

# A New Saga Of Desert Heroism

(Continued from Page Two)

them and towed them back to Yucca camp which they reached again at 4:00 p. m.

At 5:00 p. m., after a rest and a meal, the heavy caterpillar bulldozer provided by Capt. Hall of the CCC camp having arrived, they set out as a train, the bulldozer towing a pick-up truck carrying the gasoline, tools and equipment for the bulldozer; the sheriff's car with the same party as before (except Capt. Lewis) and the car of Sheriff Thomas and Coroner Bowler of Tonopah.

At 3:00 a. m. Thursday, they had reached Oak Springs summit, a distance of 20 miles from Yucca Pass, where they found a cut about 15 feet deep packed with snow, which seemingly made further progress impossible. However, by the expedient of uncoupling the cars and towing one at a time by the bulldozer around the pass on top of the ridge, they succeeded in surmounting this difficulty. However, the process of getting around the cut consumed three hours of precious time. The rescue party was now about 20 miles from Kelly mine.

After twelve hours of hard snow bucking, the rescuers reached Kelly mine at six o'clock Thursday evening. There "Roadside" Smith and his wife did everything possible to provide rest and comfort for all.

At 3:00 Friday morning the party were ready to start on the long, difficult return trip to Vegas. However, the bulldozer was frozen in various ways and the automobiles likewise, so it was impossible to get anything started until 10:00 a. m., a delay of seven precious hours.

Finally, under way again, the train reached Oak Springs, 20 miles, at 8:00 Friday evening. There it was decided that the cars could proceed on their own power and, after a hot meal and a short rest in a warm tent, they set out again Friday night at 10:30. After going off the road many times they decided at 5:00 Saturday morning to wait for the bulldozer, which was following them.

At 1:30 p. m. Saturday the four cars were again coupled into a train behind the tractor and a new start made for Las Vegas. The supply truck was left behind with five of the CCC boys with the idea that it could follow through on its own power. This proved impossible, however, and when the train reached Yucca summit camp it was necessary to send the bulldozer back after the truck.

From Yucca summit camp it was again decided that the cars could proceed down the grade toward Las Vegas on their own power, so they left there at 10:00 Saturday night and reached Las Vegas at 2:00 Sunday morning.

Here the half-frozen rescued and rescuers were taken to Las Vegas hospital for treatment. All are making a speedy recovery except James Poe, who is still in the hos-

pital awaiting the amputation of portions of both great toes which had been so badly frozen that gangrene had set in.

Mrs. Prettyman and the other members of her party suffered severely from frosted feet and other portions of the body, which became extremely painful. However, none except Poe will suffer permanent injury, according to Dr. Martin.

Every member of the rescue party suffered great hardships. Especially heroic was the work of those who drove the caterpillar tractors in the bitter cold blizzard which raged steadily for all the days of the rescue work. They were compelled to be on duty without any shelter whatever for as much as 13 hours at a time. In this connection especial mention should be made of George Brooks and Rufus Buck, cat operators.

About fifteen years ago Dr. Martin wrote a saga of heroism in the desert when, without food or water, he walked more than 80 miles through the desert in the extreme heat of summer and secured aid for Mrs. Martin and children who were stranded in an automobile and were themselves out of gasoline, food and water.

The present adventure in which Dr. Martin and others went to the assistance of those in distress with but he one thought of helping them, is typical of the loyalty and self-sacrifice which those who live in the desert country constantly exhibit.

Dr. Martin, a resident of Las Vegas since 1905, has many cases of unselfish devotion to his credit, but none more heroic than this last work of rescue.

The sun never showed its face during the days the work of rescue was in progress and snow fell nearly every hour. For much of the time there was a strong wind to add to the discomfort of the cold and pile the snow in impenetrable drifts.

Members of the CCC and Park Service from Boulder City who aided in the rescue work include Thurmon Gidcumb of Morgantown, Ky.; Erbie Lane, Princeton, Ky.; Elmer T. Snow, Las Vegas; Urano Ortalle, Youngston, Ohio; Ernest Freeman and James Bishop of Lexington, Kentucky.

Dr. Martin, replying to a question as to why the body of Fred Miller, who perished in his attempt to secure assistance for Mrs. Prettyman and party when they were marooned in their car said:

"We considered carefully the problem of whether it were better to get the survivors out as quickly as possible or delay our departure for Las Vegas until we could recover the body.

"The body lay in the snow three and one-half miles from the road. To get to it and bring it out with the bulldozer, which was our only hope, would have consumed fifty gallons of gasoline and eight and one-half hours of time. We therefore, in view of the uncertain weather, decided it wiser to let the county truck and road crew bring out the body while we made what haste we could to get the sufferers to Las Vegas."

## GUILD OF CHRIST CHURCH HOLD REGULAR MEETING

The Guild of St. Agnes met at the Vicarage Monday afternoon. Officers for the coming year were elected. Plans were made for a Parish meeting to be held Friday evening at the Vicarage at 6:30, when a baked bean supper will be served.

All members and friends of Christ Church are invited to attend. The Guild will meet Monday, January 25, at 2:30.

We have heard a great deal about the House that Jack built, but nobody has ever said whether it stood up on its foundation until Jack got the last installment paid.

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