



Lubken Creek Canyon, Rusty Trinkets

California, Eastern Sierra

AN ATTRACTIVE and sheer granitic wall juts out of the North Fork of Lubken Creek Canyon, south of Tuttle Creek near Lone Pine. This 1,000'-plus cliff is plainly visible from town and many areas in the nearby Alabama Hills, but our research revealed no previous climbs up this formation hiding in plain sight.

Myles Moser and I decided to take a closer look and hiked into the rugged, brushy canyon on the afternoon of March 31, establishing a bivouac at the base of the wall. The cliff lies at about 8,900' and was still holding snow in many of the northeast-facing crack and corner systems on April 1, so we chose the seemingly dry "King Line" and started up an arête at the very toe of the cliff.

Armed with 18 quarter-inch bolts and ultralight, homemade bed-frame hangers, we managed to stance-drill our way up a line of high resistance, weaving back and forth across lichenous, feldspar-studded granite. Four pitches of varied, run-out 5.10 and 5.11 face climbing led to the most ominous feature on the wall: a stepped 20-foot roof that is visible from town in Lone Pine. Myles executed the crux pitch onsight, with a bold lead out the gymnastic 5.12a roof. I seconded the pitch cleanly, a difficult task given the weight of the follower's backpack.

Above, three more pitches of gradually easing 5.9 cracks led to the top of the wall, a rather insignificant summit on a shrubby ridgeline. We completed the route in nine long pitches and descended the snowy gully to the left of the wall with some rappels off trees.

During our hike in and out of the canyon, we found many remnants of a very old mining camp, including metal dishware, food tins, and a late-1800s Oliver Ames Co. shovel. We named our route after the antique treasures and the interesting fixed hardware we left on the cliff: Rusty Trinkets (1,300', IV 5.12a).

– Richard Shore

Images



An unnamed and previously unclimbed granite wall in the North Fork of Lubken Creek Canyon, near Lone Pine, showing the line of Rusty Trinkets (1,300', IV 5.12a), climbed by Myles Moser and Richard Shore on April 1, 2018.



Myles Moser casting off on the first pitch of Rusty Trinkets (1,300', IV 5.12a). This is the first known route up a prominent granite wall in the North Fork of Lubken Creek Canyon, near Lone Pine.



Myles Moser traversing a slab below a large golden overhang on the fourth pitch of Rusty Trinkets (1,300', IV 5.12a). This is the first known route up a prominent granite wall in the North Fork of Lubken Creek Canyon, near Lone Pine.



Myles Moser about to engage the crux 5.12a roof during the first ascent of Rusty Trinkets (1,300', IV 5.12a), the first known route on a prominent granite wall in the North Fork of Lubken Creek Canyon, near Lone Pine.

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