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TRAGEDY OF TRAPPER IS TOLD IN DIARY

Charles Spencer Perishes in Lonely Cabin Far From Haunts of Men.

Records in the form of a diary now in the hands of Government Agent Hoskins tell a story of the terrible suffering and lonely, tragic death of Charles Spencer, in an isolated cabin between Groundhog Pass and Telegraph Creek, says the Interior News. Spencer was a familiar figure around Hazelton, owning a pre-emption in the upper Kispiox, and more recently being employed at the Hazelton View mine.

Last fall Spencer and Fred Smith, of Hazelton, went in with a winter's supplies to trap. The winter previous Smith had trapped successfully in the district, had blazed the trap line, built a main cabin on Little Klappan and a number of shelters along his line, and then took Spencer as a partner for last winter. In the late summer they packed in their supplies, Smith making Spencer familiar with the territory and then leaving to put the horses in winter quarters near Hazelton. Spencer liked the new location and when Smith started on the 250-mile trip the former said he could handle the line alone, and advised his partner to take any good job going. Smith therefore took a position on the Yukon Telegraph line, confident that Spencer would have a good season and figuring that his wages would go to augment their earnings. Later Smith went to Vancouver and enlisted.

Fears Well Founded

As weeks passed after Spencer should have come out, Smith got anxious and reported the matter to the militia and asked leave to investigate, but was refused. Smith then enlisted with the Siberian expedition.

That Smith's fears for the safety of his partner were well founded has just come to light.

Early last summer Taylor and Roberts went into the headwaters of the Stikine to survey coal claims, taking John Utterstrom as guide and hunter. The latter had made several trips into that country, on one occasion camping over night with Smith, and when an Indian told of seeing a man and six horses coming in Utterstrom decided it must be Smith and planned to look him up. Consequently, when the surveyors were on their way out via Telegraph Creek, Utterstrom hiked on ahead down the valley of the Kluyez and over a divide to the head of the Skeena, where there was a cabin in which he thought Smith might be camped. Reaching the cabin on the second day he found the door open and noticed at once that the floor was torn up. Entering, he found a body, badly decomposed, lying on the floor and covered with a blanket. Utterstrom had left on a previous trip. He did not know of Spencer and thought for a time the body was Smith's. Being alone he did not investigate further and after sleeping all night in a spruce thicket he left next morning, joining the survey party at the junction of the Kluyez and Spatzeezi rivers.



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ther and after sleeping all night in a spruce thicket he left next morning, joining the survey party at the junction of the Kluyez and Spatzeezi rivers.

Returned to Cabin.

One night's rest and, with a companion, he returned to the cabin, where they gathered up papers which identified the corpse and buried the body.

Spencer had kept a diary and on one page stated that he had only three matches left. In one of his pockets was found two matches, and from this it is taken he died shortly after. According to the diary Spencer was taken down about the middle of March with muscular rheumatism. Early in May he improved and made an effort to come out. From Klappan to the cabin where he died the distance is thirty-five miles and it occupied five days. The diary further notes:

"I had to leave my sleigh about two miles from this cabin, just about the divide between the Skeena and Spatzeezi rivers. My furs lashed on the sleigh consist of six silver fox, 22 cross fox, 14 marten, 4 linx, 2 wolves, 6 ermine and 1 mink. Whoever finds this please take it out to Hazelton and give it to C. V. Smith, who will see that my bills are paid.

In Cabin a Month.

"I have now been here close on one month, and have not been able to leave the cabin. When I am lying down and warm, I seem to feel no pain, but oh, God, when I get up and try to cook something for myself the pain is unbearable. I have been able to cook but one hotcake a day for myself. If I only had someone to cook for me I might be alright. At times it seems the struggle to live is too hard. Now, whoever finds this, try to find my furs. You can't miss them if you look close. Good luck.

"C. A. SPENCER."

Utterstrom found the furs, most of which were spoiled, but the good ones he packed to Telegraph Creek, turning them over to Government Agent Dodd.

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