

there at 8:40 p.m. Gissendaner remained in Valley Medical Center until June 3, 1978, when he was pronounced dead at 9:30 a.m., severe head injury being the cause. (Source: Tim Setnicka, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

Gissendaner decided to try to "free" an aid pitch which is not unusual these days. Not being able to protect the last half of the pitch resulted in a pendulum when he fell. Gissendaner was an experienced, excellent free climber who attempted to "go for it" according to his partner, but unfortunately fell after running the pitch out. (Source: Tim J. Setnicka, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, OFF ROUTE

California, Yosemite Valley

On May 30, at 10:30 a.m., Laurel Munson came into the valley ranger station to report that a climber had fallen from Sentinel Rock. Laurel said that she heard falling rocks and yelling, saw a man fall, and came for help. John Dill responded and contacted Ben Ailes at the base of Sentinel Rock. Ailes was with the victim, James Adair (21). Ailes stated that they had been on the approach to the Chouinard-Herbert Route when Adair got off route and apparently slipped while trying to downclimb to the right ramp. At the time of the accident, they were climbing third class and wearing tennis shoes. Adair's body was evacuated by stretcher. (Source: Ranger McKeeman, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

Adair was an experienced climber (5.11+ Yosemite walls) and was climbing third class up the approach ramps to Sentinel Rock carrying a load. He got off above the standard route onto very loose and broken rock. He slipped and fell 300 feet to his death. To say that he was in error for not roping up in this case is incorrect, because the area is such that climbers do not rope up. Adair did not, however, follow the well-tramped "on trail" and quickly got into loose fourth and fifth class rock and did not turn back. (Source: Tim J. Setnicka, Yosemite National Park)

SLIP ON SNOW, EQUIPMENT DIFFICULTY

California, Sierra

In June 1978, after completing a summit ski descent of Carson Peaks' northeast bowl (10,000 feet) and traversing the rock band to the top of Devil's Slide (9,200 feet), I regained my bivouac gear and began skiing the 1600-foot vertical couloir. After completing the difficult sections and reaching the broader, less steep slopes below, I fell over my ski tips and fractured my right hand (second metacarpal, index finger). Rescue was not necessary as it was possible to continue. (Source: Omar Hansen)