

Heroes. A single karabiner was on the rope, possibly having been in a sling used as a belay anchor or possibly about to be placed in a piton. H. Sorenson, civilian advisor in charge of the Army party, felt that whichever climber fell must have fallen a great distance before striking the end of the rope.

*Colorado, Arapaho Glacier*—On July 18, Mrs. Karen Cowperthwaite (19), and her husband David (22) and Richard Raymond (21) attempted to climb the slopes of South Arapaho Peak.

It is not known whether they had reached the saddle or not, but a summer storm, common in the area, struck them not far below the saddle. They took shelter from the rain under the overhanging side of a large boulder, some 8 feet by 15 feet, close to the trail, at about 12,480 feet elevation. They wore light summer clothing and carried no spare clothing.

As they were sitting under the rock, apparently one, David Cowperthwaite, moved away from the rock to fix a broken shoe lace. When the lightning struck, it killed the other two instantly; they were found under the rock in a sitting position. Cowperthwaite was burned by the lightning on his buttocks and feet, where he had contact with the ground. He evidently jumped to his feet, leaving his boots behind, and ran straight down the slope, not following the trail. Just below the site of the accident the slope steepens suddenly and drops to the valley floor, 1500 vertical feet below. Cowperthwaite's body was found in the valley floor, some 100 feet above the trail there. Apparently he stopped to rest and died of exposure and shock.

Rescue procedure: Raymond's parents reported him overdue to the Boulder police at 5:30 next morning, but the information was so scanty that the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group was not called. The Group learned indirectly of the missing people at 11:00 a.m. and began a search. A team was organized at noon and left the Picnic Area at the end of the road at 2:45 p.m. At 4:15 p.m. they found the bodies of Raymond and Mrs. Cowperthwaite hidden behind the rock, some 20 feet south of the trail. Because the third person was nowhere to be seen, they radioed the State Patrol to alert the entire Rescue Group for a full-scale search. Meanwhile they searched the area including the peak itself (S. Arapaho). They found a pair of climbing boots 50 feet downhill from the accident scene; with this clue they concentrated the search downhill, and later found the body of David Cowperthwaite 1500 vertical feet below the accident scene, close to the main trail to the Fourth of July Campground.

*Source:* Ed Anderson, William Davis.

*Analysis:* The victims were not on the ridge when the lightning struck, but in a relatively flat area. A boulder-strewn slope descends gently from the "saddle" below S. Arapaho Peak, then steepens and plunges very steeply to the valley. The profile of the slope is convex; the lightning struck in the region where the slope suddenly changes. Apparently the lightning struck within 50 feet of the victims, and the discharge flowed over the rock where they were sheltering, then jumped the spark gap between the lip of this rock and the ground. The victims were found

sitting directly under the overhang, in this "spark gap." All indications were that they were killed instantaneously. The third person, sitting about 10 feet in front of the rock, was probably stunned as the electricity continued along the ground, to judge by the burns found on his buttocks and feet.

*Colorado, Animas Peak*—On July 24 during the annual summer outing of the Colorado Mountain Club, a strong party of Elwyn Arps, William Davis (31), John Filsinger, and Gus Hallum (33), was formed to make the climb of the north face of Animas Peak, a sustained and fairly severe technical climb. The ascent was uneventful although it took longer than had been anticipated.

Descent was made by the regular route used to climb Monitor Peak from Noname Creek. The route follows a steep gully which at this time of year is usually filled with snow. The party was descending this gully at the time of the accident.

Davis was in the lead and kicking steps downward. He had angled across the snow in the hopes of getting onto rock shelves at the side. Just before stepping off onto the ledges, Davis slipped and fell about 6 feet, before making a self-arrest just at the edge of the snow and rock.

The exact sequence of events is unclear but it seems most reasonable that Davis struck his elbow just after falling. The blow was severe enough to dislocate the shoulder. Davis' ice axe wedged on the rock saving him from plunging on down the gully, although he was making active efforts to get into an arrest position when he stopped.

First-aid was rendered at the scene of the accident and the party continued to camp under its own power. Davis was able to walk although in pain from the dislocation. The available medical doctors were not in camp at that time (one had returned to town and the other was in fly-camp in the next valley) so one of the nurses attending the outing administered sedatives and immobilized the injury. The next day, Davis rode a horse to the narrow gauge railroad stop and proceeded to the hospital in Durango. The dislocation was reduced about 28 hours after the accident. Recovery has been complete.

*Source:* William Davis.

*Analysis (Davis):* Several factors contributed to the accident. Hurrying on the descent was one. Failure to consider the snow conditions was another. The north face had been in shadow for sometime and the snow was rapidly freezing. The step-kicking process had become more difficult and in a few places steps had been chopped. The party should have roped up in light of the steepness of the gully and the changing conditions. Davis had slipped once before and this warning should have been heeded, although the slip was not severe and a self-arrest had been successfully executed. Carelessness was enhanced by the lateness and consequent eagerness to return to basecamp.

The Colorado Rockies are usually not considered the type of mountains requiring crampons; this single piece of equipment, however, would have contributed to the safety of this party and probably would have prevented