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## A Scoutmaster's Fall: Three Witnesses Will Never Forget It

Crawford Coates

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# A Scoutmaster's Fall

*Three witnesses will never forget it*

**Crawford Coates**



CHARLES BAYS LOCKER, 21 YEARS OLD, LUNCED WITH THREE BOYS on a remote California ridge. It was July 16, 1952. They ate nuts, cheese, and raisins from old war-surplus drawstring bags. Sun shone on the remains of a freakish winter. Old snow lay thickly across the dark gray granite passes, which looked as if they rolled topsy-turvy away from them.

The foursome marked, with this brief rest, another first ascent—Peak 12,360, which Bays called Lakeview Summit. An icy blue lake lay below. He dubbed it Summit View Lake. This would be their third recognized first ascent in as many days, although they had climbed seven routes in the Sierra Nevada they thought to be unclimbed. Consummate Boy Scouts, they called the peaks Tenderfoot Hill, Scout's Rest, and Mount Ashie (because their Order of the Arrow Lodge was called Ashie). This was a year before the first summit of Mount Everest, and they had dreams of trying for it. At this moment, that dream seemed well within reach.

After lunch, they continued along the ridge about an eighth of a mile. Here, they faced a dramatic and sudden notch in the ridgeline that cut the group from their destination, the highest peak yet to conquer: 13,046 feet.

The drop to the northeast appeared promising. Karl Hufbauer, tall and vigorous, who at 15 years old was bigger than his scoutmaster, went forth with confidence. "We wanted the fastest way down. I descended first," Karl recalled later. "Then Bays came down after me." Karl's younger brother, Gary, 13, followed Bays.

Donald Albright, a blond-haired 17-year-old, stayed on the ridge, grinning in tennis shoes. "It wasn't dangerous at all," he would tell reporters four days later. "We were just trying to make our way along this ridge to go down a different way."

The northeast route proved too much. The three soon turned back up the chute toward the ridge. Donald offered their sole 50-foot rope down to help. Bays refused it. "Karl and Bays were trying one side when they came to this big rock. They had to climb over it to keep going," Donald said. "Bays was climbing it when all of a sudden it pulled out."

"Bays had just given me a boost onto a rock," Gary said. "Then it all went out beneath him."

"His last word was, 'Rock!'" Karl said. "He and the rock whizzed by me."

*Charles Bays Locker, at left, a dynamic guide and beloved Boy Scout leader, stood on the summit of Mount Whitney with Donald Albright, center, and Karl Hufbauer the summer before the accident.* COURTESY OF KARL HUFBAUER

Three boys, ages 13, 15, and 17 were left thereby alone on a desolate ridge in the high Sierra.

BAYS LOCKER WAS A NAME I KNEW WELL, GROWING UP. MY GRANDFATHER, the district commissioner for the Boy Scouts of San Diego County's North Shore District, oversaw Bays's troop and passed down his esteem for this young man to the family in vague, mythic tones. He had attended Bays's funeral. My father, nine years Bays's junior, spoke of Bays to me in the same way a young boy speaks of the older boy he reveres. My father spoke of no one else this way.

Now I'm in Washington, D.C., six decades after the accident. It's spring. The cherry trees are blooming, and pollen billows through the warm air. I drive through busy streets and soon leave that noisy world behind, climbing stone steps and passing through heavy ornate doors into the Cosmos Club, a vault of cold stone settled between the Indian and Estonian embassies.

"It affects me to this day," said Gary Hufbauer, a man who nears his seventh decade and yet is still Karl's little brother, elbows astride a marble tabletop. He sighs, rubs his hands. Years ago, he was a nervous math protégé. He left San Diego at 18 for Harvard University, then earned a PhD in economics at Cambridge University. He taught at the University of New Mexico, earned a law degree at Georgetown University, and went on to a long career in academics and government. He served as deputy assistant secretary for international trade and investment policy at the U.S. Treasury, held professorships at Georgetown University, and was the Maurice Greenberg chair and director of studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. But I still can see the gangly, 13-year-old sent out alone to seek help in a snowy wild.

"I think of Bays often," Gary said, looking down at the glass of wine before him. "He's one of the best people I've known in my life." When he leaves to meet guests upstairs for dinner, he looks to me a little ghostlier than when he had arrived.

His older brother, Karl, an emeritus history professor at the University of California at Irvine, lives now in Seattle, where he works as a stone sculptor. His pieces with such names as "Sierra Vista" and "Young at Heart" were inspired by "the ways in which erosion, earthquakes, and weathering shape rocky terrains."

Their bids for first ascents were not competitive, he said. "That was not part of my motivation. We were all fired up by the [challenge] of Mount Everest. . . . Bays and I talked about it all the time, to make history as it were.

But, in retrospect, I have a very different attitude about it. I've thought one should do things that are unique. I've always, as a historian, tried to be an original writer and not a flashy writer."

Karl has recently published a chapter about J. Robert Oppenheimer's role in the discovery of black holes, noted and esteemed by the celebrated physicist Freeman Dyson. He is at base a historian, one who grapples with the past. He yearns, even more than the others, to set this crooked record straight.

But he, too, seems vulnerable as he discusses his former scoutmaster. "The first time I ever had a long phone call with anyone was with Bays. I remember finishing the phone call—I'd never had a long phone call before. It was like I was in love with him," said Karl. He states this factually. "We went to his bedroom and saw maps all over the walls and soon we had maps all over our walls."

Donald Albright now has skin aged by the sun of eastern San Diego County, rural Arizona, and Baja, California. He squints through thick plastic-frame glasses, and oftener than not he smiles in a bemused and kind sort of way. He's a retired teacher and geologist who looks younger than his 80 years. He prefers holding forth on topics such as indigenous cultures, geology, history, and his own adventures. He speaks softly, and he relives the moment of the accident as he tells it.

It was, after all, Donald—a family friend, but also simply a friend—who first told me a cursory draft of the tragedy, which I'd forgotten except for the rudiments: that someone had died, and that



*Charles Bays Locker stands in front of the south fork of the Eel River, near Cummings, California, in June 1951.* KARL HUFBAUER

Donald had dragged out the body. It had happened somewhere in the middle of nowhere, the sort of place Donald went.

In spring 2008, I had the great fortune of driving most of the length of Baja's peninsula with Donald, my father, and my uncle. Somewhere around Cataviña, a forest of painted rocks and boojum trees tangling up the sky, on the rancho of one of Donald's Baja friends, he began to tell the story in its full detail. Each night, camped beside a fire, he would revisit details and field questions.

"There was no question as to whether he survived," Donald said, smiling faintly in the campfire light. "He dropped maybe 200 feet. He was *dead*."

He was alone in this certainty.

GARY SAID, "THERE WAS HOPE FOR ME, AFTER BAYS FELL, THAT HE WAS STILL alive. I was the youngest, and Donnie probably knew better, but we knew that if he survived the fall, he would need two people to carry him out."

"We were sending out for help," said Karl. "I was hoping he survived. . . . People have survived pretty severe falls."

All three boys must have looked very young as they rushed down from the ridge along a southwest-facing chute to a snow-covered talus slope. Donald, although the eldest at 17, was much smaller than Karl. "We went as fast as we could," said Karl. "It was midafternoon and the sun wouldn't last," said Donald. "We had to make some quick decisions."

Karl and Donald immediately dispatched Gary to find help alone in LeConte Canyon. Already an Eagle Scout, Gary had just completed seventh grade at La Jolla Junior-Senior High School. He imagined Bays, whom he revered, writhing in a snow bank, maybe dying. Running down the icy snow along their line of ascent, he reached the base camp at Ladder Lake in the late afternoon and provisioned himself—for what? The idea of an overnight hike over Bishop Pass stopped him short: "I don't know if I could have made that ordeal," he said. All he could do, this 13-year-old, was go on as he had been told to do.

He hurried along the northern side of Ladder Lake, then descended another chute to the north of the lake's steep falls. The remaining trek down to the Kings River was unclear, a steep decline of underbrush and scree boulders covered in snow. "It was a very strenuous hike out," said Gary. "But I'll tell you, the snow made it easier. It gave me something to climb on."

As he reached the valley floor, the huge granite wall of the Citadel Peak that looms over the valley bled out the last of its luminescence. The cold

set in. He faced again the swollen, raging Middle Fork of the Kings River. "The most difficult part for me on that solitary trip was crossing the Kings River," said Gary. "There had been a natural snow bridge coming in, but Bays wouldn't let us use that. Instead, we forged the river. . . . On the way out, I had no choice [but to cross the snow bridge]. So I laid down spread eagle and I crossed that snow bridge." It held.

Now safely on the other side of LeConte Canyon, his brother's entreaty to "go find help" stood starkly against the darkness that filled the canyon floor. Gary headed north on the John Muir Trail, which seemed to him the most likely place in this most unlikely of places to find anyone, beneath the pines and crescent moon. He trudged for than a mile when, disbelieving his eyes, he spotted flames glowing across a meadow. He ran for it. Beside the fire were a man and woman. "It probably took five or ten minutes before I could give them a coherent account," said Gary. Even then, it was a hard story to comprehend: *A man has fallen. A man named Bays. He needs help. Karl's up there with Donnie. Boy Scouts. They were going to climb down to help him. Troop 81. They need help. . . .*

Douglas and Ballard Engelbart, newlyweds, listened carefully. They warmed the exhausted youth and fed him. "After making sure he had all the names, San Diego contacts, and other details, Mr. Engelbart insisted he would go for help," Gary recalled. "They left me in their camp, with plenty of firewood, good sleeping bags and food—my only assignment was to meet the rescue party the next day."

Douglas Engelbart had sought refuge and inspiration in wilderness throughout his life. But his wife, Ballard, who had grown up in Berkeley, was on her first visit to her husband's beloved Sierras. She insisted on accompanying him, though, on the arduous fourteen-mile trek over Bishop Pass to the nearest road. She had no idea what the trek would entail, through the dead of night, in this strangely snowy season: the steep switchbacks out of LeConte Canyon, through the snow-covered marshes of Dusy Basin, over icy rocks and spires of Bishop Pass, down past the lakes of Timberline Tarns and finally to Parcher's Camp. It was a hike most experienced rescue climbers wouldn't do without great urgency and complete provisioning. Said Rick Sanger, a longtime ranger assigned to LeConte Canyon for three years: "It's beyond me to imagine attempting this route in snowy conditions, let alone in the totality of *those conditions*."

Meanwhile, Gary settled in for the night in Little Pete Meadow, holding out hope that Bays would be rescued.



CHARLES BAYS LOCKER WAS BORN ON JUNE 18, 1931, IN NEWTON, IOWA. His mother Zelma had lost her own mother three weeks earlier. His father, Paul Lester Locker, had worked for a Standard Oil Company gas station in Newton for four years, but after the family relocated to San Diego, where Zelma's father lived, Paul couldn't find work. By 1934, the couple was divorced, but Zelma stayed in San Diego and raised Bays there. For part of his childhood, he and his mother lived in a rented house near Mission Beach. In the summer of 1941, the story goes that Zelma won a prefabricated house from a developer at the San Diego County Fair. She bought a tiny parcel at 803 Yarmouth Court and had the house erected there in the sand on the north end of Mission Bay, which was then a huge dendritic mudflat that would rise and fall with the tides, cutting the beach off from the rest of San Diego. Bays—even as a boy known by his middle (and mother's maiden) name—went to recently constructed Mission Beach Elementary School each day. His mother went off to the library. "They were a team," said Gary.

In 1942, 10 years old, Bays began to deliver the *San Diego Journal* throughout Mission Beach and Pacific Beach. In 1948, at 17, he sold his paper route to Donald for \$30. Bays allegedly used the proceeds to bicycle solo around Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. That same winter he saved a drowning 7-year-old from a storming Mission Bay (despite the fact that he couldn't swim).

While most of his cohort at La Jolla High School reveled in sports and the beach life, Bays couldn't swim or throw a ball. But at 16, he began to keep a photo album that documents emerging fascinations: the natural world, the beaches and freeways, and, while visiting his aunt, the Laguna Mountain Range. He wanted a mountain place of his own, with his young friends, a sort of Neverland, which he would soon find.

AT THE FOOT OF A SOUTH-FACING CHUTE, KARL DESCENDED, FOLLOWED by Donald. Karl's hope vanished when he arrived to find Bays's head buried in rock at the foot of the northeast-facing chute on the other side of the ridge.

Bays had fallen about 50 feet before he made contact with rocks below. Then he fell another 120 feet in a rocky landslide, according to the report Karl would give to the Berkeley chemist Joel Hildebrand of the American Alpine Club. "He fell about 200 feet before making impact. Then he tumbled a lot further. Maybe another 500 feet," Donald told one newspaper reporter. The rockslide that followed his fall had lasted about five minutes. "His head was



buried,” Karl said, in “gravel and stones. . . . His head and body were so badly battered that he must have died during the fall.”

“The body—the head—the head was all crushed. Lots of bruises, all black and blue,” Donald said. “Some blood, but mostly it was intact.” His camera and watch were also intact. “I knew Bays wouldn’t have wanted to be hauled out like that. He’d have preferred to have been left up there. But I remembered up there on the mountain that he was an only child, and so we decided that we had to bring him down no matter what.”

So they proceeded: tying the rope around his ankles, walking beyond him about 20 feet or so, and then dragging him to them. And so on, they trudged across the ice fields and granite: “He was much bigger than me and the snow was furrowing. . . . As it got later, it got very cold,” said Donald. “Our feet went numb. Any water we could find, we soaked our feet in. The rivulets that ran through the snow, we’d soak our feet because we figured the water was warmer than the snow.”

Exhausted and about a half-mile from the base camp at Ladder Lake, they buried the body in snow and left for camp for the night.

FOR ALL ITS GROWTH, MISSION BEACH REMAINS CLOSE-KNIT AMONG the old-timers. Word spread that I was interested in the story of Bays Locker. Pretty soon a house being demolished in the College Area produced a photo album, delivered to a local history buff, John Fry, delivered to me, and this is the firmest testament I have to who Bays was: meticulous notes, fascinations, treks, his eye, all in his time. There’s a photo Bays took from the foot of his block of the bay on February 1, 1949, either in the early morning or early evening, I can’t tell. In the foreground is a broken-down wooden dock, a faint trickle of water working through the sand, and a wide placid body of water that had receded deeply, creating a small island. This little black-and-white picture is mostly gray. Across the water are some small, faint one-story structures. The photo at a quick glance could be easily mistaken for an empty place, a place of desolation. But in the tiny details emerge human artifacts—lights from houses on the opposite shore scarcely recognizable to us today, because that shore later changed so much. In a sense, he was born to what we might call *wilderness*. Or, at least, he was born to a place worthy of steady exploration.

It seems obvious now that Bays and his mother occupied a pivotal moment there. The ocean was on one side, the bay on the other, and the tide cut their

sandbar off from the rest of the city. They were a unique community in those days, before Mission Bay was dredged.

“The Beach,” as Zelma called it, began the transition from backwater to a bedroom community in the midst of the baby boom.

Karl Hufbauer’s father, Clyde, was an architect who designed 16 middle, junior, and senior high schools in his career in San Diego. He built 60 elementary schools and contributed significantly to the campuses of the city’s multicampus college system. The Hufbauers lived in a small modern beach cottage of his design in Mission Beach. The father believed in self-reliance, was an outdoorsman, and ambitious. He saw in Scouting, as embodied by Bays, an opportunity for his sons. The eldest son, Karl, joined Troop 81 in 1950. “[Our father] didn’t like Boy Scouts until he saw that it was his agenda: to be self-reliant in the out of doors.” In 1951, Karl’s brother Gary joined the troop. “My father respected Bays enormously,” said Gary.

Bays by this time had developed a reputation as wilderness wunderkind. Donald describes the Boy Scout troop before Bays took charge of it: “We’d tie some knots and play some football, and maybe once in a while plan some local trip—up to Torrey Pines or the Lagunas or something—but it wasn’t



*Charles Bays Locker, left, and Karl Hufbauer at the junction of the Muir and Mono Creek trails during a YMCA trip in August 1951. COURTESY OF KARL HUFBAUER*

very well organized.” By 1950, Bays, age 19—too old for Scouting’s highest honor, Eagle Scout, too old in fact for Boy Scouts—was essentially in charge of a flourishing Troop 81. “Even though there was a scoutmaster on paper,” said Karl, “Bays ran things. Parents helped out with transportation and things, but the scoutmaster was a figurehead.” Bays planned, for example, an annual Christmas tree sale—ordering trees from Oregon, setting prices, negotiating a church lot for sales—that funded trips throughout the year, including a summer Sierra trek. He ordered dehydrated foods from a military supplier in Compton, California. He studied maps and all available literature until he was expert. He rented trucks when necessary, and he secured adult supervision and support. “Bays was the core. Of Troop 81, he was it,” said Gary. “Even before he became scoutmaster, he was a *father figure*.”

Naturally, then, when the Boy Scouts District Council planned a district-wide backpacking trip to the High Sierras in the summer of 1951, the commissioner asked Bays to plan this too. It was to be classic High Sierras in July: skirting the peaks of the White Divide to the Palisade Glacier (the southernmost glacier in the United States) and surrounding lakes of Palisade Basin, giving way to Dusy Basin and the many lakes south of South Lake—a tumble of granite and pine and crossed by trout-filled streams.

Bays led the Council on the tromp from Taboose Pass to South Lake with a copy of Hervey Harper Voge’s 1949 preliminary edition of the classic *A Climber’s Guide* (Sierra Club) close at hand. The 1954 edition would describe the peripheral westward region: “South of Goddard Divide, between LeConte Canyon and the White Divide, is the wildest part of the High Sierra. Perhaps no more than a dozen parties have been through the Enchanted Gorge since its discovery. Of the Ragged Spur peaks, only Scylla is known to have been climbed and that but once. Place names are rather far between. From the old map, it is apparent that the Geological Survey parties were not too familiar with the topography. Lack of trails, rugged terrain, high altitude and low timberline, remoteness, and the lack of any great number of mountaineers who would prefer to cope with these conditions—all this has contributed to the final result: a knapsacker’s wilderness, as black, ragged, and enchanting as its place names.” The 1949 edition only covered the southern part of that particular trek. The rest of the trek—specifically, the Black Divide—was covered by Voge in the May 1951 issue of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*<sup>1</sup> and Bays,

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1. Hervey Harper Voge, “A Climber’s Guide to the High Sierra: Part VII. The Kings-Kern Divide and the Adjacent Crest,” *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 36, no. 5 (May 1951): 106–125.

who joined the Sierra Club early that year, brought this with him too. Guidebook writer R.J. Secor notes the Black Divide was “one of the wildest parts of the High Sierra . . . not accurately charted until the 1950s.”

“I could see Bays thinking about it on that trip, planning the next trip in his mind,” said Donald. For the rest of the Scout Council, this was a backpacking trek. For Bays, it was a reconnaissance mission skirting the mother lode of possible first-ascents.

On July 19, eight days into the trip, Bays led a group that included Donald up the 14,250-foot North Palisade. Three days later, Bays bagged his first-route ascent: a Class-4 scramble with a group that included Donald and Karl up the north wall of the Citadel.

“We reached a point where the creek seemed to leap off into space, for we could hear it below us no more,” Bays wrote in his report of the trek. “I peered over the edge but could see nothing but a black void, as complete darkness had now set in.” They turned around and headed back for the peak they were attempting to descend from. Roped together and moving one at a time, they worked their way back from whence they had come. They were hungry, without food, and “clad only in light shirts.” He wrote: “By the time we reached the basin at the foot of the mountain, we had also reached the point where we fell asleep every time we sat down . . .” Bays decided to take a shortcut. He wrote that they would avoid Muir Pass, instead crossing the crest of the Black Divide south of Peak 12,804. He missed his mark. They found themselves instead on 750-foot cliffs of the Black Giant above its southernmost glacier. They could only continue downward, working their way down the cliffs, which steepened as they went. The first light of the day glittered on the ice. It was only luck that they would wander into the camp with the sun, a day after setting out.

By this point, the other adults of the trip were on to Bays. They were furious. He had risked the lives of four boys in pursuit of—whimsy? Obsession? But the fury ended there on the mountain. This experience, with those boys, seemed only to bolster his reputation and confidence. Bays, who wrote his report of the ordeal ten months later—May 22, 1952—concludes, simply, “Everyone was OK, with no ill effects.” The report was to be left on the mountain in a 35-mm canister his mother had saved for him. The upcoming trek was the one that was to, and would, solidify his reputation.

“We had first-ascent fever,” said Karl, as if to explain.

But there was more to it than ego at play. The very day Bays wrote his account of the first-ascent of 13,271, he also awarded the rank of Eagle Scout to two of his Scouts, Gary, 13, and Karl, 14.



*A pack train of eleven horses carried the body of Charles Bays Locker to civilization, July 17, 1952. STEPHEN "LOU" LUKACIK*

AS THE MORNING WORE ON AT PARCHER'S CAMP PACK STATION AND the rescue party assembled itself, Douglas and Ballard Engelbart made phone calls to Clyde Hufbauer, Karl and Gary's father, and Zelma Locker. (Douglas would go on to revolutionize network computing and invent the computer mouse, while Ballard would fear wilderness the rest of her life.) Whether Bays was alive or not, they didn't know. If he was alive, he was "in critical condition." Clyde and Zelma began the drive from San Diego to South Lake. "Mission Beach Youth Hurt in Sierra Plunge," read the *San Diego Tribune* headline the following day.

The rescue party was Deputy Sheriff John Joslin, Dr. Robert Denton, Game Warden Stephen "Lou" Lukacik, and packer Dudley Boothe. They headed out on horseback with a string of horses and mules to carry Bays and the boys back on. In the afternoon, the legendary mountain pilot Bob Symons<sup>2</sup> made two trips over the site. Karl and Donald saw him, but Symons didn't see them. The boys headed down to Muir Trail and found Gary waiting for them there. "He's dead," they said. The rescue party arrived in LeConte Canyon that evening. Donald shouted across the wide Kings River that Bays was dead. He then headed back up the mountainside to Ladder Lake for the

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2. "Legendary" is used advisedly. Symons was the principal pilot and visionary behind the Air Force's Sierra Wave Project, which took place in two phases: 1951–1952 and 1955. It was "in many aspects a forerunner of modern mesoscale field experiments," according to Vanda Grubusic and John M. Lewis, "Sierra Wave Project Revisited," American Meteorological Society, August 2004.

night to be with Karl and Gary, and Bays's body. The rescue party camped on the river's east side.

In the morning, the rescuers crossed the river on horse and then prepared the stock for the scramble up toward Ladder Lake. Clyde, Zelma, and a reporter from Bishop named Don Calkins spotted them from Symons's airplane. Calkins would report in the *Los Angeles Times*: "When the plane reached Ladder Lake the rescue party appeared to have young Locker on a sled."

Messages were scrawled out on paper, tucked into toilet-paper rolls, and dropped to the rescue party. "They asked those on the ground to indicate the injured youth's condition by forming a circle if he had a chance or by standing in a straight line with their arms outstretched if there was no hope." They formed a straight line. "Stunned . . . Mrs. Locker nearly collapsed in the plane. It was not known, of course, whether the youth already was dead or that the rescue party had no hope of getting him out of the mountains alive." Symons flew Zelma back to San Diego that afternoon to be treated medically.

Gary, Karl, Donald, and the rest of the rescue party carried Bays's body back to Parcher's Camp. The following day, the body was flown to San Diego. Five days later, Bays's casket was carried by his Scouting friends and senior Scouting officials at the Central Christian Church in downtown San Diego. He was in full Boy Scout uniform.

"He was my boy, my only boy," Zelma cried. "I'm all alone now."

Thirty-five years later, Zelma Locker was interred beside her son at Mt. Hope Cemetery in San Diego.

"HAD HE LIVED," SAID GARY, A WORLD-RENOWNED ECONOMIST, "BAYS would have been tremendously successful in business."

In early 1951, the San Diego neighborhood called Clairemont—named after developer Carlos J. Tavares's wife, Claire—emblazoned itself on the scrub hills above Mission Beach. In February of the same year, Bays bought 20 acres along the Oat Hills aqueduct at a tax sale, \$70 for the whole of it. It was, by the photos, an overgrown and hilly piece of land, not particularly picturesque. It would be worth millions today.

I, as all who know his story, have wondered what would have been had Bays survived. It doesn't get you far. What impresses me most is, despite his youth, the reverberating consequences of his death, through Donald, Karl, and Gary, of course, but most poignantly throughout the long life of Zelma, his mother.



Bays bought something else before he died: a life insurance policy payable to her. With this money, Zelma was able to attend the master's program in Library Science at New York's Pratt Institute. When she returned to San Diego, she was assigned to the downtown branch of the public library, where she was the driving force behind the creation of its California Room, the pride of local historians.

Zelma "was dedicated to libraries and to facts," recalled Jim Moss, former director of the San Diego and California Historical societies, who co-edited the *Journal of San Diego History*, which she wrote for. "I had heard she had a son," said Moss. "I always felt—I don't know why—that I shouldn't talk to Zelma about him. That was the feeling I had."

The 1954 edition of *A Climber's Guide* reads, "The name Mt. Locker has been suggested for this peak to commemorate Charles Bays Locker who was killed while descending with three companions from a first ascent of a small peak one-half mile east, Peak 12,360+n." But so far, the peak has not been renamed.

A month after Bays's death, Zelma wrote to Karl, "Many people have spoken of the courage, and the presence of mind which you and Don showed, up there on the mountain. Many people have said, 'Those must have been exceptional boys; most boys that age would have run away from death.' But instead of that you and Don took Bays back to base camp—and I know that the physical work of moving his body that far must have been very hard—and took care of him there in the snow until the posse arrived. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the way you showed your respect for him in those last days. I want to tell you, also, that I think you used your heads, in packing him in snow."

Donald and Karl returned to Parcher's in 2011 to mark the anniversary of their journey and celebrate the life of Bays Locker. It seems the ambitious are still drawn to wilderness. But with maturity, one's definition of *wilderness* is transformed. Another sort of vision of eternity looms, and it worries less about glory and renown than about dignity and memories of an old friend who went too quickly despite how hugely he still looms in these lives.

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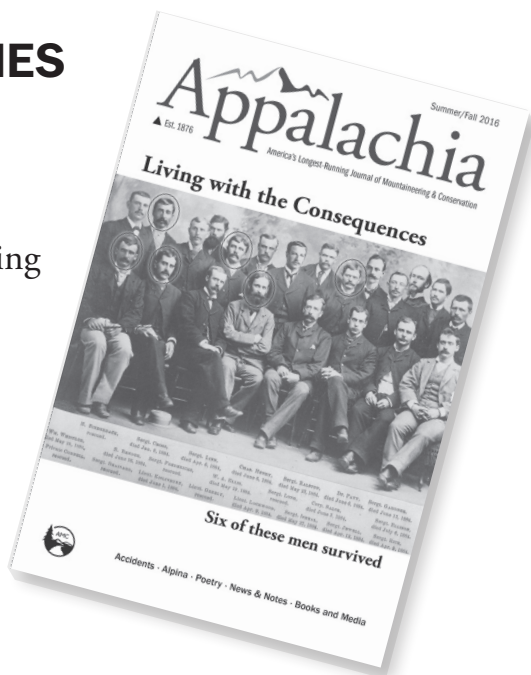
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