



AAC Publications

Lincoln Peak, Northwest Face, Wilkes-Booth

Washington, North Cascades

Lincoln Peak (9,080') is located among the “Black Buttes” and is a prominent subsidiary summit of **Mt. Baker**, less than a mile southwest of **Colfax Peak**. **Steep on all sides, it is the gutted remains of a 500,000-year-old stratovolcano, otherwise known as choss.** On March 13, 2015, Michal Rynkiewicz and I climbed a new route on the northwest face. We completed the route in 18.5 hours from the Heliotrope Ridge trailhead, during a one-day weather window. It would usually take at least a day to reach Lincoln Peak in winter, and not without serious avalanche concerns, but a nearly snowless winter in the Cascades created clear roads and all-time conditions.

I had not had my eye on the northwest face of Lincoln for very long. However, two ascents of the Polish Route on Colfax Peak that season, and a subsequent photo of the face, got me thinking. In early March 2010, Daniel Jeffrey and Tom Sjoeth had climbed the northwest side of Assassin Spire, a subsidiary summit of Mt. Lincoln, by their route Shooting Gallery (2,000', IV WI4, AAJ 2010) and published photos of unclimbed ice on Lincoln. If Colfax was in, I figured Assassin must be too, and possibly Lincoln as well.

Michal and I started our climb in the same location as the Assassin Spire route, where a pitch of WI4 begins right of the prominent hanging glacier. Above that, we simul-climbed along the west side of the upper amphitheater (a large basin between Lincoln Peak and Assassin Spire). Once on Lincoln's northwest wall, we climbed approximately four roped pitches on steeper ice, with snowfields up to 70° in between, followed by some rime-covered ridge climbing. After a brief stop at the summit, we descended the southwest face route. The descent was involved, with sections of snow and ice up to 65°. However, the immaculate conditions allowed for rapid downclimbing. We called our route the Wilkes-Booth (2,000', IV WI4).

– Daniel Coltrane

Images



The northwest aspect of Mt. Baker's "Black Buttes." Shooting Gallery (2,000', IV WI4, Jeffrey-Sjoleth, AAJ 2010) on Assassin Spire is shown at left. The Wilkes-Booth (2,000', IV WI4, Coltrane-Rynkiewicz, 2015) is shown on the right.



Daniel Coltrane climbing the lower portion of the first pitch of Wilkes-Booth, the crux of the route (60m, WI4), shared with the start of Shooting Gallery (2,000', IV WI4, AAJ 2010) on Assassin Spire.



Looking up the northwest face of Lincoln Peak from the upper amphitheater between Assassin Spire and Lincoln Peak.



Michal Rynkiewicz climbing the first pitch of a long ice flow on the northwest face of Lincoln Peak (60m, WI3+).



Michal Rynkiewicz climbing the final, icy chimney up to the summit of Lincoln Peak.

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