

TOM HAAKE IS TOSSED OUT OF SPEED BOAT, AND BODY IS MISSING

Accident Occurs Late Sunday On Father's Boat In Boulder Water

FATE SETS STAGE

Swimmers Near Vicinity Of Tragedy Unable to Give Any Aid

Fate apparently set the stage yesterday afternoon to whisk 18 year old Tom Haake, popular Las Vegas high school junior, into eternity and then contrived to balk all possible aid that might have saved the youth from drowning in the waters of Boulder lake, a half mile from the boat dock in Hemingway Wash.

Catapulted from his seat atop the engine hatch of his father's recently purchased speed-boat, young Haake, unable to swim and inherently afraid of the water, sank out of sight before the boat could be swung around to bring him aid.

Three Utah youths, swimming from a row-boat about 30 yards away, were the only ones close enough to save the struggling youth, but their attention was distracted thru the loss of an oar at just the moment they should have been on their way to the rescue.

THE BODY had not been recovered up to three o'clock this afternoon, although park service and Boulder Dam-Grand Canyon Tours employes spent last night and today dragging the lake bottom with grappling hooks, but to no avail. A deep-sea diver was en route to Boulder City this afternoon, trucking his equipment here, to make a more thorough search of the area where the youth disappeared yesterday afternoon.

Young Haake was one of a party of five aboard his father's Criss-Craft speed boat which left the boat dock about 2:45 p. m., headed on a trip up the lake.

THE FATHER, Jack Haake, was at the wheel, with Dr. C. W. Woodbury seated beside him. Mrs. Haake and Jerry Woodbury, school mate and pal of the dead youth, were occupying the second seat while young Haake was sitting on the engine hatch drinking a bottle of pop, feet dangling over the seat between his mother and Woodbury.

Making top speed, the boat had reached a point about a half mile from the shore when, according to Dr. Woodbury, there was a grinding noise and it shot suddenly to the left, twisting in the air to such an extent that all aboard thought it was going over.

"It flashed thru my mind that in another second or so we'd all be in the water with the boat on top of it," Dr. Woodbury said.

"Then it righted itself and while I was getting myself straightened around in the seat, Mrs. Haake screamed, 'Tom's overboard.'

"I LOOKED back and saw him struggling in the water, nearly 100 yards away. Jerry said: 'I'm
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Tom Haake Is

going after him' and prepared to jump. I felt we could get back faster with the boat than he could swim so I told him to take off his clothes and be ready.

"Haake was trying to bring the boat around, but said he couldn't turn it. By that time we were perhaps 250 yards away. I grabbed the wheel, slowed the boat down and got it turned around. Something was wrong, I don't know what. But every time we went fast, it started going crazily—you couldn't steer it at all.

"We chugged over toward Tom—I still thought we had time to make it, I called to him to keep paddling, but when we were about 30 yards away, he disap-

peared and didn't come back up. I imagine we were there within three or four minutes from the time he first went down."

DR. WOODBURY said that when they first realized Tom had gone overboard, they noticed some boys in a row-boat not more than 30 yards from the drowning youth and attempted to attract their attention, pointing to the spot where Tom was struggling in the water.

"They heard us all right, but we couldn't make them understand," Dr. Woodbury said.

Later it was discovered that the attention of the boys was distracted by the loss of an oar from their rowboat and by the time it had been recovered, they were too late to help out.

Immediately upon righting the boat and getting started back toward the spot, Woodbury sounded the horn continuously while all on board shouted for help. Their calls attracted the attention of Harold Carpenter, Boulder Dam-Grand Canyon Tours employee at the boat dock and he immediately launched a speed-boat and started to the rescue.

When he realized Haake had sunk for the last time, Woodbury headed the boat for shore to get help. Carpenter passed the in-board boat about half way out.

"**I FOUND YOUNG** Haake's cap and the empty pop bottle floating around on top of the water about 100 feet apart. About that time the three swimmers in the row boat reached the scene and started diving in an effort to locate the body," Carpenter said.

"I kept going around and around for about two hours watching for bubbles or some other indication, but to no avail."

Carpenter said he was at the spot not more than five minutes from the time he heard the first call for help.

Paul Wilson of the Park Service, corroborated Carpenter's story.

"I was first attracted by the frantic blowing of the boat's horn and started for a rescue boat when I ran into Carpenter. He got away immediately," Wilson said, stating that later a tourist, who had been sitting on one of the beach benches scanning the lake with field-glasses, reported seeing the Haake boat veer suddenly to the left and the youth plunge into the water and sink after struggling a few moments.

"He told me he marked the spot by lining up two buoys with an

island, and then came over to report. By that time the rescue boats were on their way out," Wilson stated.

A SECOND boat was dispatched after Carpenter left the dock. This boat contained four swimmers who joined the work of trying to locate the body and remained on the job for several hours.

The Las Vegas fire department was requested to rush its pulmotor to the boat dock when the accident was first reported, in the hope that it might be used to restore life should the body be brought to the surface within a reasonable period of time.

THE STATEMENT of the three swimmers who witnessed the tragedy but didn't realize it until later, is as follows:

"At approximately two-thirty, Keith Kennedy, Don Burns, and myself, Delmer Wilson, hired a row boat at the boat dock on Lake Mead. We rowed out into the lake about one mile, and were just swimming around the boat when our attention was attracted by some people in a motor boat. They were yelling something and waving their arms for us to come over there. The only thing we could distinguish was 'help, help.'"

"We didn't have the slightest idea what was wrong, so we just looked for a second or two to try to understand what all the commotion was about. Immediately after they had yelled at us for help, they started in for the boat dock, and we decided that some one was just trying to get us to do some unnecessary rowing.

"**THE PEOPLE** were within approximately thirty yards of us at the time of the accident. We could have easily swam over to them and saved the man, had we known what the matter was. As it was, we just milled around the immediate vicinity waiting to see what would develop. We knew by this time that something was radically wrong, because when the motor boat started for the dock, they started to blow the horns of their boat and scream.

"When the people first attracted our attention, I started to swim over to them, as I was already in the water. I swam approximately ten yards toward them, when they started for the shore. In the meantime my two friends in the boat had lost an oar so I turned around, and swam after the oar.

"When the oar was recovered, we all rowed the boat over to the approximate spot where the accident occurred. None of us saw the man fall overboard, nor did we see him thrashing around in the water. The only thing we saw, was the people in the boat waving and yelling for us to come over there.

"About the time we started to row to the spot where the accident occurred, a speed boat put out from shore, and headed in our direction. I think that they had some difficulty, but it was only a matter of minutes, until there were two or three boats from the dock out there to search for the man.

STAYED in the immedi-