

"flipped over" the karabiner so that the gate faced away from the rock.

Ermarth escaped serious injury probably because he "slid" down the face instead of falling free.

*Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Symmetry Spire (2)*—On August 24, a climbing party led by Sterling Neale (22) of the Exum Mountaineering Concession, Janet Crane (18), Tom Lightburn (12), Steve Howse (17), and John Manley (17), had completed a normal ascent of Cube Point on the East Ridge of Symmetry Spire and were descending the north face of Cube Point by a series of rappels and a fixed rope. The party was approaching the top of the final rappel, which started from a ledge below a large sloping talus and scree field. To get onto the ledge required going down a short three foot vertical section of rock or walking around to the west end of the ledge and back to the rappel point. Neale and Manley had gone down the vertical wall and Neale was assisting Tom Lightburn down to the ledge when Janet Crane apparently decided to walk around to the west end of the ledge. As she was walking along the ledge toward the rest of the group, she stepped on a rock that rolled and she lost her balance. As she started to fall, Neale had just turned around and tried to catch her, but he was unable to reach her before she went over the ledge, falling about 110 feet, to the base of the rappel.

Another climbing party, Jack Dodd and H. K. Hancock, two National Park employees, climbing on their day off, witnessed the fall from near the base of the rappel. They went to the spot where Miss Crane had fallen and found she had severe head injuries and was bleeding from the mouth and ears and was unconscious. Mr. Hancock immediately started down to report the accident to the Jenny Lake Ranger Station, while Dodd remained with the injured girl. Neale brought the rest of the party down the rappel and leaving them in a safe location, away from the scene of the accident, went to the girl to see what could be done and check the extent of the injuries. Neale remained with Miss Crane until he was certain that she had passed away. Neale then took his party on down to the valley and informed the rescue team of the situation. Dodd remained at the scene to assist the rescue team in the evacuation.

*Source:* F. Douglas McLaren, District Park Ranger and H. L. Bill, Superintendent, G.T.N.P.

*Analysis:* This route has been used by the guides for years in the same manner that Neale was using it at the time of the accident. The fact that Miss Crane was moving at the time Neale was helping another climber and could not watch her as she was getting on the ledge, and when she stepped on the loose rock, is as much to blame for the accident as anything. From indications, after having talked to the other members of the party, it appears to have been one of those situations that was unavoidable and can only be avoided when inexperienced climbers can be shown the dangers of moving around in areas where loose rock is present and the importance of carefully placing each foot.

Though this area has considerable exposure, it is not the type of area that requires roping up for protection. Normal climbing movements can

be made with safety, as is shown by the fact that many guided parties have used this route each year and have not had any trouble before this particular climb.

*Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Symmetry Spire (3)*—On August 29, Sven Wihrheim (21) and Elwynn Taylor (18) attempted to climb the Durrance Ridge. They began the first lead at 1:30 p.m.

Elwynn Taylor had anchored himself to a rock nubbin and was belaying Wihrheim as he began the third lead on the climb. Wihrheim was 80 feet above and out of sight of his belayer when he encountered a mass of large loose rock that gave way with him. He fell amidst this shower of rocks a total of 170 feet, striking two ledges during the fall. Taylor suffered very severe rope burns to his left hand and forearm in bringing Wihrheim to a stop with a 10 foot dynamic belay. Taylor then exhausted the remainder of the rope in an attempt to lower the unconscious Wihrheim to a ledge below. The time was 2:15 p.m.

A party of three climbers in a nearby couloir had, fortunately, witnessed the fall. Two of them went directly to the aid of Taylor and his injured companion, while the third dashed hastily down to the valley for help. The two climbers, Art Burr and John Greenlee, climbed up to Wihrheim and tied him into their rope. They then cut the taut belay line that led to Taylor and lowered Wihrheim the remaining distance to the base of the ridge. There they made him comfortable and administered what aid they could. Wihrheim was still alive but suffering from a possible fractured skull and severe lacerations about the head, that were bleeding freely.

Meanwhile Shepard Burr had reached the Jenny Lake Ranger Station. Two members of the Park Rescue team, Pete Sinclair and Dave Dornan, were on their way with a sleeping bag and first aid equipment by 4:00 p.m. on the chance that the victim was alive. They reached the accident scene two hours later. By 8:00 p.m. seven more members of the rescue team had arrived and the victim was prepared for travel by 8:30 p.m.

During the first stages of the carry-out, Wihrheim, who was quite delirious, was very difficult to handle. He manifested tremendous feats of strength in trying to extricate himself from the sleeping bag and litter into which he was securely tied. However, as the descent continued, his condition became more bearable. Two periodic injections of Demerol undoubtedly aided in quieting him down somewhat.

A second team of three men joined forces with the rescue party at 10:30 p.m. and the evacuation was completed via boat across Jenny Lake at 3:00 a.m.

*Source:* J. M. Langford, Park Ranger, and H. L. Bill, Superintendent, G.T.N.P.

*Analysis:* From all appearances, Wihrheim paid insufficient attention to the danger of dislodging loose rocks, which undoubtedly contributed directly to his fall. It is questionable whether the terrain warranted a piton for protection, although a considerable degree of exposure is experienced on the entire ridge. The fact that Wihrheim's most serious injuries were about the head, again gives rise to the query: "Would a hard-hat have helped?" The belayer, Taylor, was wearing only one glove.