

Nome Serum Drama Reenacted

By JEFF RICHARDSON

NENANA — 1925. Imagine a starry night, a cold minus 40 degrees. The moisture freezes in your nostrils, the cold pinches the lobes of your ears.

Bill Shannon waits with his dog team for a train from Anchorage that bears a precious freight — 300,000 units of diphtheria serum for the stricken city of Nome.

Shortly before 11 p.m. the train pulls in. Within minutes Shannon has hit the 674-mile trail in a race against time that would see 20 mushers carry the serum in relays to Nome in 127 1/2 hours.

The relays varied in length from 18 to 91 miles. As a result of that effort, less than a half dozen people succumbed to diphtheria and the epidemic was prevented from spreading to villages outside of Nome.

In commemoration of the race, and the surviving mushers, the Nome Kennel Club is sponsoring a

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Nome Drama . .

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re-enactment exactly 50 years later, to the hour.

Joe Redington Sr. began the race at 11 p.m. Monday after a banquet presided over by Jack Coghill, mayor of Nenana. The race started in spite of the fact that not all of the relay legs had mushers to run them.

In lieu of serum, the teams will be relaying 1,000 back-stamped envelopes carried by train from Anchorage to Nenana.

One of the original mushers, Edgar Nollner Sr. is running one of the relays this year, from Whiskey creek to Galena. Other survivors include Edgar Kalland of Kaltag and Harry Pitka, Billy McCarty, and Charlie Evans, all of Galena.