

Newspapers and Magazines 1900s

SICK 71-YEAR-OLD SURVIVES GLACIER CRAWL, 10 MILE
TREK

BY FRED CURTIN

A 71-year-old prospector who crossed a glacier and 10 miles of wilderness in a daze after blacking out in his remote cabin has survived a 12-day fight for life.

Bernard Rover is in fairly good condition in Vancouver General Hospital following a rescue which was almost as unbelievable as his desperate trek for help near Pitt Lake, 40 miles northeast of Vancouver.

Rover was found last Saturday by Mike Chizh of Surrey and Bob Milburn of Vancouver, two railroad men who had set out for a week's vacation to prospect in one of B.C.'s most rugged areas.

"All the odds were against him ever getting out," Chizh said, "I feel fate or Providence had a big hand in the rescue."

Chizh said he and his partner decided to spend a week prospecting seven or eight miles up Vickers Creek which flows in the northeast end of Pitt Lake.

"When we landed in a clearing near the creek last Saturday we saw a small fire burning and asked our helicopter pilot to fly over it to see if anywhere was there."

"He said it looked like a lightning strike and we went down to put it out after he flew off.

"It was an abandoned camp fire. Then we saw another one about a quarter-mile further down the creek and went down to put that one out.

"There we found the old man lying under a tarp with his legs blown up like balloons.

"He was pretty much out of his mind but after we got some food and tea into him he told us he had been prospecting at Thomas Lake for the past month.

"He said he suffered a stroke five days ago in his camp and set out for help. He couldn't remember anything else.

"He had put on boots with spikes to get over the glacier and we had to cut them off him because of the condition of his legs.

"He had planned to come down Gurney Creek off the glacier and get help at the logging camp but missed his way and came down Vickers Creek.

"He was down to a few hardtack biscuits and a can of sandwich spread. He said he wouldn't have lasted another day without help.

**Sick 71-year-old survives
glacier crawl, 10 mile trek**

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“We packed more grub and sleeping bags into his camp and spent Sunday resting so he could regain some of his strength. He didn’t even have a sleeping bag for his trek over the glacier.

“We spent Monday and Tuesday packing him up the rock slide to our camp where a helicopter could land.

“Our plane wasn’t due until Sunday and it was becoming apparent that he wouldn’t last that long.

“It had been raining for several days and everything was soaking wet. He was now swollen right up to the hips and said water was coming out of his legs.

“He seemed to be going back into shock and I thought he was going to die.

It was raining even harder Wednesday and Bob and I decided we had to go for help.

“We left him in a dry bag with some food and a fire and set out at 7 a.m. for the B.C. Forest Products camp at the head of the lake. It was tough going. The country is strewn with 40-foot boulders and clogged with jungle growth.

“It took us all day to get to the camp and we were not able to do anything that night.

“But the Canadian Forces sent their helicopter over from Comox Thursday morning and we were able to take them to the camp.

“The old man was soaked when we got there and couldn’t get out of the bag. But they told us at the hospital that he is going to make it.

“We didn’t get any prospecting in for ourselves but finding him was much better than finding gold.

“He told us that he has lived his life in the mountains and has prospected all the way from Afrika to the Yukon.

“His camp was at least 10 miles from where we found him and it is anybody’s guess how far he had walked.

“He told us he didn’t want to die.”

Bernard Rover, age 75, died in Haney on August 18, 1973.