

## ACCIDENTS 1969 CANADA

*British Columbia, Garibaldi Park, Wedge Mountain.* On 28 December Nona Rowat (28), and three companions completed a ski-mountain tour in Garibaldi Park. They had been near 9,400 foot Wedge Mountain where they had experienced severe cold. The night of 27 December they spent in a snow cave. The next morning Nona put on an extra pair of wool socks before they started down. This may have been a mistake as it may have reduced circulation. In any case it is likely that frostbite did not occur on the way down, but while waiting for men to dig out the car which had been snowed in. Toes when examined were hard and black. Treatment was carried out according to the AAC pamphlet on frostbite, and within a few days the blister and swelling stages were over. She entered hospital ten days later after returning to Chicago, and there immediate amputation was recommended. *On the strength of the pamphlet the physicians agreed to wait, however, and Nona's feet are now fully recovered.*

## UNITED STATES

*New Hampshire, Mt. Washington.* On 27 January Robert Ellenberg (19), C. Neale Yoder (25), and Scott Stevens (19), apparently were descending Huntington Ravine between Central and Damnation Gullies. The reason for the fall was not known, but it is presumed that one of the party slipped and as they were roped together the others were pulled down the slope. All were killed in the fall. When the rescue party arrived in the ravine, they found the bodies roped together and spread out along the fall line. The first body was downhill 50 feet from the second and the third above the second by about 12 feet. They were all roped by an 11mm perlon rope. The first was missing the left boot which was lying close at hand. There was also a rock hammer just above the body. A crampon was tangled in the rope about six feet above. He had around his waist a sling with three ice screws and several carabiners. He was adequately dressed for the season. The second was badly tangled in the rope and had several carabiners with him. He was also well dressed except that his gloves were missing. The third was well dressed, missing one glove, but had a pack. One glove was found about 30 feet east of the bodies. After untying the victims, they were placed in litters, roped onto the back of the snow vehicle and taken to Pinkham Notch.

The site of the accident was examined on the following day by a group of experienced persons. About halfway up the slope, two ice axes and a crampon were found as well as a pair of pliers and a screw driver. None of these items slid very far and it is presumed they had become separated from the falling party and remained in the approximate spot where the separation had occurred. There were no traces of blood found farther than one quarter of the way up the slope. At the very top of the slope the terrain became too steep and Sloat and Bailey, two of the examiners,

started their descent. It was noted during the descent that pockets or depressions approximately 1½ inches deep in the hard crusted, icy snow appeared along the fall line approximately 10 to 15 feet apart. These pockets continued to about the middle point of the slope and then disappeared. This indicated that the boys were tumbling and bouncing very rapidly at the top of the slope, but as the slope became more gradual they tended merely to slide. Although blood was found on one or two projecting rocks, these rocks were nearly filled with snow behind and probably not a cause of any additional injuries. The fall must have started somewhere above the top of the snow slope between Central Gully and Damnation Gully. The reason for the fall could not be established.

*Source:* Alan Corindia.

*New Hampshire, Mt. Washington.* On 8 February Henry Townsend (52), Deidre Byers (21), and Robert Hall (22), were descending the Escape Hatch on South Gully after a successful climb of Central Gully. One of the climbers slipped and all three plunged 600 feet down the Gully in full view of their rescuers. Deidre Byers made attempts to arrest the fall with her ice axe, but produced only momentary stops before being jerked free of the belay and down the mountain. All suffered head and body abrasions. Two climbers wore hard hats while the third did not, and he suffered serious lacerations to his scalp. The rescue set a record for shortness of time—two hours from Huntington Ravine to Pinkham Notch.

*Source:* Alan M. Corindia. *Appalachia* 37, 656–657, 1969.

*Analysis:* Fatigue and the lack of a belay certainly were possible factors. Hard hats would seem to be indicated even in winter climbing, as the only person who suffered serious head injuries was not wearing a hard hat.

*Colorado, The Dome, Near Boulder.* On 12 May Skip Bailey (22), and Michael Mertaugh (23), began a day of climbing with the expectation of trying a new route on the Dome. Because several teams of climbers were already at work on its face they decided to try a moderate ascent beginning with a 40 foot chimney in the granite rock mass south of the Dome. Michael considered an inviting belay point directly out from the base of the chimney, but on Skip's advice, positioned himself slightly lower, and out of range of potential debris from the chimney. Skip jammed up to the chimney's first chockstone, placed a piton, and continued his lead to a second chockstone. Here he placed *two* pitons, joined them to a single carabiner with a hero loop, snapped in, and began a two-handed mantle from a third large chockstone just above his head. From there he intended to lay-back from a flake on the chimney wall to his right and exit from the chimney.

As Skip was mantling up on the last chockstone, which was about the size of a five-foot thick twin bed, it broke away and began falling. Michael heard "rock," then immediately "falling." The belay left Skip upside-down three feet above the first chockstone at the base of the chimney.

Skip's rock helmet (Buco) was found to have received a two inch crack in the fall from falling debris. This, together with the double piton placement at his last snapping-in point (one piton was so loosened by the