



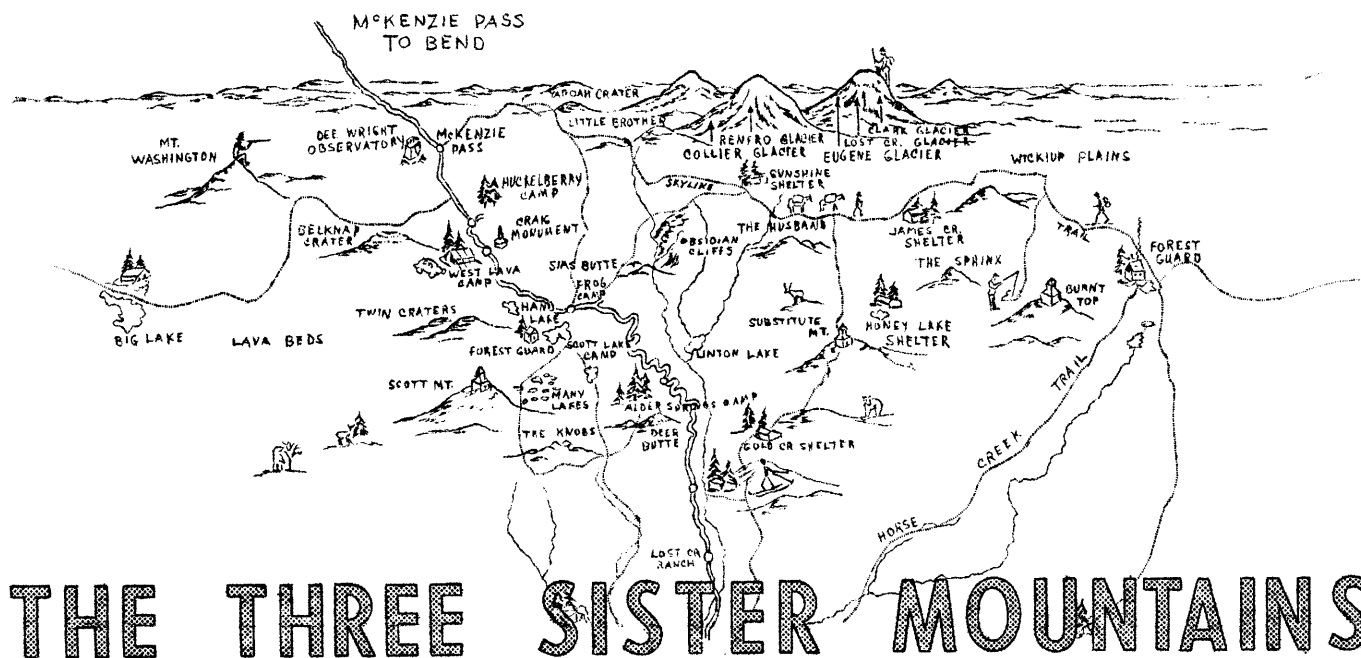
# The OBSIDIAN



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NO. 7



## THE THREE SISTER MOUNTAINS

by Ray Sims

The Three Sister mountains with their snow white glaciers and the many beautiful meadows with their never-ending fields of colorful flowers has been the "home of the Obsidian Club" for the past 23 years.

In 1892 the first notebook was left in a tin can at the top of Middle Sister by John Straub's party and a member of that party was Darwin Yoran. They hiked over trails from McKenzie Bridge.

On August 26th, 1928, two weeks after the Club's first summer outing at Obsidian Camp, the leaders of the Club took 73 townspeople on a sight-seeing "tour of Collier Glacier". At that time Collier Glacier was "big" and it was a rare sight that these people saw at the first "Chief's Initiation" at the foot of the Glacier, only to climb upon the ice and traverse the entire length to the great depth of ice coming off the Middle Sister.

Out in the center of the Glacier, Marion McClain gathered the large group  
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### *Summer Camp Notes*

ALL dunnage will be taken on the bus. Therefore, sleeping bags, tents and dunnage of any kind must be left at Glen Sims', 741 East 14th (in alley) by Saturday afternoon, August 5th.

The bus will be loaded at 7 P.M. August 5th. Label all bags. The bus will be at the East Park block - by the Court House - at 6:30 A.M., Sunday August 6th, - ready to go.

The route is over the McKenzie to Bend, Burns, Vale, Nyssa, Caldwell and Boise.

Arriving at Boise at seven Sunday evening, the night will be spent in motel cabins. The Club will reserve the  
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**"THE OBSIDIAN"**

**MEMBER:** Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs; Pacific Northwestern Ski Association; Central Cascade Recreational Council.

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**FWOC CONVENTION**

Can the Obsidians make up a delegation this year to the FWOC Convention - some other clubs are doing it. This year it will be at the Sierra Club's Norden Lodge, in the high Sierras, west of Reno. Time, September 2-3-4; cost, only \$8.00. Dorr Hamlin will be our delegate; call him - 5-1148 - for more details, if you can go.

**THE THREE SISTER MOUNTAINS(Continued)**

in a big circle, surrounding the "draft" (a large hole in the ice where the surface water runs off) and told them of the history of Collier Glacier, Oregon's largest Glacier.

In the first summer camp held from August 5th to 12th, 1928, all the mountains were climbed. Nearly all the 18 members in camp climbed the Husband on Monday. Seven men of the camp climbed the North Sister on Tuesday. Ten members climbed the Middle Sister Wednesday. A day of rest. And five set out early Friday morning and climbed the South Sister. Crossing the fields of jet black Obsidian, Henry Korn conceived the idea that we were just as HARD as the rocks we walked upon, so why not call ourselves OBSIDIANS? Thus our name was changed from the Eugene Outdoor Club.

During the second Summer Camp held on Hinton Creek, on the West side of the South Sister at Camp Bovard, another large group climbed the South Sister, nearly our entire camp of 42 members, E. A. Britton and his Roseburg Boy Scouts and a party from the new Bend Skyliners were all on top.

Another large party of 20 climbed the North from our 1929 camp, and besides the seventeen men, it was the first time any women had climbed the North, with the club. Elizabeth McMahan, Florence Ogden (Florence Sims) and Elsie McHoes (Elsie Dotson) were the first Princesses.

The fifty-two members of the 1931 Green Lakes was the largest of any summer camp until last year's Spirit Lake Camp. But the record set in 1931 and still going strong is the "Three in a Day" climb of the Sisters. Our Mayor, Ed Johnson, Clifford Stalsberg and Don Woods were the first to achieve the feat. They left the camp at Green Lakes and hiked up the East side to the foot of the North Sister, camped, climbed the North, then the Middle and then up the North side of the South Sister and down Lewis Glacier to Green Lakes. How did they get their sleeping bags back from the North Sister. Well, I led the climb of the North Sister a day later, and brought them back.

Broken Top was "scouted" from all angles in 1931 and the North pinnacle was  
 (Continued Page 3, Column 1)

## THE THREE SISTER MOUNTAINS(Continued)

found to be the highest and I might say the "most interesting".

Another record for the Middle Sister which came on July 1, 1934 was the "Tenderfoot Climb" which Clifford Stalsberg led and 71 was the number reaching the snow-capped summit that day. Reading the long list in my scrap book shows many present club members were on that climb of Clif's.

The great break in the terminal moraine of Skinner Glacier on the South Sister during the summer camp in 1933, coming a day later than the South Sister climbers - who thereby escaped being engulfed by it - made the McKenzie river "run red" for several days from the red ash on the South.

Books could be written from the many climbs recorded in the summit boxes and also from our 21 enjoyable summer outings into many wilderness regions. We have camped eight times in the Three Sister Area, twice on the East side at Green Lakes in 1931 and 1937, six times on the West side of the mountains, Obsidian Camp in 1928 and 1945, Camp Bovard in 1929, Scott Camp in 1933, and Husband Lake in 1942 and 1947.

Quite a number of men have climbed the "three in a day" in fours, threes, twos and even one, but not until Labor Day of 1949 had a woman tried it and on that day Doris Sims, Mike Stahl, and Lloyd Gust made it "Three in a Day".

To bring this up to date, on July 2, 1950 thirty-four were on the "Tenderfoot Climb" of the Middle Sister, snow was three foot deep at Frog Camp, it was a snow climb, led by the Climbing Committee and the Princesses and Chiefs.

## OBSIDIAN BULLETIN BOARD

Remember! The Obsidians have a Bulletin Board at Hendershott's; whenever you are down town, make it a point to stop in and look it over. It will keep you informed on the various activities of the club.

## PAGEANT

Wanted --- several typical Obsidians, both men and women, to take a small part in the Pageant. Call Mike Stahl, if you would be willing to take part - 7-9335.

## THE GEOLOGY OF THE THREE SISTERS

Obsidians who are interested in the geological history of the Three Sisters area can find many reports that have been published on the development of the area. Not all of the geologists agree, but because of that very disagreement we find greater interest.

One of the recent reports is Howell William's The Ancient Volcanoes of Oregon which he originally gave as one of the Condon lectures. He tells that volcanic activity began in the Pacific Northwest about 60 million years ago. At this time the coast ran along the present Cascade foothills near Portland, Salem, Eugene, and Roseburg. During the ages since that time the land has been raised and eroded; volcanoes have appeared and disappeared. The whole Cascade Range he explains as an accumulation of lavas, thickest in the center and wedging out east and west.

The age of the birth of most of the present Cascade mountains is in the upper Pliocene period about ten million years ago. The early mountains of this period first developed uniformly broad shield cones. The sides have now all eroded away and the summit cones of more resistant material stand out as rocky pinnacles. Vivid examples of these dissected volcanoes are Three Fingered Jack, Mt. Washington, Mt. Thielsen, and the North Sister.

One of the most fascinating theories of the formation of the mountains of this area was advanced in 1925 by Dr. Edwin Hodge in Mt. Multnomah, Ancient Ancestor of the Three Sisters. He believed that the entire upper portion of this huge volcano was destroyed either by explosion or subsidence leaving a gigantic caldera ten miles in diameter. Since then erosion has left its walls represented by the North Sister and Little Brother on the north, the Husband on the west, the Sphinx, Wife and Devil's Hill on the south, and Broken Top on the east. Within this caldera comparatively recently have been built the Middle and South Sisters. Although later studies have questioned parts of this theory and added new facts, the next time you climb one of the mountains in the area, try to picture the huge volcano as Dr. Hodge

(Continued Page 4, Column 1)

THE GEOLOGY OF THE THREE SISTERS(Cont.) described it.

Going back to the report of Dr. Williams, we note that he states that, during the past few thousand years there has been more volcanic activity in the Three Sisters area than in any other part of the Cascade Range. Indeed, many cinder cones have probably been built and numerous flows of basalt and Obsidian have erupted during the present millennium. Of the Three Sisters the last to erupt was the South. Its beginning goes back well over a million years when a broad shield volcano of basalt was formed. Then during the Ice Age a steep cone was built on top of the shield and after the glaciers began their last retreat, two cones of basaltic lava and cinders were developed around the summit. The younger of these cones has a beautifully preserved crater rimmed by cinders and lava bombs and slaggy layers of lava which seem so fresh that the final outburst may have taken place less than 1,000 years ago.

Close to the southwest base of the South Sister another youthful cinder cone discharged a long stream of lava that poured almost as far as Elk Lake; a second cone on the southwest flank of Broken Top erupted a shorter flow that almost reached the edge of Sparks Lake. At about the same time basalt issued from the parasitic cinder cones on the sides of the Bachelor.

Very arresting are the black and red cinder cones on the North flank of the North Sister which poured lava to the McKenzie Pass. Obsidians have all climbed over the flow spilled into White Branch Creek from one cone close to the snout of Collier Glacier. This flow followed White Branch for several miles and overflowed into Linton Creek, damming it to form Linton Lake.

On the north side of the McKenzie Pass the black wilderness of basalt from the Belknap Crater cones is one of the largest and most impressive sheets of recent lava anywhere in the United States.

Today there are neither hot springs nor fumaroles in the Three Sisters region; nevertheless, it would be unwise to deduce that all the volcanoes are extinct. Dr. Williams who is recognized as a leading authority on volcanoes be-

lieves some of them may be merely dormant.

\* \* \*

Dr. Ruth Hopson, Obsidian, has written an article on Collier Glacier which was published in the June 1950 issue of American Forests, entitled "Collier Glacier Year by Year". Four pictures of the Glacier accompany the article in which the movements of the great body of ice are easily traced. Dr. Hopson visits the glacier every year to make this study.

The article affirms that Collier is the largest one of fourteen glaciers on the sides of the Three Sisters, besides being the largest in Oregon. It is around 400 years old.

#### SUMMER CAMP NOTES

(Continued from Page 1)

cabins in advance, but everyone will be on his own just as we have always done on trips to the Wallowas.

The first meal - Monday dinner - will be served at String Lake in the Tetons.

Monday's trip from Boise will be to Mountain Home, Glenns Ferry, Twin Falls, Burley - turn north at Pocatello - Idaho Falls, Rexburg, Jackson, Wyoming, and String Lake by 4 P.M.

Frank Sipe, Bulletin Editor, wishes to announce that this particular July 1950 issue of the Obsidian was assembled and completely directed in its publication and set-up by Dorothy Spencer, member of the committee. She was assisted by various members of the club.

There will be no issue during August and the next Obsidian will be the August-September number and will appear in early September.

SECT. 34.66 P.L.&R.

