

*2 caught, 1 buried***Weather Conditions**

A very cold fall with light snowfall and a thin snow cover caused the early season formation of depth hoar in the higher Wasatch Mountain areas. December 1966 brought normal snowfall plus two rain storms which produced hard sliding surfaces in the snow-pack. Above-normal snowfall was recorded in January 1967, along with exceptional wind action.

Early February in the Alta and Brighton area found the weather generally clear and mild. Snow depth at Alta measured 105 inches. On February 10, a storm moved in and deposited 6 inches of new snow, most of it falling as graupel. Strong northwest winds gusting to 40 and 50 m.p.h. accompanied the storm.

February 11 broke clear and mild with moderate northwest winds. Afternoon cloudiness brought a trace of snow. Temperatures ranged from 12° to 26°F.

**Accident Summary**

At noon on February 11, two experienced skiers, Jack Gordon and Rex Anderson, left the Brighton Ski Area to ski tour Twin Lakes Pass to the west. They got off the top of Mt. Millicent lift and skied outside the ski area boundary without notifying anyone or inquiring about snow conditions. The selected route exposed them to extreme avalanche danger the entire way. They did remove their pole straps from their wrists, but their arlberg straps were left tied down on their skis.

Snow Ranger Will Bassett was standing on the ridge overlooking the Twin Lakes Pass area and the Brighton Ski Bowl when he observed the two men traversing across the hazardous avalanche area. Remarkably, he then observed the avalanche as it was released by the two skiers; the time was 1315. The snow fractured 80 yards above the men, and they were quickly engulfed by the slide.

Gordon was carried 200 yards downhill by the slide and buried just below the surface with his face up and head downhill. He was able to get an arm free and clear his face.

Anderson was carried approximately 120 yards in the slide and remained on the surface.

**Rescue**

When the slide stopped, Anderson discovered that he had lost one ski and one pole. Nevertheless, he started downhill looking for Gordon and found him buried but unhurt. Anderson was able to dig out his companion.

Not knowing that the skiers were unhurt, Snow Ranger Bassett reported the accident to the Brighton Ski Patrol at 1320. He then took three patrolmen and immediately headed for the accident scene. Seven minutes later a second hasty party of five patrolmen left with probes, marking flags, and a shovel. Several minutes later, the main rescue party of 10 men left for the scene, fully equipped.

At 1340, the first hasty party led by Bassett was in voice contact with the two victims and was assured that everything was all right. Anderson's missing ski was found, and they were able to ski out. The second hasty search party was stopped 300 yards from the accident site to prevent them further exposure to avalanche hazard. The main party was stopped ½ mile from the site. The back-up rescue party was then disbanded, and the ambulance that had been called was canceled. By 1430, the rescue effort had been completed and secured.

**Avalanche Data**

The avalanche occurred about 1½ miles west of the top terminal of the Mt. Millicent chairlift at Brighton. The slope has a northeast exposure and an average steepness of 30°. It has a history of sliding after most new snowfalls.

On February 11, the day of the accident, an identical exposure in the ski area was checked by artillery fire at 0800. It did not slide. However, estimates of avalanche danger were that the hazard was increasing during the day. Touring was closed on the 11th.

The avalanche was a SS-AS-3, approxi-