

occurred. One member had already rappelled and Jensen was second when the piton worked loose and he plunged to his death. The accident was witnessed by William Keiper from his cabin on the opposite side of the valley. Keiper notified rescue groups who led the rest of the party to safety. Jensen had carried the group's only rope with him in the fall.

*Source:* Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News (William E. Davis, Safety Chairman, Colorado Mountaineering Club).

*Analysis* (Davis): The newspaper reports suggest this party was not adequately experienced for the climb they were undertaking. Certainly they were under-equipped with only one rope. None of the climbers was known to be a member of a climbing organization nor to have had any formal technical rock instruction.

Rappelling is such an inherently dangerous practice that to undertake it without some safety precautions, particularly a belay, seems inexcusable. The inherent danger of using only one piton for a rappel point also seems too obvious to need elaboration. In spite of these facts, however, rock climbers continue to use elaborate precautions for ascending (dynamic belays, pitons and bolts frequently placed) and then to throw all caution to the wind in descent (rappelling unprotected on a single rappel point). This accident, perhaps, resulted more from lack of knowledge of protective procedures than in their inconsistent application.

*Colorado, Clear Creek Canyon*—On May 3, a party of five went to Clear Creek Canyon, west of Denver, to practice rock climbing. The party apparently climbed the face of a rock cliff using conventional methods. They then returned to the base of the cliff and reclimbed the route to recover their pitons. They were unroped on this second climb.

The following is a quotation from the newspaper source attributed to Jimmy Blake (22) who was reclimbing the face with Paul Wright (27). "I was about six feet away from him when he started around this bad outcropping of rock. I knew he was getting tense; he started trembling and he turned pale. I knew he was going to fall but I couldn't help him. Then he let go—he didn't say anything." Wright fell about 40 feet in a free fall and then struck a ledge. From the ledge he fell another 15 feet free and then rolled about 35 feet down the slope before stopping. Wright suffered a broken leg and arm, rib fractures, and other internal injuries.

*Source:* Rocky Mountain News (William E. Davis, Safety Chairman, Colorado Mountaineering Club).

*Analysis* (Davis): This accident seems to have resulted from overconfidence and a resulting lack of elementary safety precautions. The cliff apparently was climbed safely with the use of rope and piton. The reasons why it was being reclimbed without these techniques are not clear.

*Colorado, Turkey Creek Canyon (1)*—On July 4, Daniel McGill (15) fell while climbing with a group of friends in the Turkey Creek Canyon area. Details of the accident are unknown. The boy suffered a possible broken shoulder and other injuries.