

ACCIDENTS, 1962 CANADA

Alberta, The Rockies, Mt. Eisenhower. On June 23, four experienced Edmonton climbers set out to climb the southeast ridge or face of the East Tower of Eisenhower. They were Patricia Payne (45), Ernie Kinsey, Jaro Mares, and Eric Hopkins.

Top of the tower is 8,500 feet and reaching the base of the tower at more than 7,000 feet entails crossing an easy system of ledges through a rock band. All four had used this route before, and did not think it necessary to rope around a sloping corner joining two easy ledges.

Kinsey had traversed this but as Miss Payne followed a section of slab she was using for handholds came completely away. She fell backwards down two cliffs and stopped on scree 200 feet below. Others reached her within minutes, but she died instantly.

Source: Eric Hopkins, Paddy Sherman.

UNITED STATES

New Hampshire, White Mountains, Crawford Notch, Willey Slide. A scheduled A.M.C. Beginners' Ice Climb was held on the Willey Slide, Crawford Notch, on Saturday, March 17th. The party included Bert Hirtle and Walter Herrmann, trip leaders, John Perry, Bob Leach, Wayne Keller, Alan Stroh, Charlie Wood, and Sally Mills (Mrs. Ronald).

A climb had been held there the previous weekend. Since that time there had been a fairly heavy snowfall, which because of at least two warm days was well consolidated and bonded to the older snow and ice.

After a morning spent in general belay and self-arrest practice, the party divided into ropes of two to climb the slide.

Leach and Mills on one rope were slightly to right of center of the slide. Mills led off over easy ice, secured by an ice-ax belay in the snow. Picking her route well, and climbing surely and with confidence for about seventy feet, she stopped on a fairly level snow-covered platform.

Perry, who was above and to the right of this point, was observing her. In his opinion the platform was a logical belay stance. After a quick look around, she moved toward the back left of the platform. The snow she was on and that below it suddenly slid off. She landed face down and applied self-arrest. The arrest kept her speed down until she went over an 80° drop about ten feet high. (On the way up she had diagonalled around this on much less steep ice.) It appeared that she caught her crampon on the less steep ice below. This flipped her into a "cartwheel." She landed on her back in the snow and slid until stopped by the belay.

She made an attempt to move and then lay still. Leach went down to her position, keeping tension on the rope. She appeared dazed at first and then remarked that her right leg hurt. The other climbers converged on the spot. Hirtle and Perry after a brief examination decided the leg should be splinted. This was done with two ice-axes and several triangular bandages. While this was being done, two poles were cut and a stretcher was made using a nylon poncho. The quilted dacron jacket she was

wearing was supplemented by a down jacket. She was wrapped in a full-zipped down sleeping bag and placed on the stretcher.

She was carried down the lower part of the slide under belay. Below the railroad tracks no belays were needed. Arriving at the road, she was placed in a station wagon and taken to the Littleton Hospital, where the injury was determined to be a broken ankle joint and leg.

The fall occurred at approximately 2:15 in the afternoon. Half an hour was consumed in splinting the leg and preparing the stretcher. Three hours were required for transportation to the road, and another ten minutes to load her in the car. Thirty-five more minutes saw her at the hospital.

Due to the fact that there were a number of trained first-aiders in the group, she arrived at the hospital in reasonable condition. Later, she expressed her thanks that the party was prepared with warm clothes and a sleeping bag, had the know-how to cope with the situation, and the ability to put on a tremendous effort to carry out the evacuation from the slope.

Source: Bob Leach, Chairman Mountaineering Committee; Bert Hirtle; John Perry. *Appalachia*, 34, 127-128, 1962.

New Hampshire, Mount Washington, Huntington Ravine. On March 17 Christopher MacRae (24) and Don Jensen (18) were involved in an avalanche in Damnation Gully. *The background:* a rope of two (from the Harvard Mountaineering Club) climbed North Gully, and traversed across to Damnation below the second ice-pitch; this had been climbed (using rock-piton belay), and about three quarters of the gully ascended (using two sling-belays to rocks and thereafter ice-ax belays). *Conditions:* There was a considerable wind above, but this was blowing over the gully; while there had been a certain amount of recent snow, this did not appear to affect Damnation till about 200 feet above the second ice-pitch; up to about this point there was a crust varying in hardness (whether a previous snowslip had stripped the loose snow or because the wind had done so, is not certain); above this point, there were about two to three inches of powder snow on top. (While the rope was climbing the second ice-pitch, a short but sharp burst of hail fell.) *The avalanche* started above the leader, out of sight (the visibility by this time was minimal because of cloud); at first it consisted only of surface snow; but when this had built up to waist height, the underlying crust was also swept away. Where the line of break occurred was impossible to say in the circumstances, and it is not absolutely certain from the second man's evidence whether or not the crust was stripped as far as the point at which he was (about forty feet below the leader). It does seem more than likely that the whole width of the gully went, since the leader was right against the wall. Both the leader (MacRae) and the second were swept down the gully. Jensen suffered a fractured shoulder blade. *Conclusion:* The leader had taken into account the possibility of a surface snowslip (as the avalanche started out by being); and had there been no more than this, the situation might have been worrying but not too dangerous. It appears that the snow-crust in Damnation Gully is not