

dent. A belay would also have prevented it, but we did not have another rope.

*California, Yosemite National Park.* On 13 November John Michael Wrightman (20) left Yosemite Lodge on a drizzly afternoon in hopes of shortcutting up to the base of the upper Yosemite Falls. He walked along the base of Sunnyside Bench below the falls until he came to a point where an ascent looked possible and began to climb up mossy dirt-covered ledges and slabs. He had no mountaineering experience, was only vaguely familiar with the area, and had started his ascent in poor weather. He was found by a search party three days later at the base of the previously described slabs and ledges. It looked as though he had fallen about 200 feet sliding over slabs and falling over ledges on the way down. The autopsy showed that he had died from injuries about the head. It is presumed that he slipped on a loose rock or on the wet slabs during his ascent.

*Source:* Pete Thompson. Yosemite National Park.

*Analysis:* Mr. Wrightman should not have left the park trails especially because of the poor weather. If he had thought about safety or would have had some knowledge of mountaineering and its dangers this accident could have been avoided.

*California, Yosemite National Park.* Roger Bunch (15) and a party of five led by his father were ski-touring to Tenaya Lake from Yosemite Valley via Clouds Rest. Roger's boots were poorly waterproofed and were soaked through by the second day, and he didn't have enough dry socks to keep his feet warm or dry. The boots were also too small and he had poor circulation. He became frostbitten on his toes and was taken back to the Valley by his party.

*Source:* Russell Cahill, Yosemite National Park.

*Analysis:* If Roger and his father had any knowledge of frostbite and what problems in equipment normally cause it, he would have been able to avoid his accident. Each problem is so typical of frostbitten feet; tight boots resulting in poor circulation, poorly waterproofed boots resulting in wet feet, not enough socks to keep feet dry and warm when his other socks became wet, inexperience in not knowing what was happening to his feet under the conditions.

*California, Yosemite National Park.* On 29 August Tom Gerughty (21) was cleaning the last pitch of Sickle Ledge Route on El Capitan while using Jumar ascenders. He reclipped the right Jumar at the start of the pendulums and the left Jumar released and knocked the right Jumar loose. He fell 100 feet holding the rope with his hands and stopped because he was tied off at the end around his waist.

*Source:* Steve Hickman, Yosemite National Park.

*Analysis:* There have been other reports of Jumar ascenders failing in the past. If Mr. Gerughty would have considered this fact he might have been more cautious when he reclipped his right Jumar. He could also

have been on a belay, but this is not a normal practice when cleaning with Jumars in Yosemite. Had he not been tied, this would have been a much more severe accident.

*California, Yosemite National Park.* On 20 August Ronald Guest (21), Pierre Zetterberg (21), and Tom Rack (21) decided to climb a seemingly moderate wall between Murphy Dome and Fairview Dome near Tenaya Lake. There were no pre-established routes on this section of rock and they were merely going to do an easy 4th and 5th class ascent. The party had very little experience including Mr. Guest. As they climbed up, the difficulty went from 3rd to 4th to 5th class and consistently became more difficult. The party reached a 6 foot by 20 foot ledge 300 feet up from the base and Guest started a difficult 5th class lead. He climbed about 20 feet above the ledge and it became too difficult for him. He then placed a piton, clipped in an aid sling, and stood on it with the thought of passing the difficult part by the use of aid. The piton pulled out and he fell backwards onto his head and downwards to the ledge below him where he lost consciousness. Rack was able to apply artificial respiration and basic first aid while Zetterberg descended 3rd and 4th class ledges East of the route and summoned help. Mr. Guest had never used or practised aid climbing before.

*Source:* Steve Hickman, Yosemite National Park.

*Analysis:* There are many ways the accident could have been avoided. The party should have been wearing hard hats. When the route became apparently too difficult for them, which was obvious at the 6 foot by 20 foot ledge, they should have given up the climb. Extra caution should have been exercised realizing that the route they were on had never been climbed and that the group was made up of beginners. Protection should have been placed sooner than 20 feet off the ledge or the aid piton should have been placed for protection rather than aid. A greater knowledge of piton placement should have been known.

*California, Yosemite National Park.* On 14 October Jim Madsen (20) and four others went to the top of El Capitan to go to the aid of two climbers who had been on the Dihedral Wall since 9 October. The weather had been rainy and cold and Madsen and other climbers were concerned that they might be in trouble, although they had made some slow progress. The climbers were at the 6,500 foot level and soaked. Temperature was falling.

Madsen and Price planned to rappel down from the summit to Thanksgiving Ledge and try to communicate with the climbers, and see if they needed any help. Madsen had climbed the wall and knew the route. This would require a rappel of some 600 feet. Belay was, therefore, impractical. At 7:00 a.m. on the 15th, they started to look for a rappel point. Madsen found a ledge quite close to where they had camped that night on the top. It was down another 30 feet, with a pine tree three feet in diameter about six feet from a steep wall that dropped straight down to Thanksgiving Ledge. This spot saved one rappel as it was 150 feet lower