

*Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park (3)*—A tragic death occurred on August 15, 1956 when Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman and Mr. and Mrs. Hardwick had hiked up the Longs Peak trail to Chasm Lake and were on their way back when overtaken by a severe lightning storm on the open downhill side of Mills Moraine. Before shelter could be reached, a bolt of lightning struck the party, killing Mrs. Hoffman, age 33, instantly and knocking the rest of the party down. Mrs. Hardwick, age 40, also sustained face cuts and suffered from shock.

*Source:* George B. Hartzog, Acting Superintendent, R.M.N.P.

*Analysis:* Although not strictly a climbing accident it does emphasize the danger of lightning in high mountainous country.

*Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park (4)*—On August 15, 1956 George Bloom (21) and a companion, John Carpenter, had climbed Mt. Craig and in descending had separated, each going down opposite sides of a steep rock ridge. Carpenter never saw Bloom again and finally went on in to report Bloom's disappearance. A search party started out that night and an extensive search was carried on the next day when Bloom's body was finally located in a rock pile at the foot of a series of steep cliffs. It was evident that he had died almost instantly from a crushed skull, crushed chest, broken leg, and other injuries.

*Source:* George B. Hartzog, Acting Superintendent, R.M.N.P.

*Colorado, Maroon Bells*—On August 5, 1956 Ralph Melville with two companions, a boy and a girl, reached the summit of Maroon Bells. As they descended Melville tried to glissade a steep snow slope. He lost his footing and catapulted down a gully. He was arrested several times but always fell again, and ended up at the bottle neck of the gully semi-conscious and badly injured. He attempted to climb down over the overhang at the lower end of the gully. In so doing, he fell again and would have been killed but for the timely assistance of one of his companions.

As soon as the fall took place his two companions, unable to descend the steep snow without a rope, divided up. The boy returned to the A.M.C. camp at Maroon Lake for assistance. The girl, an unusually courageous and strong person, descended their route of ascent, and traversed the entire base of the mountain, and worked her way up the slope down which she thought Melville had fallen. Almost seven hours after the accident she succeeded in climbing the last thousand feet of snow and reached the overhang down which Melville was attempting to climb. She arrived as he was starting to descend and was able to support him over the overhang and to drag him into a narrow snow cave as night fell. She gave him clothing and food and remained with him until help arrived. Her male companion in the meantime had alerted the A.M.C. camp. Four members of the rescue party reached Melville at 2:00 a.m. the next day, gave first aid, and waited for dawn when the evacuation was completed.

*Source:* C. S. Houston, *Appalachia 31*: 265-266, 1956.

*Analysis:* (C. S. Houston) The accident occurred because none of the group was an experienced climber, and they were wearing flat-soled leather shoes. Melville could not possibly have glissaded in these shoes safely, particularly with his lack of experience.

The conduct of his companions is deserving of the highest praise, particularly that of the girl (Marylou Hayden) who did a really magnificent