Avalanche tracks and debris tongues are abundant enough in western Montana to attract attention, yet geologists tend to overlook them or regard them as non-geologic in origin. We are uncertain as to the historical background for this curious professional bias in the United States. European geologists are very much involved in avalanche research. In 1962 we gave a paper on avalanches at the Rocky Mountain Section Meetings of the Geological Society of America and were rather pointedly questioned about the appropriateness of the subject for G.S.A. Times are changing slowly (witness this Guidebook), but the outer boundary line of geological literature still falls pretty solidly somewhere between ice and snow. In the United States it was the U. S. Forest Service which initiated and now leads in avalanche research. (In Japan it is the Japanese Railway System.)

Since about 1960, we have had a modest program of avalanche research and instruction at M. S. U. Montagne has put his efforts into such matters as glide slabs, cornice formation and control, geomorphic and ecological aspects of avalanche slopes, avalanche safety and control, search and rescue. He also teaches a course entitled "Snow Dynamics and Accumulation."

Bradley has focused on the so-called "Climax Avalanche" with special attention to the evaluation of snowpack stability and the mechanics of snowpack failure. This paper reviews some of the salient aspects of the work, with particular emphasis on its relation to geologic concepts.

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