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Tragedy of Sand Cave

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Tragedy of Sand Cave



David B. ...

Henry St. George Carmichael
General Manager of the Kentucky Asphalt Company

DEDICATION.

of the turmoil and strife of the thrilling battle waged by humanity to save Floyd Collins from a fearful death, there emerges an outstanding hero. The Sand Cavern Tragedy follows established precedents.

Those who toiled in tunnel shaft and heading, all must be given and their names have been enrolled on an enduring tablet of the world's memory. But the bronze, the heaven-sent chieftain, on whose sturdy shoulders fell the greatest burden, is Henry St. George Carmichael, General Manager of the Kentucky Asphalt Company.

Bringing order out of chaos, fighting on when hope was gone, leading his men rather than ordering them, risking his own life in dangers, sharing their every hardship—these are a few of the many heroic deeds wrought by this hero.

This record may fall short of its purpose but it will be succeeded if the world may realize what we firmly believe—that God selected Carmichael for the task and when the fight was over, He bestowed the supreme reward. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Therefore, we desire to add our feeble compliments by dedicating these pages to "Carmichael, the bronze hero of Sand Cavern."

HOWARD W. HARTLEY.

PREFACE.

On the morning of Friday, January 30, Floyd Collins, a resident of Barren County, in the heart of the "cave country" of Kentucky, entered a cavern a short distance from his home—entered never to return.

When Collins disappeared into this cave he was engaged in what had been to him for years a customary task, that of cave exploration. He was unknown beyond the immediate neighborhood of his home.

By Monday, the name of Floyd Collins had flashed through the country. The hopes and fears of the nation centered around that cave mouth. For two weeks the world kept vigil there for Collins was trapped in the narrow fissure, caught far beneath the surface by a falling boulder that pinned him by the feet just as he was crawling out to tell the news of a wonderful underground chamber he had discovered. He was held prisoner under conditions more appalling, more fearful than had ever been known or imagined. Caught at the entrance of that narrow passage to the upper earth, through which a man could just squeeze his way, Floyd Collins was in a position where friends and relatives could crawl to him, talk to him, take him food and endeavor desperately to extricate him. But they could not free him. Then came the fall of earth that shut him off completely.

In a few days all the resources of mechanical power, man labor and engineering skill were about that cave mouth seeking to save Floyd Collins from undergoing living death in the cold and the darkness beneath the earth, striving to sink the shaft through the rocky ledges that would bring him out while yet there was life.

It was a race and a fight; a race and a fight such as men never thrilled over before.

Louisville, Ky., Feb. 27, 1925.

Mr. Howard W. Hartley,
Louisville Post.

My dear Mr. Hartley:

I have read with great care and interest your story entitled "The Tragedy of Sand Cave" and wish to commend your work in the highest possible terms. Although I appreciate the prominent part you have seen fit to give me in this volume, yet I feel wholly undeserving of such praise. However, I am convinced that you have chronicled the main facts surrounding this great drama in a true, forceful and readable manner and that all of us engaged in the rescue work, in fact the nation, which took such interest in the case, owe you a debt of gratitude for this great work.

Yours sincerely,

H. T. CARMICHAEL,
Gen. Mgr. Ky. Rock Asphalt Company.

PROLOGUE.

FATE seems to have selected Floyd Collins as a figure for the nation's Hall of Fame in early childhood. Born in the hilly cave region of Kentucky in 1890, Collins as a boy evinced the passion for exploration that cost him his life.

While his playmates were content to follow the usual pastimes of normal boys, Floyd often would desert them to worm his way into the yawning caverns. To him glistening gypsum and the pillars of onyx were as wonderful as the coveted birds' eggs and he sought them ardently. This queer turn of mentality caused his parents much worry and his father, Lee Collins, a devout church goer, often was haunted with the premonition of disaster.

Growing into manhood among crude surroundings, Collins did not begin the professional exploration of caves until after he accidentally discovered Crystal Cave in December, 1917. One morning, while making the round of his traps set for woodchuck and other small animals, Floyd discovered that a trap had been sprung and dragged away by its captive.

Search for the woodchuck and the trap revealed a small hole on the crest of a ridge near the Collins home. After much squirming and considerable excavation, Floyd succeeded in enlarging the hole sufficiently to permit the entrance of his entire body. Once inside all thoughts of the trap were abandoned for the hole proved to be a natural water drain leading into a vast pit that yawned downward a distance of 237 feet.

Thus Crystal Cave was discovered. Floyd was given a half interest in the cave and he, his father and three brothers, Marshall, Homer, and Andrew Lee opened up the cave for commercial purposes. The venture did not pay as well as was expected, due to the location at a point too far from a passable highway, but the cave today has

great possibilities in that it is regarded generally as one of the most beautiful in Kentucky.

After Floyd discovered Crystal Cave his services were eagerly sought by a number of farmers of Barren, Hart and Edmonson Counties as a professional explorer. He worked always on contracts stipulating that the discoverer was to be deeded a half interest in the new cave.

Thus Collins made his living. He was boarded by those for whom he worked and his financial outlay was small. Sheer joy of exploration and the lure of great wealth, should he open up a cave of such proportions as Mammoth or the new entrance drove him on in the face of great dangers. That the teeth of the cave dragon closed upon him in Sand Cavern was the natural course of events. Floyd had often been warned and had laughed at those who feared. For his was the courage of the Vikings. They scoffed at the perils of uncharted seas as he made light of even more fearful dangers of the land below the surface.

Collins began working in Sand Cavern about the first week of January, 1925, after a contract had been drawn up between himself, Bee Doyle, Edward Estes and J. L. Cox, all farmers owning land adjoining the narrow water fissure. That this fissure, located on Doyle's farm, seven and one-half miles southeast of Cave City, should be called Sand Cave was purely accidental. Floyd named it after he found white sand in its strata and the title was promptly adopted for want of a better one.

An illustration of Collins' fortitude is the story of his plight while exploring Crystal Cave in 1923. He was wedged in a tight passage for twenty hours but lay quietly while frantic friends effected his release. Other men would have taken warning but Collins again threw the gauntlet of daring in the teeth of a relentless Fate and continued exploring the next morning.

So what has gone before illustrates the character of the story's central figure. It reveals him as a true hero, well fitted both mentally and physically to play the leading role in "The Tragedy of Sand Cavern."



Sand Cave, as it looked the Day Collins Entered the Tunnel.

CHAPTER I.

COLLINS ENTERS THE CAVE.

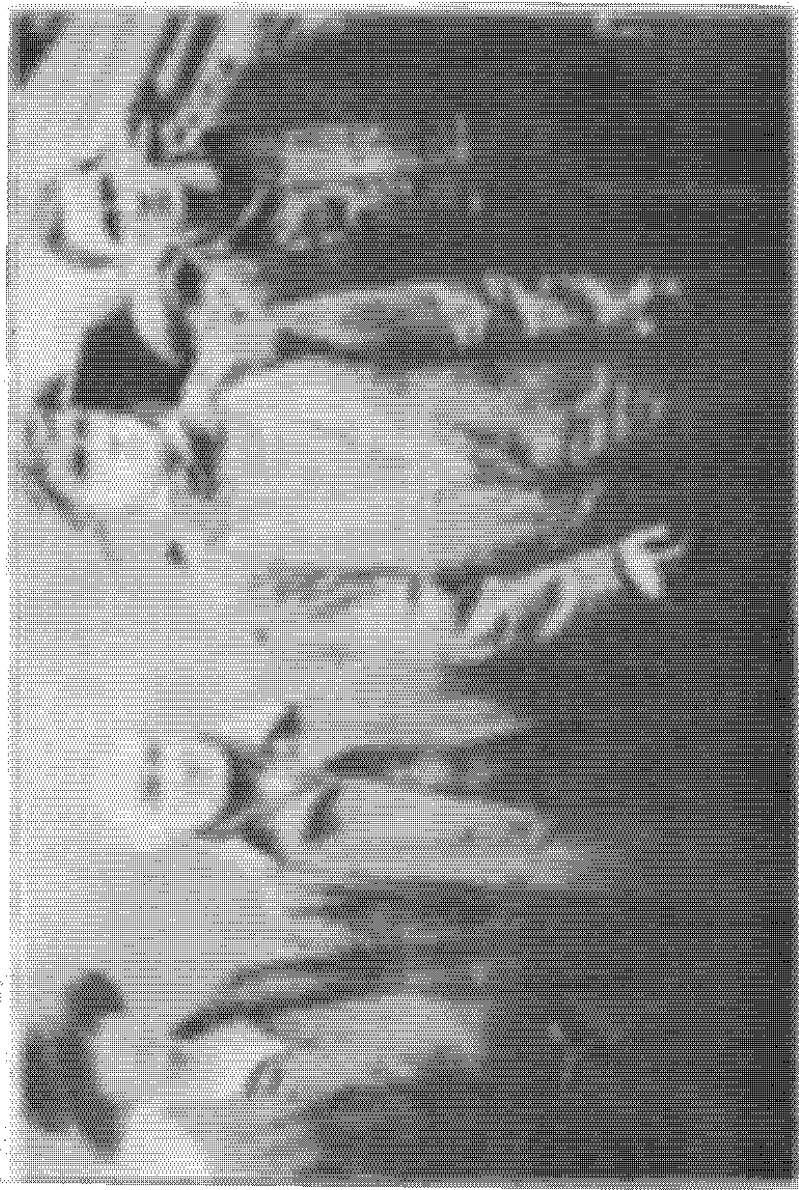
A timid sun peeped over the foothills of Barren County, Kentucky, on the morning of Friday, January 30, 1925, to signal the opening of the drama of the decade.

Scurrying rain clouds, retreating before a chill westerly breeze flung back the curtain and the first gray rays stole softly through the tiny panes of a cabin where slept Floyd Collins, man of destiny. Beside his crude pallet lay the scattered accoutrements of a true soldier of Fortune. Rough overalls, a worn blue jumper, a battered kerosene lantern, hobnailed boots, and a coil of stout hempen rope. Prosaic articles these. Yet just as effective to his kind as musket or broadsword.

No bugle roused Collins to his last journey. No fair lady waited to bestow the rose. Outside a quarrelsome chanticleer voiced his indignance at the impudent sun and at the first shrill notes Collins awoke.

As he clumsily adjusted his "armor," moving slowly and with the deliberateness of all hill folk, he pondered over plans for the day. For three long weeks Collins had been working on contract making explorations in a narrow fissure beneath an overhanging cliff located on the farm of Bee Doyle, a faithful friend of Floyd.

Because it was believed this fissure lead into a vast cave, as large and beautiful as Mammoth, Onyx, Crystal or any of the other principal "tourist" caverns of Barren, Hart or Edmonson Counties. Collins was engaged on contract to Doyle, Edward Estes and J. L. Cox, owners of three farms adjoining the mouth of the fissure. If a cave were opened, it was calculated that the underground area might lie beneath these farms. Hence the triple agreement between Collins and the farmers.



Floyd Collins' Father, Sister and Two Brothers.

The pact had been duly signed and set forth that in the event Collins opened up a cave of sufficient size and beauty to justify commercialization, the discoverer was to become half owner. The other half was to be held jointly by Doyle, Estes and Cox. Collins was to be boarded "week about" by the three farmers. On this particular morning he was residing at Doyle's home, located at the side of the highway between Cave City and Mammoth Cave and a quarter of a mile from the mouth of the fissure leading into Sand Cavern.

Floyd had been engaged in this particular exploration for about three weeks. Two days before, he had slogged through the rain to Doyle's home after spending almost thirty hours toiling in the narrow aperture, preparing it for the final dash to the cave he knew lay beneath the wooded ridge. This absence had alarmed Doyle, who knew the danger of the job. The conscientious farmer had gone to the black mouth of the fissure after Floyd had been absent twenty-four hours only to be reassured by the cheery voice of the explorer that "everything was all right." But an hour after Doyle departed, Collins encountered the final obstacle blocking his path to the first level of the cave, a solid, jutting ledge of limestone. Over this hung a loose strata of muck and sandstone boulders.

Finding it impossible to loosen the ledge with chisel and hammer, Collins used dynamite. He made a brief survey after the blast and the task he set out to accomplish on this fatal Friday morning was to clear away the debris.

The faithful Doyle was waiting when Collins had finished dressing and the rough table bore a simple breakfast of salt pork, potatoes, corn bread and steaming coffee.

Floyd spoke but little as he sat munching what was to be his last full meal. He told Doyle of the dynamiting and predicted that the day would find him in the depths of a wondrous cave, more beautiful than anything yet discovered.



Alma Clark, Who Once Was
One of Floyd's Close
Friends.

"I know this thing will pan out," Floyd explained to Doyle. "If I can get down to the pit and get through to the main avenue, I am sure it will lead to a cave as big as Mammoth. Perhaps this will develop another entrance to Mammoth. And if it does, you and I will wear fine clothes."

But Doyle was so apprehensive that he paid little attention to Floyd's exultant prophesies. All through the stormy night he had been haunted by grim visions of disaster.

Admonishing Collins to beware of the loosely hanging rock in the tortuous passage, Doyle met schoolboy reassurance, for Floyd was too near the goal to be halted by what he termed "scairdcat talk."

The hasty meal finished, Collins bade farewell to Doyle, shouldered his sack of tools and departed for the fissure.

Pausing only long enough to exchange his woolen coat for the denim jumper and to light his lantern, Collins plunged into the rocky slit, crawling on hands and knees for a distance of thirty feet. Here he was compelled to flatten his body and the remainder of the journey was effected in this posture.

Close your eyes for a moment! Imagine a stovepipe, coiling, twisting under itself, filled with loosely hanging boulders, sharp jagged ledges, spiraling downward through a strata of muck and rock. Its average height is eighteen inches. Its width scarcely large enough to permit the passage of a human body. At only two points is its ceiling sufficiently high to enable the explorer to reverse his body. It is cold, dank and the rocks drip icy sweat. So dark is it that the inky blackness seems to press upon your body like an unseen hand. Your ears are tortured by the spasmodic crash of falling boulders farther on into the yawning pit. Your heart pounds madly and your lungs seem incapable of sucking in the chill air fast



Collins as a Crystal Cave Guide.

enough to cool a brow made hot by fear of impending death.

It was into such a fissure that Floyd Collins ventured for his last excursion into the caveland! And he entered it resolutely, without faltering, calm with the assurance of previous trips that had been successful. Thrusting the oil lantern ahead and holding tight to the short steel crowbar, the explorer reached the "squeeze," a particularly narrow "s"-shaped passage. Wriggling like an earthworm, Collins passed this dangerous double turn and, within twenty minutes after leaving the surface was at the scene of the dynamite blast.

He found the explosion had completely loosened the jutting ledge and a few extra strokes from his crowbar removed all of the obstruction. But above his head hung a huge egg-shaped boulder, weighing approximately 100 pounds and held in place, sharp point downward, by a small wedge rock. In all of his previous trips Collins had learned to respect that wedge. He knew it meant disaster if he should brush against it. And so, as he wriggled over the lip of the pit and swung down on a rope adjusted a week before, he little realized that this small rock would play such an important part in the tragic events leading to his death.

Dropping nimbly from the rope and alighting on the floor of the pit, Collins walked straight forward. He traversed probably a hundred yards, turned sharp to the left and found himself in a wondrous cavern! Its walls glistened with gleaming gypsum and the stalactites festooned like brown icicles from the vaulted ceiling.

For a moment Collins was dumfounded by the very beauty of it all. Then the realization of victory smote his senses. He rushed back along the cavern floor to the dangling rope and began the long climb to the fissure high above.

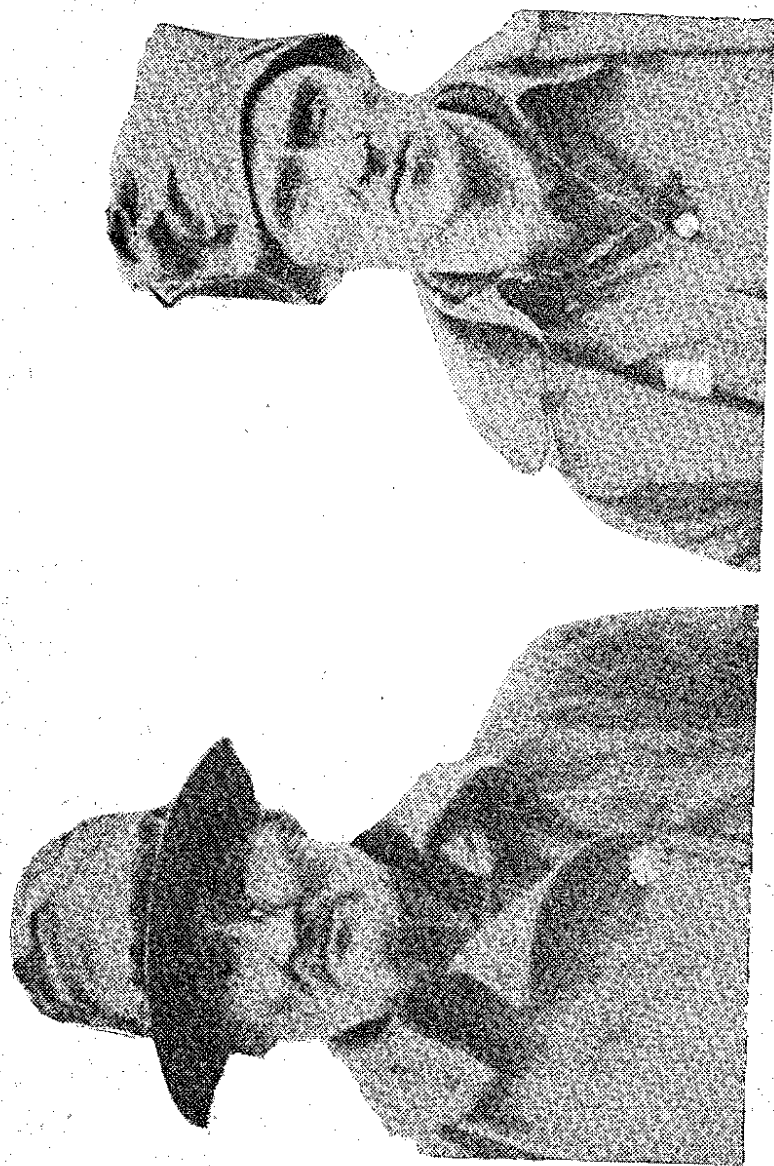
long stays in the caves would not be indicative of disaster. So chance of discovery before the passage of at least twenty-four hours was remote, and Collins knew it.

The next thing Collins considered was his light, which lay at his head on a narrow ledge. He seized it with frantic hands and shook it to test the oil content. Only a shallow gurgle was heard, probably enough to furnish illumination for three or four hours. The crowbar rested beside his left hand. His right arm was partly pinioned by the trapped leg and could not be withdrawn. So all the work with the crowbar must be done with the left arm and hand.

With these harrowing thoughts filling his mind, Collins began fighting alone against the forces that held him prisoner. Clink! clink! clink! The pokes of the cramped arm sent the point of the crowbar but feebly against the rocky mass. Once the point hit too high, sending down another shower of smaller boulders, covering Collins' body almost to the breast!

Work five minutes, rest thirty. Such was Collins' schedule for the first three hours. The yellow flame of his lantern dwindled lower and lower. Creeping down from above, ever nearer and with the relentlessness of the sea, came the tidal wave of inky darkness. No sound came to his ears but the hoarse whistle of his own breath. Though the air currents in the tunnel were near the freezing point, Collins soon was wet with sweat and the icy drip from the rocks above stabbed like tiny daggers as they fell upon his grimy face and neck.

By two o'clock in the afternoon, only a tiny flame remained, denoting the draining of the last drop of oil through the wick. At last it flickered feebly—and went out. And for the first time the cold fingers of Fear clasped Floyd Collins' brave heart. The passing of the light meant the exit of hope unless some human could move the rock-bound shackle.



Lee and Marshall Collins.

But while these thoughts filled Collins' mind, what was happening on the surface?

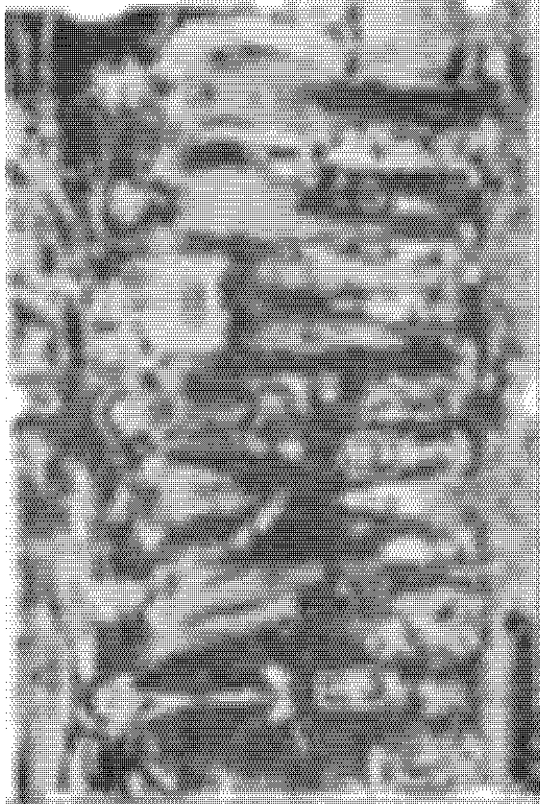
CHAPTER III. THE DISCOVERY.

While Collins spent his first night of agony in the tunnel a violent rainstorm swept Barren County. The vivid flashes of lightning and deafening crashes of thunder awakened Doyle; and the farmer, as if by instinct, made his way to Collins' bedroom to ascertain if Floyd had come home. He found the bed unruffled and could not sleep the remainder of the night. As soon as it was light enough to make his way over the ridge to the home of Edward Estes, Doyle donned his raincoat and hurried to the neighbor's to find out if Floyd had come to the Estes home because he could find quicker shelter there. Estes did not seem to be alarmed when told of Collins' absence and reassured Doyle that the explorer probably would be waiting for him when Doyle returned home. His mind still troubled with strong fear, Doyle retraced his steps but could find no trace of Collins.

Having gulped down a hasty breakfast, Doyle returned to the Estes home, this time insisting that Estes investigate, and the latter, a stolid man, at last consented calling his son Jewell, a sturdy lad of seventeen summers, to go with him to Sand Cave and to assist in the search for Collins. The three searchers were surprised to find Collins' coat and cap hanging on a rocky ledge just outside the fissure. These articles bore mute evidence that disaster had overtaken the explorer. Because the boy, Jewell, was of slender, wiry build, he was selected to enter the tunnel and was closely followed by his father, a rather portly man, with Doyle bringing up the rear. The elder Estes was able to proceed only as far as the squeeze, and there he was blocked by the



Picture of Collins Taken in Crystal Cave.



One of the First Rescue Gangs.

narrow rock walls. Instructing his son to proceed further, the two farmers lay face downward in the tunnel shouting directions to the boy, who showed rare gameness by pushing on until he reached a point fifteen or twenty feet from Collins, when he succeeded in getting a feeble response from him, who by this time was half asleep and partly overcome by cold and terror.

Young Estes clambered head foremost down to Collins and was the first to learn from the explorer exactly what had happened. "Go back out and hurry over to the homeplace and tell the folks," was Collins' first order to young Estes. "My legs are caught by at least one rock but if you can get me a crowbar and have my brothers come over with some of the other boys, I believe I can get out of here without much trouble."

Young Estes left his lantern, when Floyd begged piteously for the light, explaining that it was heartening to him. The lad then turned around and came out head foremost, reaching his father and explaining the situation.

The elder Estes accompanied by Doyle rode muleback to the Collins' home, arriving there at noon on Saturday, January 31. The Collins family had just finished dinner and Estes was met at the door by Lee Collins, the aged father.

"Floyd is hung in Sand Cave and wants you all to come over right away," Estes explained.

The elder Collins stood for a moment as if smitten by a lightning bolt. "You are to blame," he exclaimed, his voice shaking with poorly suppressed anger, "You men got him to go in that hole and now you got him killed." Then the white-haired father realized that now was the time for action and not for words, and so, hurrying back into the cabin, he notified Marshall Collins, a younger brother and instructed other members of the family to telephone Louisville and to inform Homer Collins, the second brother, who was working in the Kentucky metropolis. The elder Col-

lins, his son, Estes and Doyle hurried back to Sand Cave stopping at every farmhouse to spread the alarm. Telephones jingled all along the party lines leading to Cave City and the operators at the switchboards assisted materially in arousing the countryside. By the time the relatives and the two farmers reached the cavern from the Collins home, eight miles distant, between twenty-five and thirty farmers of all ages stood awaiting them.

Marshall Collins immediately organized a party of volunteers and crawled into the cavern where he found the situation practically unchanged. The brother tried frantically with a longer crowbar to reach the rock resting on Floyd's foot but found this was impossible, due to the fact that he was compelled to reach over and under the rocky ledge beneath which Floyd reclined. The lantern was replaced by a gasoline torch for which Floyd was extremely grateful. The party of rescuers after remaining in the tunnel for approximately three hours, came out and prepared a number of grass sacks and secured a rubber coat which they took in with them again, placing the sacks under the upper part of Collins' body and arranging the rubber coat as an awning to ward off the maddening dripping of the water which had fallen continuously on Floyd's face.

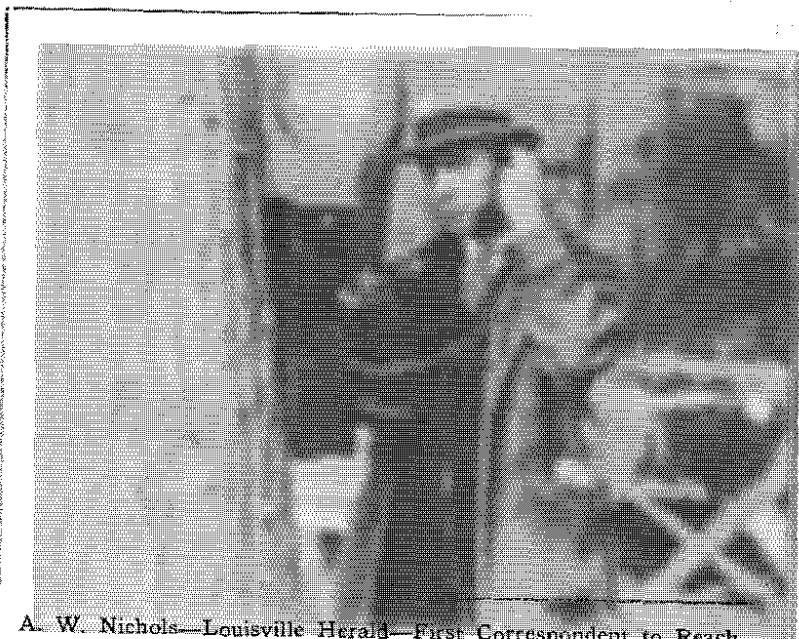
Homer Collins—courageous and unfearing—arrived from Louisville on the train reaching Cave City at five-thirty of that evening. He made a record run to the cave in a battered Ford and found a little group of rescuers, who looked more like a column of mourners standing about the entrance. The coming of Homer served as a real stimulant, for the lad, though he knew nothing of the dangers that lay before him, was bubbling over with confidence that he would be able to effect Floyd's release. Another party went into the cave headed by Homer who was closely followed by Marshall. Homer weighs approximately one hundred sixty pounds. He is a man of powerful build with muscles

CHAPTER IV.
THE FIRST SABBATH.

Homer Collins was at last persuaded to leave the cave at dawn on Sunday morning, February 1. He was worn from exhaustion, his clothing dripped mud and icy water, and he was on the verge of both a nervous and physical collapse.

Church bells tolled softly and their mellow notes were wafted on the gentle breezes. The Reverend Columbus Doyle, pastor of a small flock of Hardshell Baptists, arrived at the meeting-house to find most of the pews empty. Learning from the few faithful in attendance of the disaster that had befallen Floyd Collins, whom he had known from childhood, the minister, a man of stout heart and strong physique hurried to the cavern. He found a scene of wild confusion. His ears, abhorring profanity, were shocked by the oaths of well-meaning but less devout men of the hills. There was no organization, all was chaos. Homer Collins was in a state of collapse and had offered a reward of \$500 to any man succeeding in rescuing Floyd, dead or alive. Shortly before noon, a new figure entered the picture, Larry B. Hooper, an electrician, whose home is in Nashville, Tenn., but who at the time was visiting friends in Cave City. Hooper, or "Tennessee" as he later was affectionately known by the rescuers, clambered down the shaft landing from the cliffs just as a Barren County farmer emerged from the tunnel and announced that he had been to Collins and felt the cold sweat of death on Floyd's forehead, that the explorer's eyes were glazed and that man had already lost the race.

Hooper, though a young man, knows men and realized from the expression on the face of the informer that all was not well. Although he was unfamiliar with the character of the tunnel, "Tennessee" donned a suit of overalls and crawled through the tunnel's bends and twists to the side of the entombed man. He spoke to Collins and received a response,



A. W. Nichols—Louisville Herald—First Correspondent to Reach Scene and Talk to Collins.

he felt his pulse and found it was steady, he gave him a few sips of hot coffee, wrapped the explorer more securely in the grass sacks and rubber coat and then struggled back to the surface. "Where is that man?" shouted Hooper, his eyes searching wildly for the farmer who had falsely reported Collins' death. The farmer by this time was hastily scaling the path and did not look back, as Hooper shouted, "You are a liar, Floyd Collins is alive and we can get him out if there are enough real men willing to help."

Hooper was in the cave two hours, and while engaged in giving the lie to the report of death, Magistrate Thomas Clay Turner of Cave City had impaneled a coroner's jury for the purpose of questioning the farmer and officially declaring Collins dead. The jury was assembled but it promptly became a rescue party when Hooper delivered his challenge.

It was inevitable that the menace of moonshine should creep into a disorganized band of rescuers engaged in so hazardous and exhausting a task. Probably the first thought of those who brought the whiskey to the mouth of the cavern, was that the powerful stimulant might be needed to steel the nerve of the brave men who were trying valiantly and as best they knew to pry the rock from Collins' foot.

There never was a situation where moonshine had less place, than where only men in full possession of every faculty could be of any use in the tunnel and those whose sensibilities were dulled in the least by artificial stimulation would not only be useless as rescuers but would seriously jeopardize the lives of their companions.

So flagrant and open was the drinking on Sunday night that the Reverend Mr. Doyle, who came prepared to do his best and who tried, went into the tunnel as far as the squeeze, returned home that night fully heart-sick and disgusted. And on through the night, party after party crawled to Collins, pounded vigorously at the rocks and



Larry Hooper, "Tennessee," Who Proved
First Report of Collins' Death
Was a Falschood.

gravel, and came back exhausted without effecting material progress in the task that was foredoomed to failure.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORLD AROUSED.

Dawn of Monday, February 2, found every telephone and telegraph wire leading from Cave City to the world singing stirring messages for aid. Sensible men of the community had come to realize that human power would be futile to combat the terrific forces that held Collins in their grasp. On the first train reaching Cave City early Monday morning, came A. W. Nichols, staff correspondent of the Louisville Herald, the first newspaper man to reach the scene. Nichols went at once to the cave and succeeded in penetrating the tunnel to about ten or twelve feet from Collins.

"The world is coming, old man," Nichols shouted to the entombed explorer, who then was very weak and was able only to mutter his thanks; the first message Floyd Collins sent to an anxious humanity. Nichols told Collins that Louisville stood ready to offer any assistance, financial, human or mechanical, to effect a rescue, and in a brief interview explained how deeply Kentucky had been stirred by the tragic plight of the daring hill man.

Nichols was closely followed by William Burke Miller of the Louisville Courier-Journal, who also penetrated the tunnel that morning getting all the way to Collins and interviewing him regarding his plight and as to what methods Collins would suggest to free himself. Lieut. Robert A. Burdon and Private John Blake of the Louisville Fire Department accompanied by the writer arrived at Cave City on the noon train. The firemen had volunteered their services and the Lieutenant was in the fissure in less than an hour after reaching Cave City.



Floyd Collins Surrounded By
Curious Specimens Taken
from Sand Cave.

After the powerful air compressor and drill, which was brought from Louisville in a special car donated by the L. & N. Railroad, was hauled to the cave by a team of six horses, the apparatus was mounted on the cliffs and preparations were made to use it but careful investigation of the tunnel showed that the space was too small to use a drill, thus sweeping away the only chance man ever had to rescue Floyd Collins by bringing him through the fissure to the surface. Every effort was made to devise a means whereby the drill could be used but the natural contour of the passage made this impossible.

It is curious to note that Lieut. Burdon upon emerging to the surface after his inspection trip, said, "There is only one way to save Collins without maiming him and that is to sink a shaft to him."

There was more drinking of moonshine on Monday night than any other night during the rescue. It was then that the situation literally slid from under the control of the hard-working but severely handicapped organization. The more level-headed workers of the crowd, who stood astounded while the frolicsome toppers reeled dangerously from boulder to boulder, engaged in free fist fights and broadcasted their sentiments to the world in raucous streams of profanity, realized that troops were needed and needed immediately. Governor William Jason Fields was notified of the critical situation and ordered engineers of the State Highway Department and other experts to proceed at once to Cave City to aid in the rescue.

Collins by Monday night was resting very well, having been fed three times during the day and he indicated his gain in strength and spirit by asking for "A mess of fried onions" his favorite dish. It was impossible, however, to give him anything except liquid foods such as coffee and milk. The coffee, especially, was of great value in keeping him warm. The blankets covering Collins were changed



Lieut. Robt. Burdon and Private John Blake,
Detailed from Louisville Fire Department as Volunteer Rescuers.

during the day and later in the afternoon a new plan of rescue was suggested by Lieut. Burdon.

"I believe there is a chance to free him if we can adjust a harness about his waist and shoulders and pull on a rope attached to it until Floyd's foot is broken and drawn from under the boulder," the fireman explained.

The harness, hastily constructed of stout leather was brought to the cave by Homer Collins, who descended into the tunnel with Burdon and Miller and assisted in adjusting it around his brother's body.

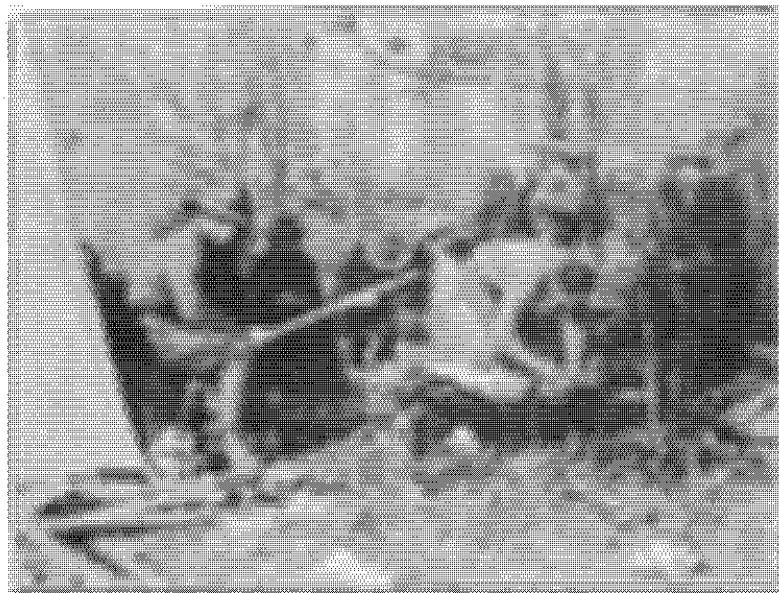
Burdon explained carefully just what they had planned to do and Floyd muttered, "Go ahead and pull, I had rather be dead than down here." When the final test came and Miller and Burdon began pulling, Floyd uttered a low moan which completely unnerved his brother, who was holding to the end of the rope and who at first pulled with all of his strength. Homer immediately stopped pulling and begged Burdon and Miller to do likewise.

The harness was left in place and the three men returned to the surface to find out-spoken complaint among the workers against Burdon's plan of rescue. Homer Collins, however, saw the impossibility of attempting to remove the rock and offered \$500 to any surgeon in the world who would be able to amputate Floyd's leg and thus free him. But this plan also was not feasible because of the utter lack of room to permit a surgeon to perform such an operation.

A conference was held between Lieutenant Burdon, Private Blake, city and county officials and relatives at which the fireman explained in detail about the hose hoist plan.

"It might break his foot or maim him," said Lieut. Burdon, "but it is the only chance of getting him out."

"Handle him as you would one of your own," the father pleaded. And the words touched the heart of Burdon, who realized that the aged parent was not in absolute sympathy with his system of extricating Collins.



Militiamen Making Their Beds After Reveille.

Upon returning to the hotel, after pulling on Collins' body sufficiently to straighten the torso, Lieutenant Burdon lay awake until the wee hours, turning over the matter in his mind. He concluded to secure two hose hoists from the Louisville fire department and dispatched a message to Major Alex Bache, his chief, for this equipment. The hoists were sent immediately.

Lieutenant Burdon was confident that, with the leverage of a crowbar, augmenting the power of the hoists, he would be able to drag Collins from beneath the rock and was determined to do this, regardless of how much suffering he would cause. The Louisville fireman rode back to the cave Tuesday morning and found his hoists had arrived but that Gerald had assumed command. Lee Collins, the father, appeared highly incensed against Lieutenant Burdon and there was much hostility among many of the rural rescue workers. Sensing the situation, Lieutenant Burdon made no further effort to haul Floyd to freedom with the hoists.

CHAPTER VI.

MOONSHINE—MUCK—MADNESS.

King Chaos ruled Sand Cavern from the discovery of Collins until the evening of Wednesday, February 4.

Have you ever witnessed a grade-crossing fatality? Have you ever been compelled to stand helpless while a locomotive bore down with relentless speed upon a pinioned victim? Then imagine how much greater your emotion would be if three or four groups of earnest workers, each striving for the honor of releasing the trapped victim, jockeyed for position and wasted precious moments in senseless argument when only the keen brains of experienced engineers could save the life of the doomed man.

Such was the situation at Sand Cave on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and most of Wednesday. Isaac T. Woodson,



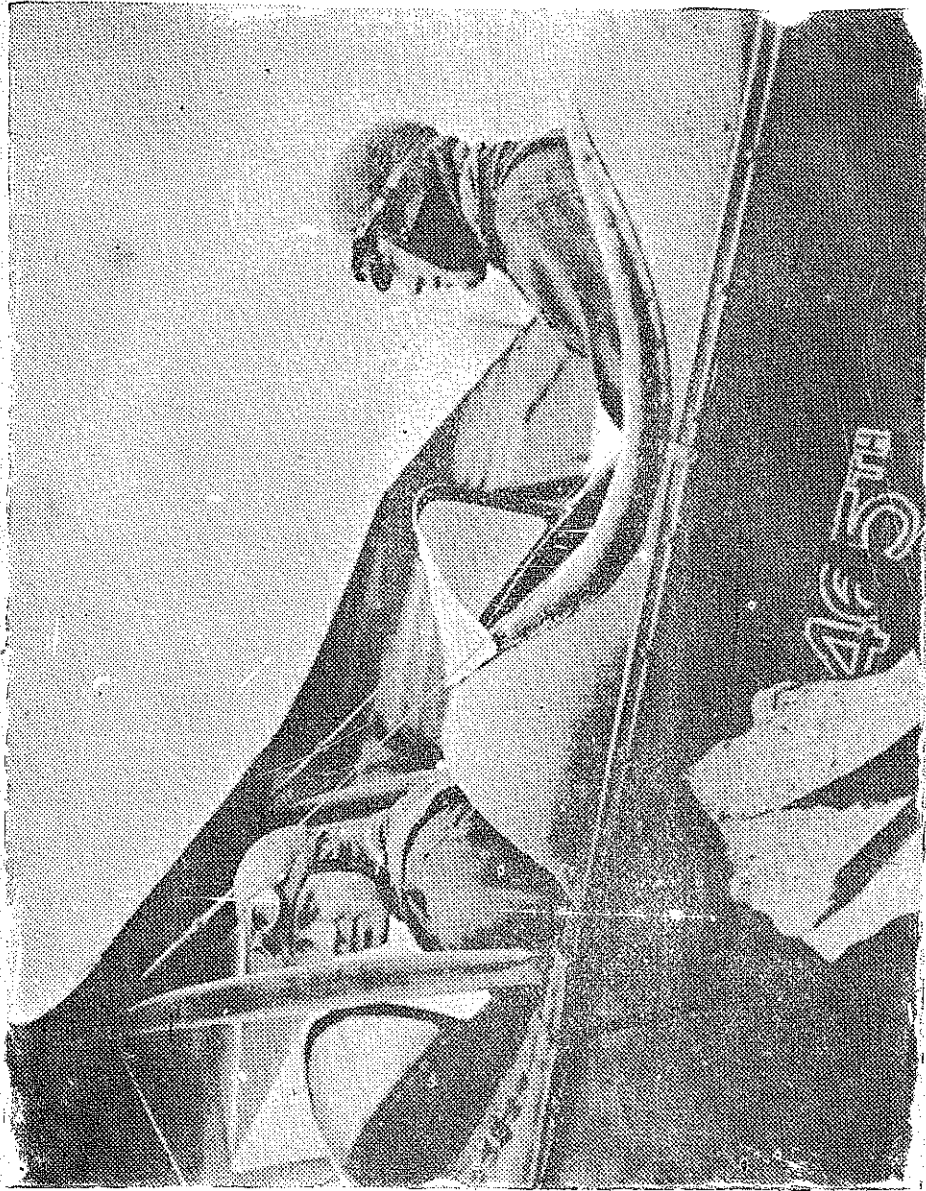
Magistrate Clay Turner.

Fred A. Kratch, monument builders, of Louisville, accompanied by two of their most expert stone men and engineers, Harry Mell and Ralph Gibbs, arrived at the cave at six-thirty o'clock Monday night. They came prepared to make a survey of the tunnel, to view the situation from an engineering standpoint and to work out a definite plan to free Collins. Until their arrival no scientific men had been on the scene.

Imagine our reaction when Mr. Woodson upon returning to the hotel after spending two miserable nights in the downpour, made this report: "Although we were urged by Lee Collins, the father, and Marshall Collins, a brother, to take charge and try and effect a rescue," Mr. Woodson said, "John Gerald, a friend of Floyd Collins, who has taken charge of the rescue work, refused to permit us to enter the cave, and there was nothing for us to do but return home. We found everything in confusion and several hundred men blocking the entrance to the cave.

"We had been told that the entrance to the cave was very narrow and for that reason Harry Mell and Ralph Gibbs, our expert granite and stone cutters, were scantily dressed and ready to enter the cave immediately and begin the work of rescue. However, the crowd was so dense it was impossible for the men to get even close to the entrance to the cave and they stood around in the cold rain for more than five hours waiting for the entrance to be cleared.

"We finally despaired of making any headway Monday night and returned to Cave City for a short rest, but were on the scene again Tuesday morning at five-thirty o'clock. We again found the same conditions confronting us, as the crowd had not dispersed during the hours between midnight and morning. In fact, the number had increased instead of decreasing, and the entrance to the cave was more congested, if possible, than it was on our arrival and during our stay Monday night.



Dr. Hazlett Leaves Louisville in Plane Piloted by Lieut. Bob Gast.

"It was following our arrival Monday morning that the father and one brother of the imprisoned man appealed to us to start the rescue work. We told them that while we were there as volunteers we felt sure we would be able to effect a rescue if given the right to undertake the work and carry out our own plans without interference. As Mr. Mell and Mr. Gibbs are known experts in their line and were willing to risk their lives to save the life of a fellow human being, Mr. Kratch and myself felt they should be unhampered in their work of rescue, or attempted rescue, and asked that the cave entrance be cleared and no one permitted to enter while our men were at work.

"It was at this juncture that John Gerald informed us he was in charge of the rescue work at the request of the imprisoned man, and that he would not permit our workmen to enter the cave with the tools necessary to carry on the work or even to make a survey to ascertain what, in their opinion, is necessary to effect a rescue. With that situation prevailing it was useless for us to remain longer on the scene, hence our return to Louisville."

Mr. Kratch said that while neither he nor either of the experts entered the cave and did not know the exact conditions prevailing in the immediate vicinity of the imprisoned man, he was convinced, from what was told him by men who had been inside, that the only method by which Collins could be safely rescued was to use a small drill and chip away a little at a time of the stone or boulder which had fallen across his left ankle and foot. "It was our opinion," said Mr. Kratch, "that if a large drill was used or an effort made to raise the boulder it will result in the walls of the cave giving away and not only mean the death of Collins, but of those who are attempting the rescue.

"Our experts were ready on arrival at the cave at six-thirty o'clock Monday evening to make a survey and begin work immediately after they had determined the best meth-



Capt. J. L. Topmiller, in Full
Command of Military De-
tail at Sand Cave.

od to pursue, but as the cave entrance was clustered with more than a hundred men who refused to make room for our workmen we had to withdraw until a more opportune time. However, conditions were even worse Tuesday morning, and finally Gerald assumed full charge and refused to permit the experts to enter the cave.

"From the information we received from those who had been in the cave and been close enough to Collins to talk to him," Mr. Kratch said, "we know it will be necessary for the rescuers to enter the cave, or that part of it where the man is imprisoned, head first. We also know that it is a hazardous undertaking and one that requires great skill if a rescue is to be made. With those conditions prevailing it was only fair, if Mr. Mell and Mr. Gibbs were to undertake the work, that they should be permitted to use their own judgment in mapping out a plan of procedure. This suggestion was turned down by Gerald, who refused to make any effort to keep the crowd back or permit the experts to enter. In fact, we were pointedly told our services were not needed."

Until hearing these words from the Louisville monument men, it had been our impression that Gerald was doing excellent work and we still believe he did what he thought was best. But, while pondering over the delays and the nerve-racking aimlessness of the rescue work up to that point, Marshall Collins and Edward Estes came voluntarily to the writer and reported several matters extremely suspicious relative to Gerald. It seemed to be Marshall's opinion that Gerald deliberately blocked the effort of Louisville monument engineers, while Estes' ideas were even more sensational than his companion's. By this time the Louisville engineers had left the cave utterly disgusted and Marshall seemed so anxious to have them return and make their survey that I advised Estes to hurry to Cave City and bring the experts back with him. They did not come back, having left on the afternoon train before Estes could reach the depot.



Telegraph Office, Homer Collins (in Overalls, Standing Dictating a Message.

Meanwhile party after party went in and came out of the tunnel. Some of those, who started so bravely, faltered by the wayside. This was proved when Lieut. Burdon discovered bottles of milk and coffee and packets of lunch tucked in crevices far from Collins. One could not be sure that the reports he heard from the majority of the rescuers were true. Some would say that Collins was strong and brave, others would report the explorer in virtual collapse with death hovering near. But it seemed the concensus of opinion of those who really got to Collins that the strain was already breaking a brave spirit.

Two valiant figures entered the drama late Monday night, distinctly contrasting to the gang of drunken roisterers holding orgy in the valley. These were Lieut. Ben Wells, a strapping six-footer, and a West Point graduate, and Charles E. Whittle, the twenty-five-year-old president of Ogden College, Bowling Green. Lieut. Wells is head of the mathematics department at the college. These men drove through a blinding rainstorm and went to work immediately upon arriving at the cave. They went in together with Gerald leading and these three did more real work from midnight Monday until dawn Tuesday, than had been accomplished by any previous parties.

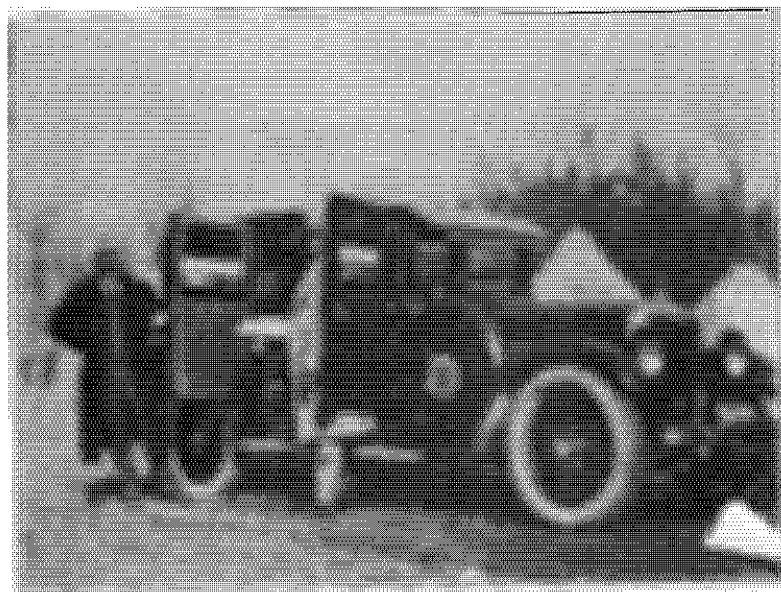
They removed so much rock from around Collins' body that practically the entire torso was free and it was possible to reach down as far as the knees. One rock was so large that Gerald, literally standing on his head, suffered a severe strain, passing it back to Whittle and Wells.

This party also fed Floyd quantities of grape juice, milk and hot coffee three times early Tuesday morning. Collins' hands were completely free and he was so revived by the nourishment that he was able to assist the rescuers.

Whittle, a man of keen intellect, noticed however, that Collins was rapidly approaching the breaking point. He reported that the explorer would groan when very small rocks would fall upon his body and that there was other



One of the Faithful Red Cross Nurses.



The Ambulance That Waited in Vain to Take Collins to the Hospital.



Floyd Collins—Citizen of
Kentucky and Soldier
of Fortune.

evidence that the anticipated collapse of mind was imminent.

Gerald was completely exhausted by the strain of seven hours' labor with Whittle and Lieut. Wells and retired to Cave City for the much-needed rest. So much rock had been removed from about Collins' body that it was hoped that a successful effort could be made by a small man to insert a jack beneath the rock resting upon Collins' foot and lift the boulder from the limb. By this time engineering concerns from all parts of the United States, who had imagined that jacks could be used, had sent various types of apparatus of this character to the cave. These ranged from very small affairs to large types used in lifting houses, the impression apparently having been fixed in the minds of the public at large that there was considerable room in which to work.

Miller and Lieut. Burdon, while Gerald was resting, went into the tunnel for the purpose of operating a jack, Miller in the lead. Several types were tested and found to be too large, but at last a very small jack was adjusted against a rock that was believed to be the pinioning boulder. Miller could not be sure, but began lifting the jack by means of a small wrench. The rock began moving slowly and Collins seemed overjoyed, but the moment of triumph was short-lived, for the jack suddenly gave way and the ever-shifting gravel and the rock rolled back in place. This marked the high tide of the effort to release Collins in the tunnel, and Miller and Burdon were in a state of nervous collapse when they returned to the hotel following their daring but pitifully unsuccessful battle with the boulder. It is significant to note that Collins' spirit seemed to snap when the jack failed to work. He began babbling incoherently and for the first time demanded that some one remain with him so that he might be able to hear constantly the sound of human voice. Marshall and Homer Collins were rushed to the hotel Monday night



John Gerald, Who Has Been Declared to Be
Both Friend and Enemy of Collins.

both semi-conscious from the strain of their labor, but Homer after physicians had dressed the lacerations of his limbs, literally broke away from his friends and returned to the cave.

It is important to note here that the continual passage through the tunnel of great numbers of men of various sizes, most of them inexperienced and all in stages of terror had slowly but surely knocked away the important key rocks supporting sections of the ceiling between the squeeze and Collins' body.

This could have been avoided if there had been a concerted head to operations, if the rescue parties had been selected rather than assembled haphazardly and if the spirit of factional strife had not over-shadowed the better judgment of those who knew exactly the situation and could appreciate the need for coherent organization.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CASE OF JOHNNY GERALD.

Johnny Gerald is the victim of circumstances. Endowed with several years of experience in caves, with a more or less sound practical knowledge of the peculiarities of the subterranean passages, it was inevitable that the fickle goddess should cast him in one of the most peculiar roles of the drama.

Had it not been for Gerald's business dealings with the Collins family relative to the Crystal Cave options there is no doubt that Johnny would not have been raised to a position of considerable importance in this story. Briefly summarized, Gerald's transactions with Lee Collins and Floyd were as follows:

During the summer of 1924, Gerald endeavored and succeeded in securing options on the interests of the elder Collins and Floyd in Crystal Cave. Both of these options



"Dad" Bailey and His Boys, the "Louisville Wrecking Crew."

expired on January 1, 1925, and while Gerald held the options he succeeded in coming to terms with Lee Collins. That he failed to do so with Floyd was due, it seems to the varying opinions as to the potential commercial possibilities of Crystal Cave, held by the elder Collins and the explorer.

Floyd Collins was thoroughly imbued with the idea that Crystal Cave some day would pay big dividends. Floyd realized that considerable progress had been made on the project to convert the entire cave region into a national park and he realized if this were done Crystal Cave would be taken over by the United States government. These motives together with the natural pride of the discoverer caused Floyd to demand more money for his half interest in Crystal Cave than Gerald felt able to pay and so at the date of expiration of the first option, Gerald had failed to come to terms with Floyd.

There had been considerable wrangling over the matter and shortly before the first of the year Gerald had persuaded the elder Collins to grant an extension of his option to April 1, 1925. This extension, the father informs the writer, was made without the knowledge of Floyd, Gerald explaining that he hoped to come to terms with Floyd in the interim.

Since Marshall Collins appears to have taken sides with Floyd in the deal, it was natural that he would look through suspicious eyes upon anything Gerald did towards effecting the release of the explorer, and as a result of this opposition, it was natural also that he should call aside the author and explain Gerald's connection in the Crystal Cave transaction.

Gerald, we believe, really desired to save Floyd Collins' life. He seems a man of firm convictions, slightly stubborn and of unquestioned courage. That he resented outside aid can be explained by the inherent spirit of provincialism that imbued several others connected with the rescue in the



Ford, Anderson, Lieut. Wells, the Engineers, and Carmichael.

early stages. Doubtless Gerald felt completely justified in declining to permit the entrance of the Louisville experts. He felt perhaps that the main effort at that stage should be concentrated on extricating Floyd's feet and in attempting to drag him inch by inch up the narrow passage to freedom.

He little realized—although he later became converted—that science and engineering intellect were of paramount importance from the time it was found that Collins could not have been brought to the surface even though his feet had been released.

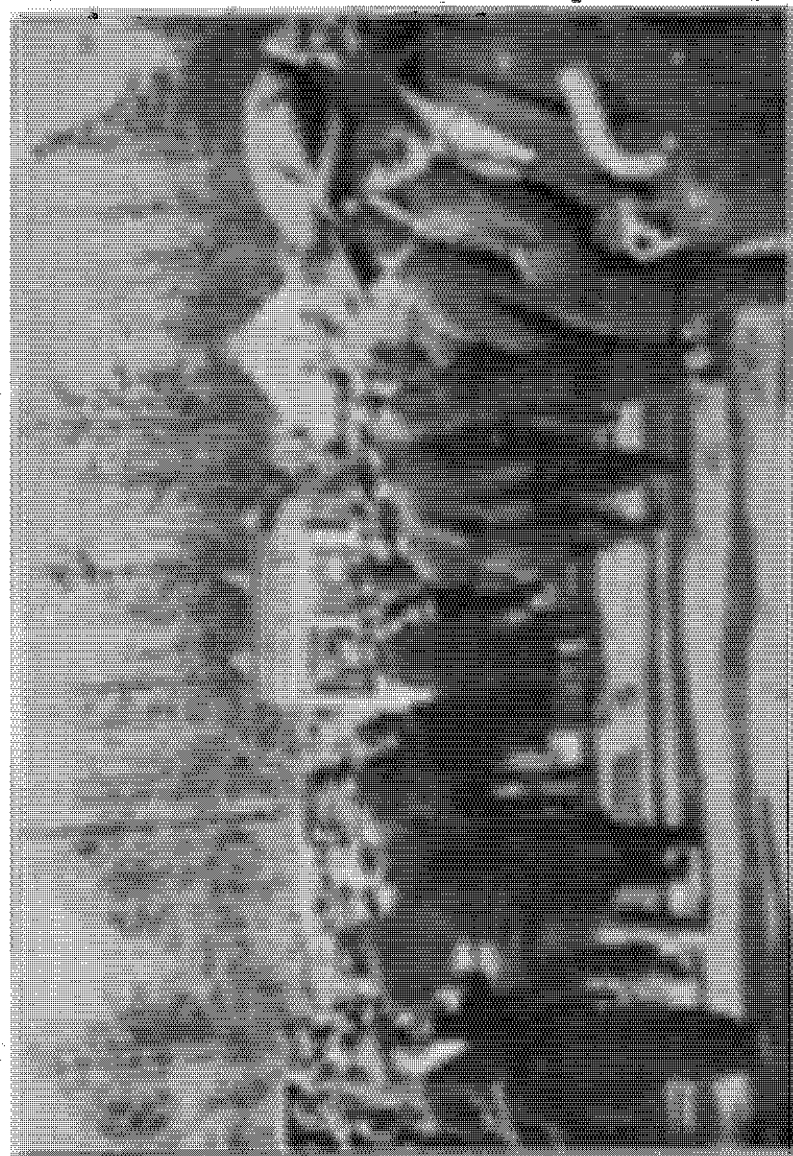
The constant arrival of additional experts irked Gerald. His jangled nerves impelled him to do and say indiscreet things and, because he was enshrined by many country folk as the hero, he undoubtedly was, his words and actions were considered of great importance by certain classes.

Gerald was slowly, but none the less, surely crowded out of the drama by the onrushing course of events. Brig. Gen. H. H. Denhardt, who assumed full command of the military and who from long experience realizes the importance of morale, ordered Gerald excluded from the rescue zone. This was the final crushing blow to a brave spirit, but Gerald showed remarkable fortitude when later allowed to return by refraining from bitter attack upon those he naturally blamed for his rude exclusion.

A man in the heat of passion, be it anger or the burning desire to lead, will say and do many things which upon calm reflection, he will regret. This axiom of life seems peculiarly applicable to the case of Johnny Gerald, but regardless of what man may say, Gerald will forever retain his place as a true soldier of the battle. He may have been head-strong, he may have resented the aid of others than those he knew from childhood, he may have scoffed at the coming of experts, but when all is said and done, Gerald, we believe, strove as valiantly for the life of Floyd Collins



Lee Collins Reading Sympathy Messages from All the World.



Part of Crowd—Showing Lunch Stands. Army Camp in Background.



Brig. Gen. H. H. Denhardt, Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky and Director of the Military Forces at the Cave.

the home of the Kentucky Rock Asphalt Co. of which he is the general manager, bringing with him a band of tried and trusted employees, selected personally for the tremendous task ahead. Carmichael realized in an instant that the first need was organization, and the responsibility of leadership came to him inevitably. He did not seek it nor did he attempt to override the half-dozen or more of the substitute leaders. These came to him and said, "We need you," and he replied simply, "Command me."

Brief interviews with those he knew had really penetrated the tunnel to Collins satisfied Carmichael that the haphazard methods of the preceding days had gone for naught. Long years of practical experience in excavations had satisfied him that careful surveying would be the first step.

Listen then to the brief story gleaned from Carmichael's note-book: "The first thing I did when I arrived was to locate a bunch of men that I brought with me. I had previously selected Thomas Smith, who is noted for his mechanical skill and good sense, and I sent him with ten men on a gas boat to Mammoth Cave. They had been instructed to proceed to Sand Cave from there and do whatever they could and to advise me as early as possible Tuesday morning of the conditions and how they found them. The men called me up and reported about five-thirty Tuesday morning that the situation was very serious and there was more or less confusion.

"I asked what they needed in rescue work. They said that I, myself, was needed (there was nothing of the egotistical in this expression, merely the notation of a request made the same as if a piece of mechanical equipment were required). I told them I could not leave at once and really did not know what I could do. I arrived at Sand Cave Tuesday afternoon and found things a little confused. There did not seem to be any system and I did not see any-



Capt. Topmiller Dictating a Communique.



And It Cost \$3,000.—Flaherty, the Diamond Day Operator, Exhibiting the Valuable Point to His Buddies.



Physicians and Brenner, After Collins Was Pronounced Dead.

one in actual charge. When I got there, it seemed that the rescue party had just come out and advised that they were going in at stated intervals, an hour or so apart. Casey Jones, one of the men I had selected, had come up when I arrived. He was a boy of good judgment and nerve. I got my first real information from Casey as to conditions in the cave. That information was, that there was no special difficulty in reaching Collins but that it was a horribly tough squeeze, and that the hole was a small one and particularly tight. The end of the tunnel was the most hazardous place, about thirty-eight feet beyond the squeeze.

"Casey told me that he had reached Collins and fed him, found him in good shape physically, but in a horribly bad position. He described to me how he had to go over the rock, and back under the rock to the entombed man, who was in kind of a crevice, tightly wedged with only his shoulders sticking out at an angle of about forty-five degrees. Casey found it impossible to get his hand down around Collins' body. Collins told Casey his feet were caught in a crevice under a rock, he guessed would weigh about forty or fifty pounds. He understood that Collins said he loosened the rocks but some more loose rock had fallen down, although Jones and all of the men expressed some hope of getting him out. No one knew exactly how he was caught so I picked two men to go in front, more or less to relay, but the men occupying the positions one, two and three were in very tight places. The plan was for the leading man to be assisted by the second man, who would hand him tools and pass rock and dirt back to the others. The men would lay on their backs until they reached a place where the cavern was large enough to enable them, by removing the dirt to reach down to Collins' thighs.

"As Tuesday wore on, there was a tendency of the organization there to rally around me, and they began asking, should they do this or that."



Carmichael—A Study in Expression.

Thus Carmichael took charge, and for the first brief hours of his generalship permitted work to continue in the tunnel. He interviewed Gerald, Miller, Burdon and one or two others, who had been in to Collins and for a time there was some hope that Floyd might be extricated through the tunnel. A group of expert timber men headed by Albert Marshall of Danville, began bracing the tunnel, starting at the entrance preparatory to bringing Collins out that way. Shortly before two o'clock Wednesday noon February 4, nature trumped man's second trick with a sudden collapse of about twelve or fifteen feet of ceiling between the squeeze and Collins' body. News of the collapse spread like wildfire and the spirits of the volunteers plumbed the nadir of despair. Many felt that Collins then was doomed because the rock fall made it impossible for rescuers to reach his side. Fortunately, however, an hour before the ceiling collapsed Lieut. Burdon, Miller and a party of rescuers had reached Collins, fed him a small quantity of milk and had attached an electric light bulb in such a way that the globe rested on Collins' neck. Had the rescuers known of the impending collapse, they would have installed a telephone receiver in such a way as to enable Collins to converse with the outside world, and would also have placed a tube near Collins' mouth so that he could be fed but there was no warning, no forecast of the terrible disaster. The hollow roar of the falling rock was in reality Collins' requiem.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHAFT IS STARTED.

While Carmichael was perfecting his organization in "death valley" the outside world was becoming more and more aroused by the fearful plight of Collins.

The history of the Sand Cave case as a newspaper story may be summed up by the description of a snowball rolling



Vanderbilt University Athletes Working on the Dump Cars.

down hill. It started quite inauspiciously but gathered weight with astounding speed until within five brief days the dailies of two continents were carrying long accounts of the fight to rescue Floyd.

Special correspondents and photographers came in droves from all sections of the country, taking up headquarters at the Dixie Hotel, a splendid little hostelry, whose capable management labored tirelessly to provide every comfort and convenience. Sand Cavern was the cynosure of the eyes of an anxious world. It became the center of all thought, not because of Floyd Collins' prominence, but simply because humanity was at death grip with nature and because the high ideals of the struggle stirred the pulses of every reader.

"Ask the country to pray for my boy" was the message the press gave the world from Lee Collins, the patient father. And the world did more than pray. Mrs. Emmons Blain, a great-hearted woman of Chicago sent Dr. William S. Hazlett, the eminent specialist, to Cave City in a plane. A field hospital was established on the brow of the cliff, capable of handling any emergency. Two trained nurses were stationed at the hospital working in twelve-hour shifts. Troops came at last to keep in check the ever-growing multitude, to stamp out the drinking and to maintain guard over equipment worth thousands which lay scattered at the mouth of the cave.

The Kentucky National Guard as an organization is to be heartily commended for its fine service at Sand Cave. The details were not large but the service was of outstanding character. Officers and men alike gave freely of every energy and remained on the job to the last moment. The discipline and morale was of the highest character.

Lieutenant Governor Henry H. Denhardt, acting in the capacity of his office as a brigadier general of the Kentucky



Henretta, the Kyrock Foreman, Talks It Over with the
"Big Boss."

National Guard, arrived at Cave City Thursday morning February 5, and at once assumed command of the military. He considered martial law for a time as a means of effectually stamping out the drinking and selling of moonshine but this plan was abandoned because the mere sight of the uniform acted as an efficient check to the bootleggers.

Cave City was rapidly taking on the appearance of a Klondike gold rush town. While the spirit of most of the citizens was that of co-operation, there was much profiteering. This took the form of sky-high telephone and taxicab tariffs. But it was inevitable that this should develop for profiteers follow crowds and take instant advantage of urgent emergency.

The news from the cave at this point—or while preparations were being made to start sinking a shaft to release Collins—was most discouraging. Gerald was the last man to talk to Collins face to face and Floyd murmured drowsily as a weary school boy, "I'm tired, Johnny, so tired and I'm going home and go to bed," Gerald adjusted the quilts and the rubber coat while at Collins' side for the last time and was on his way out to report to Carmichael when the rock fell from the ceiling.

After the fall, Norman Parker, a disabled war veteran and close friend of Collins went in the tunnel to make a personal investigation. He penetrated to the edge of the fall and escaped horrible death by the narrowest of margins when a huge boulder fell directly in front of his head, missing the skull by a fraction of an inch.

Upon receiving the combined reports of Gerald and Parker, Carmichael was practically converted to the shaft plan but lacked the necessary survey data. And here is where the mistakes made in the early stage of the rescue were thrown into conviction bas-relief. No accurate survey



Field Hospital Ready in Case of Rescue.

had ever been made of the tunnel. When the squad of Louisville monument men were on the scene, their first thought was survey. They realized, from long experience, that the whole tunnel should be carefully mapped and plotted, so that if it later were found necessary to sink a shaft, the data would be at hand.

As a result of the ignorant opposition to these scientists, Carmichael was without accurate measurements of that section of the tunnel between the cave-in and Collins. Parties coming out of the tunnel Wednesday afternoon, following the ceiling collapse of that morning, reported that a "mine squeeze" was in progress.

This, in the language of the layman, is the gradual closing together of the bottom and top of the fissure by pressure of muck and it results, miners say, when the supporting side walls give way. These side walls had been ripped down by the continual and blundering passage of all sizes of men. News of the "mine squeeze" came as a new blow at the hopes of the rescue army. That Collins was not slowly crushed to death, as a human nut in a cracker, was only prevented by the squeeze encountering the loosened boulders of the rock fall.

Preliminary to selecting the spot upon which to start the shaft, Carmichael sent in several parties of surveyors and Roy Hyde, the latter an experienced miner, who was the last man to speak to Collins.

Hyde worked his way to the edge of the cave-in, or about fifteen feet from Floyd, who was then in a state of delirium.

"My God, why don't you take me!" moaned the frantic explorer. "Mother, I am coming home in just a little while."

Choking back the tears, Hyde called to Floyd: "Hold on, old man, we are coming!" And Floyd answered, "You're too slow, too slow."



Big Game Denhardt Congratulates Brunner

These are the last words Floyd Collins ever spoke to his fellow man. Various medical opinions were made then as to Collins' physical condition. Some stated that Collins was a victim of pneumonia and that his delirium was the natural development of the disease. Others thought the raving was that of a demented man. But the positive news that Collins had not been killed by the falling rock was in itself heartening to the army of rescuers.

While Lieutenant Wells, Anderson, Ford and other engineers made careful surveys of the tunnel from the entrance to the cave-in, Carmichael began interviewing Miller, Gerald, Burdon, Maddox and all the others he knew had been to Collins. From them he obtained data to construct a composite plot of the tunnel from the cave-in to the explorer. A transparent map was made of the tunnel in its entirety, drawn to the scale of the map of the surface. The former map was then superimposed upon the other and the site for the shaft was selected.

Carmichael was certain that Collins would be located at about the sixty-five-foot level and the shaft was spotted so as to miss Floyd by about ten feet. Actual work on the shaft began at one-thirty o'clock Thursday afternoon, February 5, 1925. The edge of the overhanging cliff was cleared of all obstructions and dangerous rock. The only tools at the outset were picks and shovels.

Carmichael, however, is a man who anticipates every need. Under his direction, a stout wooden railway was laid from the mouth of the shaft over the edge of the valley. A rude but efficient hoist, constructed of whole logs and set to a nicety, was hastily assembled, rigged and fitted with a sturdy little gasoline engine. Material and labor were lavishly furnished by the L. & N. Railroad and other large corporations. The appeal for labor was broadcasted through the press and was answered instantly by hundreds from all classes of society.



Floyd as the Business
Director of Crystal
Cave.

Crews came from the Western Kentucky State Normal School, to compete as if on gridiron or diamond, with squads from Vanderbilt and other universities. The college men toiled shoulder to shoulder with the common laborer from the mining camps or section gangs.

Carmichael formed a board of strategy, consisting of himself, Prof. W. D. Funkhouser, member of the faculty of the University of Kentucky and M. E. S. Posey, executive secretary of the Kentucky State Highway Commission.

All efforts to locate any new entrance to the cavern proved futile and even later, when banana oil was sprayed into the tunnel, no important side fissures were discovered. The tunnel itself was impassable beyond the cave-in. So the shaft, which was the only chance from the very first day, now was the last shred of man's last fading hopes.

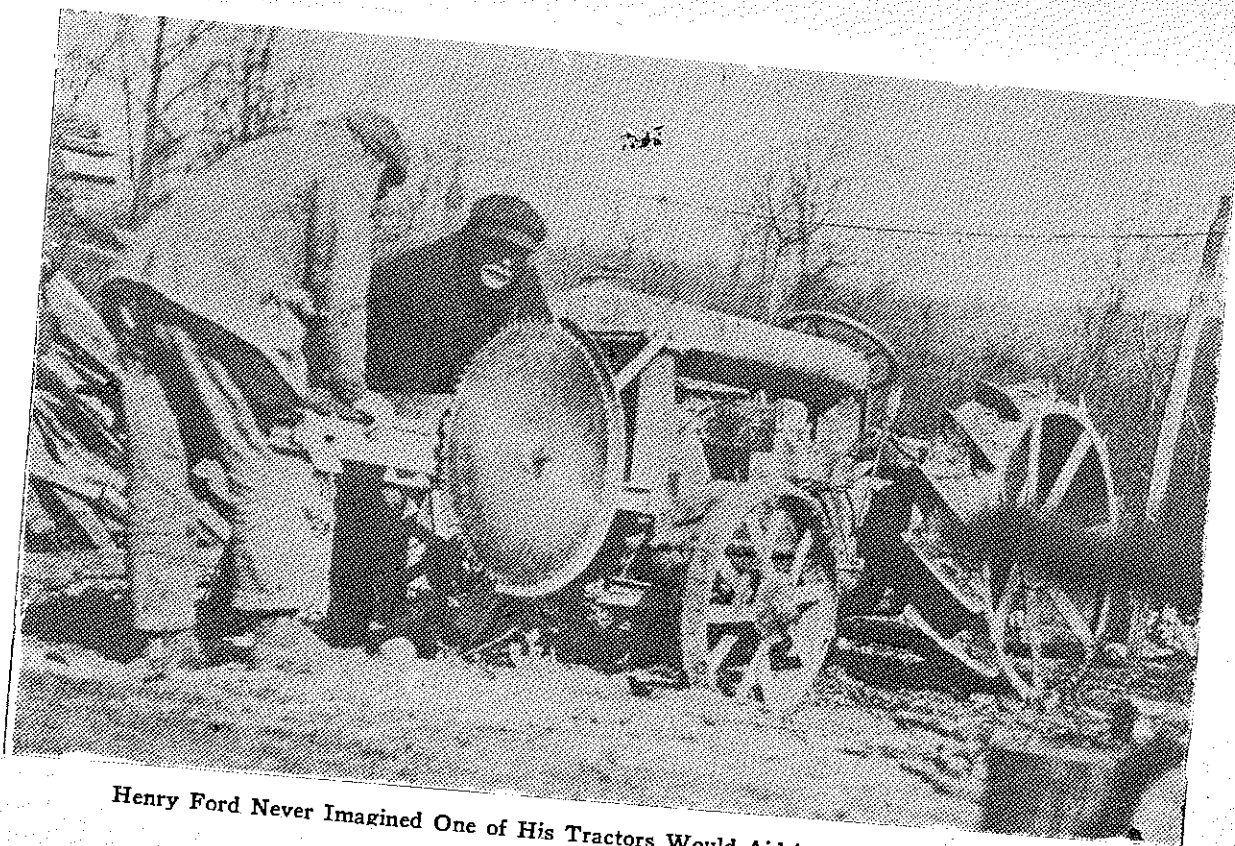
Every swing of the pick or downward thrust of the shovel was backed by the prayer of an anxious world.

CHAPTER X.

DIG—DUMP—PRAY.

Much has been said and written for and against the so-called radio tests employed during the final stages of the battle of Sand Cave. Experts can be found who declare the tests meant nothing. Others are just as firm in their opinions that the murmurs heard over the delicate apparatus proved that Collins' heart still beat. But one fact cannot be disputed, the radio tests aided wonderfully in maintaining the morale of the rescue army at a high pitch.

H. C. Lane, who had charge of the Delco lighting outfit, suggested the tests. He is a radio enthusiast and figured that a powerful detector and amplifier could be attached to the wires leading to the globe resting on Collins' breast. Then, with the current turned off, Lane calculated that the



Henry Ford Never Imagined One of His Tractors Would Aid in Battle to Save Collins.



faint rise and fall of the explorer's diaphragm would be recorded in the head phones.

Repeated tests were made after venturesome rescuers worked their way to the "squeeze" and disconnected a globe hanging there, thus making sure that the globe on Collins' body was the only one from which impulses could be detected. Some of these tests were successful, others were not. On Saturday, February 7, no murmurs were heard and it was figured that the circuit had either been broken or the globe was loose in the socket. But when Collins was found, the globe proved to be in good condition. It was also tight in the socket. So the contentions of those who place no faith in the "radio tests" have some foundation.

Yet it was surprising how reports, that either really came or were supposed to come from the electrical men, were eagerly seized upon by the shaft workers. These men came to regard the bulletins as personal messages from Collins and the acceleration in shaft work following the announcements was most encouraging. So, regardless of the scientific merit, the "radio tests" played an important part in the rescue work.

After the shaft-digging equipment had been installed and work was progressing in earnest, the fight settled down somewhat to a prosaic basis. It was now a giant engineering project, differing from the average run of jobs in that the objective was the saving of a human life. While in reality the work progressed faster than a shaft of this nature was ever dug by human agency, to the watchers on the hillside it seemed painfully slow.

Eager correspondents, after being told that but a few feet had been excavated in thrice the number of hours, would turn away dejectedly, imagining perhaps that the true figures were being suppressed. The opposite was the



... on the Dump Cars.

[The right page of the notebook is mostly blank, with some faint, illegible markings and a vertical line near the left edge.]

case. It was Carmichael's policy from the very first to give the world through the press all of the truth of the battle in the valley. And it was during one of these innumerable interviews that the director of operations coined the slogan of Sand Cave "Dig, Dump and Pray."

It was the slogan of a working man. Nothing poetic about it. Nothing poetic about the toil at the bottom of that shaft. And so these four words epitomize the gruelling work of the sappers.

They dug a lot and dumped a lot and prayed as they worked, these sturdy gnomes of the underground struggle. When the purple mantle of night draped over the hills of old Barren County and the yellow incandescents gleamed far down in the yawning shaft, one could hear the sob of a stricken people, louder than the sobs of the sorrowing family. Grim thankless work! No prospects of pay beyond the thanks of the world. Many were men with families, who ill could spare their time and pay envelopes. Some were just youngsters budding into full manhood at colleges. Others were true soldiers of fortune, mayhap those for whom the long fingers of the law were searching. It was a new Foreign Legion, a fine brave band, these men of Clan Carmichael, forgetting self, forsaking family, risking all that one man—whom they never knew as friend but to whom they were bound as brothers—might live.

Dawn of Sunday, February 8, 1925, found all roads leading to Sand Cavern jammed with vehicles of every description. The vanguard of a mighty caravan passed through Cave City at daybreak. By noon ten thousand sight-seers jammed the fields and wooded hillsides surrounding the cave. At three o'clock the peak was reached when conservative estimates fix the total present at fifteen thousand.

Some idea of the vastness of the multitude may be obtained by the length of the lines of parked motor cars ad-

joining Bee Doyle's farmhouse. Two lines, on both sides of the road, fender touching fender, extended a distance of four miles in each direction. Three thousand other cars were parked in the fields. Every man, woman and child in that vast assemblage departed greatly disappointed. Many came fully expecting to be able to pass into a cave and gaze upon a fellow-being in his death agony. Such is the character of so great a per cent of human nature, a throw back, probably, from the mobs who shouted in glee when Roman gladiators battled to the death in Nero's arena.

Others were drawn by the very human desire to be able to say in years to come, "I saw it all." But regardless of motive they came by the thousands and a very small percentage really saw the only worth-while thing from the standpoint of the idle spectator, the church service held on the wooded hillside above Collins' prison.

"Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on
The night is dark and I am far from home
Lead thou me on."

This was the prayer of Floyd Collins. These were the words of a hymn breathed toward the blue dome of Heaven that Sunday afternoon by the worshippers gathered on the brow of the cliffs, overhanging the entombed man.

It was one of the most impressive church services ever held. The cloistered woods formed the aisles of the natural tabernacle and its floor was the rocky roof of Sand Cave. If Collins, in his living tomb, could have heard the fervent prayers and the hymns of his childhood, he would have realized as never before that the heart of humanity beat a mighty diapason of supplication to God.

The sermon was a brief and impressive message, picturing vividly the struggle on whose outcome a nation waited with intensive interest. Nothing of the flowery sort. Noth-

ing of gushing oratory. Simply a direct appeal for united prayer, a liaison between God and man, and the forceful explanation that only through divine help can mortal achieve the impossible.

"We find in the Bible," explained the minister, "that all things are possible through prayer. If God wills, the mountains may be moved and the seas dried up. If it be His

EFFORT TO RECOVER COLLINS' BODY BEGINS"

CAVE CITY, KY., April 3.—Tents tonight again dotted the bleak hillside near Sand Cave as they did during the trying days when rescuers worked in vain to extricate Floyd Collins from the trap that closed in on him January 30 while he was searching the subterranean reaches of the cave country for a new and more beautiful cavern.

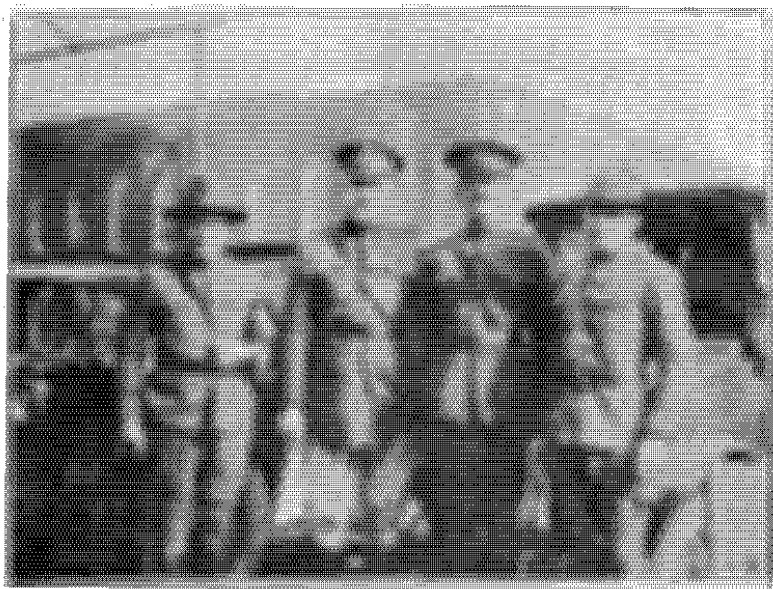
An attempt to recover his body got under way today, the first having been abandoned when Collins was found dead, seventeen days after he was imprisoned.

W. H. Hunt, of Central City, Ky., a miner of thirty years' experience, holds a contract to reclaim the body. He estimated that it would take from two weeks to twenty days to do the work.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MILITARY INQUIRY.

The morning of February 9 marked a new and sensational development. The newspapers of that date carried long accounts of two investigations, one already formed and the other under consideration. The first was a detailed announcement of a Board of Military Inquiry, duly summoned and impaneled at the order of the governor, William Jason Fields and Adjutant Gen. J. J. Kehoe. The planned investigation was a grand jury probe, suggested by County Atty. J. Lewis Williams of Barren County who



The Military Board of Inquiry. Left to Right: Capt. Chaney, Brig. Gen. Denhardt, Lt. Col. Henry J. Stites and Capt. Polin.



Correspondents Getting Story From Albert Marshall, Boss of Timbermen.



The Radio Station, H. E. Ogden, Jeffersonville, Ind., at the Key.

conferred Sunday night at great length with correspondents of the Louisville Herald and Post, the Chicago Tribune, the Cincinnati Post and the Nashville Tennessean, concerning the maize of rumors and innuendo that had beclouded main issue—the rescue of Floyd Collins. Singularly enough both investigations had a common objective, although the Military Board in addition to investigating the rumors of delays in the rescue of Collins, also was directed at the running down of an unfortunate story which appeared in many newspapers allied through the national organization of the Associated Press.

This story related in substance, among other rumors concerning the Sand Cave case that, "certain residents in the vicinity of Sand Cave doubted if Floyd Collins was really trapped; that they considered the whole thing a giant publicity scheme to attract thousands to the cave country; and that the whole affair might be a gigantic hoax." The reaction to this report, which angered the high officials of the State of Kentucky, was violent and instantaneous. Governor Fields in a righteous explosion of wrath, demanded the immediate recall of the correspondent, who sent in the story, holding that the article was an insult to the commonwealth, that it placed the entire state in a precarious position in the eyes of the world, and that the people of Kentucky were in grave danger of being held up to scorn by their fellow men.

The writer has no desire whatever to delve into the circumstances surrounding the writing of the Associated Press story, feeling that the matter is one that concerns the Associated Press and is of no interest to the world at large. He feels that the correspondent was indiscreet, but that the story was no more irrational than a score of others which might have been penned by other correspondents, if all that was heard was written. But the fact remains that this story was the lever that really precipitated the convening of the Military Board, which held its first session



A Shaft Crew Resting on the Brow of the Cliff.

on Monday morning in the dingy little police court at Cave City. The personnel of the Board was as follows: President, Brig. Gen. Henry H. Denhardt; members, Lieut. Col. H. J. Stites, of Louisville; Major W. H. Cherry, of Bowling Green; Capt. John A. Polin, of Springfield; Capt. Julius L. Topmiller, of Smith Grove, and the recorder Capt. Alex L. Chaney, of Bowling Green.

The Military Inquiry accomplished much good. First of all it proved conclusively, that there was no foundation, in fact, for the Associated Press hoax story, secondly the testimony showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that excessive drinking of moonshine, haphazard organization, chaotic rescue party direction and the general tumult that prevailed from the time Floyd Collins was found there trapped until Carmichael took charge, hampered the work of rescue. There were so many days lost in what has always been a handicapped race between man and nature.

These were the accomplishments of the Military Board which held its sessions regularly, went in the police courts, or at the cave until the close of the drama. The files of the Board which were later made public in the Adjutant General's office were along the same lines set forth above and its testimony will remain an eternal fact of the Sand Cave case in the archives of the commander.

Coincident with the convening of the Military Board came the institution of the military communique, a system of press information. The reporters had been gathering their news haphazardly until this time, but the situation between the press and the military and the superintendents was not fully clarified until a meeting was held on the brow of the cliff. This meeting was quite suddenly precipitated when the two reporters were ordered from the mouth of the cave. After much milling around and considerable wild talk on both sides, the press representatives and those in charge of the soldiers and workmen gathered together in the rear of the field hospital and got down to



The Western State Normal School Football Team.

cold facts. There was no question that the army of reporters had grown so large that they at times got under the feet of the workmen and Carmichael, Posey and Dr. Funkhouser, all patient men, had been harassed almost to the point of exasperation by the continual clamor for news. The communique plan of news dispensation was worked out to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned. It did not dampen the enthusiasm of the reporter nor did it suppress the slightest bit of information from the columns of the press and so the informal meeting on the hill takes its place as one of the important gatherings of the Sand Cave case, in that the two factions arrived at a common basis of understanding, understood thoroughly the varying viewpoints and ironed out kinks of organization that may have resulted unfortunately for all concerned.

After the meeting a bull pen was constructed quite near the mouth of the shaft, fenced in with barbed wire, but strategically located to permit clear view of the operations. The reporters were ordered to remain within this bull pen, and a similar contrivance was erected for the convenience of the photographers, thus separating the sheep from the goats. And, so, after being duly penned, showered with instructions and given definite orders as to conduct, the reporters proceeded to gather news much after the same fashion as before with exception, of course, of the official communiques. These were announced at regular intervals, namely: at nine in the morning, at two in the afternoon, and at ten at night with frequent informal bulletins interspersing.

Direct testimony as to the chaotic conditions in the early stages of the rescue was delivered by the Reverend Columbus Doyle, who was driven from the entrance of Sand Cave forty-eight hours after Collins was entrapped, by the confusion, factional disputes and drinking. The minister testified as follows: "There were three or four factions that seemed to be contending with each other.



The Coroner's Jury, Police and County Officials.

They were all strangers to me. And there was a great deal of swearing. I saw one empty bottle, but there was so little organization and so much tumult that I was afraid to remain."

Testifying regarding his experiences relative to threats, Miller the newspaper reporter stated as follows:

Question—Were you at any time threatened with personal violence?

Answer—I received rumors of that.

Q.—You were not threatened directly?

A.—I was only told of it by a workman in the crowd that I do not know. I was called away seven times that night.

Q.—What night?

A.—Wednesday night, when I was there fuming and impatient to get in. I was told that it would be best for me not to get down there, that my trouble if I did would be above ground, not below it. Dr. Funkhouser called me to come inside at one time and said to me, "Your worst enemy is provincialism."

Q.—What did they tell you?

A.—They told me, "You had better not go down there, if you do go they are going to let you go with your own and you won't come out."

Q.—Who appeared to be directing the efforts around there on the part of the faction that was trying to prevent you from going in?

A.—Mr. Gerald was preparing to go down. He was cold and tired and had just come out and went up to the tent to warm up a little bit. He did not want anyone to go down but wanted to go himself.

Q.—Did he ask you to go with him?

A.—No, sir.

Q.—He did not ask you to go?

A.—No, sir, I heard him at the mouth of the cave say when I came out that if they let anybody else go, that he

would not go in again. He said, "I am going to get him out, and if anyone else goes down there I won't go in."

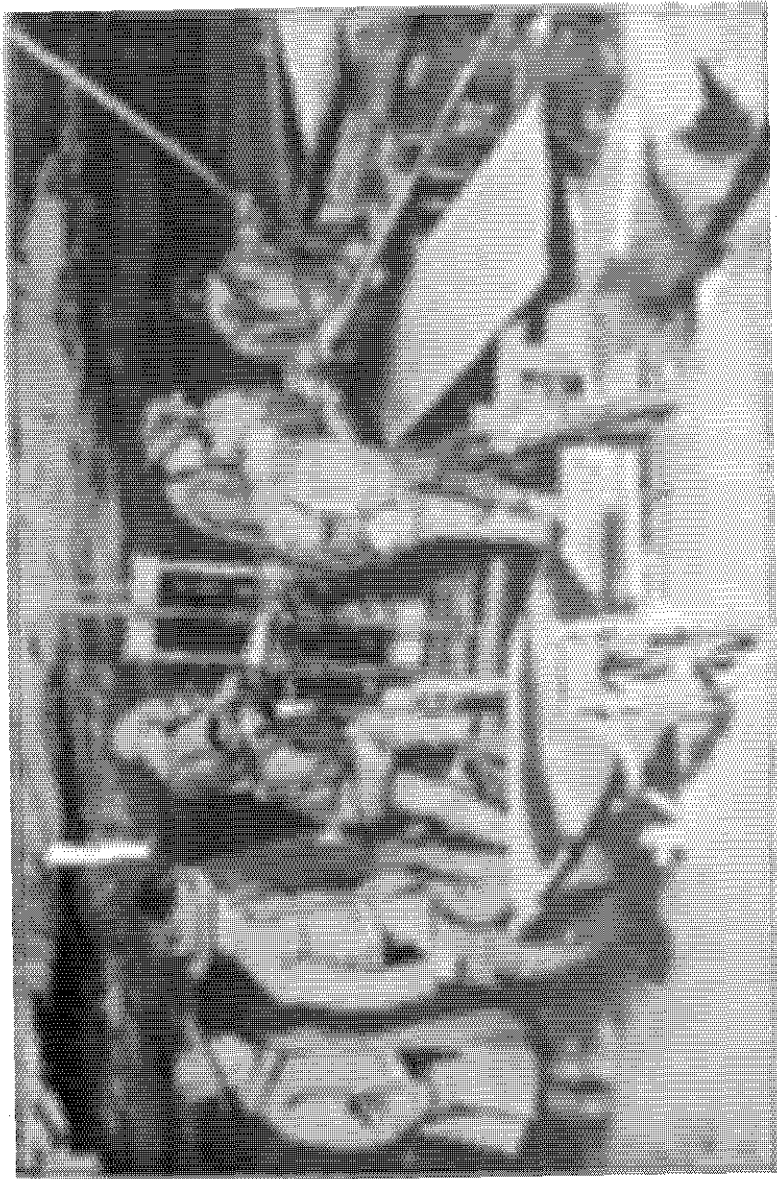
Q.—In his opinion then he was not the only one that was not bungling?

A.—Yes, sir.

Additional testimony that proves that there was drinking of moonshine in the early stages of the rescue was delivered by J. O. Hornung, County Agent of Barren County. "When I reached the cave Monday afternoon I found great confusion, men were trying to do what they could but they had no leader, some said they could get to Collins and some others said that they were afraid to try. Before I went down, I appealed to Magistrate Turner, advising him of the situation and asking him to give me at least four or five men who had not been drinking."

Even the aged father, Lee Collins, admitted on the stand that the rescue had been hampered by too much whiskey. He was asked directly by Cap. Chaney to give the name of the bootleggers, but the ironclad man of the hill country sealed his lips, turned square about in his chair and gazed without flinching into the face of his questioner and replied, "I cannot tell you, suh."

These excerpts from actual testimony delivered before the Military Board proved what the author will always believe, that Floyd Collins could have been rescued alive from Sand Cavern if the shaft had been started on Monday morning, February 2. The golden sands of time which were as precious as radium in those first days, were scattered ruthlessly by well-meaning, disorganized, impotent men who firmly believed that they could achieve the impossible—to drag the tunnel to safety.



The Diamond Drilling Is Started to Test Rock Strata.



Carmichael and Posey Talk It Over.

CHAPTER XII.

NATURE BLOCKS THE SHAFT.

Floyd Collins died sometime during the afternoon of Friday, February 13.

There is much evidence to support the statement that God released the soul of the brave explorer on "hoodoo day." First of all Dr. William Hazlett stated, after making a physical examination of Collins when the body was discovered on the following Monday, that he believed Floyd "had been dead between two and five days."

This is doubly important when one recalls the events of Friday and Saturday. Disregarding the strange superstitions of all miners, Edward Brenner, a rough-and-ready Teuton from Cincinnati, went into the tunnel about ten o'clock Friday morning with a fellow workman to signal by tapping to the crew in the shaft. These sound tests had been carried on from time to time in order to determine accurately how close the bottom of the shaft lay with reference to the tunnel.

Brenner made his way to the edge of the rock fall and crawled a little way over the debris, being able to do this by reason of his small, wiry physique. He stopped at a point ten or twelve feet from Collins. Then he lay quiet and distinctly heard gasps and low moans.

Upon reporting this to Carmichael after the sound tests were satisfactorily completed, Brenner was taken at once before the military board of inquiry which immediately placed him under oath and took the following testimony:

Q.—Did you go down into the hole this morning—down into the cave, I mean?

A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—What did you do down there?

A.—I went down to listen to the sound, see, the sound



Ed Brenner—"The Man from Cincinnati."

of our working and I find out how far we are and to give the boys a sound, the boys in the pit.

Q.—Did you hear any sounds they made?

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Mourns for Collins



MISS ALMA CLARK.

Miss Alma Clark, 22 years old, living eight miles from Cave City, was to have eloped with Floyd Collins Thursday. Instead she went quietly to the shaft, being sunk into Sand Cave and, standing apart from the spectators, wept silently.

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the harness and the canteen and a lantern, and



Bill Takasy Flirts with the Muse.

I took them with me. The lantern has a blue tag on it, you know, and I take the tag off, but I lost it coming out. I find the canteen in the corner there, stuck in a corner, and I took it along and took this harness and the lantern, but I take this blue tag off the lantern and I lose it coming out and it's still down there.

Q.—Did you hear any more gasping, or any other noise in there?

A.—No, I didn't.

Q.—How long did you stay there?

A.—I stayed about five minutes.

Q.—After you heard this gasp, you waited and listened to see if you could hear anything else?

A.—I certainly did.

Q.—Did you see any light there in the hole?

A.—No, I couldn't see nothing but my own light.

Q.—Did you see any electric bulb down there?

A.—No, I didn't see no electric bulb. I turned my light back behind me so I could and didn't see no light in there.

Q.—Where was this gasp you heard in relation to where you were? Was it in front of you?

A.—Yes, it was in front of me.

Q.—Did you hear the knocking from that place, or had you gone further back, or where were you?

A.—No, I was about two feet back from there, back from the fall.

Q.—About two feet back?

A.—Yes. That's where I give the boys sound.

Q.—That was near the cave-in?

A.—Yes, I crawl back and just wait on the signal—savvy? Then I hear that deep gasp in front of me or right behind me somewhere—I can't tell at first—then I know it is in front of me. I couldn't hear no more, and I hollered out "Floyd, Floyd." And Floyd don't answer, for he is where he can't, I guess. So I holler, "Hold out, we are coming."



Articles Found in Tunnel Near Collins.

There is a rock sticking out here, see, and I took the canteen—but first I took a rock and hit it, and it didn't sound right, see, and so I took the canteen and hit three times. I rapped three times and they started hitting over there, and heard that. I waited a while and they stopped again, so I keep that pounding up, and give them seven more raps. I hit it seven or eight more times.

When I come out, I brought that canteen and I took that blue tag off the lantern and lost it in the hole. I took that harness on and that canteen, that army canteen, to bring them on out with me. I pushed them on out in front of me, I want to show them to them—to the boss, you know. I brought it out and give it to what's-his-name, you know?

Q.—Mr. Carmichael?

A.—Yes, Mr. Carmichael, that's his name. The boss.

Q.—Did you pass where the telephone was?

A.—Oh, yes.

Q.—You saw the telephone?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Then what places did you go through?

A.—I can't remember that; I can't remember what they looked like. I was hell-bent on getting back there. I was making time. It wasn't bad crawling in there. I got along all right. I skinned my arm a little bit one place. There was about two places I could get through when I go down like that, see, and turned around and went through like that. When I come back, I have to back up till I get around, and I come out the right way.

Q.—Could you turn around down there at the cave-in?

A.—No.

Q.—You had to back up and then you found a place where you could turn around?

A.—Yes.

Q.—And you say you went clear on down to where the cave-in is?



Reunited After 30 Years. Lee Collins Meets His Brother, William.

A.—Sure, and I took a piece of rock out of it about that long.

Q.—Could you see over in there; past the cave-in?

A.—No.

Q.—And you say you saw no electric light burning in there?

A.—No, sir.

Q.—Saw no electric lights down in the passageway at all?

A.—No; only my light.

Q.—Did this other man that was with you stop there by the telephone?

A.—Yes, I had that other fellow with me—I don't know his name—and I told him to go about half-way if he wanted to, and he goes out long before I do.

I asked him, about ten feet from the phone, if the phone was in order and he says, "yes," and so I went to call up outside and I wound on the phone for about five minutes or so and couldn't get nobody to answer me, so I thought I would crawl on.

Q.—And then you crawled on nearly as far on the other side of the phone as you did on this side?

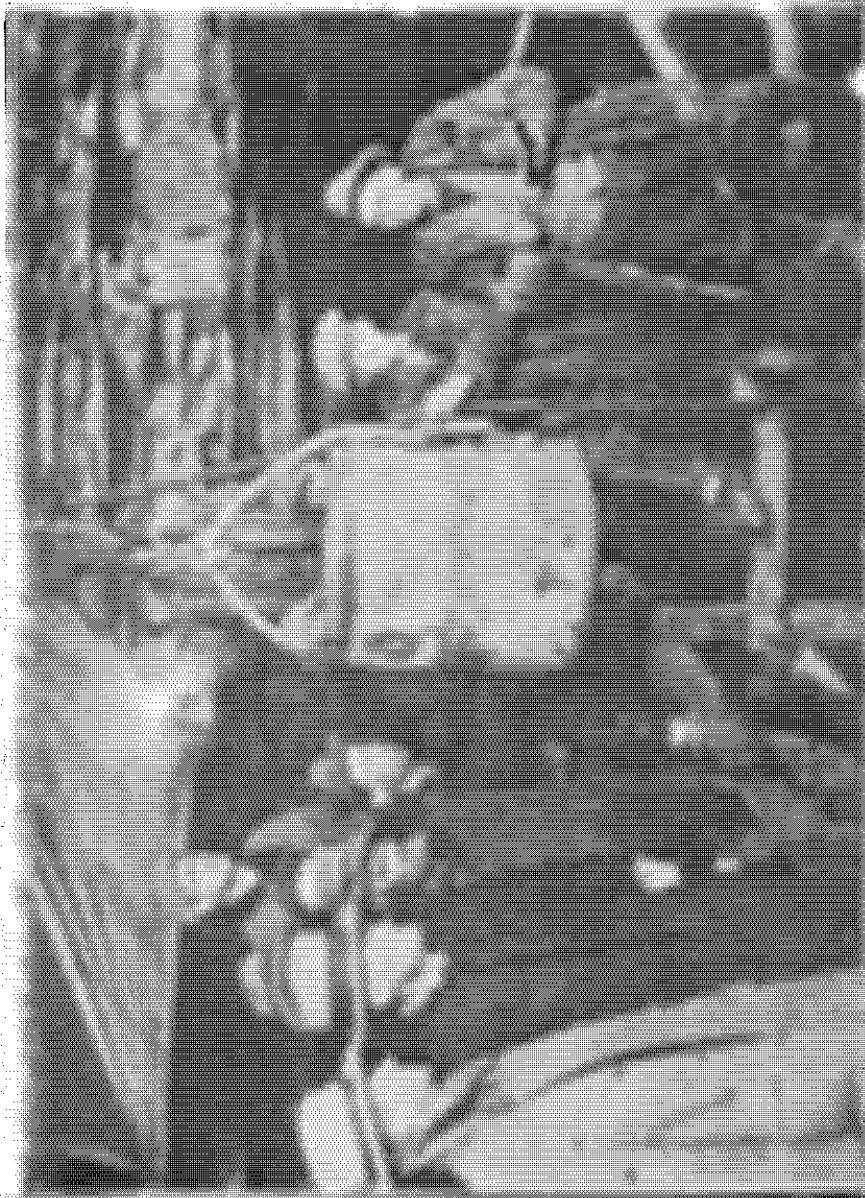
A.—I guess so, I crawl on about twenty-five or thirty feet, I guess. Give me a tapeline and I'll go down there and measure it for you. I could not swear to that distance.

Q.—It wasn't the man back of you gasping, was it?

A.—No; no, no, absolutely. He was gone. He wasn't there. I called back and said, "Are you still back there?" And he didn't answer me. He was gone then. When I call back and ask him if he is still there, he is gone—he's on his way out. As I left the phone, he left me. I says, "Are you still back there? Can you see my light?" But I didn't get no answer.

Q.—You say you tried to talk to Floyd and tell him to carry on, that you were coming after him?

A.—I said, "Floyd, hold out; we are coming."



The Last Bucket Load to Leave the Shaft.

Now Brenner is a truthful man. He was not seeking publicity and he brought out with him the harness, which had been taken into the tunnel by Lieutenant Burdon and Miller. This was positive proof that he spoke the truth. Brig. Gen. Denhardt was also convinced and gave the press the copy of the testimony.

On the following day, however, soaring hopes fluttered to earth. Another sound test was made and this time Lieut. Wells went into the tunnel to exactly the same point at which Brenner heard Collins' last gasp.

Immediately after reaching the surface the writer closely questioned the former army officer. Lieut. Wells said, "I lay there in the tunnel for fully a half hour, perfectly quiet, straining every nerve to catch the slightest sound from the direction of Collins. I heard nothing but the drip of the rock sweat."

Taking these three facts—Dr. Hazlett's diagnosis and the reports of Brenner and Lieut. Wells—into consideration indicates almost exactly the time Floyd Collins was freed from his underground torture chamber.

Lieut. Wells' report was strictly confidential and was not circulated among the rescue workers for fear of affecting the morale, which was then at a high pitch as a result of Brenner's testimony. Late Friday afternoon, however, a serious obstacle was encountered in the shaft.

The strata changed to a curious mixture of muck and loose boulders. It was almost impossible to work through the stuff. As fast as an excavation was made a cave-in would occur, forcing the sappers to keep on the alert to keep from being caught in the avalanches. Carmichael realized instantly that a drastic change of plans must be made, as evidenced from his field notes, which read:

"When the shaft reached about forty-five feet we hit a bunch of muck and loose rock. This condition continued down to fifty-five feet. At fifty-two feet we had so much

loose material and it was falling out so fast that I began to have fears of the shaft pulling in two. We switched the shaft, after the core drill was placed in the shaft and showed a limestone ledge at sixty feet with a vacancy in it. This led me to believe there was some sort of vacancy sixty feet from the surface. The shaft at this point began to sag to such an extent that I was afraid to go straight down any farther. We decided to leave the shaft and drive a heading to get behind and start down at another point."

The work on the lateral heading began at once and immediately gave rise to all sorts of rumors which kept the newspaper camp in a constant state of uproar. The heading was a spiral affair, sloping gently down so as to bring the sappers on a level with Collins or very close to it.

Frequent conferences were held by Carmichael, Posey and the engineers who made the surveys. They first estimated that Collins would be released sometime on Sunday, February 16, but progress was so slow in the heading due to frequent rock falls, that a new prediction was made, extending the time to nine o'clock Monday night.

The heading measured three feet square and was timbered constantly as shifts of three specially selected men, cut their way forward and downward from the main shaft.

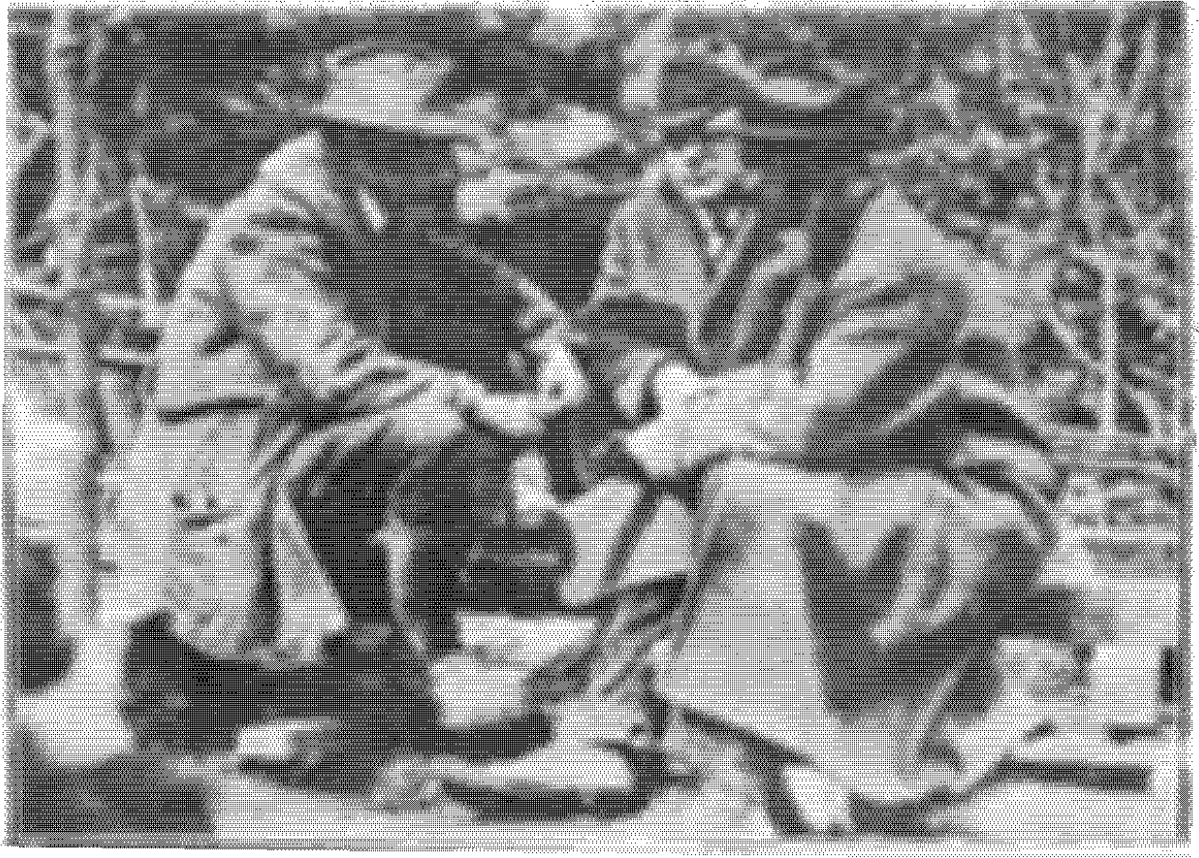
CHAPTER XIII.

THE FINAL DASH.

Nature retreated slowly before the final onslaught of man's attack. After a sultry Saturday afternoon, a terrific rain and electrical storm swept the camp. Carmichael had prepared for aerial assault days before by spreading 2,400 square feet of canvas over the entire valley fronting the cave mouth. So the work continued without interruption. It was hard on the soldiers and the faithful newspaper colony, who stuck gamely to their posts fearing they would miss the rescue.



Lee Collins Shown Rock Slabs Taken from Lateral Heading.



Carmichael, Dr. Funkhouser and Brig. Gen. Denhardt Confer
After Finding of Collins' Body.

Drawn Three Days Before the

The electrical display was as vivid as could be expected in any midsummer thundershower and the weather changed quite suddenly to bitter cold. Reports from the shaft were anything but encouraging. Most of the work in the shaft was being done by Marshall, Brenner and Blevins, who were known as the "Three Musketeers of Carmichael's Legion."

During the height of the storm, the framework of the shaft slowly began settling into the strata of muck and rock. This was a very grave turn of affairs. Carmichael immediately ordered huge logs thrown over the top and lashed the shaft frame to them. Even this plan failed to check the sagging, which continued at one corner until the framework was eight or nine inches out of plumb.

The third Sabbath passed quietly. Less than a third of the throng of the preceding Sunday was on hand to gather around the barricade, which had been flung back still further on the orders of the military. Some enterprising but callous hawkers were on the lot bright and early with a stock of "Sand Cave" balloons but were quickly dispersed by a prompt order from Brig. Gen. Denhardt.

As the lateral heading drove farther and farther into the loose rock the dangers to the sappers constantly increased. Brenner was very near death once when a fall of rock came within an ace of trapping him. The avalanche came when Brenner scraped the ceiling with his pick handle, illustrating how loose was the strata and what a faint touch was needed to precipitate fearful death.

Marshall, a man of steel nerve, became more apprehensive at each rock fall but stuck gamely to his task of timbering the heading.

In order to give the newspapers and the world some idea of the character of the work, Carmichael took Miller and Nichols into the heading with him and explained in detail

what was being done. Both reporters had been in the tunnel and had concurred in the belief that the heading was much more dangerous.

The sound tests continued all through Sunday and far into the night. Each test showed the intervening space growing more and more narrow.

An interesting development in the last stages of the fight to save Collins was the installation of a blower, superheated and a tank by Lieutenant Burdon and Private Blake, the Louisville firemen, at the special request of Dr. Hazlett and other physicians. The outfit had as its purpose the forcing of warm air into the tunnel but the plan was suggested during the early days of the rescue work. Lieutenant Burdon explained the proposition to the volunteer workers but his offer was flatly rejected. The volunteers, mostly natives, told the fireman that to raise the temperature in the tunnel was to risk the collapse of the walls. It was singular that the outfit, during the final dash when the gallant spirit of Collins had already fled the battered body, was ordered installed not only by the doctors but also by the military authorities. A tank was specially built at Glasgow on Private Blake's specifications. Blake had long experience as an engineer and the apparatus worked to perfection although the heated air never reached the tired lungs for which it was intended.

Speculation was rife among the workers at this stage relative to whether or not Collins still lived. Great care was taken to sustain the morale—a precautionary measure of great importance, as evidenced by the collapse of spirit that cropped out when Collins' body was found.



III
IN SH

CHAPTER XIV.

COLLINS FOUND DEAD.

The discovery of Floyd Collins' body was as sudden as his entombment. The official announcement of the discovery of the remains was not made until exactly two-forty-three o'clock on the afternoon of Monday, February 16, 1925. The first break between the workers in the heading and the narrow tunnel, which for five days had served as Collins' coffin, was made at one-thirty o'clock. To Edward Brenner the Cincinnati miner goes the honor of discovery. Brenner was working on his hands and knees in the heading, wielding a short-handled pick when the keen point of the tool punctured a thin layer of limestone, much after the fashion of an ice-pick thrusts through the tough skin of an orange. Realizing instantly that the end was at hand Brenner enlarged the opening with his tools until it was of sufficient size to admit his body.

Peering down into the narrow trap door, Brenner detected the rope which lay beneath Collins' body and which he had used to lower himself into the eighty-foot shaft of Sand Cavern, a milk bottle half full and a small crowbar. Brenner knew, having questioned other rescuers, that these tools were abandoned between the squeeze and Collins and he realized that he would be able to reach the entombed man by crawling head-foremost into the tunnel and worming his way forward. Working in the heading with Brenner at this time were Marshall and Blevins, who had been his companions practically all the way through on the work in the shaft. Calling upon Blevins to follow, Brenner clambered down to the tunnel and quickly reached Collins.

Squatting down on the rocky ledge, Brenner felt Collins' face. It was icy cold and the jowls were covered with a thick growth of beard. Drawing back with a natural horror of contact with the dead, Brenner steeled his nerves to



Carmichael Dictating the "Death Communiqué"
to Dr. Funkhouser.

make a more careful investigation. He adjusted his flashlight so that the white beam fell directly on the face of the dead man, revealing a remarkable mask. The jaw was set and the lips tightly clenched. It was the face of a man who died fighting, battling desperately against inevitable death. The cheeks, though hollowed by long days without food or water, were furrowed deeply with the lines of determination, and the eyes were half closed. Collins in his death agony had turned over on his back and the tips of the fingers of the left hand were clenched between the teeth. This was characteristic of the posture of the mummy of the little white girl, which was found in Sait's Cave in 1875 by a party of explorers, and was typical as the final act of a human who met death in a subterranean prison. Rigor mortis had set in but not completely for Brenner was able to move the upper portion of Collins' body rather easily.

Satisfied in his own mind that Collins had passed on, Brenner and Blevins returned to the heading and ran to the shaft to notify Carmichael, who immediately descended and made a personal investigation. Orders were issued for all guards to fix bayonets and none of the workmen in the shaft were permitted to leave, it being desired to announce the news simultaneously to the reports thus giving each one an even start in the mad dash for telephones and telegraph instruments.

The watching newspaper men detected that something was about to happen when Carmichael, his genial smile vanished, crawled stiffly out of the shaft and summoned Brig. Gen. Denhardt, Prof. Funkhouser and Posey for a conference which was held at two-thirty o'clock at the far end of the trestle leading from the mouth of the shaft.

The four executives sat down on the wooden ties and discussed Brenner's ghastly discovery from all angles. They decided that it was of paramount importance to determine



Carmichael Breaks News of Collins' Death to Lee Collins,
the Aged Father.

officially that Collins was dead, but before doing so they summoned the newspaper men and announced the historical communique that started the presses whirring in all parts of the United States, grinding out the extras that informed the wide world that man had been defeated in the thrilling struggle with nature and her ally, death. The communique follows:

"At one-thirty o'clock this date; the lateral heading, at a distance of twelve and one-half feet from the shaft measured circularly, broke through into the original cave after the man-hole was started just below the breakdown. After breaking through a four-foot ledge of rock, verifying prediction to the inch, the distance from Collins' head measured six feet vertically. The location of Collins is at the elevation originally indicated and within a few feet of the position determined by the first survey.

"The whole cavern was found in an extremely critical condition. Albert Marshall propped the loosely hanging dangerous boulders and let himself down into the shaft feet foremost, touching with his feet what he thought to be a blanket wrapped around Collins' body. Immediately afterward Brenner by reason of his stature and iron nerve, went down head-foremost into the hazardous shaft and with a light closely examined the place and position of the man. It was quickly seen that Collins was cold and apparently dead. For information at hand it will be several hours before a physician or any one else can reach Collins unless it develops that a way can be found of driving a drift to reach Collins' feet. It will be probably thirty-six hours before the body can be brought to the surface.—[Signed] Carmichael, Denhardt, Posey and Funkhouser."

Immediately after this announcement, there was a wild scramble by newspaper men to flash their offices, after which further conferences were held which resulted in the sending of Gerald into the tunnel to positively identify Collins.

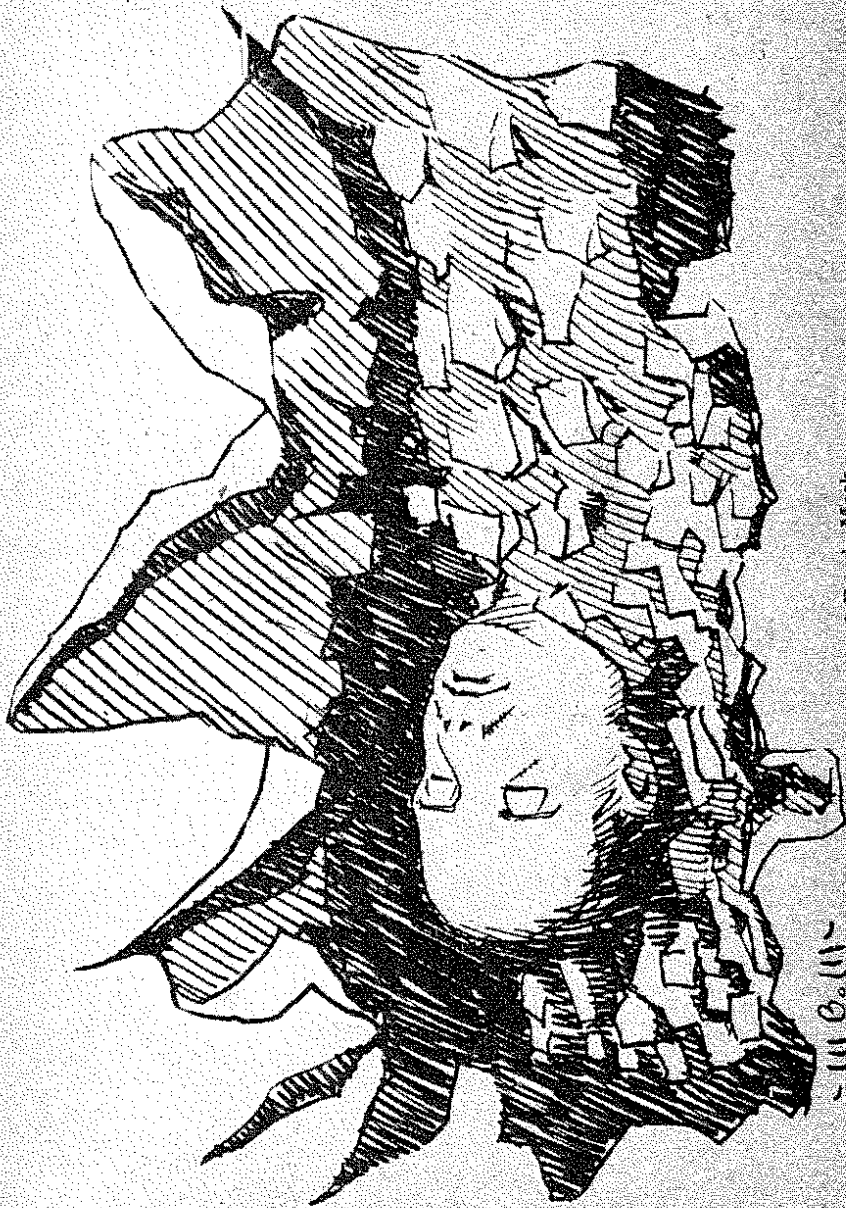
CHAPTER XV.

CAVERN MADE AN ETERNAL MAUSOLEUM.

One of the most remarkable changes in spirit and morale of any group of men was noticed among the army of rescue workers immediately following the definite announcement that Floyd Collins had paid the price of daring with his life.

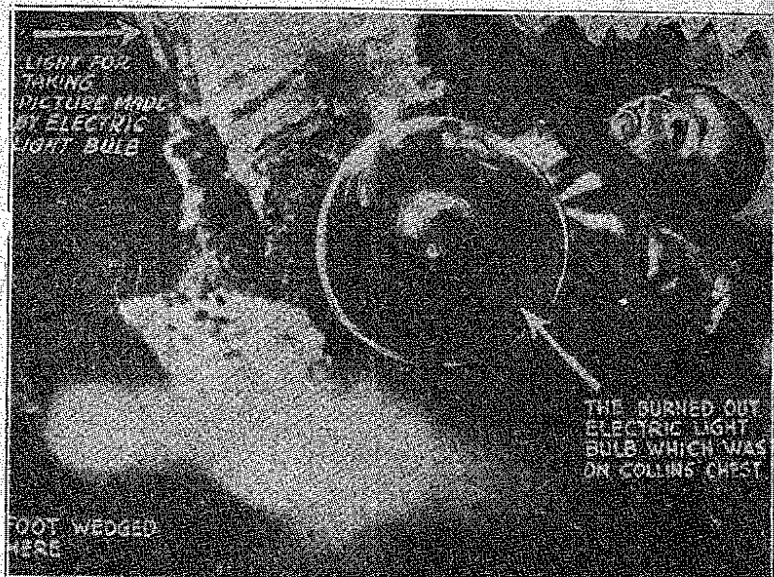
Courageous men, who had battled faithfully while there was yet hope that a life might be saved, flatly refused when asked if they would assist in the extremely hazardous task of removing the body.

"I will go through hell fire to save that boy from death," said one of the faithful band. "I have suffered torture in the shaft, I narrowly missed being buried alive working in the dangerous heading, my body is worn and my nerves frayed but I would be down there just the same if I knew that Floyd was alive but now that he is dead I simply won't do it." It was this out-spoken and logical attitude on the part of practically every man in his battalion, that caused Carmichael to suggest confining Collins' body to Sand Cavern. He realized that a great many ignorant folk who had read the hoax story would twirl their thumbs and shout, "Ha! Ha! I told you so," unless some visible proof, however grisly, be brought out of the shaft and flung where all might see, proof positive that a human being had been trapped in the cavern. "If it must be done that these fools may believe, let us cut off his head, bring it out, photograph it and broadcast the picture to silence the doubters," suggested Carmichael. Stern opposition developed from the family, as was expected, although Carmichael's suggestion was never made in full seriousness. The men would have gone through with it rather than risk the danger of the hoax rumor becoming fixed more firmly in the minds of even the most ignorant. It was finally decided however, to pierce



Collins' Death Mask.

- (11) C. (11) -



Only Photo Made of Collins in Cave-Tomb.

another "window" through the floor of the heading at a point directly over Collins' face, to wash the features of the corpse and to have the profile photographed by one of the newspaper men.

This was done. Maddox, a faithful rescue worker undertook the disagreeable task of arranging Collins for the last photograph and a plate was made although the result was not satisfactory from an artistic standpoint due to the poor light and close quarters in which the photographer worked. Magistrate Turner impaneled a coroner's jury composed of six close friends of Collins and the jurors visited the tomb, viewed the body and made positive identification. After the departure of the jurors, rock falls within the heading became more and more frequent until Carmichael definitely decided that it would be utterly impossible from a standpoint of safety to remove Collins' body from its rocky coffin. After gaining the consent of members of the family, preparations were made to permanently seal the tunnel, the shaft and the heading. This was begun early Tuesday morning and was completed by sunset Wednesday. Huge logs and rocks were huried into the shaft after the heading had been blocked with a solid wall of cement. The tunnel likewise, was blockaded with cement and heavy timbers, thus encasing Collins' body as effectively as though it were entombed in an expensive mausoleum. Lee Collins stood upon a rocky crag looking down upon a gang of workmen as they sealed his son's tomb. "It is a fitting place," the old man sobbed, "just like a church, for every cave was a church to Floyd. If he were here to tell us, he would say, 'I am content.'"

**COLLINS' BODY
IS RECOVERED
FROM CAVERN**

FATAL ROCK IS LIFTED FROM COLLINS' FOOT

Body Of Cavern Explorer
Who Lost Life In Subter-
ranean Exploration Will Be
Brought To Surface Today.

(By the Associated Press.)

CAVE CITY, KY., April 22.—The body of Floyd Collins, cave explorer who died from exposure and hunger when trapped in Sand Cave late in January, today was freed from its natural underground prison and moved from the rock that pinned it to the ground to the bottom of the seventy-foot shaft. W. H. Hunt, Central City, Ky., engineer, said early tonight.

The body was in good condition considering the time it has been exposed to the underground elements, Mr. Hunt said. He also announced that the corpse would be raised from the shaft to the surface at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Examination of the rock that fell on Collins and pinned him in the death-trap showed that it weighed only seventy-five pounds, Mr. Hunt said.

Just after two workmen had succeeded in removing the body from under the small rock, the portion of the tunnel and lateral in which the body was found collapsed and fell from sixty to one hundred feet into a

pit directly behind the position where the body had remained. Collins had told rescuers who had crawled to him in the first days of his entrapment that there was a deep pit behind him.

Two miners, E. S. Hays and J. S. Smith, of Central City, were the only ones who ventured into the death trap today. They reported that they found old chicken bones and scraps of food by the side of the corpse which disproved early rumors that no food had been taken within Collins' reach.

Several small chisels and a hammer taken to Collins thru the original narrow winding tunnel by William B. (Skeets) Miller, Courier Journal reporter, also were found by Collins' side as was a rope which the cave explorer had tied around his arm pits with which other men who crawled down to him tried pull him out.

Funeral Not Arranged.

Mr. Hunt explained that the body which was released at 8 o'clock, was left in the shaft tonight because he did not have material ready to lift it to the surface. He also said he wanted to leave it there tonight because it was damp and cool in the bottom of the shaft and the body would suffer no decomposition. A guard with a high-powered rifle stands on silent duty over the mouth of the shaft tonight with orders to permit no one to descend it.

Funeral plans have not been arranged and no member of the family was at the cave when the body was released tonight. Mr. Hunt said, however, that following removal tomorrow and dressing at an undertaking establishment the body would lie in state in the Baptist Church here for a few days. He said that his entire success in removing the body and in accomplishing what original workers had termed the impossible was "due entirely to the power of God."



The Way Out Way

LAND CAVE TELLS FLOOD COLLINS' STORY

Dead Yagrow's Remains
Seen January 26, 1934
Returned by Minors

The remains of a man, identified as Yagrow, were found in a cave near Collins, Minn., on January 26, 1934. The remains were found in a cave near Collins, Minn., on January 26, 1934. The remains were found in a cave near Collins, Minn., on January 26, 1934.

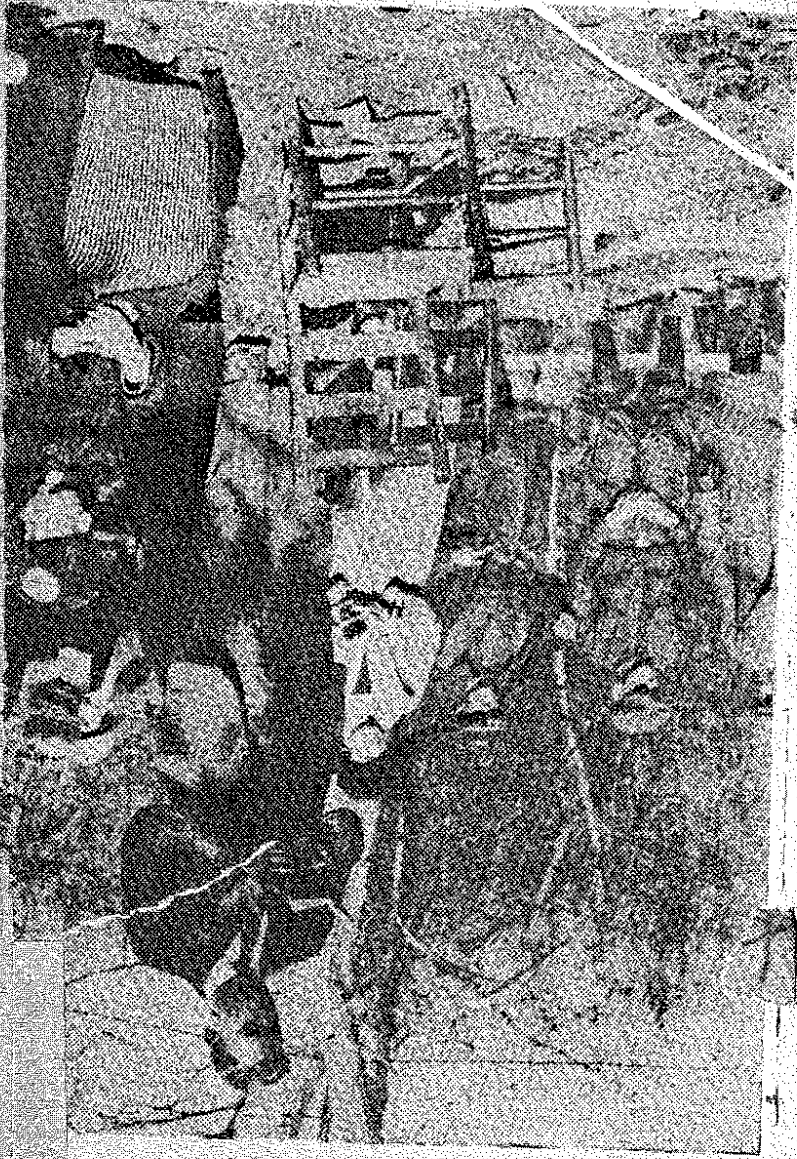
COLLINS' FUNERAL TO BE HELD SUNDAY

The funeral for the late Mr. Collins will be held on Sunday, January 28, 1934, at 10:30 a. m. in the Collins funeral home. The funeral will be held in the Collins funeral home, Collins, Minn., on Sunday, January 28, 1934, at 10:30 a. m.

Features of Case Victim Identified by Name of Parsons; Said He Is Now Known as Trapp

The name of the victim in the Collins case has been identified as Parsons, it was learned today. Parsons, it is said, is now known as Trapp. The name of the victim in the Collins case has been identified as Parsons, it was learned today. Parsons, it is said, is now known as Trapp.

"Earth to Earth"—Seen



at Collins' Funeral.



L'ENVOI.

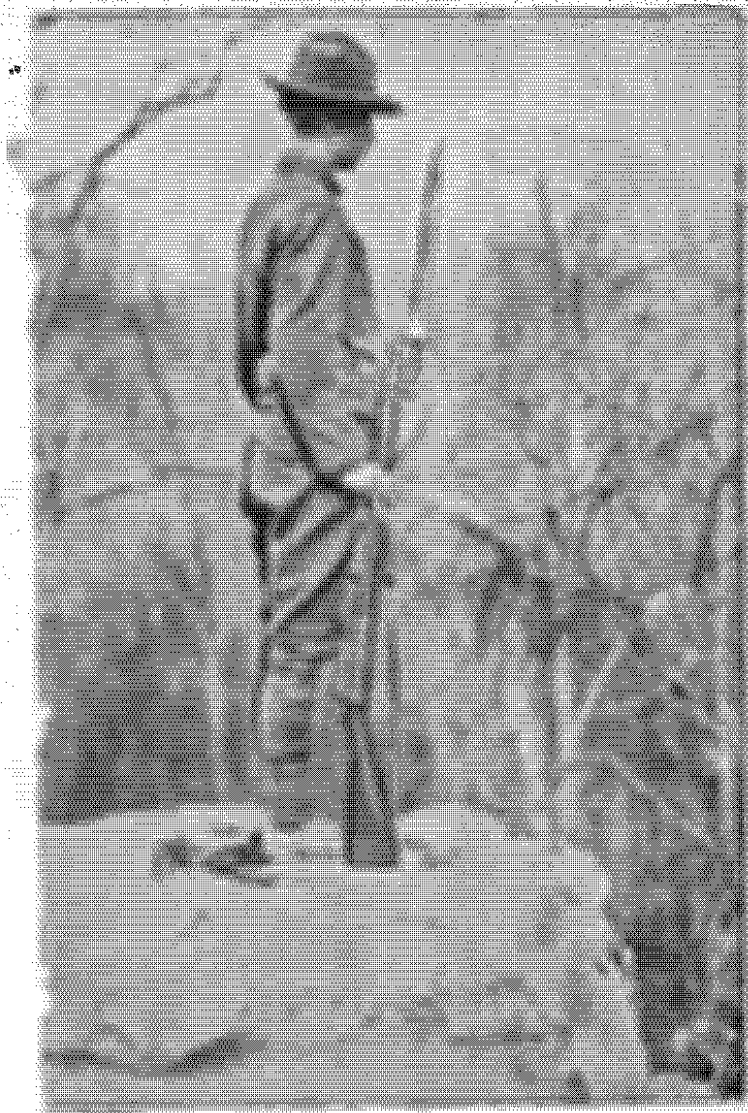
Floyd Collins has been enshrined in the lore of the caveland. The story of the gallant battle fought in "Death Valley" has been spread upon the pages of Kentucky's history. And the world will soon forget.

Yet who can say that those who toiled in muck, and died beneath perilous ledge and tottering boulder, have not received reward not measured in perishable gold. "Greater love hath no man than this: That he lay down his life for a friend." And so willed that human sacrifice was not necessary to penetrate to Collins' prison. But there was none in that brave legion who would have gladly given life if only the divine spark might be preserved in the battered body of therepid explorer.

They pass on into the vale of yesteryear. Their stalwart figures too soon are enshrouded by the shifting mists of time. Somewhere there is an angel, whose duty it is to record on eternal pages the record of good deeds—the credit balance of a weary world. And, somehow, we believe that when the final reckoning is made, God once again will marshal "The Army of the Cave."

The Author.

cut v. 1. time too. understand are honest & pure to you.



Sentry Guarding Collins' Eternal Tomb.

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MEMPHIS

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viding a single, dependable place where all of your
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time too, when I would like to make sure
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... WE HARVEST ... ONLY WHAT WE SOW

The old man says we planted seeds of
harvest and we harvested it...
The man said that we had sown...
enough for harvest and we have
enough for harvest of seed and soil.
As always, our generation of...
of...