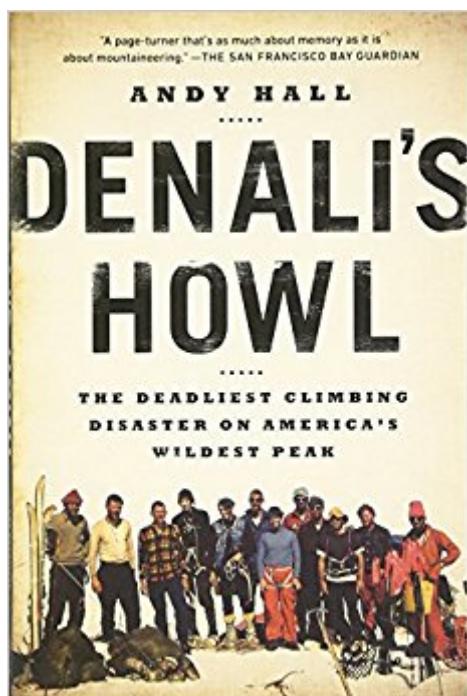


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# Denali's Howl: The Deadliest Climbing Disaster On America's Wildest Peak



## Synopsis

In the summer of 1967, twelve young men ascended Alaska's Mount McKinley—known to the locals as Denali. Engulfed by a once-in-a-lifetime blizzard, only five made it back down. Andy Hall, a journalist and son of the park superintendent at the time, was living in the park when the tragedy occurred and spent years tracking down rescuers, survivors, lost documents, and recordings of radio communications. In Denali's Howl, Hall reveals the full story of the expedition in a powerful retelling that will mesmerize the climbing community as well as anyone interested in mega-storms and man's sometimes deadly drive to challenge the forces of nature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Denali's Howl  
"In this straightforward, balanced account of the greatest mountaineering disaster in Alaskan history, Andy Hall allows the full tragedy of that episode to emerge. In resisting the facile urge to lay blame, his narrative captures with gripping immediacy the intersection of seemingly small human decisions with one of the most powerful storms ever to descend on Denali. As one who was climbing elsewhere in the Alaska Range at the time, I had long pondered just how the catastrophe came to pass. Thanks to Hall, I understand it better than ever before." —David Roberts, author of *The Mountain of My Fear* and *Alone on the Ice*  
"A haunting, meticulously-researched account of twelve men's encounter with the awesome fury of nature." —Amanda Padoan, author of *Buried in the Sky: The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2*  
"Twelve men

went up the slopes of North America's highest mountain in the summer of 1967.Â Only five made it back.Â The ill-fated Wilcox expedition to Denali finds an able chronicler in Andy Hall's gripping account of mountain majesty, mountain gloom, and human doom.Â •Maurice Isserman, co-author of Fallen Giants:Â Himalayan Mountaineering from the Age of Empire to the Age of ExtremesÂ "One of those couldn't-put-it-down books!"Â This harrowing story of a more than 40-year-old mountaineering tragedy is raw and immediate as it marches relentlessly towards the final, devastating end.Â •Bernadette McDonald, author of Freedom Climbers

ANDY HALLÂ grew up in the shadow of Denali. He is the former editor and publisher ofÂ AlaskaÂ magazine. He lives in Chugiak, Alaska.

It is hard to imagine another book being published about the Wilcox Tragedy on Denali, which happened 47 years ago. Four books have already been written about the disaster to date--the last came out in 2012--and was penned by me. My brother Bill Babcock, was the leader of what would become the rescue team. He had invited me along for the ride the previous fall of '66. I was then living on the East coast and attending college in Maine. The Mountaineering Club of Alaska had asked Bill to lead an expedition (the 53rd), which by chance trailed a week behind the Wilcox team. Both teams used the standard Muldrow Glacier / Karstens Ridge approach on the North side of Mount McKinley. When the worst storm in Denali's history exploded on top, our team was positioned to assist the five survivors, and to search the upper slopes and hopefully find the 7 missing climbers. At 19, I was not only the youngest and least experienced member of our group. I was also terrified by what lay ahead for our group. Andy Hall, whose father was Park Superintendent at the time has given us another version of this sad story, which he calls 'Denali's Howl.' Andy was five and living with his family in the park when the event took place in the summer of 1967. George Hall was Andy's father. Andy's book offers readers a carefully researched and thoroughly engrossing account of one of North American mountaineering's most controversial and heart-rendering stories. His narrative offers many varied and personal accounts of what happened, and he paints a vivid picture of each of the men on the 12-man Wilcox team. As I read Andy's descriptions I found myself changing some of my impressions of the climbers I met so many years ago. I also found Andy's description of Blaine Smith's 1997 ordeal on the upper slopes above Denali Pass enthralling--and very similar to what happened to my eight-person team on the South side of the mountain in 1977. Unless you have been caught out in the open during a frigid high altitude mountain storm, with

winds of hurricane force, it is difficult to appreciate the thin line that truly exists between life and death. Andy describes this sheer terror with all the skill of a gifted writer. If you can't find shelter in such circumstances, you will most likely die in a very short span of time.'Denali's Howl' is a wonderful book, extremely well-written, well-documented, and a classic rendering of one of mountaineering's most terrifying tragedies.Jeff BabcockAuthor, 'Should I Not Return'[[ASIN:1594332703 Should I Not Return]

For those that don't know, in the summer of 1967, a 12 man team attempted to climb Denali (Mt. McKinley), the tallest mountain in North America....only 5 came back. I'm astonished that more people don't know (or aren't aware) of this story. I know that when it comes to mountaineering disasters, most eyes turn to Everest, K2, and the rest of the Himalayas and many of the classic books written covering those related tales (Into Thin Air, The Savage Mountain, Annapurna, etc), but I'm hoping that more readers will come to know of this tragic story (it as afterall to this day, the deadliest mountaineering disaster in American history) through Andy Hall's newly written book covering this story. There's been 4 other books written on this tradegy (two from actual survivors) and it was hard to imagine any more new details emerging, but the author went to great lengths to recover and unearth old documents, recordings, interviews, etc and it definitely shows, most notably the details surrounding the "super-storm" that attacked the mountain that summer. Few details were ever evident in previous books (from the scientific side), and it was mind boggling to finally read and absorb the actual detailed conditions the climbers were faced with high up near the summit. It was also great to read some opinions and thoughts from other notable mountaineers and climbing guides on the subject, each giving their own insight to the mistakes, and problems the 12 man team faced while ascending the mountain, and relating it to their own experiences (some on the same mountain). Also want to point out that another plus to this new book was the inclusion of color photographs from the expedition from Howard Snyder's personal collection (in previous books, we were left to grainy black and white photos). At the end of the day, many questions will remain unanswered and some mysteries forever left unsolved about this climb, but thanks to Andy's incredible research, a thoughtful portrait of each climber, and their ascent up one of the largest mountains in the world has been painted, and I can't help but just admire and respect each and every one of them. They weren't showboats, they weren't world famous mountaineers; they were just young humbled college-aged kids who, while America was at war and in the midst of some type of revolution, just wanted to climb, and sadly due to some mistakes, and some horrendous bad luck, found themselves in the history books for the wrong reasons. It's hardly ever the details and

descriptions of the vast mountains, or wild weather, or the "epicness" of the adventure that draw me to these stories, but moreso the people involved, and their story and their will to face something that is obviously much grander, vast, and much more powerful than they are. It's the elements of challenging, fighting, and enduring these conditions (sometimes winning, sometimes losing) that make it difficult for me to put these books down, Denali's Howl included. Whether you're familiar with this story or not, whether you enjoy mountaineering books or not, if you're looking for a true tale of fight and survival, triumph and tragedy, then I highly recommend you pick this up and experience the deadliest mountaineering disaster in American history.

This is a well written adventure book that any fan of the outdoors will enjoy. Andy Hall has a connection to the Wilcox Expedition tragedy. He was five years old and the son of the Denali Park Superintendent as the tragedy unfolded. He met, as a boy, the survivors and would-be rescuers as they came back from the mountain and trickled into the park offices. Hall is an engaging writer and has put together a well written book that combines facts as well as interviews and diary entries of participants. He does a superb job of delving into the personalities of the Wilcox team and developing the strengths and weaknesses members had in relation to mountaineering as well as some of the leadership and personality difficulties that developed over the course of the expedition. His narration takes the reader into the story and provides a gripping account of the tragedy as it unfolded.

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