

ACCIDENTS 1960
NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED
CANADA

Alberta, Snow Dome. On July 15, Jack Fralick (35+) and Paul and Anne Stettner started to climb Snow Dome via the Athabaska Glacier. They had traversed two icefalls and were about 2 hours from the summit, at 1:30 p.m., when Fralick, in the lead, noted a faint line of discoloration. He probed with his axe and found the snow soft. He took a couple of steps obliquely and suddenly fell through a snow bridge some 40 ft. into a crevasse. After a considerable struggle on the part of all concerned, Fralick was extracted from the crevasse. The party then returned to their base. It was later learned that Fralick had suffered an incomplete fracture of his sacrum.

Source: Jack Fralick; Newsletter, Chicago Mountaineering Club 15: July 1961, Number 3.

Analysis: (Fralick) The great depth to which I fell was due to a number of reasons. First, at the time we reversed the lead, we failed to change the ice-axe arrest loop, which now put it behind the climber and made it useless; therefore, the violent pull on Anne (*second on the rope*) rendered her helpless; second, the rope cutting through the soft snow; third, the delay of the arrest by the third climber added a few more feet to the unpleasant journey.

In this same issue there is sound advice for those who do extensive travel over crevassed glaciers. Further reference is also given on this subject: *On Climbing* by Charles Evans and *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, published by the Seattle Mountaineers.

UNITED STATES

California, Yosemite National Park, El Capitan. On April 12, Paul Delany (22) and Charles Raymond (20) attempted "the slack" route on the southwest side of El Capitan. The accident occurred on the second pitch. Raymond had just finished the most difficult part of this section and while attempting to gain entrance into a chimney dislodged a rock that fell and struck Delany on the head. Raymond lowered himself to Delany and under belay Delany rappelled to the ground. Prompt evacuation was effected and it was later determined that Delany had suffered a skull fracture.

Source: Paul Delany and Charles Raymond.

Analysis: (Raymond and Delany) The leader has the obligation to respect the exposed position of his belayer and others who are below him. He must recognize the potential danger of dislodging loose rocks. In addition, the belayer should take a stance that will give him maximal protection against falling rock. This is also an instance in which a hard hat would have minimized the effect. Incidentally, skull fractures are extremely painful and hard hats should be a required item of equipment. In addition the ability of the injured person to assist in his own evacu-

ation facilitated the procedure and allowed prompt institution of adequate treatment and exposure was minimized.

Colorado, Third Flatiron. On July 12, a group of boys under Carl Boehm's leadership was descending the Third Flatiron after a successful ascent. One of the boys, Shaw, lost his footing during a rappel, fell sideways, and struck and lacerated his scalp. He was able to complete the rappel. Evacuation was completed by the Rocky Mountain Rescue group.

Source: Ed Anderson.

Analysis: This may well be an instance in which a hard hat would have minimized the injury.