

With all deference to the combined experience of the two climbers the following points should be made and noted.

Whereas the climbers were seemingly aware of the limitations relating to the weather, terrain, and their own individual ability, they nevertheless erred in judgment; the first warning should have been enough to have kept them from triggering the mishap that eventually caught them. Had they realized the full danger of wind slab slopes they would have followed their original route in making their descent. The warning of what might have been encountered on the lee slope on the ascent should have been apparent enough to prove that the slope was unsafe even though in their opinion the weather was not indicative of avalanche conditions. The agreement to keep off the windblown slope with its ensuing physical discomforts was undoubtedly caused somewhat by over-confidence and lack of foresight. The original route had proven a safe one and should have been used for the descent regardless of personal desires.

It is of special interest and importance to note that the swimming motion (backstroke) used by Lasher was in his estimation largely responsible for keeping him on the surface until he was upended by the snow shoe getting caught. In fact he felt that if the route had been free of obstructions he might have remained on top until the slide stopped. (See accident New Hampshire—Mt. Washington.)

*Oregon, Mt. Hood*—On July 29, 1956 two groups of American Youth Hostel climbers totaling 18 persons climbed Mt. Hood with one guide. This occurred because both groups arrived in Portland at about the same time and hoped to climb Mt. Hood. The usual leader, Carl Schnoor, could lead only on the 29th and he had agreed to take the first group on the climb. The second group was unable to locate a leader; the two groups were therefore reluctantly combined. This had been done two weeks previously with no harmful results.

The party was well equipped with proper climbing boots and crampons. There were 15 ice axes and four alpenstocks. On the way up the chute on the regular route of ascent Carl Schnoor came upon a poorly equipped party of two (a young boy and a man) who had neither ice axe nor crampons. Fearing for their safety, Schnoor borrowed an axe from one of his party and gave it to the man in the small party. Schnoor had given instructions to his party about the use of the ice axe and crampons on the ascent.

The entire group of 19 was tied into one rope which consisted of two 120-foot lengths tied together. The weather was beautiful. The ascent was made uneventfully. The accident occurred at about 3:45 p.m. during the descent. The afternoon sun had softened the snow in the chute, and as a result, the bucket steps were fairly long steps. The members of the party reported that a couple of the short girls had difficulty in descending for this reason, and had slipped a little trying to reach the steps. When the party had passed the large crevasse on the descent and were strung out below it, the slide began in the middle of the party. According to reports, Schnoor, Ron Heinrich and others of the party attempted to arrest the slide with their ice axes. It was difficult to make an effective arrest as they were tied so closely. The entire party of 19 slid approximately 200 feet into a fumarole type moat after bouncing off the rocks near the upper base of Crater Rock at 10,500 feet.

Fortunately there was another small party close by which saw the fall. They started giving aid and alerting a rescue team. The first of the rescuers reached the scene at 6:00 p.m. The party was cut apart and moved out of the moat, wrapped in blankets. By 8:00 p.m. more rescuers arrived including two doctors. By 9:00 p.m. the more seriously injured victims began the trip down the mountainside. The last of the victims left the Crater at 11:50 p.m. and was in medical hands by 3:10 a.m. after a two-mile evacuation. One of the climbers was killed and all of the others received varying amounts of injury; there were 13 litter cases. The Mountain Rescue & Safety Council of Oregon, Clackamas County Civil Defense Truck, Red Cross, Air Force, Air Guard, U. S. Forest Service and others were active in the rescue and deserve mention for their fine handling of the problem.

*Source:* Newspaper accounts; John Biewener, Sec'y MoReSCO.

*California, San Francisco Bay Area*—On February 18, 1956 Keith Anderson (25), accompanied by two other climbers, attempted to climb one of the outcrops near the summit of Mt. Tamalpais. With a lower belay he led up a wide chimney to an overhang. At the underside of the overhang he placed an angle piton for protection and proceeded to climb the overhanging rock with the aid of a large handhold. The handhold pulled out under his full weight and in falling the piton was also pulled out. Although the piton probably absorbed some of the energy, it did not arrest the fall and Anderson landed at the base of the climb, having fallen a total distance of about 25 feet. He suffered a broken ankle for which he was given immediate first aid at a nearby military installation.

*Source:* William Siri and Harvey Voge.

*Analysis:* (W. Siri). The piton had been placed in unsound rock. If the piton had held it very likely would have prevented injury to Anderson. He also failed to test carefully the handhold on which he relied for sole support.

*California, Berkeley*—On March 11, 1956 a group of about 15 climbers that included experienced men as well as novices was practicing lower belaying at Indian Rock under the direction of the outing leader. The belayer was at ground level using a standing seat belay to arrest falls (free jumps from above). The rope passed through a carabiner about 25 feet above the belayer and then down a few feet to a climber on a ledge. On signal the climber would leap off to be arrested by the belayer. For safety a second, upper belay was also used but the belayer was off at an angle of about 30 degrees and hence not too effective. Although several jumps had been made and successfully arrested, on this occasion the rope broke after absorbing most of the energy of the fall but dropped the climber possibly the last five feet. Fred Schaub (20) landed on his back, apparently without serious injury, at least none that could be diagnosed.

*Source:* William Siri.

*Analysis:* (W. Siri). The rope used in these practice falls and belays was  $\frac{7}{16}$  inch diameter nylon. The rope, however, was five years old and had been badly worn in use on local practice climbing and belaying. A study of the rope revealed that about 50 percent of the fibers were only  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long and only 10 per cent of the fibers in the rope had not been affected by abrasion. Ninety per cent of the fibers were less than 4 inches long. Further tests are being made of its ultimate strength.