

not seen notices posted that morning in a near-by Forest Service shelter. These stated that avalanche conditions probably existed on the lip of the headwall. He was skiing above the headwall and, while traversing to the left above it, fell and began slowly sliding down. Persons who saw him fall say that he could have stopped himself, but he must have failed to realize the danger. He slid slowly over the top of the headwall and through a sizable waterfall, and disappeared into a bergschrund which the waterfall had opened between the rock wall and the snow slope. A number of persons immediately converged on the scene, and several tunnels were dug through the snow some 18 feet below the top, but Schiller could not be found. Late in the afternoon, rescue attempts were abandoned, it being thought that he could not have survived the combination of the fall and the exposure to the ice water. A long line of men had been formed to the headwall, up which they passed blankets, Stokes stretchers, shovels, ice-axes and ropes. The body was found the next day. A coroner reported the death was caused by a "basal skull fracture."

*Source of information:* newspaper accounts, and members of the rescue crew.

*Analysis.* This accident, although it happened to a man on skis, is included in this report because it is the sort of thing which could easily happen to a careless mountaineer climbing or ski-mountaineering on slopes above a bergschrund or waterfall. The accident suggests that on such slopes one must be doubly careful, whether on skis or on foot, and that the inexpert should avoid climbing or skiing there at all. Also, as in the case of the Welk accident on Mount Hood, it is only too clear that one must regain control of oneself as soon as possible after slipping on a slope before one has slid too far.

*Colorado: Estes Park, Rocky Mountain National Park.* On 10 October 1949 another unsolved mystery of the mountains developed when two young hikers from the Colorado A. and M. Hikers' Club disappeared on the top of 12,300-foot Flat Top Mountain. David Devitt (20) and Bruce Gerling (21) became separated from nine other students with whom they were hiking from Grand Lake to Bear Lake. Their absence was not observed until the party returned to the college the following morning. Both men

were adequately dressed for cold weather, and they carried food; but cold and high winds battered the area for several days after they disappeared. It appears that in the confusion of the meeting of groups of hikers at Bear Lake their absence was not detected. A rescue party went into the field next afternoon, but raw, stinging snow squalls and heavy overcast impeded the search and drove rescuers with frostbitten fingers back to the base camp. Thirteen men from the Army's 14th Regimental Combat Team at Camp Carson, 22 A. and M. students, six members of the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group of Colorado University, and Park Rangers took part in the search, which eventually proved futile.

*Source of information:* newspaper accounts, correspondence from the Colorado Mountain Club and official report of the Chief Ranger's Office, Rocky Mountain National Park.

*Analysis.* What appears to be a fair description and appraisal of this tragedy and its causes has been written by Mr. Jack Gaskie, who covered the details of the event for the *Rocky Mountain News*. His statement is quoted below:

Failure of student leaders to live up to their responsibilities yesterday was blamed for the possible fatal delay in sending search parties out for David Devitt and Bruce Gerling, lost in near-zero weather for three days in the mountains between Grand Lake and Bear Lake.

Dr. Robert Bock, faculty sponsor of the Aggie Hikers Club, was unable to go on the Sunday expedition. He authorized a senior member of the club.

When the party of 40 boys and girls split up at Estes Park, leaders were appointed for the groups respectively going to Grand Lake and Bear Lake. It is one of the rules of the club that such leaders take roll calls at rest stops and trail's end.

The group of 22 with which Devitt and Gerling were hiking drove to Grand Lake; then walked 12 miles to a shelter cabin. There they split up again, 11 to continue on to Bear Lake and join the group that had stayed there, 9 to retrace their steps and drive to Bear Lake.

Leaders were again appointed for these sub-groups, and took lists of those in their party -- but nobody took note that Devitt and Gerling were not signed up with either contingent.

This was due to a change of plan on their part. At first they planned to return to Grand Lake. After the Bear Lake group left the cabin they stayed behind, resting before following the climbing party.

Thus as both parties descended to their goals, their leaders believed the missing two students were with the other.

Bad weather at this point took a hand. Those at Grand Lake were told the Trail Ridge road was blocked by snow, and that they could not rejoin the Bear Lake group over it. They had to return to Fort Collins via Berthoud Pass.

They reached the campus at 2 a.m. Monday morning, four hours after the Bear Lake party had returned. The first returnees were already abed -- hence the leaders of various groups and sub-groups did not get together to make their final check till after classes had started that morning.

Because of class schedules, it was not till noon that it was discovered that Devitt was missing. A more thorough check was made, and Gerling's absence was discovered.

By this time it was late Monday afternoon, with but a few hours of light remaining. Thus the search was not mounted till Tuesday morning -- 40 hours after the two students became lost, and possibly the difference between life and death.

#### (b) OTHER ACCIDENTS

*Arizona: Catalina Mountains.* On 30 October 1949 Wally Lundbohm (20), of Tuscon, was rescued from a tiny ledge 1000 feet above the head of Pima Canyon. He had been stranded on the six-foot-wide, 20-foot-long ledge overnight and had to be hauled 800 feet up the precipice after a volunteer mountain climber succeeded in getting a rope to him. Sheriff's deputies, aided by floodlights and a public address system, from near-by Davis-Monthan Air Base, worked all night to reach Lundbohm.

*Source of information:* newspaper accounts.

*Analysis.* From the meager data available it appears that this is another case of an inexperienced climber, climbing alone, and beyond his abilities.

*Colorado: Hagerman Peak, Snowmass Peak District.* During the last week of August 1949, Robert Hostetter became marooned overnight on Hagerman Peak. He later told a search party that, after progressing ahead of his companions, he decided to climb the peak, and that darkness eventually stopped him while he descended the mountain. Although he was not injured, he suffered somewhat from exposure

*Source of information:* newspaper reports.

*Analysis.* This is evidently the familiar story of a person who separated himself from his party by going ahead too eagerly