

sitting directly under the overhang, in this "spark gap." All indications were that they were killed instantaneously. The third person, sitting about 10 feet in front of the rock, was probably stunned as the electricity continued along the ground, to judge by the burns found on his buttocks and feet.

*Colorado, Animas Peak*—On July 24 during the annual summer outing of the Colorado Mountain Club, a strong party of Elwyn Arps, William Davis (31), John Filsinger, and Gus Hallum (33), was formed to make the climb of the north face of Animas Peak, a sustained and fairly severe technical climb. The ascent was uneventful although it took longer than had been anticipated.

Descent was made by the regular route used to climb Monitor Peak from Noname Creek. The route follows a steep gully which at this time of year is usually filled with snow. The party was descending this gully at the time of the accident.

Davis was in the lead and kicking steps downward. He had angled across the snow in the hopes of getting onto rock shelves at the side. Just before stepping off onto the ledges, Davis slipped and fell about 6 feet, before making a self-arrest just at the edge of the snow and rock.

The exact sequence of events is unclear but it seems most reasonable that Davis struck his elbow just after falling. The blow was severe enough to dislocate the shoulder. Davis' ice axe wedged on the rock saving him from plunging on down the gully, although he was making active efforts to get into an arrest position when he stopped.

First-aid was rendered at the scene of the accident and the party continued to camp under its own power. Davis was able to walk although in pain from the dislocation. The available medical doctors were not in camp at that time (one had returned to town and the other was in fly-camp in the next valley) so one of the nurses attending the outing administered sedatives and immobilized the injury. The next day, Davis rode a horse to the narrow gauge railroad stop and proceeded to the hospital in Durango. The dislocation was reduced about 28 hours after the accident. Recovery has been complete.

*Source:* William Davis.

*Analysis (Davis):* Several factors contributed to the accident. Hurrying on the descent was one. Failure to consider the snow conditions was another. The north face had been in shadow for sometime and the snow was rapidly freezing. The step-kicking process had become more difficult and in a few places steps had been chopped. The party should have roped up in light of the steepness of the gully and the changing conditions. Davis had slipped once before and this warning should have been heeded, although the slip was not severe and a self-arrest had been successfully executed. Carelessness was enhanced by the lateness and consequent eagerness to return to basecamp.

The Colorado Rockies are usually not considered the type of mountains requiring crampons; this single piece of equipment, however, would have contributed to the safety of this party and probably would have prevented

the accident. Had the party had crampons a quick, safe descent would have been possible.

*Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park*—On July 31, Lester Reeble (45), Mrs. Al Spencer, George Lowe, and Amel Landgraf (leader), attempted to climb Chief's Head (13,579) in Rocky Mountain National Park. The group left the parking area at 6:30 a.m. and began the seven mile hike into the base of Chief's Head. The group had been scheduled to climb McHenry's Peak but after looking at the two, Chief's Head appeared the easier. They continued their ascent; arriving on the ridge between the two peaks at 1:00 p.m.

By this time, the weather began to deteriorate. To avoid the danger of lightning the party turned back. In the descent, Les Reeble was in the lead and Landgraf followed the group. They were making good progress; Les was getting a little ahead of the group. At about 1:35 p.m. Landgraf heard a large rock start sliding down the slope. It came from a point about 100 feet below him and in the vicinity of where Les Reeble was last seen. He stopped to watch for the rock to appear on the snow slope below. Instead he saw Les rolling and sliding out of control down the snow slope; then over the edge of another cliff to a snow field below. He came to rest at the base of this snow field.

Landgraf tied the others into a rope to avoid panic. They descended to the point from which Les had fallen. They found the site where a large rock had been. He evidently was using this as a hand-hold to lower himself to the lower ledge. They traversed this point and descended sixty feet to a ledge that they had used in the ascent and followed this down to where they could traverse back to where Les lay. He was dead.

They returned to the parking area. Landgraf hurried on ahead of the others to notify Park authorities. They immediately organized an evacuation team. Poor visibility and rugged terrain prevented their locating Les's body until about 1:00 a.m. They completed the evacuation the next morning.

*Source:* Amel E. Landgraf.

*Analysis* (Landgraf): "As leader of the group, I am to be held responsible for the events leading to the accident. As I look back at it now, I should have kept the group closer together during the descent. A rope was not actually needed except at the point where Les fell from. Had he or we traversed sixty feet to our left the descent would probably have been without mishap. Les Reeble was a man of good judgment. I'm certain he would not have tried anything beyond his capabilities. I feel he would not have continued his descent if he didn't think he could have done it safely."

*Colorado, Dome Peak, Boulder Canyon*—On August 7, Dan Sawtelle (17) and Larry West (17) climbed Dome Peak. They established a rappel by driving in two pitons and running a sling between them. West rappelled first successfully. Sawtelle then rappelled. As soon as he applied his weight a piton pulled out and he fell nearly vertically 75 feet to the