

River Campground on that day. On Sunday, [May 24] the two Tacoma climbers broke camp around noon and began the ascent of the Carbon Glacier to the usual bivouac at Thumb Rock at 10,600 feet. The weather was warm—about 45–50°F—and wet snow avalanches were frequently heard rumbling off Willis Wall. We decided to wait for colder weather before making our attempt.

“We last saw the two climbers alive at the base of Liberty Ridge, approaching it from the east. As later events would show, they probably attained an altitude of 12,500 feet before the accident, but we never saw them on the ridge, probably due to the intermittent cloud cover.

“The next day, May 25, after an overnight rain which by morning had turned to snow, saw us starting out to Thumb Rock. We left camp at 1:00 p.m. in intermittent cloud and reached Thumb Rock about 6:00 p.m. After bivouacking in a snow cave, we started the climb on May 26 at 5:00 a.m., reaching Liberty Cap at 2:00 p.m. We followed the standard 1935 route, encountering some thin ice over névé about the 12,500–12,800 foot level. We then descended to Camp Schurman and then the next day to our camp on Curtis Ridge. We first learned the two other climbers were missing when we reached the White River Ranger Station on Thursday. Their return date was supposed to have been May 25.

“Cause of the fall will never be known for sure, but fresh snow over ice could have been a problem, rock or icefall, or fatigue. We ourselves found it necessary to move together on the ridge, since belays on most of the route were impossible.”

With the inclusion of this route in *Fifty Classic Climbs of North America* by Steve Roper and Allen Steck, its popularity has soared and probably will continue to do so. It is sustained, exposed, objectively hazardous and, in general, not a route to be attempted in marginal weather. Unfortunately, it will probably be a source of increasing numbers of future mishaps and tragedies as more climbers take up its challenge. (Source: Edward A. Wilson, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park and Dr. George McLean)

RAPPEL FAILURE, NO HARD HAT, INEXPERIENCE

Washington, Leavenworth Practice Cliffs

Peggy Stark (49) died Sunday [May 24] of head injuries she suffered Saturday in a rock-climbing accident in Chelan County just southwest of Leavenworth, the King County medical examiner's office reported.

Stark and a companion, James Garrison, had been practicing basic rock climbing about six to eight miles southwest of Leavenworth, beyond the Snow Creek trail near the Icicle River.

Garrison is an experienced climber but Stark was not.

According to Garrison, after about 45 minutes of successful practice, Stark was rappeling down a 15-foot-high section of the rock when she lost control halfway down. She scrambled, twisted, struck her head and was knocked unconscious. (Source: *The Seattle Times*, May 26, 1981)

LOSS OF CONTROL, VOLUNTARY GLISSADE, FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS

Washington, Mount Rainier

On May 31, 1981, John Sabella (33) caught a crampon point and lost control while attempting a sitting glissade during a descent from the Emmons Glacier at the 10,500-foot level.

Sabella injured his right knee and ankle in the fall. The injuries sustained were diagnosed at the scene by an orthopedic surgeon as probable ligament damage to the knee and a possible fractured right ankle. The situation was reported to the White River Ranger Station by Jim Springer, Camp Schurman Climbing Ranger, at 4:15 p.m.

On June 1, Springer led the evacuation effort down the Inter Glacier with very few problems. Additional NPS personnel met the evacuation team at the foot of the Inter Glacier with the Anderson Wheeled Stokes litter and the White River Bergtrage; they assisted with Sabella's evacuation to the Glacier Basin trailhead where he was met by his wife and taken for medical attention. (Source: J. Krumbink and J. Springer, Rangers, Mount Rainier National Park)

Analysis

The same comment applies as was made about the March 12 glissading accident on Cowlitz Cleaver. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALLING ICE

Washington, Mount Rainier

Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (RMI), the professional climbing concessionaire at Mount Rainier National Park, was conducting a routine climb of the mountain on Father's Day, June 21, 1981. John Day (22), senior guide for RMI, was leading the party of 29, which included 23 clients and six guides. The party of six roped teams left their base camp at Camp Muir (10,000 feet) at approximately 3:50 a.m. in weather that Day later described as "excellent." The intended route was via Disappointment Cleaver, commonly called "the standard route."

At 5:30 a.m., after making a rest stop on Ingraham Flats (10,500 feet), guide Chris Lynch (23) returned to Camp Muir with three clients who decided they could not continue. Led by Day, Michael Targett, Peter Whittaker (22), Greg Wilson (23) and Tom O'Brien (20), the remaining five roped teams consisting of 25 climbers proceeded to the base of Disappointment Cleaver.

After arriving at Disappointment Cleaver, Day decided to unrope and check the climbing conditions on the Cleaver. The avalanche danger had been forecast as moderate to high above 10,000 feet and he was concerned about the slope conditions. Approximately 100–200 feet west of the "nose" of the Cleaver, where parties normally leave the Ingraham Glacier and begin their ascent of the Cleaver, the five roped teams stopped, coiled in their ropes, and sat down just above a large crevasse to wait for Day.

Day borrowed Wilson's rope and roped up with Whittaker and Targett, whom he considered knowledgeable about avalanche prediction; they then proceeded onto the nose. Wilson, O'Brien, and the remaining climbers waited as a group while Day and his fellow guides dug snow pits and checked the avalanche danger and general climbing conditions on the Cleaver. After consultation with Whittaker and Targett, Day determined that there was "... no real solid path like there usually is. . . ." on the Cleaver, so he made the decision to turn the climb around and go home.

Around 5:45 a.m., just as Day, Whittaker, and Targett started back toward the waiting climbers, they heard a very loud crack or roar on the glacier above them. Apparently, a very large serac or ice formation toppled over or let go about 800 vertical feet above the waiting