

(Editor's Note: We know that there is a lot of climbing activity in the mid-West, and finding sources for accidents continues. All contributions welcomed!)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED, PANIC, INEXPERIENCE

Mississippi, Tishomingo State Park

On March 26, 1988, around 1600, Robert L. Breland (c. 20) sprained his left ankle as the result of a ten meter unroped fall on rock at Tishomingo State Park, Mississippi. Breland was scrambling unroped on the upper section of a technical rock climb of moderate difficulty ("Muscle City Direct" 5.7). He said he panicked on the final section of the route while stepping off the ledge into a corner pockmarked with solution pockets. His discomfort was caused by looking down and realizing the consequences of a ten meter fall. Breland began screaming as he attempted the move, and then fell to the ground. His two partners helped to break Breland's fall by attempting to spot him. Breland landed primarily on his left ankle and slid about eight meters down the slope below the base of the climb. Members of the Memphis Mountaineers, Inc., responded and carried Breland out via litter to the trailhead. He was transported by private car to the hospital. (Source: Jim Detterline—AAC member)

Analysis

Breland told me that he had been "scrambling" for several years without incident. He said that he was aware of the existence of technical climbing techniques and knew of a competent instructor in his home area (Jackson, MS) but he had not availed himself of any training or practice. Tishomingo State Park is one of a handful of sites in the mid-South where accidents by non-climbers in a climbing situation may adversely influence climbing policies by legislators and landowners. It is important that these limited resources remain available to climbers. Public awareness of climbing's safe aspects will help. (Source: Jim Detterline—AAC member)

AVALANCHE, WEATHER

New Hampshire, Willy Slide

On February 10, 1988, a fresh snowfall of 30 centimeters was followed by 90 kph winds and -35 degree C temperatures the next day. Paul Nicinski (26) and I (29) soloed the first hundred meters. When we started to rope up, the wind was too strong so we decided to descend. We did not rope up. We downclimbed to the left toward the trees. The snow there felt good and we decided to go up. Paul was about ten meters above me and to the left. Paul heard a muffled sound and an avalanche started. He was trying not to hit me. I was not looking up. The snow grabbed me and my crampon snagged—so I was going down head first. I hit a small rock band with my chest, flipped over again, then ended up in the trees sitting up. Paul had an enjoyable ride down. I had a terrible headache and spit up a little blood. I was short of breath. We walked out. I believe I cracked my sternum. Never went to hospital. We estimated that we fell between 125-150 meters. (Source: Michael Binder)

Analysis

We should not have climbed at all in this weather. It was definite avalanche condi-