

# CAMP AT AQUEDUCT GATE IS CENTER OF FAMILY LIFE

Some Women Cook for Watchers While Others Care for Tots: Girls Form Orchestra  
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by Otis M. Wiles (Times staff correspondent)

ALABAMA CONTROL GATE, LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT, Nov. 19. - Through the Alabama control gate, the strategic position on the Los Angeles Aqueduct, between, Independence and Lone Pine, a stream of flowing water is rushing down into the waste land of the Owens River bed today. Above the gate the turbulent mountain stream is dashing southward. But at this point it veers to the east and the huge concrete ditch is drained. Not a drop is following on its intended course.

At the foot of the Alabama hills, said by geologists to be the oldest mountain formation on the continent - even older than the Sierras - are grouped 100 or more automobiles, dust-laden and bearing scars of long arduous journeys over mountains and deserts. Others are continually joining in groups, coming from the Inyo hills to the eastward, from Independence, Big Pine and Bishop from the northward, from Lone Pine and the desert stretches to the southward.

Who are these people who have hurled the boldest of defiance at the officials of Los Angeles who guard the destinies of the city's water supplies and its source?



Grouped around at the dozen camp fires are several women, sturdy women with bronzed faces and hands calloused by household toil. They are the women of Bishop, wives of ranchers, Bishop's leading business and professional men who have taken upon themselves the big job of feeding the scores of Owens Valley men who have opened the flood gate. Among them is Mrs. Eva Glasscock, the kindly woman in khaki breeches and mountain boots, who is chief of the commissary.

Mrs. Glasscock is the wife of Harry A. Glasscock, publisher of the Owens Valley Herald and the Inyo Independent. Each morning at 7 o'clock she drives to the control gate from Bishop, fifty-seven miles to the northward, and drives back again at 9 p.m. Today, in addition to superintending the feeding of the men, Mrs. Glasscock also admitted running an issue of her husband's paper off the press." And all of us have kiddies to take care of and feed and send to school," she said.

The barbecue has just ended. It has lasted all the afternoon. Mrs. Glasscock and her women helpers had charge of it. Bishop declared a holiday. Practically all of the town places of business were closed. The business men were at the head gate, and signs on their locked doors said so. They downed the food and they have been doing so since the gate was first "captured," and they intend to do so until an amicable settlement is reached.

The Bishop butchers supplied the meat, the Bishop bakers donated the bread and the Bishop grocers donated the other food, and fifty Bishop women each made a pie.

The barbecue ended, 350 residents of Owens Valley congregated in groups about the scene. Here was Sheriff "Charlie" Collins gnawing at a big chunk of barbecued meat. And these were the people who elected him.

Over there "Cop" John Fiehman is sitting on a rock and talking to the boys. "Cop" Fiehman was one of the earliest settlers in Owens Valley. He came here back in '68 with a twenty-mule team that consumed eighteen days on the trip. He admits having trouble with naked Indians and tells a vivid tale of the quake of '72 in Owens Valley, when twenty-six persons were killed and when the Owens River was shaken a mile off its original course. "Cop" Fiehman says his neighbors here at the head gate are right and he says he will stick with them to the finish – whatever the finish may be.

"The river use to be ours," he said, "the Aqueduct too it away, and now the ranchers are all dry."

Over here, by one of the improvised tents used as sleeping quarters for the men, stands "Doc" Boody, one of Bishop's physicians. He is looking after the physical condition of the men who remain night and day on the scene. Through the desert heat of the day and the chilly night.

"I came here eight years ago to live, after everybody said I was going to die," he said, "and this is the only place on earth I can live in and I'm going to remain living here until I die a natural death. They can't drive me out."

And weaving in and about among the groups of bronzed men, smiling women and laughing children is Rev. E. E. Schoffler, "the fighting parson" of Owens Valley. The "fighting parson" is pastor of the Bishop Baptist Church. Where his entire congregation is found, there he will be found also, he declares. He is carrying on, in visioning the day when peace, harmony and prosperity will once more visit Owens Valley, although it be a distant day.

The "fighting parson" has brought down an armload of song books. He has passed them among the 350 ranchers that cling to the Alabama hillside.

An orchestra with several khaki-clad girls dragging drums and musical instruments with them, climbing up the slope a chord or two is sounded and 350 lusty throats join in the singing of “Onward, Christian Soldiers,” the song sweeping across the barren Owens Valley and re-echoing against the Inyo hills of the east.

Mid-day passes, the sun dips behind the suncrest of the high Sierras. Long shadows creep across the valley as chilly winds, kissed by the snows, slip down from the mountain heights. Dusk settled and the determined ranchers remained at their posts. Bonfires began to grow on the hill sites, and a welcome aroma of hot coffee drifts across mesquite stretches and the overall ranchers remain on into the night.

Darkness descends and the women folks, wearied by their day’s toil feeding their men – the guardian of their homes – join their husbands about the fires. Some are nestling their babies, others are “feeding” a phonograph with operatic selections.

And the men of the Alabama toll gate remain on. Talking quietly in groups and never asking – how long?