

**FALLING ROCK, FALL ON ICE, FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS, "PITONS"
PULLED OUT, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, EXCEEDING ABILITIES**

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park

On July 31, 1989, Paul Hammond (21), Erik Larson (17), and Carl Steger (21) were traversing from rock across the ice of Lamb's Slide to the start of Broadway Ledge. Hammond was leading the traverse with a single ax and crampons strapped to sneaker-type hiking shoes. He dodged a falling rock and fell, pulling out eight 14-inch (36 cm) wood spikes that he had placed for intermediate protection. Steger was belaying but was not anchored; he was pulled off his stance and began falling. Larson had untied himself before the accident occurred. Hammond slid 60 meters and arrested himself with his 70 cm LaPrade ice ax. Steger slid an additional 60 meters beyond Hammond and was stopped by Hammond on the 9 mm rope. The rope caught around Steger's neck like a hangman's noose and he sustained rope burns, in addition to pericardial tamponade and numerous lesser injuries. Hammond injured his left ankle. They walked to the trailhead without assistance. (Source: David Essex, Chief Park Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis

This party was not trained and equipped for ice climbing, having only one ax and only one pair of crampons per three persons. The hinged crampons were incompatible with Hammond's boots. Wood spikes cannot take the place of ice screws or pickets. The belay was not effective because the belayer was not anchored. The accident occurred at 1400, a dangerous hour for crossing this rockfall-prone slide. Opting to walk out instead of immobilize and stabilize injuries could have caused serious medical complications. This party had climbed together for several years on small rock climbs in Missouri and had little experience on ice or alpine terrain. Hard ice conditions were present on Lamb's Slide. (Source: David Essex, Chief Park Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

**STRANDED, INEXPERIENCE, FAILED TO FOLLOW ROUTE, INADEQUATE
EQUIPMENT**

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park

On August 16, 1989, John Berry (19), Aaron Duncan (19), Quesnell Hartland (20), Dennis Schutzenhofer (39), and Erik Wobus (18) attempted the North Face route on Longs Peak. The group was without proper technical equipment, having only a three-meter section of manilla horse rope with them. They traversed off the 5.5 route left into a more difficult slabby area with considerably more exposure (atop the Diamond Face). Hartland, and later on Wobus, were able to climb out of this situation, but the others were left stranded on a small ledge. Hartland borrowed another rope from a Keyhole hiker, but was unable to rescue his group without anchors. Rangers Linda Stuart-Smedley and Jim Detterline reached the group during the afternoon storm, and evacuated the remaining climbers down three roped pitches. Aspirant Diamond climbers Randy Day and David Goldstein assisted on the last pitch. (Source: David Essex, Chief Park Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)