabasca Valley, from what is now Jasper, and in January 1811 followed the Whirlpool River over the Athabasca Pass (5,736 ft.) to the Wood River and down to the Columbia River. Thompson overwintered at Boat Encampment at the Big Bend of the Columbia, and eventually made his way to

Astoria, J.J. Astors fur trading post, at the mouth of the Columbia River just inland from the Pacific Ocean.

Alexander Henry had previously described the Athabasca Pass as a route used by Nippising and Iroquois Indians and it is possible that Thompson was not the first white man to cross the Athabasca Pass but he was the first to accurately establish its position and provide details of the route to and across it from the Athabasca to the Columbia.

From 1811 to about the 1850s the Athabasca Pass was probably the most used route through the main range of the Rockies especially after the amalgamation of the North West Company with the Hudson Bay Company in 1821. The pass continued to have occasional use until 1913 when the Grand Trunk (now CNR) line was completed from Jasper, through the Yellowhead Pass.

The Yellowhead, at 3711 ft., is the lowest pass in the northern Rockies but was not fully explored and documented until **after** the Athabasca Pass. Though it does lead to the headwaters of the Fraser River and thus to the Pacific, the Fraser was both too difficult and too dangerous to provide the fur companies with a reliable access to the Pacific. This was the attraction of the mighty river of the west, the Columbia, which did provide a navigable water route to the Pacific. The Yellowhead regained prominence in the 1860s as a means of access to the gold fields of the Cariboo Country.

**1827:** The significance of the Athabasca Pass to Canadian mountaineering is its passage in 1827 by David Douglas. In just 5 hours Douglas ascended a peak on the west side of the pass and in so doing made the first recorded ascent of a Rockies peak. Subsequently Douglas named his peak Mt. Brown and assigned it a height of 16,000 ft. to 17,000 ft. Douglas named a prominent mountain lying east of the pass Mt. Hooker with a height of 15,700 ft. Mts. Brown/Hooker became the highest peaks in N. America and later efforts made in their rediscovery provided a major spur to mountaineering exploration in the northern Rockies.

The Brown/Hooker saga is a fine tale recounted at length in many of the references appended, especially the chapters and appendix in Thoringtons Glittering Mountains. Colemans bewilderment/ disappointment is clearly expressed in his original account on finally reaching the Athabasca Pass in 1893. The *Controversies* section of the Canadian Mountaineering Anthology p. 171-187 helpfully extracts some of the original references and provides pertinent discussion and some incisive editorial comment, especially on the divergent views of A.O. Wheeler and Monroe Thorington on what exactly David Douglas did or did not do, on his 6 hour solo snow shoe hike, at the Athabasca Pass on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1827.

*J. Monroe Thorington, The Glittering Mountains of Canada, pages. 200/201.*

*Therefore (Mtns. Brown/Hooker) are probably not the peaks Douglas named; in fact*

*we remain in ignorance as to precisely where he went, what he did, and what he named during his few hours at Athabasca Pass. The Interprovincial Survey has unquestionably done the best thing possible in perpetuating these classic names by applying them to a lovely peak on either side of the pass. But the ambition to stand upon them is a deeper thing than it appears; for the naming of peaks by Douglas, and the over-estimation of altitude no matter how strange and ludicrous the mistake may seem; no matter who was at fault in figuring these things first led men in search of great Canadian heights. They came from the far corners of the earth, following pioneer trails, seeking beauty. And none there was who returned insensitive to the glory of that mountain vastness.*

**1850s:**The Athabasca Pass was still a major trans Canada route. In the spring (March) trading parties left Edmonton to cross the pass to Boat Encampment by which time boats had arrived from Vancouver (i.e. Vancouver, Oregon, on the Columbia River). Goods were exchanged and taken back to Edmonton and to York Factory on Hudson Bay. The reverse journey occurred in September. The journey from Hudson Bay to the Pacific by this route generally occupied about 3 months and *involved an amount of hardships and toil that cannot be appreciated by those who have not been traveling in these territories.*

**1859:** Dr. James Hector (of the Palliser Exploration, 1857-60) and Walter Moberly (then of the Hudson Bay Co.) make a partial ascent of Roche Miette and later in February explore the Athabasca River above its junction with the Whirlpool. Later in 1859 Hector discovered the Lyell Icefield and ascends part of the Lyell glacier, and thus was the first European to venture onto a Rocky Mountain glacier?

**1862:** Viscount Milton and Dr. Cheadle travel from Edmonton to Kamloops via the Yellowhead Pass, they describe Mt. Robson and Tete Jaune Cache.

**1871:** Walter Moberly, surveying for the CPR for a suitable pass through the Rockies, completed a detailed survey of Howse Pass and concluded that it was the best line for the CPR. However, in 1872 it was decided to adopt Yellowhead Pass for the transcontinental line and the Mr. Moberly's work in Howse Pass was discontinued, A/BC, p.15.

The 1918 Alberta/British Columbia Interprovincial Survey agreed with Moberly: Howse Pass is of lower altitude than Kicking Horse (by 319 ft.) it has no steep approaches and will some day be found suitable for a trunk motor road from the Columbia to the prairies, the feasibility of using the pass for such a road or for a railway having already been established.

At present the major logging road up the Blaeberry reaches within 5 km of Howse Pass.

The concept of a Howse Pass road leaving the Trans Canada Highway about 10 km north of Golden, following the Blaeberry to Howse Pass, and linking up with the David

Thompson Highway at Saskatchewan River Crossing and thus act as an alternative or supplement to the Trans Canada Highway is an idea that comes up for discussion every 20 years or so!

**1872:** Walter Moberly, having been ordered by the CPR to discontinue the survey of the Howse Pass, first surveys the Athabasca Pass and then the Yellowhead Pass. The CPR rejected both of the northern passes in favour of the much more southerly Kicking Horse Pass; however, survey of the Yellowhead continued until 1880 when the railway rights were transferred to a private syndicate that became the Grand Trunk Pacific and then the CNR. The Yellowhead Pass became the route for rail lines from Edmonton to both Kamloops/Vancouver and to Prince George/Prince Rupert.

**1888:** The beginning of the Mts. Brown and Hooker search. Professor A.P. Coleman, of the U of Toronto, and party fail to reach the Athabasca Pass from the Columbia River.

**1892:** A.P. Coleman and party enter the upper Athabasca Valley from the north (i.e. from what is now Jasper) and name the Chaba River. The Coleman party rediscover Fortress Lake and were the first Europeans to provide a comprehensive description of the area. They also made the first ascent of Mt. Bouillard (which they call Misty Mountain) from which they become the first persons to record seeing Mt. Clemenceau (which they called White Pyramid) and the Clemenceau Icefield.

**1893:** A.P. Coleman reaches the Athabasca Pass and L.Q. Coleman and L.B. Stewart climb the highest mountain on the west side and so Mt. Brown receives its second ascent(?) but its height declines from 17,000 to Colemans estimate of 9,050 ft. and so the Brown/Hooker myth is over?

Coleman establishes the height of the Athabasca Pass to be 5,710 ft. not 11,000 ft.!

**1893:** James McEvoy, a government surveyor calculates the height of Mt. Robson at 13,700 ft.

**1896:** Walter Wilcox and R.L. Barrett travel north from Banff and are the first Europeans to discover the Sunwapta and Wilcox Passes. They observe the snouts of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca Glaciers but have no idea of the presence of the Columbia Icefield. Then they continue north to the Athabasca River, i.e. Wilcox has defined the basic line of the present Icefields Parkway from Banff to Jasper. Wilcox and Barrett then follow the Athabasca River to Fortress Lake, and thus establish a route to the middle reaches of the Athabasca River from the south, i.e. Lake Louise. Barrett makes the first ascent of Fortress Mountain.

**1897:** Norman Collie, from a high point on Mt. Freshfield observes, perhaps 30 miles to the NW a magnificent snow-covered mountain, its western face being a precipice, it towered above its neighbours. Collie thought the mountain might be 15,000 ft. high and thus could still be one of the mystical Mts. Brown and Hooker.

**1898:** Norman Collie/Hugh Woolley make the first ascent of Mt. Athabasca and in doing so discover the Columbia Icefields and see Mt. Bryce (the Finsteraarhorn), and directly westward of Peak Athabasca, rose probably the highest summit in this region of the Rocky Mountains (i.e. Mt. Columbia) I at once recognized the great peak I was in search of; moreover a short distance to the northeast of this mountain, another (i.e. Mt. Alberta) almost as high, also flat topped, but ringed by sheer precipices, reared its head into the sky above all its fellows at once I concluded that these two might be the two lost mountains, Brown and Hooker. Collie/Stutfield/Woolley attempt to climb Mt. Columbia via an approach up the Athabasca Glacier, but Mt. Columbia proved to be much further off than it looked, but they did succeed in making the first ascents of Snow Dome and Diadem and discovered the source of the Athabasca River.

From the summits of Snow Dome and Diadem Collie realizes that Mts. Columbia and Alberta cannot really be Mts. Brown/Hooker because there is no Athabasca Pass lying between them, leading from the Athabasca River to the Columbia River.

**1900:** Collie and Stutfield attempt to reach Mt. Columbia via the Bush River but do not succeed.

**1900:** C.S. Thompson rediscovers and follows the Indian trail leading to the east/west pass between the Saskatchewan River and the Bush River lying south of Mt. Bryce. This is the pass now known as Thompson Pass.

**1901:** Jean Habel (of Berlin), with Fred Ballard and Dan Campbell as his horse packer and cook left Laggan (Lake Louise) on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and used Wilcox's route to reach Fortress Lake on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, a journey of 21 days. Then they continued south to become the first Europeans to explore the inner reaches of both the Chaba and the Athabasca valleys. Habel notes that they are following Indian trails and at the terminal forks of the Athabasca River there are still standing tepee poles. On July 26, they reached and explored the West Chaba glacier; then on July 31<sup>st</sup> they attempted to climb Chaba Peak, but found the East Chaba glacier icefall too difficult. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1901 they successfully climbed Mt. Chaba. The first ascent of an inner Athabasca valley peak. Ascent 7 hrs. 40 mins., descent 5 hrs. Habel gives a height of 9245 ft. for Chaba Col and of 10,300 ft. for Mt. Chaba. Both of these heights are remarkably accurate. One of the impressive aspects of this ascent is that Habel managed to cajole his horse packer and cook, Ballard and Campbell to accompany him on the climb, it was hardly their normal activity so it is not surprising when one of them turned to him and said, A man may break his neck here! As the stories recorded in Fraser's book reveal, Ballard and Campbell were not particularly enamored of their rather straight-laced, 60 year old plus, Berlin employer/companion. Equally interesting in Habel's very detailed account of his Athabasca explorations he never once actually names his companions/employees!

Habel then moved camp from the Chaba valley to explore the innermost recesses of the Upper Athabasca valley. Habel reached the foot of the Columbia Glacier and

scrambled up to 6,700 ft. on the northern flanks of Toronto. Habel named most of the major mountains and glaciers in the area though virtually all his names have been rejected by both the A/BC and the Canadian Geographic Names Board, Habel had an Ontario Glacier, a Toronto Glacier and a Mt. Ontario, for a transcription of Habel names versus A/BC/Cdn. Geog. Board names, see table in Thorington, CAJ, Vol. 20, p. 31.

Habel ascended Habel Creek to a col at 9,845 feet, i.e. the Woolley shoulder and looked down at the Sunwapta valley.

Habel also produced a wonderful first photograph of the N face of Mt. Gamma (Mt. Columbia) rising more than 7,500 ft. above the Athabasca River.

Running short of food Habel left the Athabasca valley on August 12 and reached Laggan (Lake Louise) on August 24, exactly eight weeks after he had started out. *Not very much was achieved, for, like all former expeditions, mine ran short of provisions, and we had to return a fortnight earlier than I had anticipated, just when we had found the right way to advance on difficult ground, and in perfect weather.* Habels had spent 21 days reaching Fortress Lake, 13 days getting back to Lake Louise, and only 20 days in the Chaba and Athabasca valleys, 10 of which were spent in camp due to torrential rain.

Habel must have met or corresponded with Norman Collie after his 1901 trip as a footnote on page 37 (Habel. App., Volume 10) states, Collie, who has had the kindness to look at some of my photographs, identifies my Alpha as Mt. Alberta, and Gamma as Mt. Columbia.

Jean Habel first visited the Rockies in 1896 when he was almost 60 years old. Whilst on a CPR train descending to Field Habel saw a snow peak at the head of the Yoho Valley, which he called Hidden Peak. He returned to the Rockies in 1897 and discovered the Yoho Pass, Takakkaw Falls, the Yoho glacier and the western approaches to Mt. Balfour. Later in Field it seems he met Norman Collie (Fraser, 1969, p.156) who discussed the Brown/Hooker problem and Collies recent observation of a huge snow peak lying to the north of Mt. Freshfield. Its likely this conversation stimulated Habels 1901 exploration. Habel died in 1902 in Ostende, Belgium.

Habels Hidden Peak became Mt. Habel as named (by the Appalachian Mountain Club Thorington 1947 ref., or as named by Norman Collie, Place Names of the Canadian Alps) and remained as Mt. Habel until at least 1924 (see A/BC Boundary Volume, p.9) and there was also a Habel Glacier draining the Wapta Icefields. However, sometime after World War I Mt. Habel became todays Mt. Des Poilus.

In some accounts Habel is described as mysterious however, Thorington, (1947) provides five pages of incisive information and six further references, and Fraser (1969, p.156/157) provides a number of neat vignettes.

**1902:** From a camp in Castleguard Meadows James Outram and Christian Kaufmann make the first ascents of Mts. Columbia and Bryce. Then they join up with Collie and party (the discoverers of Mts. Columbia and Bryce!) to climb Mts. Freshfield and Forbes. In the Canadian Mountain Anthology, p. 157 there is a pithy editorial comment: Norman Collie, wrote private letters about his rival James Outram describing him as an interloper and opportunist, bent on self-serving first ascents missions built on the work of the real explorers who had proceeded him. But not a word of this appears in Collie's published writings.

Long gone are the days of the stiff (silent) upper lip when someone steals your mountain/route/pitch!

**1906:** Mary Schffer and Mary Adams reach the Wilcox Pass. The first recorded visit of European ladies to the northern Rockies.

**1906:** Founding of the Alpine Club of Canada and #1 item on A.O. Wheeler's agenda is a Canadian first ascent of Mt. Robson.

**1907:** Mary Schffer/Mary Adams cross the Wilcox Pass and reached Fortress Lake and carried on south down the Athabasca River to view Mt. Columbia from the north. Schffer renames Jean Habel's Mt. Manitoba as Mt. King Edward. On their return to Jasper they meet A.P. Coleman and his party travelling north on their way to make the first mountaineering exploration of Mt. Robson.

**1907:** First designation of Jasper National Park.

**1908:** Mary Schffer/Mary Adams rediscover Maligne Lake and are the first to reach it from the south. Henry McLeod, a railway surveyor had previously discovered the lake from the north, from the Athabasca River, in 1870. Then Schffer/Adams travel on to Jasper and to the Yellowhead to view Mt. Robson.

**1913:** A.L. Mumm and Moritz Inderbinnen visit Athabasca Pass and climb Mt. Brown.

**1913:** Conrad Kain, W.W. Foster and A.H. MacCarthy make the first ascent of Mt. Robson at the ACC GMC.

**1914:** Jasper National Park enlarged, virtually to its present boundaries.

**1916:** B.W. Mitchell and H. Bryant visit the upper Athabasca Valley.

**1919:** Caroline Hinman begins her off the Beaten Track tours for young ladies from the eastern U.S.A., these include horse back tours from Lake Louise to the Columbia Icefields.

**1919:** The Alberta/British Columbia Interprovincial Boundary Survey (A/BC) map from south of Mt. Columbia through Snow Pass to Clemenceau. The A/BC produces Sheet

23 and 24 of the Interprovincial Mountain Boundary Survey, which remain the basic topographic maps of this area until 1964!

The A/BC leave Banff on June 20, reach the Thompson Pass (south of Mt. Bryce) June 28, unsuccessfully attempt both Mt. Columbia and Snow Dome, in both cases there is too much cloud to make photographic surveying worthwhile. August 18 they move to Fortress Lake, then on Sept. 3 to the head of the east branch of the Chaba. On Sept. 8 they make the 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Sundial Peak; and then move to the inner Athabasca; Sept. 17 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Warwick Mountain; Sept. 23 pack up to return to Banff; October 3 arrive Banff.

The A/BC Volume a report of the Commission Appointed to Delimit the Boundary between the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia may sound like a typical austere government publication. However, it is not. Firstly it contains many superb mountain photographs, often taken from some unusual view spots, as the surveyors required wide arcing views of valleys and slopes as well as summits. Also it is ninety percent (90%) written by A. (Arthur) O. Wheeler (the founder of the ACC) and frequently Wheeler simply gets carried away by the beauty of a meadow, lake, flowers, alpine trees, the splendor of an icefall; a wholly new view of an icefield, a totally unexpected waterfall, the joy of exploration always finds its way through the official prose.

Then there are a few pearls of familiar mountaineering experience, e.g. page 29, *on one occasion the leader of the party broke through the snow and disappeared into a crevasse. Fortunately the members of the party were roped together and he was hauled out without other mishap than a drop into space at the end of a rope*, a description of the 1918 Survey Party crossing the Conway Icefield.

An equally familiar tale, dropping a rucksack, p. 31, *The (1918) party on the 1<sup>st</sup> August made the ascent of Coronation Mountain, when there occurred a very serious mishap resulting in the absolute loss of a book of field notes of the work from the commencement of the season. The climbing party in charge of the chief assistant, Mr. A.J. Campbell, made the ascent of the peak by a route both difficult and dangerous and completed work at the summit. When descending by another route it became necessary at one place to lower the other two members of the party both of whom were novices and in their first season at mountaineering down a bad piece of cliffs; the survey instruments, camera, transit, and a rucksack containing a satchel with the field book in it, sweaters, etc., then had to be lowered separately. Untying the rucksack from the rope, one of the assistants placed it upon a too narrow ledge and the moment he removed his hand it fell off, struck the ledge on which he was standing and bounded over the edge out of sight. Climbing down it was nowhere to be seen. For two days, in pouring rain, every possible spot in the vicinity was searched and only one conclusion was probable. On bounding over the ledge the rucksack must have fallen into a narrow rock gully with a steep incline to its mouth, across which flowed of mass of glacier ice. Directly opposite the mouth of the gully there was a*

*large hole in the ice, doubtless carved by water flowing down the gully, which furnished a run-off channel for the melting snow from above. The incline of the gully continued steeply under the ice and the only conclusion possible was that the rucksack had continued its course down the gully and under the ice. Mr. Campbell lowered a weighted rope for one hundred and fifty feet down through the hole in the ice and found that the steep incline continued beyond that distance. There was no possible way of ascertaining where the rucksack had gone.*

This serious loss necessitated the re-occupation of a number of stations on the west side of Bush Pass, and Mr. Campbell, who in my absence was at his wits end to know just what to do in the circumstances, took the only common-sense action possible by re-occupying them immediately. All the photographic views previously taken, were safe at the camp, but the transit readings for azimuths and orientation of the views, without which the views themselves were of little value, had to be done again.

See below A.O. Wheeler, as one of the two Commissioners of the A/BC strengthens his surveyors mountaineering capabilities in the following year, 1919, by hiring Conrad Kain!

In 1918 the A/BC commented with regard to the Thompson Pass (6,511 ft.), immediately south of Mt. Bryce, *a road could be constructed without a great deal of difficulty.* As everyone who attend the Spring Rice GMC can attest the logging road from the Bush River almost makes the crest of the pass! But I very much doubt if Parks Canada is going to complete a trail through to the Icefields Parkway!

Omega Peak was the final photographic tie-in station covering the southern margin of the Columbia Icefield of the A/BCs 1919 field season.

**1919:** Conrad Kain was employed by the A/BC from June 23-September 28 and he worked from Rice Brook to Castleguard Meadows/ Thompson Pass to the Columbia Icefields and then northwards to Fortress Lake.

Kains long summer of surveying in the upper Athabasca valley, provide him with ample opportunity to realize the wealth of unclimbed mountains that lay at hand, to the west in the Chaba group, to the east Mt. Alberta and the Twins and to the south Mt. King Edward.

There is somewhat of an information gap here. In *Where the Clouds Can Go* there is a complete list of Conrad Kains ascents, and these include: Warwick (first ascent), Sundial (first ascent) and a number of others- Chaba W., three peaks east of Fortress Lake including Chisel (first ascent), two peaks west of Fortress Lake, peak north of Sundial. In Thoringtons guidebook to the Rockies all of these ascents are attributed to the anonymous A/BC Survey with no credit being given to Kain. But indeed all of the A/BC reports are anonymous, only three individuals are ever named and there are no appendices listing each years employees.

**1920:** The A/BC survey the Athabasca Pass area and twice climb Mt. Brown. The A/BC establishes a height of 5,736 ft. for the Pass, and 9,156 ft. for Mt. Brown. Later in their 1920 field season the A/BC make Mt. Robsons height decline to 13,068 ft.

**1920:** Allan Carpe, Howard Palmer and W.D. Harris climb Mt. Serenity from Fortress Lake.

**1920:** Allan Carpe and Howard Palmer attempt to climb Mt. King Edward via Habels Ontario Glacier (King Edward Glacier). They reach a height of 10,600 ft. below the final cliff band.

**1921:** A/BC survey provide a final height for Mt. Robson of 12,972 feet, so in fact there is no >13,000 ft. mountain in the Rockies, and, at 3954 m no >4000 m peak either!

**1921:** Publication of Howard Palmers and J. Monroe Thoringtons seminal first edition of A Climbers Guide to the Rocky Mountains of Canada with its front page photograph of the unclimbed Mt. Alberta.

**1923:** D.B. Durand, H.S. Hall, W.D. Harris, H.B. de V. Schwab make the first ascent of Mt. Clemenceau via an epic back packing trip from Fortress Lake following the route of their 1922 reconnaissance.

**1923:** From Castleguard Meadows, Conrad Kain with William S. Ladd and J. Monroe Thorington, make the first ascent of N. Twin and then make the second ascent of Mt. Columbia. On the latter the climbing party included Jim Simpson, the horse packer who had taken Outram/Kauffmann to Castleguard Meadows to make the first ascent, 21 years before. Later Jim Simpson makes the first pack horse descent of the Saskatchewan Glacier.

Thus by 1923 Conrad Kain had climbed three of the four 12,000 peaks of the Canadian Rockies.

**1924:** W.O. Field, F.V. Field, L.U. Harris, guides Edward Feuz/Joseph Biner made the first ascent of South Twin, 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent of North Twin, 3<sup>rd</sup> ascent of Mt. Columbia.

**1924:** Conrad Kain, with M. Max Stumia and J. Monroe Thorington visit the Athabasca Pass. With them is A.J. Ostheimer, who is then 16 years old, but Ostheimer had climbed Mts. Temple and Rainer the previous summer, i.e. when he was 15. In the *Glittering Mountains*, opposite page 170 there is a photograph of the 1924 party, Ostheimer appears to have a full beard and is smoking a pipe and seems to be well built for a 16 year old!

They make an ascent of Mt. Brown and then make the first ascent of Mt. Hooker, which has declined in height from 16,000 ft. to 10,782 ft.! Their ascent of Mt. Hooker is an epic journey which lasts 54 hours with some masterful leading by Conrad Kain.

The party then made the first ascent of Simon Peak in the Ramparts, and continued to Mt. Robson where Ostheimer/Thorington made the first ascent of Little Mt. Robson on the SSW ridge route to Mt. Robson and Conrad Kain made the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> ascents of Mt. Robson by the S.S.W. ridge route as part of the ACC GMC.

**1924:** Byron Harmon (photographer) and Lewis Freeman (writer) On the Roof of the Rockies visit the upper Athabasca Valley as part of their 70 day/500 mile journey in which Byron Harmon takes 400 glass plate still photos and 7,000 ft. of movie film, see the classic black and white photographs of the Columbia Icefields, Mt. Columbia, Fortress Lake, packhorses on glaciers in Great Days in the Rockies.

**1924:** The first ascent of Mt. King Edward by Conrad Kain, and J.W.A. (Joseph William Andrew) Hickson (President of ACC 1924-26). Palmers original description of their ascent is a fine read. The party realizes one could climb Mt. Columbia by a traverse south of Mt. King Edward (as was done by Bell and Michel in 1951).

They make a complete circum navigation of the Columbia Glacier and reject it as a reasonable route to reach the Columbia Icefield. They do see a break towards N. Twin (used by Ostheimer in 1927). The party then makes an extensive reconnaissance of Mt. Alberta and defines what would become the successful 1925 route. They climb Little Alberta but the weather is always too poor to attempt Alberta.

**1925:** 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Mt. Alberta, Jean Weber (see below, 1927) is the additional Swiss member of the Japanese party led by Yuko Maki.

In **Where the Clouds Can Go** Kain makes continuous comments as to what a great climb Mt. Alberta would be, and as the pre-eminent guide of the time and the most knowledgeable of the inner Athabasca Valley one wonders why he wasnt with the Japanese party? However, as stated in (*Where the Clouds Can Go, p.390*) 1925-1928 Conrad Kain seems to have done little or no mountaineering in the three summers that followed (1924); and as explained in Bob Sandfords excellent account (*Sandford, Mountain Heritage Summer, 2000*) the Japanese party had traveled by CNR to Jasper and then joined forces with Swiss guides in residence for the 1925 summer, Heinrich Fuhrer and Hans Kohler and the visiting Swiss amateur Jean Weber. This may or may not have been coincidence.

Yuko Makis great route was the Mittellegi (NE) Ridge of the Eiger, in the Bernese Oberland. Maki made the first ascent, Sept. 10, 1921 with three Swiss guides, F. Amatter, F. Steuri and S. Branwand.

So though Maki did not climb the Mittellegi with Heinrich Fuhrer he may well have met him in the Bernese Oberland as Fuhrer was one of the most notable local guides and the Mittellegi (in its virgin state) was a great route, otherwise it seems strange for both the Japanese and the Swiss to simply turn up in Jasper in July 1925!

**1927:** A.J. Ostheimer (now 19 years old) and his two Harvard undergraduate companions, John de Laittre and Rupert Maclaurin, their guides Hans Fuhrer and Jean Weber and their two horse packers and cook climb 36 peaks, 27 of which are first ascents, in a period of 63 days. Their 1<sup>st</sup> ascents include Tsar Mtn., Stutfield, Kitchener; 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent of Clemenceau, 3<sup>rd</sup> ascent of N. Twin; first access of the Columbia Icefield from the north, etc. and the rest of the epic of **Every Other Day**. Their second from last first ascent is Wales Peak by Jean Weber, de Laittre and Maclaurin via the East Chaba Glacier and then the west slopes of the mountain.

Weber with de Laittre and Maclairin also made the second ascent of Sundial Peak, ascent from the Chaba Valley and then descent via the Sundial Glacier to the Athabasca Valley and cross the terminal forks of the Athabasca River on foot to reach Ostheimers packhorse camp. There is a wonderful, effectively vertical photo of the terminal forks of the Athabasca River in **Columbia Icefield, A Solitude of Ice plate VII** which shows exactly what an unpleasant on foot proposition this is, and has been done by all **Up the Athabasca** climbing parties after the demise of the packhorse.

One of the notable features of Ostheimers eight-man team is that **everyone** climbs mountains; the horse packers, the cook, the Harvard botany/geology students, never mind Ostheimer and the two Swiss guides. Everyone is involved in every aspect of their 63-day marathon, which, in part, is why they achieved so much.

Its interesting to speculate why Ostheimer didnt employ Conrad Kain on his epic 1927 summer, especially as Ostheimer had climbed with Kain in this area in 1924. But Ostheimer had been guided by Hans Fuhrer on an ascent of Mt. Rainier in 1923 when Ostheimer was 15 and Fuhrer moved to Canada in 1926 to work for the CPR and then to Jasper in 1927 to work for the CNR so Fuhrer was in the right place at the right time and clearly Fuhrer and Ostheimer related extremely well with each other. Kain seems unperturbed and he provides Ostheimer with numerous written details from his 1919/1924 explorations.

Ostheimers and Fuhrers other goal for their 1927 season was to climb all four 12,000 peaks in the single summer, still a laudable ambition.

Pushing the Limits (p.153) lists Hans Fuhrers later accomplishments of first ascents in the Coast Mountains, Mt. Steele, the Fuhrer Route on Robson, etc. Ostheimer never climbed again though he did visit the Rockies in 1977.

**1927:** Jasper National Park, final extensions.

**1928:** 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Chaba Peak, autumn by E. Schoeller (Breslau, Germany) and his guide Julius Rhmi (Pontresina, Switzerland) via East Chaba glacier (they also made 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent of Mt. Serenity at Fortress Lake)

**1929:** Joe Weiss (solo) skied from Jasper to the Columbia Icefield.

**1930:** Joe Weiss and party skied from Jasper to the Columbia Icefields, explored the Icefields and almost made the summit of Mt. Castleguard.

**1930:** Joe Weiss and party, first ski trip from Jasper to Banff, down the line of the Banff/Jasper highway

**1931:** First winter ski ascent of Snow Dome, March 1931, Cliff White, Joe Weiss and Russell Bennett

**1931:** July 13, 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Habels Toronto Glacier by the Cromwells, Spadavecchia and Thorington and first party to reach the snowy watershed pass at 7,300 ft., in morainal debris at the summit we found balls of iron pyrite similar to those found on the Freshfield, Lyell and Alexandra glaciers.

July 15, Cromwell, Spadavecchia, Thorington, 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Watershed N. Peak (pt. 10,160 ft.), by the **west** (NW) ridge, sharp broken slabs being encountered below the summit. Descent made by the **south** slopes.

July 18, Cromwell/Spadavecchia 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Pt. 10,300 ft. (SW Warwick) up **west face**, from col to the west

July 19, Cromwell, Cromwell, Spadavecchia, Thorington 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Pt. 10,100 ft. (SE Sundail) **via west face**.

July 20, Cromwell/Spadavecchia, 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Watershed S. Peak (Pt. 10,340 ft.) via the **south face**/the **SW rock ridge** (from about 9,500 ft.) fairly interesting rock climbing. CAJ, Volume 20, p.30-35 and App. Volume 18, p.347-356.

**1931:** Late in 1931 construction of the original, narrow, gravel highway from Banff to Jasper was begun as an unemployment project providing 600 jobs each summer through the 1930s.

**1933:** Joe Weiss, C.V. Jeffery, A.D. Jeffery, A.L. Withers attempted a ski ascent of Mt. Columbia, but failed 100 m below the summit.

**1936:** July 6, by Cromwell, Cromwell, North and Thorington, **2<sup>nd</sup> ascent** of Chaba Peak, via south side of East Chaba glacier/icefall to summit, found record of 1<sup>st</sup> ascent.

July 8, **2<sup>nd</sup> ascent** of Mt. Chaba (which they called Chaba Minor) via east lateral tributary glacier, i.e. Habels route, found record of 1<sup>st</sup> ascent.

July 12, via Toronto Glacier to Toronto Pass, i.e. Snow Pass, mounted a steep icefall, crossed a difficult bergschrund and made **first ascent** of Pt. 9,700 ft. (North Aqueduct Peak) and then followed long undulating snow arte south to make **1<sup>st</sup> ascent**, Pt.

10,300 ft. (Central Aqueduct Peak and cut back to Snow Pass.

July 14, followed the SW branch of the Toronto Glacier to col at its head and up SW slope to make 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Triad Peak.

1940: June 15 the official opening of the Banff/Jasper Hwy., the Icefields Parkway.

1942: 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Snow Dome by a snow cat vehicle (!) by the U.S. 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.

1944: Lovat Scouts (a Scottish Regiment) made the first winter ascents of Mts.

Columbia, Kitchener, Andromeda, etc.

1947: The Alpine Club of Canada held their first ski camp on the Columbia Icefield.

1949: 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent (?) of Watershed Mountain North Peak by George Livingston (as recorded by the Petroskes in 1979)

1951: Sterling Hendricks and George Bell utilized a totally different approach to solving the logistics of a major climbing campaign in the Columbia/Clemenceau /Chaba Icefields, instead of packhorses and man packing they utilized floatplanes and airdrops.

Hendricks party landed their float plane on Glacier Lake, in Banff National Park, and had food/fuel dumps dropped off at the Lyells/Spring Rice Brook, climbed their way north via Mt. Columbia and exited via the Athabasca Glacier to the Icefields Parkway. Not sure what Banff National Park officials would think of this scheme nowadays!

Meanwhile the party consisting of: George Bell, Graham Matthews, David Michael and John Rousson were flown to Fortress Lake July 9 and had a major food/fuel dump dropped off on the Clemenceau Icefield.

Bell and Michael made 1<sup>st</sup> Ascent of Mt. Shackleton (West and Centre summits), the party made 2 attempts on the NE ridge and N. face of Clemenceau reaching within 300 feet of the summit; climbed NW ridge on Tusk; they then backpacked all their gear to the Tsar/Mt. Somervell col; **Bell/Rousson** made the 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Mt. Somervell. **NB: every edition of the Northern Rockies Guidebook has the wrong names for the 1<sup>st</sup> ascent party.** Bell/Matthews/Michael made the 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent of Tsar. As had Ostheimer before them, they discovered that the route from Tsar Creek to Snow Pass consists of the wild icefalls of the Lower Wales Glacier rather than the gentle slope shown by the A/BC map.

*On this trip it was noted that A/BC Interprovincial Boundary Map is completely erroneous in the region Headwaters of Tsar Creek.*

Still they were the first party to ever traverse Snow Pass from west to east.

From a camp below the King Edward Glacier, Bell and Michael climbed Mt. King Edward (? 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> ascent) and then from a bivouac ledge at 9,000 ft. on Mt. King Edwards SW ridge they traversed across to Mt. Columbia and made a new route up the west face joining the SW ridge near the summit of Mt. Columbia. They returned to the Athabasca Valley, ascended Habel Creek and exited to Banff-Jasper Highway on August 6. Their month long journey almost rivals that of Ostheimers 1927 party, minus the packhorses!

**1953:** MacIntosh party up the Athabasca. Climbing guide Walter Perren. First ascent of Blackfriars. Maybe one of the last (?) classic packhorse, outfitter, cook, and guide parties to go up the Athabasca.

**1954:** The first attempt to ski via the Icefields/glaciers from Jasper to Banff.

**1955-1962:** Banff/Jasper Highway reconstructed and paved.

**1960:** Second attempt to ski the glacier/icefield route, from Banff to Jasper, Hans Gmoser, Neil Brown, Kurt Lucas, Pierre Garman, Pat Boswell, Philip DeLaSalle. Reached the Columbia Icefield after 25 days and abandoned their attempt.

**1964:** ? 1<sup>st</sup> use of helicopter to reach Clemenceau Icefield peaks (\$130/hr!)

**1967:** The first north to south glacial/icefield ski traverse from Jasper to Banff. This involves crossing the col between Chaba Peak and Mt. Chaba (the Chaba Col) and continuing down the Wales Glacier, crossing Snow Pass from north to south, and exiting via the Watershed Glacier and the 9,320 ft. pass to the Columbia Icefields below Mt. King Edward. Party: Don Gardner, Charlie Locke, Neil Liske, Chic Scott. Their trip took 21 days.

**1967:** John de Laittre (of Ostheimers 1927 Expedition) made a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary visit to his glacier markers on the East Chaba Glacier.

**1970:** Mt. Columbia, N. Face/Ridge, Chris Jones/Gray Thompson.

**1972:** Mt. Alberta, N Face, Jock Glidden/George Lowe.

**1973:** Mt. King Edward, NE ledges, H. Mitchell (solo).

**1974:** North Twin, N Face, Chris Jones/George Lowe.

**1974:** Another N-S (Jasper to Banff) ski party (Smith team) via the Clemenceau Icefield and then they descended to the Wales Glacier by rappelling from the col between the Deamon Horns and Chaba Peak to the Wales Glacier and then skied out to the south as per the 1967 party.

**1975:** Alpine Club of Canada Climbing Camp in the inner Athabasca Valley. The participants walked in from the Icefields Parkway over the Woolley Shoulder and down Habel Creek to a base camp at Habel Creek and the Athabasca. From a high camp in the valley on the west side of Mt. King Edward the ACC group made the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> ascents of Mt. King Edward; the 2<sup>nd</sup> (?) ascent of Triad Peak and the 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Omega (by two separate routes) and the first ascent of Toronto; 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent of SW Warwick by a new route; 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent of SE Sundial; 3<sup>rd</sup> ascent of Sundial Mtn. etc.

The records of camp attendees, routes and mountain climbs, incidents amusing or interesting are somewhere filed in Don Forests basement. Don is currently searching for his files!

**1975:** Dane Waterman spent 18 days alone in and around the headwaters of the Athabasca River. He first attempted an ascent of Mt. Alberta, but was stormed off. He then put up new routes on South Twin, Mt. King Edward via the NW ridge a crumbling classic and the N face of Sundial a 500-foot snow and ice face with a beautiful shape and attempted the N face/NW ridge of Mt. Dias. A.A.J, Volume 50, p. 469, 1976.

**1977:** A.J. Ostheimer/John de Laittre make a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary visit to Rockies.

**1978:** Bob Kruszynas party helicopter to a camp south of the south fork of the Sullivan River from which they made numerous first ascents in the Chessboard group. Then they made the first ascent of Aqueduct (South) Mountain via a long traverse to reach the Aqueduct Glacier and ascended via Pt. 9900 ft. and the north ridge.

**1979:** Jim Petroske and his three sons, Bill, John and Jim Jr. In 5 days with 80 lb. packs, walk in from the Icefields Parkway, over the Woolley Shoulder/Habel Creek and up the Athabasca River. They climbed from July 18 to August 4. They walked out via the Athabasca Valley to Sunwapta Falls (35 miles/2 days), which they found to be vastly preferable to their 5-day epic entry via the Woolley Shoulder. Their base camp was on the NW side of Snow Pass at the Watershed/Wales divide. They made the 3<sup>rd</sup> ascent (?) of Mt. Chaba, 3<sup>rd</sup> ascent of Chaba Peak; first ascent of the Deamon Horns; 2<sup>nd</sup> ascents of Centre Aqueduct, Pt. 9,900 ft. and Aqueduct (South) Mountain; 3<sup>rd</sup> ascent of Watershed North; 2<sup>nd</sup> ascent of Toronto; first ascents of Pt. 9,400 ft. above the Triad Glacier and of NW Toronto.

**1986:** Winter ascents of Triad Peak and Toronto by Bob Saunders and Robin Tivy, April 1986, part of a ski excursion south down the Athabasca and then up the Wales Glacier and over Chaba Col and then north up the Chaba Valley.

**1987:** The second complete glacier/icefield ski traverse from Jasper to Banff by Peter Tucker, Rory MacIntosh, Steve Langley and Charlie Eckenfelder.

**2001:** Toronto Section Mt. Chaba Centennial Camp. On six of our ten days we were either in the cloud, in torrential rain, driving snow or white out but the good days were **really** good! During any poor weather you can always have a competition to collect the largest, most perfectly spherical, pyrite nodule. You will be in good company. J. Monroe Thorington did this back in 1931 whilst sitting around in the rain and snow on a Snow Pass moraine, C.A.J. Volume 20, p. 31!

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*The “Enigma” of the Lower Wales Glacier, or,  
the origin of the Alberta/British Columbia Interprovincial Survey’s most significant error*

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The “Lower” Wales Glacier

The single most significant error made by the A/BC surveyors in 1919 occurs at Snow Pass, see comments by Ostheimer (1927), Thorington (1931) and Bell (1951) appended below. Though the A/BC produced an elegant 100 ft. contoured map of the entire area they completely omitted to show the presence of the “Lower” Wales Glacier, which in 1927 was +/- 7 km long and was still “three to four miles long (4-5 km) in 1951, see map attached. Goes to show that extrapolating contours into the “dead ground” between survey points is a risky business! The 1919 maps were the “topographic maps of record” until 1966 when the 1:50,000 imperial (100 ft. contour) maps based on vertical air photos were published.

A major problem for the A/BC was the mapping of the British Columbia side of the Interprovincial boundary along the south and west sides of the Columbia Icefield from their photographic stations at the head of Bryce Creek and on the Clemenceau Icefield. The A/BC Survey had extremely detailed coverage of the Alberta side of the Boundary from their many occupied stations above both terminal branches of the Athabasca River, both branches of the Chaba River and the high ground between the Athabasca and Chaba Rivers; however, they had no occupied photographic stations on the British Columbia side of the boundary for a distance of almost 40 km, and none covering any of the branches of the Sullivan River.

**How did this sequence of events come to pass?**

A/BC 1919, p.62: *“in order to supply some of the data for mapping, deficient through inability to reach the Bush River, a station was occupied on the southern border of the icefields at the head of Bryce Creek...this station was named “Columbia Icefield”, at 8,884 ft. and was found to be of much service”.*

A/BC 1919, p. 72: *The Continental Watershed follows a circular ridge of numerous elevations of which the two Chaba glaciers are outlets...what lies beyond it is, at the present time, a matter of speculation for it was not possible to reach it from either of the Chaba branches”.*

A/BC 1919, p.81: *“The increasing difficulty of getting data on the British Columbia side of the Divide has made it impossible so far to map any part of it northwest of the Columbia Icefield until close to Fortress Lake. It is hoped to be able to gather data for such purpose during the season of 1920 by means of the Snow Pass at the head of the western source of the west branch of the Athabasca and the valley of the Wood River and its tributaries”.*

However, as the detailed account of the A/BC’s 1920 summer makes clear, they never did return to Snow Pass and therefore they never actually occupied any photographic stations, which surveyed the British Columbia side of the boundary between Bryce Creek and Clemenceau.

A/BC p.84, July 9, 1920: *“Clemenceau Creek Valley was now ascended...it was necessary to reach the southern borders of this icefield (Clemenceau) to cover the country that could not be reached the previous (1919) season from the head of the west branch of the Athabasca River”. The A/BC occupied*

five photographic stations, the highest and most southerly being Clemenceau Icefield No.1 (9,721 ft.) and No. 2 (9,676 ft).

A/BC p.89, 1920: “Beyond the SE margin of the Clemenceau Icefield is seen a deep valley of a large stream which, judging by its general direction and source, maybe the Sullivan River...a tributary of (which the A/BC named) Tsar Creek, heads from the snow pass where the most western source of the main Athabasca River has its rise”.

Thus, on the British Columbia side of the Interprovincial Boundary, due to the problems of access, the A/BC had a gap of +/- 40 km, between their occupied photographic stations at Bryce Creek and those on the Clemenceau Icefield. Also Bryce Creek and the Clemenceau stations are not in “line of sight” of each other. The upper Sullivan River and “Tsar Creek” both lie in “dead ground” of the occupied stations. The A/BC never actually visited snow pass or had an occupied station (i.e. Warwick Mtn. or Sundial Pk) capable of viewing “Tsar Creek”.

However, despite their lack of real data the A/BC confidently asserted that:

A/BC, p.110, 1920: “The season’s surveys added the area southwest of the watershed to sheet No. 23, which area could not be reach in 1919. It was now covered by the assistance of camera stations on the Clemenceau Icefield. The data obtained enabled the basin at the head of Tsar Creek to be mapped, producing a very nearly full sheet.

*The same stations enabled sheet No.24, submitted in 1919, to be enlarged to practically a full sheet.*

*In addition, new sheets No.25, 26 and 27, filled out as fully as the data obtained permitted, are now submitted.”*

However, the A/BC surveyors had simply interpolated contours and topographic features into ground they had not actually surveyed. This is always a hazardous technique in complex mountainous terrain and one which the actual users of A/BC maps of the “Lower” Wales Glacier and “Tsar” Creek were keen to comment on:

### **Ostheimer 1927**

*“The (A/BC) Survey sheet showed that, in the valley labeled “Tsar Creek” there was timber and stream, but no glacier. On the contrary, in its waist is a glacier of considerable extent, measuring about ¾ mile across and flowing for some 3 miles from the névés at the valley head. For this ice river we have suggested the name of “Wales Glacier”. As for the name of the stream flowing from Wales Glacier to Tsar Creek, we have suggested the appropriate title, Wales Creek. Tsar Creek is misplaced on the Survey Map, for the name should belong to that creek with its deep and wild canyons that flow south and then SW from the glaciers of Mt. Tsar. **“Every Other Day”, p.97***

### **“Every Other Day”, p. 247, footnote #61**

“In short, this discussion is to the following effect: On the Boundary Survey Sheet #23, the Shackleton, Tsar and Wales Glaciers are absent; Wales Creek is called Tsar Creek; Tsar Creek is termed Sullivan River; while the name Cummins River remains”.

**Thorington 1931, C.A.J., Volume 20, p.33:**

“On the western side of the (Snow) pass, Wales Glacier, imperfectly mapped, descends to the depths of Tsar Creek in a succession of broken cascades and a tongue as long if not longer than any effluent of the Columbia icefield”(i.e. say 6 to 8 km. Long because the Saskatchewan Glacier, was the, 1931, 6.5 miles/10.5 km long).

**George Bell, AAJ Volume 8, p.258/259**

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1951, George Bell, at the Somervell/Tsar Col, “we were encouraged to move eastward to the Athabasca Valley. We had with us a handsome map compiled by the A/BC Interprovincial Boundary Commission. It had 100 foot contours, impressively printed in black, brown and blue. We observed that, in the region we were to cross, it disagreed with Ostheimer’s sketch map – but who could be so impious as to question a map with 100 foot contours? Also the map and the terrain bore no resemblance to each other. The map said Tsar Creek; we found a great glacier. The map showed a gentle slope; we found a cliff. Indeed, those contours could have been drawn as well on a desk in Ottawa as on a plane table in Alberta. Suffice it to say by evening we found ourselves in the Athabasca Valley north of Mt. King Edward. For those who are interested in this route, let me add that there is a valley glacier extending three to four miles west of Divide, with an icefall (which could be difficult) one mile west”.

George Bell, CAJ Volume 37, p.102

*“On this trip it was noted that the A/BC Interprovincial Survey Map is completely erroneous in the region “Headwaters of Tsar Creek”.*

So I guess the moral of the story is, “*with maps, artistry is no guide to accuracy*”.

The state of the “Lower” Wales Glacier in 1980 is shown in the photograph on p.52 in “*Columbia Icefield, a Solitude of Ice*” plus the additional comment made by Bart Robinson, when he and Don Harmon stop for a lunch break on their helicopter photo extravaganza. “*We wander to the brink of our limestone outcrop to inspect the (“Lower”) Wales Glacier, a shattered, nightmarish finger more crevasse than ice. To cross here, would be impossible*”. “*Columbia Icefield, A Solitude of Ice*”, p.47.

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**GLACIAL RECESSION 1919/1927-1994**

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Available information:

- (1) **A/BC Maps Sheets 23/24 of 1919/1920**
- (2) Ostheimer modification of the A/BC maps, 1927
- (3) 1:50,000 Dept. of E.M.R. "Imperial" Map with 100 ft. Contours, produced in 1966 (from aerial photographs taken in 1955/56 and field surveys in 1956 and **1962**)
- (4) 1:50,000 NRC "Metric" Map with 40m Contours, published in 1996  
(with data current to **1994**)

From this database one can construct glacial recession lines. These are only too apparent as one traverse from today's separated glaciers. See map attached.

Both in the ***A/BC Volume*** (p.77) and reproduced in ***North*** (1936, p.56) there is a wonderful photograph, taken in 1919 by the A/BC Survey, looking south from Sundial Peak (on its first ascent). The photograph shows the Toronto and Watershed glaciers as being one continuous sheet of ice, 3 km wide, divided by the narrowest strip of moraine. The Toronto Glacier is 1.5 km wide as it turns from NW to N to E to flow down into the Athabasca Valley. Part of the "Upper" Wales Glacier joins the Sundial and the Toronto Glacier to make an east flowing glacier with three distinctive medial moraines. Meanwhile the "lower" Wales Glacier is fed by five glaciers: the Watershed, the "upper" Wales, the north Aqueduct and two wide extensions of the South Chaba glacier. No wonder it is a major trunk valley glacier system.

In 1919-1927-1936 (even in the early 1950's?) all of Base Camp lay totally beneath "permanent" snow and ice!

Between 1919/1927 and 1994 the glaciers appear to have **retreated** as follows:

<b>Wales</b>	<b>by</b>	<b>±</b>	<b>5 km</b>
"Sundial"	by	±	2 km
"Toronto"	by	±	3.5 km
"King Edward"	by	±	1.5 km
"N. Aqueduct"	by	±	1.0 km
Apex	by	±	0.5 km
East Chaba	by	±	1.5 km
"East East Chaba"	by	±	1.0 km

**North**, 1936 p.59 states that the “East Chaba Glacier had retreated 559 feet since 1927”. North could be this accurate as he had located Ostheimer’s 1927 line of painted boulders. In 1967 de Laittre made a “40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” visit to the same marked boulders on the East Chaba Glacier. However, he failed to actually locate them, but “according to our best estimate, the distance of recession from 1927 to 1967 is 3,300 ft. or 80/year on average. Judging from the 1919 A/BC survey and the vertical air photographs of 1955 recession is 2,640 ft. or 78/yr.” Appendix D, **Every Other Day**, p.240/241.

From 1919/1927 to 1994 the “Divide” peak rock ridge has increased in length

<200 m to <2 km as it emerges from the ice; and the Watershed and Toronto Glaciers are now divided by a wide rock spur rather than a narrow strip of moraine.