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Mt. Hayes, southeast face, variation and solo ascent

Alaska, Ruth Gorge

In April, Samuel Johnson soloed the southeast face of Mt. Hayes (6,500', AI3 M3) in 18 hours round-trip from a base camp on the Trident Glacier. He and Ryan Johnson (unrelated) had hoped to attempt a more north-facing line on Hayes' east side, but when brutally cold temperatures quashed that plan and his partner came down with a cough, Samuel Johnson decided to solo a sunnier aspect of the wall. He climbed directly below the summit for the first third of the climb, then veered up and right for the middle portion (to avoid a steep rock band and stay clear of the cornices near the summit), and then continued directly up to reach the east ridge, which he followed to the 13,832' summit. He descended the heavily crevassed east ridge.

For about two-thirds of his ascent, Johnson generally followed the line climbed by John Bauman and Tom Walter (AAJ 1989) for the first ascent of the face. In the upper third, he climbed directly up where Bauman and Walter traversed rightward toward the east ridge. This was possibly only the second ascent of the face and the first solo ascent of Mt. Hayes, though there are many undocumented climbs in this range.

Dougald MacDonald, from information supplied by Samuel Johnson

Images

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