

# NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

## THE DANGLING MUSTACHIOS

1/6/35

"Hey, dammit, I can't go up that rope! I'm too heavy. Can't get my fingers between the rope an' the cliff there at that overhang. I'll have to turn eagle to get out of here, I s'pose..."

"Heavy" stood on a ledge at a dizzy height above the bottom of Black canyon, looking up the precipice at his fellows. Sheer cliff to right of him, sheer cliff to left of him, and above him a bad overhang over which he must follow the rope trail of the other members of the gang to get up to his lunch.

"You little runts didn't strain the rope so hard as you went up," he shouted up to his buddies. "I weigh 200 pounds, and I know dam well the rope'll be so tight I can't get my fingers under it if I try it! Better get a set of blocks to pull me out with."

He looked down, canyon-bottomward, at the jagged edges of rock far below...

Later half a dozen men strained at a rope, and puffed and pulled, and up came "Heavy" over the overhang, getting on to the footing with his pals, above the railroad tunnel near the upper workings on the Nevada side of the gorge.

"Humph!" he snorted, coming to a halt, "that's that! But dammit, Dick, YOU should've known better'n to help me get out of there alive. Just puts me out where Little Jim's wife can get at me!" And soon he was plunging into his cardboard box for a cheese sandwich.

To the doom boom BOOOOOM of the noontime blasts the boys devoured their lunches, roosting on rocks in a sheltered spot. And the new man of the crew ventured over to "Heavy" to ask:

"What did you mean about Little Jim's wife getting you?"

"I mean plenty! Wait 'til she finds out I was the guy held his head! Why, there ain't a man on Carl Belcher's crew here could take what I'm due for soon as she finds out."



"For God's sake, Heavy, get me out of this!"

"Leggo my pants, you so-and-so, or I'll sock you on the head with this bar!"

A M E I

"Held his head?" New Man frowned—puzzled.

"Well, I'll tell you—IF you'll promise not to tell Little Jim's wife."

And Heavy more or less deftly directed the conflicting traffic of the bites going in and the sentences simultaneously coming out his upper portal:

"You see, there's a lot of us in this gang of high scalers been together since couple of months before we started work on the Arizona valve house. Must be 18 or 20 of the original 'Mustachios' in the gang yet. There's Frenchy, and Chappo, and O'Brien, and Tex Dollar, and Little Jim, and Timber, and Bob, and Peewee, and Fat; and there's Heavy and Dick Morris and Slim, and Tiny . . ."

"Why call us the 'Mustachios'? Hm, that's just what I'm getting at. We had an election bet with another gang. Our bunch agreed if Roosevelt won every member of the gang'd grow a moustache for a month after election.

"Well Roosevelt won, and we all lugged growing moustaches around over the cliff—all but one young fellow, and his name was Little Jim. And that's where the trouble comes. Little Jim hadda be punished.

"So one day after we finished lunch, in the Arizona garage, we surprised Little Jim. Well, Heavy held an arm and Dick an arm, while I held his head. Tiny suddenly pulls a pair of short scissors out of the bottom of his lunch box and snip . . . snip . . . curly, brown locks start dropping to the ground. Before we finished he was almost as good as bald, and lots uglier, and a lot of the guys had a lock apiece for souvenirs of the occasion.

"Well, Little Jim's wife sure liked those locks on his head. And she was so mad about the north exposure we gave her Little Jim she'll just massacre about two of us soon's she finds out who it was had charge of the most intimate details. I'll do better if I fall to the bottom of the canyon!"

(Note: Intimate "nuggets" of true (somewhat) Hoover dam incidents will be a more regular feature of the Boulder City Journal henceforth.)