



AAC Publications

Gregory Butte: First Known Ascent

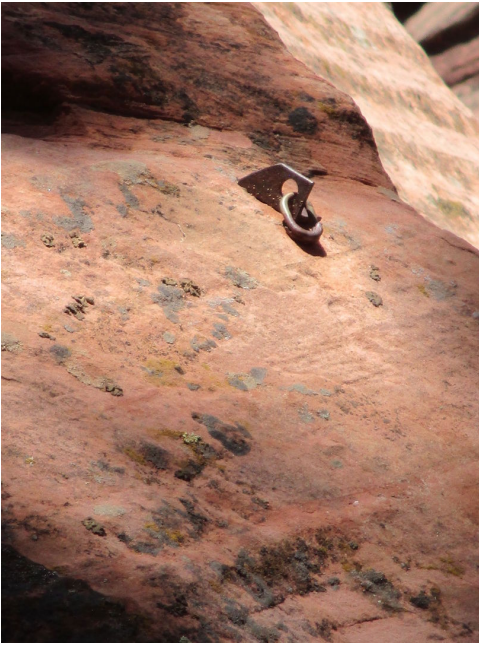
Utah, Zion National Park, Kolob Canyons

Over six days in July, during a cool spell of 90°F, I made the first known ascent of Gregory Butte (ca 7,700'), in the Kolob Canyons section of Zion National Park. I had previously attempted to climb the butte via a new aid line on the southwest spur, but there were no continuous crack systems. Eventually I found a gully described in by Fred D. Ayres and A.E. Creswell in AAJ 1954, leading to a hanging valley upon which the summit formation of Gregory Butte sits. Ayres and Creswell had climbed the gully to measure the span (ca 300') of nearby Kolob Arch. It was apparent this route sees very infrequent traffic. On the first pitch I used a knifeblade piton to scrape thick moss off footholds, and there were no cracks that would take pitons or cams. Higher up I found Star Dryvin bolts from the 1950s and rotten webbing at rap stations.

Once in the hanging valley, I explored the north and south sides of the upper section of Gregory Butte for a route to the summit. My route ascends the south face, starting where the west ridge meets the flatter summit formation. Overall, I rope-soloed ten pitches: five in the gully and five from the hanging valley to the summit (5.9 A2).

– Dan Sith

Images



Old bolt found in the gully accessing the hanging valley from which Gregory Butte was climbed. The bolt likely was placed in the 1950s during the first climb of this gully.



Dan Stih on top of Gregory Butte.



Looking up the first pitch of the upper buttress on Gregory Butte.

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