

ponchos for bivouacking. With better physical and mental conditioning they might have gone ahead and climbed out. (Source: Charles Farabee Jr., NPS, Yosemite Valley.)

*NUT FAILURE—California, Yosemite, Washington Column.* Thomas Beck (28) and Ken Baldrey (23) were attempting to climb the South Face of Washington Column (V 5.8, A3) using only nuts. On the third pitch, Beck was leading and pulled out a small stopper, zippering at least seven or eight other nuts he had placed as protection. Beck fell all the way down to the belay ledge where he struck Baldrey. Beck broke his ankle severely. (Source: Tim Setnicka, NPS, Yosemite.)

*Analysis:* This account demonstrates that the use of nuts and cams placed for protection are still in the developmental stage for many climbers. Unlike pitons, nuts may only be good in one direction of force. Unless jammed, or even sometimes hammered, they are not as bomb proof as one might hope. Additionally, while not part of this accident, those nuts requiring runner loops have an additional hazard. At least one climbing accident reported this year included runner rope failure as a result of using the wrong kind of knot. (Source: J. Williamson.)

*CLIMBING UNROPED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT AND EXPERIENCE—Colorado, Maroon Bells.* The following was related by James McKinney (29) during an interview regarding the fatal climbing accident of his fiancée, Beatrice Venice Sawyer (24).

The two climbers left Littleton Friday evening, August 22, 1975, arriving the same evening at Crater Lake in the Snowmass Wilderness Area approximately 12 miles south of Aspen. They camped at the lake overnight and had intended to climb both north portions of North and South Maroon Peaks the following day. They started their ascent of North Maroon Peak around 9 a.m. Saturday and climbed a portion of the North Maroon Peak. Approximately four o'clock in the afternoon, while crossing the ridge which connects North Maroon Peak to South Maroon Peak, they noticed a trail below them, which connected the two peaks and appeared, at that point, easier going. In order to get to the trail it appeared necessary for them to descend through a rock chimney, of sorts, approximately 20–30 feet in length, to get to the lower trail. McKinney took the packs and began the descent first, and Sawyer followed him. She was in a position above as they were descending this crevice when, for reasons unknown, she lost her footing, fell backwards away from the mountain and away from McKinney. At this time he attempted to grab for her ankles, made partial contact but was unable to control her fall; apparently from this point she fell free some distance descending the slope, and traveled approximately 1000 feet before her body came to rest on a lower level on the Crater Lake side of the incline. McKinney immediately descended as directly as possible to her location. Upon his arrival, she was already dead. He immediately, or shortly thereafter, began his descent to summon assistance and at approximately 7 p.m. gained the attention of several other hikers