IN MEMORIAM

ALLEN CARPÉ
1894-1932

In the death of ALLEN CARPÉ American mountaineering has lost one of its most enthusiastic and accomplished advocates. He was born in Chicago, December 20th, 1894, a great-grandson of Ezra Cornell, founder of Cornell University; grandson of the American poet, Coates Kinney. His father, Professor Adolph Carpé, was an accomplished musician but died while Allen was still young. His mother, a brilliant woman, survives him as do his wife and two small daughters.

Carpé spent his early years in Xenia, Ohio, at his mother's home. He was taken to Germany at ten years of age for his preliminary academic training. There he completed his gymnasium courses with honor. After a year at the University of Berlin he returned to New York where he graduated from Columbia with a degree in electrical engineering. The great war broke into his academic work. Leaving it, he joined the Officers Training Corps at Plattsburg and received his commission as second lieutenant in the Coast Artillery Section, Officers Reserve Corps, August 15th, 1917. December, 1917, saw him as a battery officer, 51st Artillery, Coast Artillery Corps. With it he went through the St. Mihiel offensive, his battery being especially cited "for the manner in which it pushed its guns forward into the conquered territory in spite of constant shell fire and bombardment of mustard gas." He was gassed in action and wounded slightly, but out of action for five days only. Entering active service as a second lieutenant he left it as a captain and in 1924 was made a major, Coast Artillery Officers Reserve Corps.

In 1920 he entered the service of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company as a member of the Department of Development and Research. He contributed in a large way to the development of systems for multiplex transmission by means of modulated high-frequency currents. He had much to do with the development of a standardized product in several models which had a large sale to the operating units of the Bell System. He knew the technical aspects of the telephone business thoroughly,

and held a number of patents in it and in the related fields of the telegraph and radio. Besides this his knowledge extended to cost studies and economic and business surveys. He had the responsibility of comprehensive tests and investigations and had been called upon to act in the capacity of a consultant in a number of cases. His knowledge of foreign languages made him sought out to advise in regard to foreign patents and systems.

His love of the mountains was formed in his school days while in Germany. He soon acquired the habit of spending his vacations in the Carpathian Mountains or various groups in the Eastern Alps. Rock climbs first interested him and he soon excelled in this type of climbing. For about six years he gave his attention almost exclusively to rock work, some of which was most exacting. In 1912 and 1913 he experienced his first work with snow and ice, but not until he came to the United States did he become greatly attracted to actively glaciated peaks.

In the mountains of Canada he found not only the appeal of high peaks, but that of the wilderness also. He delighted in venturing alone on expeditions of several days' duration which gave him both climbing and forest travel. His activities in the Selkirks, the Cariboos and Rockies are well known to all who have followed North American mountaineering literature.

In 1925 he was a member of the expedition which ascended Mt. Logan. He considered this one of his greatest adventures. In 1926 he tried Mt. Fairweather; 1927 saw him making first ascents again in the Cariboos. In the fall of that year he married Kathleen MacBain and in 1928 they visited the Gold Range and Mount Robson, climbing together in both regions.

But Alaska constantly called more and more persistently. In 1930 he made, with Andrew M. Taylor and Terris Moore, the first ascent of Mt. Bona. In 1931 he and Moore reached the summit of Mt. Fairweather—a much-coveted goal. He told me afterward that it was the most difficult snow and ice ascent he had made. A quotation from a letter written to Mrs. Carpé as he sailed northward in March of this year expresses well his love for the Alaskan mountains. "This country has lost none of its fascination for me in the last four years which have changed so much else in my life. . . . It is wild and sombre, very different from those Canadian mountains you visited. It is more like Albreda than Jasper or Robson, but it is probably more like

Norway or some parts of Scotland. Those places we visited in Canada one can readily think of as casual vacation resorts, but this country stays with me. It has haunted me for years, as you know, and I doubt if I will ever be really satisfied until I have tried to live in it."

Allen Carpé was a quiet, shy man. He had a great fund of information on all sorts of subjects, and, when he so chose, contributed in an informative and authoritative manner to any conversation. He had a clear, calculating mind; was precise in his methods and had little patience with inefficiency. I have known no other mountaineer more competent than he, nor have I ever seen or known of his making a false step. His judgment of probable routes on a mountain was excellent. He was always thoughtful of others and when wearing the rope, very careful and watchful in its management. He had great self-confidence and unusual courage and daring. He was not a rapid goer, nor did he show speed in step-cutting. All his efforts I shall always think of as being governed by one motive—precision.

Although not an easy mixer, Carpé had an engaging smile and pleasant manner. His diffidence was due rather to shyness than to offishness. He was likely, in his accounts of adventure, to be matter-of-fact in the extreme, being rather afraid that he might err on the side of the romantic. He was not superstitious and his philosophy had a decided Nietzschean flavor. He was not troubled by the problems of the next life, but felt that this world would be the happier if more of us bent our efforts in making heaven on earth rather than preparing for it elsewhere. With this, he had enthusiasm for life and adventure which at times shone forth in outbursts of contagious delight.

W. S. Ladd.

New York,
June, 1932.

It is with a heavy heart that one learns of the loss of a comrade of the mountains. Allen Carpé and I shared many fine ascents together in the Canadian Rockies between 1919 and 1923 and I never met a keener enthusiast for new paks and the exploration of primeval mountain wilderness. One of our best expeditions was Mt. Serenity near Fortress Lake, made possible by the accidental discovery of a hidden canoe, which, however, leaked so copiously that only his continual bailing during the six-mile trip

across the lake enabled us to land ourselves and supplies on the farther shore. At this time we got a good view of the approach to Mt. Clemenceau and Allen took advantage of it on the expedition which he made in 1922 with Messrs. H. B. Schwab and H. S. Hall to the vicinity of that imposing peak.

Another very satisfactory campaign that we carried out together (again by means of a small canoe) resulted in the finding and climbing of Mt. Brazeau near the south end of Maligne Lake, and then later in the first ascent of Mt. Unwin. We took observations from which Carpé subsequently constructed a good map of the lake, the largest in the Rockies.

These and other similar trips no doubt proved helpful in connection with the greater enterprises which he undertook soon afterwards: the two arduous journeys in the Cariboo Mountains (1924 and 1927) and then the splendid Alaskan expeditions to Mt. Logan, Mt. Bona and Mt. Fairweather. On the Mt. Logan expedition, he went as the representative of the American Alpine Club and most worthily he fulfilled his mission.

His interest in the Club was always of the deepest. It was especially shown by his volunteering to take charge of the first issue of *The American Alpine Journal* in 1929, and he assisted on its editorial board as much as his lengthy absences permitted, up to the time of his death. He served on the council of the Club during the six years from 1926 to 1931.

He was a member of the British Alpine Club, the Alpine Club of Canada, the Explorers Club and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Numerous papers in their publications attest the accuracy and range of his observation of natural phenomena. They will prove of permanent scientific value. Allusion may be made here to one of the most recent, "The Conquest of Mt. Fairweather" in *The Alpine Journal* for November, 1931. It is almost epic in its restrained yet forceful style—a moving narrative of a great mountaineering achievement. The editor appends this note to the paper: "We must congratulate the party on a magnificent expedition. The ascent of Mt. Fairweather is, we understand, the hardest yet accomplished among the 'Arctic' mountains of North America."

His demise comes at the height of his alpinistic career and that is probably as he would have wished it. His letters show that as time went on he was becoming more and more devoted

to the mountains and it seems probable that his activities would have resulted in even greater successes had he been permitted to persevere. The Club has lost a loyal member and his friends a great and true companion for the peaks.

HOWARD PALMER.

THE MT. MCKINLEY DISASTER

Death came to our member Allen Carpé and his companion Theodore Koven on the Muldrow glacier of Mt. McKinley on or about May 9th, 1932.

The expedition, which left Seattle April 16th, was organized primarily for the purpose of carrying out certain cosmic ray observations for Prof. A. H. Compton of Chicago. The other members were Nicholas Spadavecchia, Percy T. Olton and E. P. Beckwith, the latter also a member of the Club.

Whether or not some of them would attempt to climb Mt. McKinley was to be determined after their scientific experiments on the upper Muldrow glacier had been concluded.

Several airplane trips carried the party and most of the supplies from Nenana to the 6,000 foot level on the Muldrow glacier close to McGonnigal Pass (formerly known as McFee Pass), whence, by successive relays, Carpé and Koven established themselves at the head of the Muldrow at 11,000 feet on May 2nd.

Another party, comprising Alfred D. Lindley, Erling Strom, Harry J. Liek and Grant Pearson, having ascended both summits of Mt. McKinley, descended Karsten's ridge in the early morning of May 11th, 1932 to the tents of Allen Carpé and Theodore Koven whose location they knew well, having previously freighted up and cached some eight hundred pounds of equipment and scientific apparatus for them on their way in by dog-teams.

Surprised at finding no one there, members of the party circled around the tents seeking traces. The camp was in perfect order, but there was considerable fresh snow on the tents, and the conclusion was that the occupants had been gone at least forty-eight hours. All personal outfits, sleeping-bags and packboards were there. Both Carpé's and Koven's diaries were found and read, it being noted that their last entries were for the 7th.

Carpé's diary of cosmic ray observations was not read by them, and it was not until this reached New York that it was found

to contain a full set of observations for several days including the 8th, and one observation subsequent thereto for 6.30 A.M., presumably for the morning of the 9th. Thus the question presented itself as to whether Koven went off alone toward McGonnigal Pass on the 8th, and Carpé followed on the 9th. The omission of any entry in Koven's diary for the 8th is, however, not conclusive; and it is the opinion of Lindley and Strom, supported by the weight of the following evidence, that they went together on the 9th.

Having cooked a meal in their own tent and rested a little, the Lindley party set out down the glacier in their old tracks, still visible here and there. Occasional ski tracks were seen and these were assumed to have been those of Carpé and Koven.

About one and a half miles below the 11,000 foot camp the party came across the body of Koven exactly in their old trail and considerably snowed up. Much new snow had fallen on May 10th. Liek and Pearson waited while Lindley and Strom returned to the camp for the sledge that had been abandoned there. The body was then placed on the sledge, but they had scarcely dragged it a few hundred feet before Pearson fell into a crevasse, jammed some forty feet down, and was extricated with difficulty. They then buried the body in the snow wrapped in a pup tent and marked the spot with the upright sledge, roped up again and proceeded to follow Koven's wandering tracks. These led, in a few hundred yards, to a big crevasse slightly off the old trail where it swung around an avalanche fan.

From the tracks still to be seen it appeared that the first man had gone over safely and that the bridge had broken as the second man crossed. Lindley and Strom base their opinion on the fact that the ski tracks which were side-stepping near the edge of the crevasse, were on the *lower* side, and they do not see how they would be there unless the first man had returned after his companion had fallen through. They feel quite certain that the first man fell in also in his efforts to look into the crevasse and locate and assist the second man.[1]

[1] It is a source of keen regret to their friends that more is not known about the harrowing disaster that took the lives of these gallant mountaineers. Photographs show that about a foot of new snow fell on the Muldrow glacier after its occurrence and did much to obliterate traces that otherwise might have proved of great significance. A party consisting of Messrs. Merl LaVoy and Andrew W. Taylor has just returned from the

The fatal crevasse lay transversely to the general route but it may not have been come upon at right angles. That the crevasse was bridged over before the accident is a matter of opinion, a probability that cannot be proven. Lindley and Strom describe it as a bad one with over-hanging lips that sloped downwards, dangerous of approach. It lay in an area of open and bridged-over crevasses, a little off to the left of the old trail.

An ice-axe with a pair of crampons hanging on it was stuck on the inside end and lower side of the fatal open part of the crevasse. There were no marks on the ice-axe that would indicate whose it was, nor was it certain that this was the point where Koven emerged from the crevasse, though it appears likely.

It is positive that one of the two was on skis, and it seems most probable that both were so equipped. They were not roped, one rope having been cached at about 12,640 feet on Karsten's ridge, and the other being at the 6,000 foot camp. Which of the two, Carpé or Koven, fell in first cannot be determined, assuming that they were travelling together.

By this time it was evening and all of the Lindley-Strom party were very tired, two of the members being quite done up. They called loudly at the crevasse, without receiving an answer and knowing that the accident must have occurred more than forty-eight hours previously, they felt certain that Carpé could not be alive. Without venturing to approach the crevasse closely in order to look in, they then passed by it and continued down to the McGonnigal Pass camp, which they reached about 4.00 A.M. on the 12th. Thence, they marched out to McKinley National Park Station where they arrived on the 15th, and immediately sent an

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Muldrow glacier having located and brought out the body of Theodore Koven but no additional details regarding the tragedy were discovered by them.

The division of the party was due to the inability of Olton and Spadavecchia to leave New York until a week later than Carpé, Koven and Beckwith. The latter three flew in to the Muldrow glacier and Carpé and Koven at once proceeded upwards to establish their 11,000 foot camp where Olton and Spadavecchia were to join them upon arrival. As it turned out, the entire party never in fact got together on the mountain. Carpé employed the interval to conduct cosmic ray observations, of which he secured many. There have been recovered and will be utilized in the world-wide scientific studies now being carried out. The purpose of the measurements is to determine the possible effect of the earth's magnetic field upon the cosmic rays. The observations on Mt. McKinley are the most northerly ones which can be made at any appreciable elevation. Three hundred and fifty pounds of equipment for the ray observations alone were taken to the 11,000 foot camp on Muldrow glacier.—*Ed.*

airplane in for the sick Beckwith at McGonnigal Pass camp and instituted search for the missing Spadavecchia. The record would not be complete without mentioning the fine work done by the flyers Crosson, Jones and Robbins of the Alaska Airways.

To Messrs. Lindley, Strom, Liek and Pearson we extend heartiest congratulations on their successful ascent of both summits of Mt. McKinley, and sincere thanks for their actions in connection with the tragedy.

HENRY B. DEV. SCHWAB.