THREE FISHERMEN RESCUED FROM ICY WATER BY LIGHTHOUSE ATTENDANTS; ABANDONED AS DEAD BY SEARCHERS

4 In Boat Off Bridgeport Tossed Into Sea—Best Swimmer Struggles 2 Miles to Shore for Aid—Back With Help, Finds Pals Gone.

Night of Despair Ended When Missing Trio Lands, However, With Thrilling Story of Rescue in Angry Sound—Mourning Becomes Rejoicing.

Bridgeport, Oct. 20 (AP)—Given up as lost when their overturned dory was found deserted in Long Island sound yesterday, three fishermen were landed safely today at Fairfield Beach after spending the night at the Penfield Reef lighthouse.

The men, George Schmidt, 30, of Central Park avenue, Yonkers; his cousin, Harry Eifler, 19, of 761 East 219th street, New York, and Walter Reilly, 30, of New York, were rescued at noon yesterday and taken to the lighthouse, after clinging to the capsized boat for over two hours in the choppy cold waters of the sound. Because of the lack of means of communication, news of the rescue did not reach the mainland until the three fishermen were landed at the beach early today.

Attendants See Men

Aid was being rushed to the fishermen from the mainland when their plight was seen from the lighthouse about 300 feet from the overturned dory, by W. A. Shackley, the keeper, and his assistant, E. T. Pastorini. The latter put out in a rowboat and after dragging the three exhausted men into his boat, returned to the lighthouse.

A fourth member of the fishing party, Harry Schmidt, 28, a brother of George, swam to shore after the boat had capsized about two miles off Penfield reef, to get aid for his companions. A police boat put out for the trio, but was delayed when it struck a rock. Meanwhile the rescue was effected by the lighthouse keeper. When the police boat finally arrived and only the capsized dory was found, it was feared the trio had become exhausted in the cold water and drowned.

The rescued men today said at no time had they given up hope they would be rescued. During their more than two hours in the water, their only concern, they said, was for Harry Schmidt, whom they feared had drowned during his swim ashore for help.

Schmidt "Wisecracks"

George Schmidt kept up the courage of his two companions during the long wait for help with a constant stream of jokes and facetious remarks concerning their plight. At

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FISHERMEN SAVED BY LIGHT KEEPERS; GIVEN UP AS LOST

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one time he turned to Reilly and said:

"Well, something ought to happen. You went to church this morning."

From the time of the accident until the rescue the men said they had seen no boats. The cold gradually weakened them but their strength quickly returned in the warmth of the fire at the lighthouse where they were also given dry clothes.

The return of the rescued men ended a night of grief and anxiety for the wives of George Schmidt and Reilly and for Mrs. Harold Eifler, mother of the rescued youth. The three women came here from their cottage at Pine Creek, where they had spent the week-end and for hours waited for news concerning the fate of the three men. Discovery that Harry Schmidt had safely reached shore in his swim for aid also ended hours of worry for the rescued men.

Left Cottage Yesterday

The four men set out from their cottage yesterday, to fish off Penfield reef. Apparently bearing too great a load for the choppy waters, the boat began to settle and soon started to ship water faster than the men could bail it out. In the confusion that followed the overturn of the craft, Harry failed to see the lighthouse 300 feet away and swam to shore instead.

Eifler and his mother left for their New York home this morning. The others were expected to follow later in the day.

At the beach cottage from where the men set out on their trip the mother of the Schmidt boys; Doliv Schmidt, a sister, and the wife of Walter Reilly and Eifler's aged father waited. All arrangements had been made on Sunday morning for the afternoon repast after the men had returned from the trip. As the hours drew on and no sign of the fishermen, the family began to grow uneasy. Then came the news of the upturned boat, and the report that its occupants had been drowned.

Mother's Faith Unshaken

With the dramatic arrival of Harry Schmidt after his long swim it seemed as if the other three must have perished. All through the night the mother waited and prayed and even went on with her preparations of the meal that she felt would still be required when the boys returned.

"I never gave up hope and I knew that God would send my boys back," Mrs. Schmidt said this morning. "I felt all along that something would happen to save them. I think I should have known if they had been drowned. While there is no news, one must always assume that it means good news. So when they all walked in here this morning, I was not surprised, for I could not but believe that my prayers would be answered."

In describing his long swim in the icy water, Schmidt said that his one uppermost thought was to "get there."

"This kept drumming in my brain and helped me to swim an easy stroke until I reached the shore. It seemed a hundred miles. I hardly felt the cold, however, in my desire to get to shore and bring aid to my friends. I was the best swimmer, so it was up to me. I felt that something would save them. I told them to buck up and hang on and it would be all right."

Eifler Nearly Exhausted

Harry Eifler was the most exhausted of the three men when rescued and had to be carried from the boat to the lighthouse. The other two were able to walk.

"The two and a half hours we were clinging to the boat seemed like a lifetime," said George Schmidt. "We tried to signal to passing craft, butwithout avail. It was a dreadful feeling, clinging to a sinking boat with the shore only a little way off but being unable to make anyone see us. None of us felt, however, that we would die. We prayed too. Then we saw the lighthouse keeper wave and launch the boat. It was a wonderful piece of work they way they handled their boat in that rough sea. Had it not been for them I do not think we would be alive today."