

Canadian Boating Accident Stuns Community

THE MONTEZUMA REPUBLICAN . . . MAY 22, 1969

Divers End Search For Missing Fishermen

An entire community still waited word at press-time Wednesday on the fate of two popular and well known Montezuma business men - Denton Abbey, 35, and Kenneth Capper, 61, who have been missing since last Thursday night after a boating accident at Cameron Lake near Nestor Falls, Ontario, Canada.

The body of Merlin Stoker, who was in the boat with them, has been recovered and is returned to Iowa Tuesday. Merlin was a prominent area farmer and part owner of the farm on IS-80.

The three men flew to Canada Thursday in a plane owned by the Montezuma Flying Club of which Denton was a member. They were joined later in the day by Don Fahlenkamp and Dean Doonan who had driven from Montezuma to Nestor Falls and then taken a plane to the lake cabin where they were planning to stay. They were planning to stay. They were planning to stay. They were planning to stay.

Dean and Don went to sleep in the cabin while the other three men went fishing in a 14-foot aluminum boat. Dean awakened about midnight and soon was aware that the other men had not returned. He went out in a boat and searched for them for about an hour and then returned and awakened Don. The two then resumed the search until dawn. Early the next morning they signalled a low flying plane and asked for help. About 8:30 a.m. the overturned boat was found and Merlin's body was sighted nearby in about 20 feet of water. Officials have theorized that a sudden violent squall must have overturned the boat.

The search for the missing men is continuing during daylight hours but no trace of them has been found. It was reported that some of their fishing gear washed ashore over the weekend. On Monday, Kenneth's son, K. Dea Capper, and Paul Richman were flown to Canada by Glen Sigatfoose and joined the search. On Tuesday Roger Henkle and Terry Audas flew to Canada with an Ottumwa pilot. They will fly the flying club's plane home Thursday. The Ottumwa plane brought Mr. Stoker's body to Montezuma about 4 p.m. Tuesday where it was taken to a Victor funeral home.

Dean and Don are still on the scene and calling home nightly with reports on the search. According to unofficial reports, Canadian law requires an official search for at least seven days before a determination is made of missing persons. Divers have been on the scene and were expected to search through Tuesday.

After Tuesday Canadian authorities will continue the search on an intermittent basis by boat and by plane.

Word of the accident didn't reach Montezuma until Saturday due to the remoteness of the lake and lack of communication facilities from there. However, news of the accident spread quickly by word-of-mouth Saturday night and the entire area was in a state of shock by Sunday. Many persons have been clinging to the hope that the missing men managed to swim to an island or were washed ashore and will be found alive but injured. All three were reported to be good swimmers and Capper knew the lake and area like the back of his hand.

Cameron Lake has been a popular spot for Montezuma fishermen for over 20 years. It is in a remote spot about 70 miles northwest of International Falls, Minn., and 80 miles southeast of Kenora, Ontario. The nearest settlement is Nestor Falls, a tourist settlement of 200 persons, about 16 miles to the southwest. However there are no roads or trails from Nestor Falls to the lake and no communication facilities at the lake. Access to the lake is by pontoon planes or by a rough portage over land and water. The fly-in takes about 15 minutes from Nestor Falls.

The lake is an irregular shaped body of water approximately seven miles long and three-fourths of a mile wide. It is estimated to be 100 feet deep in places and the temperature of the water at this time of year varies from 34 to 38 degrees. There are a number of islands in the lake and the shoreline is bordered by a dense forest and rocks and boulders.

Over the years Mr. Capper and Dean Doonan have taken scores of men to the cabin for lake trout fishing at this time of year. The cabin has been maintained by them and was originally part of a resort which had been abandoned.

Monday, May 26, 1969

Conduct Services For Two Fishermen

Memorial services were held at 2 p.m. Saturday for two Montezuma men presumed drowned in a remote Canadian lake while on a fishing trip May 16.

Services were conducted at the Montezuma High School building for K. C. Capper, 61, and Denton Dalbey, 36, whose bodies still have not been recovered.

The boat in which the two were riding apparently capsized during a squall on Lake Cameron, Ontario. The body of a third man, Merlin Stoker of Guernsey, was recovered from the lake.

Monday, July 14, 1969

Recover Second Body In Canadian Accident

One body is still missing but a second has been recovered from the fishing accident last May which took the lives of three area men.

According to Canadian authorities, the body of Denton Dalbey, 35, of Montezuma, was found July 10 in the lake near Nestor Falls, Ontario, where he and the two other men were fishing when their boat capsized. Still missing is the body of Kenneth Capper, also of Montezuma. A third body, that of Merlin Stoker of Guernsey, was recovered shortly after the accident.

No Trace of

2 Fishermen

14 1/2 May 27, 1969
Searchers at Lake Cameron, Ontario, have failed to find the bodies of two Montezuma businessmen presumed drowned in the deep, remote lake.

Denton Dalbey, 35, and Kenneth Capper, 61, have been missing since nearly a week ago when their 14-foot aluminum boat apparently overturned during a storm.

Earlier, the body of Merlin Stoker, 50, was recovered from the lake and returned to Iowa Tuesday. He was a Guernsey farmer and businessman. His funeral was at 2 p.m. today.

Continue Search

Canadian officials are continuing the search for Dalbey and Capper on an intermittent basis. Some of the men's fishing gear was reportedly found washed ashore earlier.

Two other Montezuma men, Don Fahlenkamp and Dean Doonan, were also on the Canadian fishing trip. Neither was aboard the boat when it capsized.

Aiding in the search for the missing men were Capper's son Kenton, Paul Richman, Glen Sigafosse, Roger Henkle and Terry Audas. Henkle and Audas were to fly the plane which carried the fishermen to Canada back to Iowa. The plane is owned by the Montezuma Flying Club.