

THE BLOCK P ON BISHOP PEAK
by Walt. Lumley (1926)

I came to San Luis Obispo in September of 1920. Stayed all night in the St. James Hotel and the next day enrolled at Cal. Poly right out of the King City Grammar School at the age of fourteen

During my years at Cal. Poly I often wondered, since we had a lime Block P on the side of the maountain back of the Dorm, why someone didn't paint a block P on the protruding rock on Bishop Peak. It became an obsession with me for over 4 years.

During my years 1924 & 25 I was driving the school truck to pick up freight at the depot and other chores that I asked the AG department if I could borrow a long rope, paint, brush and small bucket. Of course he ask me what I was up to, so I told him what I wanted to do. I can still remember his big grin--I still think he thought I'd be bringing it all back. Could be he thought I was off my rocker. I got all I asked for.

It was on a Saturday morning, after I had done my chores that I loaded the truck with a 5 gal can of white lead, an old 4 inch brush, the/rope and the one gal. paint can, I stopped at the Dorm to pick up three fellows who had volunteered to help me with the job. I was very lucky to have them so willing.

We drove the old truck up the front side of the peak as far as it would go, which wasn't too far, due to old age. We unloaded the truck of its contents and then stood there wondering what next to do. The 5 gal can of White lead was the problem. We found a strong tree branch which we ran thru the handle and with a fellow on each side started walking. The four of us taking turns with the paint, rope, brush & can. There came a period where carrying was out and dragging was necessary--look at that peak an you will see what I mean. My choice of routes was the shortest but the roughest. There was never any choice of turning back..

One of the fellows had a wonderful idea, he took the end of the rope and started up the side and secured the rope so we could use that to get the paint and the rest of us up to that point. We used this system to the top of the rock where we all took time out.

The day was rather shot, but we decided to get in as much time as we could. We filled the gallon can with paint--tied the rope around my my waist and then I started down the face of the rock. Boy, was I scared at first, but then I got use to it. I found that the rain had caused small holes where one could get a toe hold to take the weight off the rope and make it easier to paint. It also made it easier to climb back to the top in order to reload the bucket and getting back to the job

It was getting late an I could see that we/would need a lot more paint for that rock and holes were really i using the paint up. We used the rope to get down the worse part. We left the/rope there for our trip back the next day--What a difference a rope can make.

When we got back to the dorm we found out a lot of the fellows had been watching our progress all afternoon with the help of binoculars. That made us feel good; only the next day we had more help than we needed. A lot turned back at the end of the ride

I went back to th AG department and borrowed some mere paint & rope. There was no way I could stop now. I still had problems--how was I going to paint a good looking P. How was I going to get the right curve P. I didn't get much sleep that night, thinking about the problem.

Only one solution kept coming to mind, it had to come from below the rock as from the top one could not get the right angle in the curve of the P. Remembering one of the fellows at the dorm had a megaphone (small one) that he used at the football games, I asked him if I could borrow it for the afternoon--which he did. I had figured that someone below the rock at the right angle would be able to tell me when to make the turn--only by voice. The megaphone really came in handy.

Two of the fellows went down far below where I was painting and in full view as to where the P would go. They had instructions to yell to me when to start the turn or the curve so to speak. I can still remember him yelling "Walt, start the curve" He guided me around the whole curve of the P. I still think it was a good looking P.

We finished the job late Sunday afternoon using up ten gallons of paint and the old 4" paint brush. The hardest part was the filling of the holes caused by the rain. I ended up with a very bad cold from being on the side of that rock in the wind.

NOTES OF INTEREST"

It was 28 years later that someone else went up there and gave it another coat.. After that I lost track!

Since it was my idea, I did all the actual painting but with the help of several other fellows--hanging on to the rope etc. Although once I looked up there and no one was hanging/on to the rope. I crawled back up & they had tied it to a little old bush. I asked them if they were trying to tell me something.

Dr. Crandall, president of the school at that time, told me that I had done a real good job. He invited me to a Sunday dinner at his home which was near the dorm.