

*Analysis:* This man had had some rock climbing experience, but it was apparently a case of not having any equipment along when a sudden urge to climb something came along.

*Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park (1), Avalanche Canyon*—On July 6, John Nance (19) and Rodrigo Alconero (20) were on a climbing walk in the Park near Nez Perce Peak. Rodrigo Alconero was somewhat vague as to how the party had entered Avalanche Canyon. He and Nance planned their trip as they went along. Apparently they contoured Nez Perce Peak high enough to utilize a major gulley down into the canyon. This gulley emptied into the first major open meadow. On their descent, large, grassy ledges on the buttress to their right (west) promised an easy traverse up canyon without a loss of altitude. The ledges were divided by a fan of steep slabs ending in a vertical wall above and below. It was here, as they attempted to cross the slabs that they ran into technical climbing. Neither Nance nor Alconero was a trained climber. In attempting to gain a lower vantage point for photographs, Nance slipped, fell, and skidded 250 feet, striking his head just above the ledge where he finally stopped.

Alconero reported the accident to Park Headquarters and evacuation of the body was done by the Ranger staff.

*Source:* Park Ranger John C. Fonda via Frank R. Oberhansley, Superintendent, G.T.N.P.

*Analysis (G.T.N.P.):* Misjudgement of terrain seems to account for his fall. Because neither of Nance's shoes could be found, it is thought that he was probably hiking in sneakers.

*Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park (2), Storm Point*—On July 7, James E. Ferris (22) and James M. Brydon signed out at the Chief Ranger's Office for belaying practice on the south side of Storm Point. Due to the fact that a mountain rescue was already in progress they were advised against trying for the summit and agreed to confine their activities to the lower cliffs. Both Ferris and Brydon had attended the Exum Climbing School; they planned on taking the advanced course, but wanted mainly to practice belaying before doing so.

Leaving their pack a few hundred yards from the Cascade Canyon trail they climbed up the lower slopes of Storm Point, attained the rock and began scrambling around. They carried a standard 120-foot nylon climbing rope. Ferris was wearing low-cut sneakers. The weather was warm and the climbing conditions were good.

The party reached their high point about mid-afternoon and began descending a system of short rock faces and gullies. Because the terrain appeared relatively easy they were not roped. There was some question as to the route, and Ferris began climbing down a short "V"-shaped channel to reconnoiter. Brydon asked him if he wanted a rope and he said no. The next thing Brydon knew, Ferris was gone. It is not known whether he slipped or pulled out a handhold. Brydon found an easy gulley and climbed down to the base of the cliff, located Ferris' body, and came down to Jenny Lake for help.

Recovery of the body by a reserve rescue team was uneventful. Ferris died in a tumbling and rolling fall of about 200 feet. He suffered very extensive head injuries and lost both sneakers.

*Source:* Park Ranger John C. Fonda, via Mr. Frank R. Oberhansley, Superintendent, G.T.N.P.

*Analysis* (G.T.N.P.): The judgement of the party in this case was clearly in error although their strength and experience were equal to the terrain. The rock they were climbing was relatively easy, and being easy it was dangerous for them late in the day.

This accident seems to illustrate the advantage of developing basic route-finding skill early in the course of learning rock climbing techniques.

*Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park (3) Symmetry Spire, Jensen Ridge*—On August 2, Frederick E. Wright, Jr. (19) and Frederick Medrick (19) were just starting to climb the Jensen Ridge on Symmetry Spire. Wright was leading and was 60 to 70 feet above Medrick. He had driven one piton for safety and was using a second piton that was already in place. He had tested the piton and thought it to be good, although Medrick felt it was unsound. From the second piton Wright climbed around a corner onto the face. There was considerable friction on the rope. After pulling up some slack, he attempted to take another step, when either the rope pulled him off balance, or his friction holds failed. He fell and pendulumed from the piton and hit his head. The upper piton pulled out, the second piton pulled out, and Wright finally stopped at the base of the wall. He landed on his chest and suffered internal injuries in addition to a fractured skull. The accident was reported by a climber from another climbing party that had witnessed the accident. The weather and climbing conditions were good. It is worth noting that the climber reporting the accident left the scene in such haste that he had very little specific information. He did not know who the climber was nor the nature and extent of injuries. His report was so exaggerated in most respects that rescuers were led to believe that the victim was dead.

Three Park Service climbers were sent up as soon as possible on the chance that the victim was alive. The accident was reported at 1:30 p.m. A three man team started up from Jenny Lake at 2:20 p.m. They arrived at the scene two hours later and found Wright to be conscious although dazed and frequently sick to his stomach. A long cut on the head was bleeding slightly. Wright was placed in a sleeping bag and made ready to travel by 5:00 p.m. Three additional rescue team members arrived at 5:15 p.m. Utilizing nine climbers who volunteered to help, the evacuation began using a suspension line to lift the stretcher from a deep couloir. Progress was slowed by the necessity of carrying on traverse and by loose rock due to recent flash floods. The stretcher arrived at the boat landing about midnight after seven hours of careful hand-carrying. Wright has since recovered from his injuries.

*Source:* Park Ranger, John C. Fonda, via Mr. Frank Oberhansley, Superintendent, G.T.N.P.; Frederick W. Medrick.

*Analysis* (GTNP): This accident again points out the danger of using