

The West Wing of Wakonda Butte.

WAKONDA BUTTRESS

Wakonda Buttress is a large cliff of steep yellow rock at the west end of the long band of cliffs on the north side of the valley. It is bounded on the left by a small, east-facing cliff (The West Wing) and is the home of the mighty Iron Suspender. The name of the wall comes from when George Homer, who was from Liverpool, England, was watching "Bill the Drill" Davidson leading somewhere on the route and is reported to have said "There's wak on the wall!" Wak is a Liverpudlian term for "my friend" and given George's thick accent, the Wak-on-da wall was born.

To the right of Wakonda Buttress is a long section of relatively featureless cliffs that extends eastward to Hidden Gully. On this section there are two prominent water streaks, a partially detached pinnacle called Isengard, and finally, Ripple Wall, a buttress of excellent gray rock just before Hidden Gully. Few climbs have been done on these cliffs, except for on Ripple Wall, and for now they are grouped together as The Ripple Wall Area.

Approach

Hike up to Ripple Wall and about 100 m before reaching the cliff, follow a good trail in the scree left to a rocky area near some large pinnacles (good campsite, no water). To reach The West Wing and Wakonda Buttress continue left through boulders and up a short scree slope. Alternatively, hike up and left from Old Fort Creek when even with the Ripple Wall directly to the base of the buttress.

Descent

To the west down easy slabs and scree.

J. Keunzel & party, 1971

This climbs the loose, obvious corner at the left end of the cliff.

Creame of Afterbirth 85 m, 5.7

J. Lauchlan & R. Amann, April 1973

At the right end of The West Wing is the prominent corner of Mayflower, at the junction of the cliff and the main face. About 20 m left of the corner is a chimney system that is undercut by a large V-shaped roof and choked by blocks in its lower section.

Start to the right of this below a cracked yellow corner that begins about 10 m above the base of the cliff.

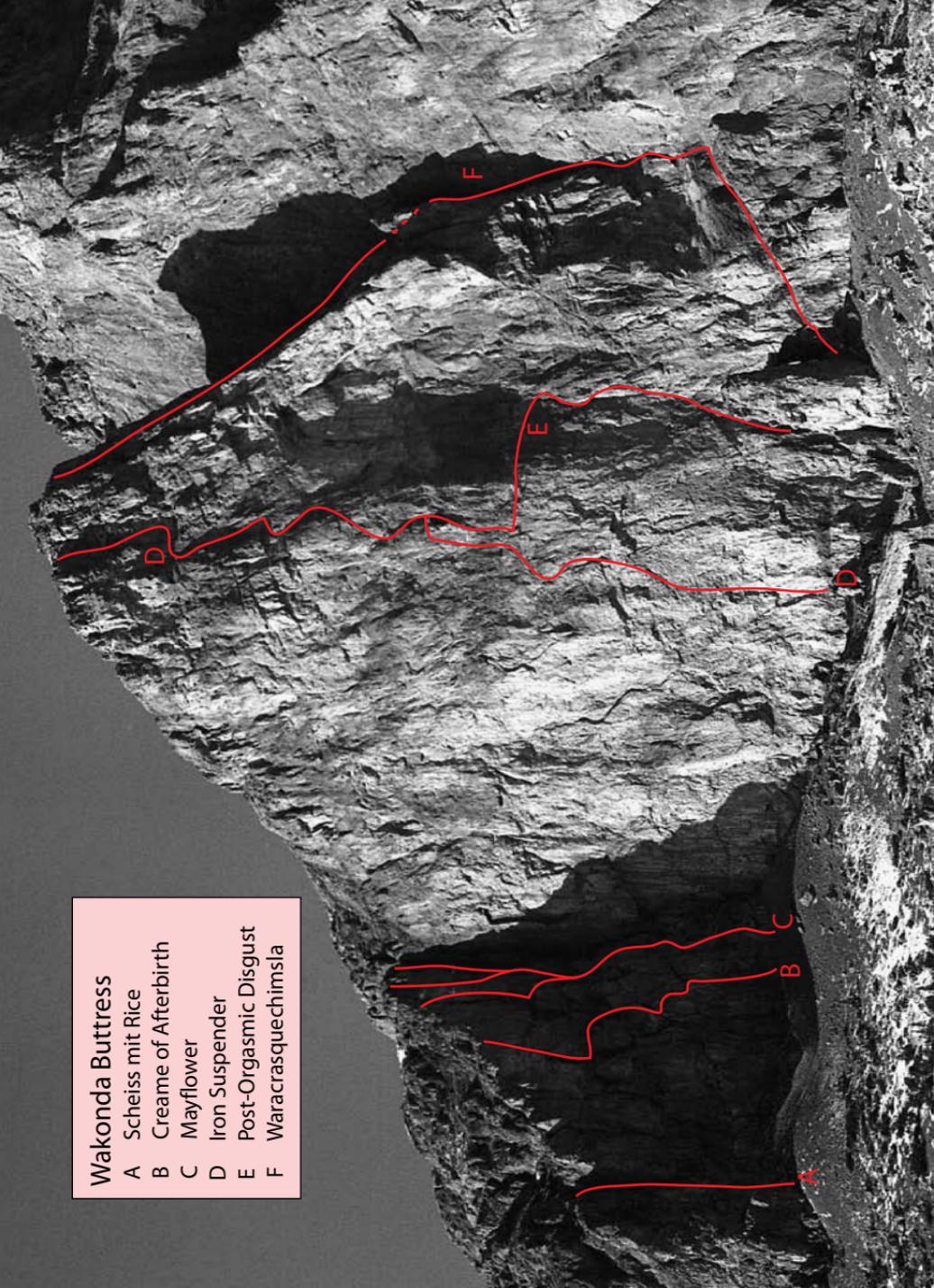
- 1) 40 m, 5.7 Climb up to the corner and pass the first roof on the left. Continue to a second roof that again is passed on the left, and then climb up to ledges.
- 2) 45 m Walk left to the base of the final chimney and climb this to the top.

Mayflower* 100 m, 5.7

G. Homer, J. Jones & P. Morrow, April 1971

Wakonda Butte

- A Scheiss mit Rice
- B Creame of Afterbirth
- C Mayflower
- D Iron Suspender
- E Post-Orgasmic Disgust
- F Waracrasquechimsla



This pleasantly named climb goes up the obvious corner at the junction of The West Wing and the main face. At the top, one of three exits can be taken.

- 1) 40 m Climb easy rock left of the corner to a belay below a groove.
 - 2) 30 m Continue up and right to the middle crack.
 - 3) 30 m, 5.7 Climb the crack to the top.
- 3 alt.) 5.7 Exit up the wider, more difficult crack on the right.
- 2-3 alt.) From part way up pitch 2, move up and left to the left-hand crack and follow this (5.7) to the top.

The Main Buttress

W. Davidson & G. Homer, 1971

This climbs directly up the steepest part of Wakonda Buttress and is typical of Billy Davidson's quest for big wall routes in the Canadian Rockies. Extensive amounts of aid are used but the route is reported to be a worthwhile outing. In the past the usual method has been to fix the first two pitches and then complete the route in a day. It is likely the route hasn't been climbed in some time and would probably go in a day for a competent party. Some of the bolts or rivets may be in poor condition and carrying a bolt kit is advisable. An extensive collection of pitons and hooks is also required.

Start "Where a drop of water falls from the summit" at a pile of big blocks below a shallow, overhanging groove. Old bolts and such are easily visible.

- 1) 35 m, A3 Climb the shallow groove and continue up the wall through a bulge mainly on bolts to a small ledge. (This pitch was originally graded A4 but has collected a fair amount of fixed gear over the years.)
- 2) 40 m, A2/A3 Follow the bolts up right until skyhook moves allow a small ramp to be reached. Continue up this (pitons) to a ledge.
- 3) 10 m, 5.7 Use rivets to gain a groove that leads to a ramp and bolt belay.
- 4) 35 m, 5.7 Free climb up right to a large detached flake, "The Lug," and continue up the right side of this to a belay on top (bivy site).
- 5) 40 m Climb up to a bolt ladder and follow this up and right across a steep wall. Continue up with the odd free move to a hanging belay below roofs.
- 6) 40 m Follow the corner on the right (piton) to more rivets. Make some delicate moves over a bulge (5.10b free, new bolt), and continue to a large ledge with a bolt belay.
- 7) 40 m, 5.8 Climb the corner directly above the belay to easier ground. Trend left into an easy right-facing dihedral leading to the top.

Post-Orgasmic Disgust* 285 m, 5.11b/c

D. Cheesmond, S. Dougherty & B. Gross, July 1985
F.F.A.: R. Slawinski & M. Norman, October 1998

This is a varied and sustained route on generally good rock, similar in both character and difficulty to Yellow Edge on Yamnuska. The first three pitches follow a prominent left-facing corner system. The route then traverses left for a rope length and finishes up Iron Suspender. The climbing is interesting and well-protected (a lot of fixed protection). Take a set of wires, cams from #1 TCU to #3 Camelot, and 3-4 pins (optional). Some new bolts were placed on the first free ascent to back up old belay and protection bolts.

Start Downhill and 30 m right of Iron Suspender is a large flake. Post-Orgasmic Disgust begins below the corner on the left side of the flake. Waracrasquechimsla begins near the right side of the flake.

- 1) 40 m, 5.10b Move up on good rock to a shattered band and climb over it to the foot of the corner. Climb the steep corner past two old bolts (5.10b) to a bolt belay on top of a pedestal on the right. The pitch is a bit scruffy but persevere, the rest of the route is much better!
- 2) 30 m, 5.10d Continue past one new and two old bolts to a short, overhanging crack (fixed wire). Pull through the bulge (5.10d) to gain a crack line trending up and right. From a fixed pin below a roof, step right (5.10a) and climb up to a ledge with a bolt belay.
- 3) 40 m, 5.10c Climb the corner above past three old bolts and a fixed pin. Stem over a bulge at the top of the corner (5.10c) to easier ground and a bolt belay.
- 4) 50 m, 5.9 To avoid the circuitous climbing of the original route, the first ascent followed a more direct line that is now the recommended route. Instead of lowering off a fixed piton on left down to a large ledge, follow the left-facing corner above for a few metres and then move up and left on clean slabs past two new bolts (5.9) to a ledge. Traverse left around a steep rib and climb the right side of The Lug pinnacle on Iron Suspender to the bolt belay on its top.
- 5) 45 m, 5.11b/c This pitch is all fixed. Step right and climb easily to the top of a pedestal at the base of a bolt/riev ladder. Traverse up and right (5.11a) to reach better holds. Climb up and slightly left of the line of rivets (new bolt), then step back right under a small roof (5.11b/c). Follow the rivets to a hanging bolt belay below roofs.
- 6) 40 m, 5.10b Follow the corner on the right (piton) to more rivets. Make some delicate moves over a bulge (5.10b, new bolt), and continue to a large ledge with a bolt belay.
- 7) 40 m, 5.8 Climb the corner directly above the belay to easier ground. Trend left into an easy right-facing dihedral leading to the top.

Waracrasquechimsla 300 m, 5.8

B. McKeith & M. Galbraith, September 1971

The route follows the prominent ramp and chimney system on the right side of Wakonda Buttress and continues up the edge of the buttress to the top. The name is actually the route description, "wall-ramp-crack-squeeze-chimney-slab." Little is known about this obscure route.

Start downhill and 30 m right of Iron Suspender just above a lone tree. Begin at the lower, left end of a prominent ramp.

- 1) 5.6 Climb a short gray slab to a shattered wall to reach the start of the ramp.
- 2) Follow the ramp to a corner crack below the upper chimney.
- 3-6) 5.6-5.8 Climb the crack and chimney above to the base of the upper scree bowl.
- 7-11) Follow the crack on the edge of the buttress to the top (mainly easy fifth class).

Robbie's Route

First ascent unknown

Fifty metres right of Waracrasquechimsa is a large square-cut boulder at the base of the cliff. A short, practice aid climb, consisting primarily of a bolt ladder, is located on its west side. With a little effort and a few newer bolts, the climb may well go free.