February 9, 2009/John E. Stoessel/PO Box 215/Meadowlands, MN 55765

TO: Edward T. Stoessel, Houston, Texas

Many happy returns, or as we say in Polish, Sto Lat, which means 100 years, or 100 summers. Monsignor Suchan explained Lato means summer, but the expression is idiomatic:

Sto Lat, Sto Lat, Niech Zhiehe Zhiehe Vam (repeat)

Yesche Raz, Yesche Raz, Niech Zhiehe Vam — niech zhiehe vam!

Anyone who's Polish will laugh at my spelling — I'm giving you the phonetic spelling since you don't read the language.

The more I delve into John Henry Stoessel's memoirs, the more I get fascinated by how much our mild-mannered grandfather learned, and we have to wonder how he survived a climate that makes Minnesota look tame.

What you have is my rendition of Grandfather's memoirs, as dictated to his wife around 1945. He was eighty (and said so in his writings) which makes me guess he wanted some form of legacy to be saved for the rest of us. We owe him an immense debt of thanks for that. His adventures in the Gold rush are a gem, though some of the others would make a good story as well. My only regret is that it took me so long to finally get it down in a good book form. Dad did a good job with his typewriter, but dad was not a professional editor. There were lots of trade secrets I learned from other independent publishers over the last twenty years, like using the drop caps as you see in the beginning of a chapter, to starting any new chapter on an odd page only. Not all books do that, but you will see that many of them do because it looks good.

Sixteen point type with Times New Roman fonts are another favorite of mine. Older people don't appreciate tiny type for the sake of saving paper. Paper is cheap. Eye strain is not, and if no one likes the type, it doesn't matter how good the book is, because no one will bother to read it.

Since Grandfather Stoessel dictated his memories, we have a basic manuscript in modified shorthand, which I'm sure was done so it could be written down faster. Once I considered that the abbreviations weren't so sacred, it didn't seem improper to restore them to proper English, with several "ands" or ampersands being modified into shorter sentences. The original plot of the story is not altered at all, however. It was obvious that John Henry Stoessel had studied his lessons well in Quincy College, though if you check it out today, it's no longer that kind of institution.

Another note, about St. Anne de Beaupre in Quebec: it appears to be the Lourdes of North America. Whenever anyone talks about healing places and especially when they're associated with the Catholic Church, I take a cautious view. We know dad and grandpa were devout, but piety can get in the way of objectivity, so I went on the Internet to check it out. Wow! If you haven't done do, look at the cathedral that's by the shrine. It looks like Notre Dame, and it's not in any large city. What was written in his memoirs does seem to be accurate, though there's no mention of St. Anne's relics, just the pile of crutches at a pillar and the fourteen life like stations. From what I saw in the pictures, the shrine and its followers haven't changed that much. The only thing I wonder about is what he meant about witnessing "several" miracles. He could have meant checking them out, like you or I would do if we were there. You know better than I how fussy the Vatican is about verifying a genuine divine intervention.

His letter to his mother is precious, especially when he gets to Pierre Stoessel's half brother who imposed on the kids and got embarrassed by a polecat and beehive. Why did he speak German? I would have thought French would be apropos, unless his brother came from neighboring Bavaria or Swabia, which are two German Catholic provinces.

With all due respect to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, it's not that easy to check shipping records and determine what time a boat sailed from one harbor to another. The Internet has given me several leads, but the *Charles Nelson* had to be another ship, because the one I found was shorted in tonnage, built a year after John Henry got to Alaska, and the *Roanoke* is a popular name for ships going back to pre revolutionary times. Somewhere in Alaska's archives (and perhaps Seattle's) we might find harbor records, but it isn't as simple as Sherlock Holmes claims.

This letter has gone on long enough. Enjoy the new and larger type. If you have any original photos, let me know. I've been talking to Mike and Barb Kelly, and they have most of aunt betty's papers.

The Life and Memoirs of John Henry Stoessel, born, July 27, 1865, died, May 17, 1950

Editor's Notes and my Dedication to Dad

This is a "third generation" printing. That means I can edit the text to fit more modern tastes, but I'd rather keep it to a minimum for the sake of character preservation. We have two distinct audiences, our family, who wants to remember John Henry Stoessel as the person he was, and the general public, whose interest is in the memoirs of a man's Alaska adventures. Obvious errors (there weren't many) were corrected for the family edition; I've updated the rhetoric style for the general public. With word processors both are much easier now than a generation ago.

His adventures are valuable because few stories from Alaska's gold rush are well written. Prospectors didn't take time to write diaries and only a few came back well off. A recent article in a national magazine points out that only 161,000 tons of gold has been mined since the dawn of time, and half of that was extracted within the last hundred years. That calculates to about 80,000 tons mined since 1900—about enough to fill one football field [Quote National Geographic—January, 2009].

The real nuggets are his dictations to my grandmother in 1945. John Henry Stoessel was the family historian who gave us access to three more generations before his own. He was christened Jean Henri by his parents Pierre Stoessel and Martha Anne (La Salle) Stoessel. Pierre and Martha Anne emigrated from France and were married in Iowa during the Civil War. Jean Henri (John Henry) was able to document his direct male line back to 1775, a year before the United States was born. This is the first part of Grandfather's notes. There are others which are more family oriented.

I've enjoyed finding out where part of my family came from, but I've also enjoyed seeing what life was like through his eyes. My own father (Edward Otto Stoessel) finished recopying the original notes a few years before Alzheimer's took him from us (1992 to 1996). God rest his soul!

John Edward Stoessel, Meadowlands, MN: February, 2009.

John Henry Stoessel, ca 1945

Chapter I: The Beginning

On the request of his family and with the collaboration of his daughter Arabella, this writer, Jonathon Beniah Hoogewooning, in his eightieth year, is undertaking to take a few of the highlights of a rather interesting, though perhaps erratic career—delving back through memory's store some seventy-five odd years when the writer was still young and his dog Mark Antony was still a pup.

Both myself and my "purp" were born on the same day, month, and year—July 27, 1865 at six o'clock in the morning—just in time for breakfast. We shared our various joys, disappointments and sorrows for seven long years—when the dog suddenly left me for his own happy hunting grounds.

Of course I could not in truth say—like the other Mark Antony on the death of Caesar, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen lend me your ears, etc." but I did say he was my friend, near and dear to me."

He seemed to have possessed all the wisdom of Solomon and the attributes of a Prince Charming, read about in fairy stories, but unlike his master had the sweetest temper imaginable.

He received the odd dog name Mark Antony in this way: Father had been reading Mark Antony's address to the Romans to Mother and shortly afterwards he went out to the woodshed and found the new-born puppy. He brought it in to show Mother and when she asked him what he intended to name it he replied, "I think I'll name him Mark Antony."

We buried him with military honors—befitting his title—under the huge elm near the house. We blew the big dinner horn, rang cowbells, played a funeral dirge on the mouth organ and fired a salute of two shot guns as he was laid solemnly in his grave, which faced the morning sun as it cast its first rays thru the beautiful leaves of the wide-spreading branches of that magnificent old tree.

His death cast a gloom over the whole family, especially us kids. Several weeks later Father surprised us by bringing a crate from town on our

wagon. It contained a huge dog, half Newfoundland, half St. Bernard, about two years old, weighing over 90 lbs.

All dog of this type have large beautiful kindly eyes, something like a cocker, and just seem to want to love everybody. He cost Dad $50. He was highly trained for riding (for small children), harness and drawing a wagon—hunting and playing 'hide and seek' with the children left in his care. When the folks were gone no one dared enter the yard. He was taught to carry in and fill the wood-box for the kitchen stove; he never had to be told. He seemed to *sense* when the box was empty and kept it filled, after which he would sit on his haunches in front of the cupboard and wait patiently with dreamy eyes for his snack.

He never committed any 'nuisance' in the house. On one occasion we had a visitor who brought her dog with her. It did something in the kitchen which immediately caught the eye of old 'Colonel' who grabbed him by the nape of the neck—like a cat does her kitten—and jumped over the fence with him, remaining on guard until the visitors left. They were tickled when they witnessed the scene and made no effort to get the dog back into the yard.

He was also taught to see that we got to school (two miles away), carrying out lunch baskets for us, after which he went back home. At half past three nothing could keep him from coming back to get us. On several occasions some of the other school children passing the house put their lunch baskets in his mouth with ours and when we arrived at school we found Colonel lying by the school house door guarding the basket—but to their dismay they found he had cleaned theirs out, and, standing up his full height, looking them straight in the eyes as if to say what, in heck, are you going to do about it.

In a way Colonel was a kind of pacifist. By that I mean we never saw him in a fight but once, which I will speak of later. Neither did we ever see him kill anything, with the same exception. It was a common thing for him to wander out to the woods and rob a rabbit nest in winter or a quail nest in summer, generally bringing the little creature home by the nape of the neck, pawing at the kitchen door until Mother opened it, and dropping it on the floor. This got to be a regular nuisance as they were generally too young to eat and too helpless to turn out. In consequence, Dad (who was soft-hearted too) built a small compartment in the stable where we fed and kept them until they were able to take care of themselves. Then we turned them loose. The exception was when Colonel unconsciously came upon a nest of polecats.

Perhaps he thought they were kittens of the same type he had often carried off before. He must have attempted his old trick again but here he made a sad mistake (as results showed), for he came home with his nose scratched, his eyes bleary, and his head down, smelling like a polecat.

We told him to go back—which he seemed loath to do until he saw us with him, armed with a gun. When we arrived about fifty feet from the place he sat on his haunches and refused to go further. The strong smell led us to the spot, however, where we found both the 'old lady' and 'old man' polecats nearly torn to pieces with two babies still in the nest. We took them home and cut off their stink bags, after which they made the finest rat and mice killers in existence, but during the life of those cats we never could get Colonel within ten feet of them.

A Map of southeastern Iowa where the Mount Pleasant farm was located, and where the family moved later (to Ottumwa).

Chapter II: Life on the Farm

To do this I must give you a little description of what kind of farm we had. It consisted of 162 acres of the finest farmland in the county, half-cleared for cultivation and an additional forty acres of heavy timber land consisting of immense oak, elm, hickory and walnut trees—a beautiful rendezvous for wolves, foxes, squirrels, wild turkeys and numerous other small game, which was to us an ideal and happy hunting ground. Our house was a large log cabin, two stories high, with a large fireplace having an eight foot opening. There was also a large kitchen which we also used for a dining room—except on state occasions, an extra bedroom large enough for two full beds in the loft and the bedroom downstairs for Father and Mother. We also had a large smokehouse near the home for smoking meats and a large half-underground cave for storage.

One day Father (on one of his trips to town) came across two grates from a discarded locomotive, which he brought home and used to build an outdoor grille and oven with a chimney, large enough to bake bread plus wild turkeys and other game. A favorite way to roast turkey was to draw and stuff it with dressing, leaving the feathers on. Then it was covered with a particular kind of clay which then was let to dry. The turkey was placed in a slow oven for a certain length of time, and when done it was struck with a hammer. The clay, feathers and skin peeled off slick as a whistle, exposing the nice juicy meat: truly a dish for a king!

Our large barn and lot was situated about 200 feet from the house. There were four acres of orchard and two acres of vineyard from which Father would make about eight barrels of wine each fall, in addition to one barrel of cherry and one barrel of blackberry wine. Being a Frenchman, he followed the custom of his native land by also raising all kinds of small fruits and vegetables in his garden.

To give a close-up of farm life in those early days, but not going too much into detail, I will copy a letter I wrote to Mother about 40 years later.

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Devil's Lake, North Dakota
August 4, 1919

Dearest Mother,

As nearly a month has passed since I saw your dear old face last, I thought it would be nice to send you a few lines so that you might know I am quite well and think of you lovingly every single day. I also know that hardly a day passes that I am not affectionately in your thoughts.

In truth, my dearest Mother, we have always been so near and dear to each other that it seems to me the mere fact of writing cannot possibly be a further means of increasing this existing love and regard.

In saying this I do not mean to offer it as an excuse for my negligence in not writing more frequently because I know these delinquencies have already been forgiven, because of the softness of a Mother's heart. Yet there can be no doubt that these nice little epistles from an absent one, now and then, always quicken the pulsations of the heart and bring back to mind many of the little scenes and happenings of younger days, and sweet, almost forgotten thoughts, when love was the making and the beautiful flowers of life were just beginning to bloom.

Those were truly ideal days, Mother, it seems to me, for both you and Dad, and for us children they were always very sweet and beautiful to recall, for towards us you were ever loving, considerate and kind.

However, as I remember too, they were really strenuous days for both you and Dad trying to make ends meet from your very meager income but you kept the ball rolling and I still wonder just how you did it.

How time flies! Here I am past fifty-five and you seventy-five; yet it seems like yesterday when we were living in our commodious log cabin in Iowa where those years were passed so strenuously. To be exact, it is just forty-eight years ago since we moved out of the farm. Don't you remember, dear, the big fireplace, eight feet wide, and how it would spit sparks, crackle and roar as the flames licked around the logs, as we sat as near as possible, first toasting our 'tummies' and then our backs. Then after the men folks had told their usual yarns, we children would hike up the ladder to the room above where we often would find snow on the covers of the beds where it had seeped in under the board roof. Regardless, we pulled back the blankets,

hopped into the big feather tick, pulled the covers over our heads, huddled close together and yelled good night down to the folks, and we were off to the happy hunting grounds of sweet childhood dreams.

For amusement to while away the odd hours—apart from the strenuous work—the men had their hunting parties in quest of wild turkeys, prairie chickens, pheasants, quail, deer and wolves. The women had their quilting parties, dancing and sewing parties, and spelling bees. Then there was hog-killing time and threshing time with a bunch of fifteen to twenty hungry men to feed. On those occasions all the good eats were forthcoming, including eight to ten chickens and all the 'yum-yums' that necessarily go with them. The women would cook and cook, and the men, as you well know, would eat and eat. Gosh, how they would eat, while we youngsters, with our mouths watering for the good things in view, were kept busy during the meal with a small branch from a tree, keeping flies off the table.

I wonder if you remember the big 90 lb Newfoundland Colonel, and how he carried in the wood for the cook stove one piece at a time until the box was filled to the brim, with a dreamy look in his beautiful eyes waiting for a snack. Then, when the snow was deep you would send him to school, a mile away, with our lunch in a basket in his mouth. He would arrive a few moments before noon and bark at the door until the teacher let him in. If the snow was very deep, the teacher would allow him to remain until school was out to see us home. Once when I got lost in a snow storm in the woods, he was sent to the rescue and found me pretty near exhausted.

I suppose you remember, too, when Father's half-brother came from France to live with us. What an old 'curiosity shop' he was—always getting into trouble or else he was very unhappy. I recall two comical incidents, the first being with a polecat. Now it seems that with all his experience, Uncle had never had the pleasure of even seeing one of these pretty creatures in the old country where he came from. So, while we were cutting timber, he happened to spot a beautiful specimen making a bee line for a big hollow log, and he at once became terribly excited calling out to us in German, 'Schöne Katze' (pretty cat) and as it crawled into the log, he wanted us boys to take a long stick and poke it in at one end while he watched at the other to catch it when it came out. Um, well, it seemed really too bad to take such easy money—as the saying goes—or to impose on such supreme ignorance, but, when we took into consideration his many little impositions on us over a long period of time, we quickly decided to accept his invitation and got into action

at once, with a long stick at one end of the log, while he waited at the other with one of those anticipatory semi-angelic smiles, really worthy of a better cause. It is needless to say that he did not have long to wait after the first poke. Out it came, plunk into his arms, and you may be sure it lathered him completely from head to foot. Uncle dropped him like a hot potato, with his hand over his nose, yelled at the top of his voice, 'Pfui, stink katze' and forthright made a bee line for the house as fast as his little duck legs would carry him.

You happened to be sweeping the kitchen floor when he burst in, bringing with him in great profusion that peculiar odoriferous smell with all its pestiferous potentialities, and almost before we could say scat you drove him out of the door with a wallop from the bushy end of the broom. Of course he had to burn all of the clothes he had on at the time, and it got in his skin too, so that it was unpleasant to be near him. During that time Dad made him sleep in the barn.

Later on his insatiable curiosity got the best of him again and he felt a 'call' to explore the mysteries of the inside of a bee hive and perhaps have a little honey for himself. His ideas may have been all right but his method was amazingly wrong for, as he took the top off the hive to put his hand in, about 'steen million bees got after him with a vengeance, covering his hands and face and stinging him all over. With a fierce scream he turned and saw a big hog wallow filled with black dirty water, about 3 feet deep. Without further ado he made for it and dove into it like a bullfrog.

When he came out a few minutes later with the mud and grime dripping from him he sure was a sight to behold. However it seems that his troubles had only begun as our old billy-goat Jeremiah, who had been watching him suspiciously, seemed to have taken umbrage—either to his strange actions or because of his change in appearance as he came from the hog wallow. As he ran for the house, Jeremiah was up and after him and before he had gone forty feet he landed with a vengeance smack on the seat of pants, knocking him head over appetite thru the open gate. Before he could get in the kitchen door Jeremiah gave him another one, sending him plunk under the table where he remained until you drove the goat away. After washing some of the grime from his face it began to swell rapidly from the bee stings until it seemed as big as a bucket and his eyes looked like two tiny peas stuck in a chunk of mud. He sure looked funny but it was plain to be seen he didn't feel that way, for he cussed those 'ver dampt' bees (damn bees) in German,

French and broken English, from the rock-bound coast of Maine to the golden shores of California until the doctor (who luckily was making a call at our nearest neighbor) came and gave him a hypo, and he was soon in the land of dreams.

This last experience seemed to have acted as a sedative in the control of his curiosity proclivities but, thereafter, he would fight at the drop of a hat to a finish, with or without gloves, gun or sword, with anyone who even casually mentioned bees or polecats.

Notwithstanding our apparent isolation we surely had some glorious good times in those days, and as I recall them now, one of the particularly bright spots in rural life came once during each year. Each farmer in turn made it his business to feature a big blow-out—as they called it then—for their closest friends, during which time the best of everything was brought out of hiding places. The festivities lasted all day and sometimes into the wee hours of the morning. Games of all kinds were played by both young and old, from tag to blind man's bluff until lunch at 11 am and again until dinner at 4 pm. In this way, as you know, rural hospitality was seen at its best and accomplished much in keeping kindly feelings uppermost in our minds and fostering thoughts of brotherhood among our neighbors.

I can remember and clearly visualize the last blowout we gave. It was on an almost perfect day in early September in the year 1874. Old Sol, in all his glory was just beginning to peep above the horizon from behind the neighboring hill, casting a shimmering light thru the branches of the big elm trees, as a gentle breeze wafted its way in unison, making a perfect day. The birds sang sweetly and all nature seemed in a responsive mood to make the occasion an outstanding success and everybody happy.

We youngsters of course had already been up long before old Sol had made his appearance, helping you and Dad to get things ready. Even old Colonel the dog had previously done his share by filling the wood box. The thirty strong company arrived according to schedule and were greeted with the blowing of horns and ringing of cow-bells. Even the dogs joined in the chorus, and Jeremiah also came through with his good old "bah-bah."

I will forego a description of the entertainment to you, my dearest Mother, up to the dinner, as you no doubt remember as well as myself, but I am going to mention the men and the things connecting in case they have slipped your mind:

The Menu

Blackberry, Cherry and Grape wine. Roast wild turkey, with dressing. Quail on toast. Yellow legged chicken and hot biscuits. Roasting ears and mashed potatoes. Tender green string beans. Three kinds of jam and four kinds of jelly. Crabapple pickles, sweet preserved water-melon rinds. Piccalilli and chili sauce. Comb honey and country butter. Apple and pumpkin pie. Black berries with cream. Angel food cake. Muskmelon and ice cream.

To completely realize the scene and enhance the joy and pleasure of the occasion the tables with eats were set under the big elm tree with its immense graceful drooping boughs, spreading over nearly a quarter acre of ground. Dappled shadows flickered thru the shimmering leaves on the head. The cat-birds called from the orchard and orioles sang sweetly from the tree tops. The scent of petunias, the moss rose and four o'clocks wafted on the gentle breeze and the locust's shrill note accentuated the heat of the afternoon sun.

The men sat without apologies in their shirt sleeves while the women with rosy cheeks smiled sweetly, completing the picture. The talk veered from that of the last meeting to anticipation of the one to come. Prospect of crops, with bits of gossip—reminiscences of the Civil War, tales of frontier life, hunting, winter snows and summer gales. Almost before we knew it the day was gone. Shadows were lengthening; the frogs and katy-dids were beginning their chorus, whipper-wills called in the dusk and the note of the wood chuck with his aching melody brought a heavy lump in the throat. The evening star came out with the new moon in a mother-of-pearl sky. The sunset tints faded in the west and the shouts of 'goodby, come again' filled the air as they disappeared in the deepening shadows of the night.

Of course, you remember all these things, my dearest Mother, and no doubt will have many a silent laugh as I recall them in detail to your mind.

With bushels of love and ever
Sweet remembrances,
Your son.

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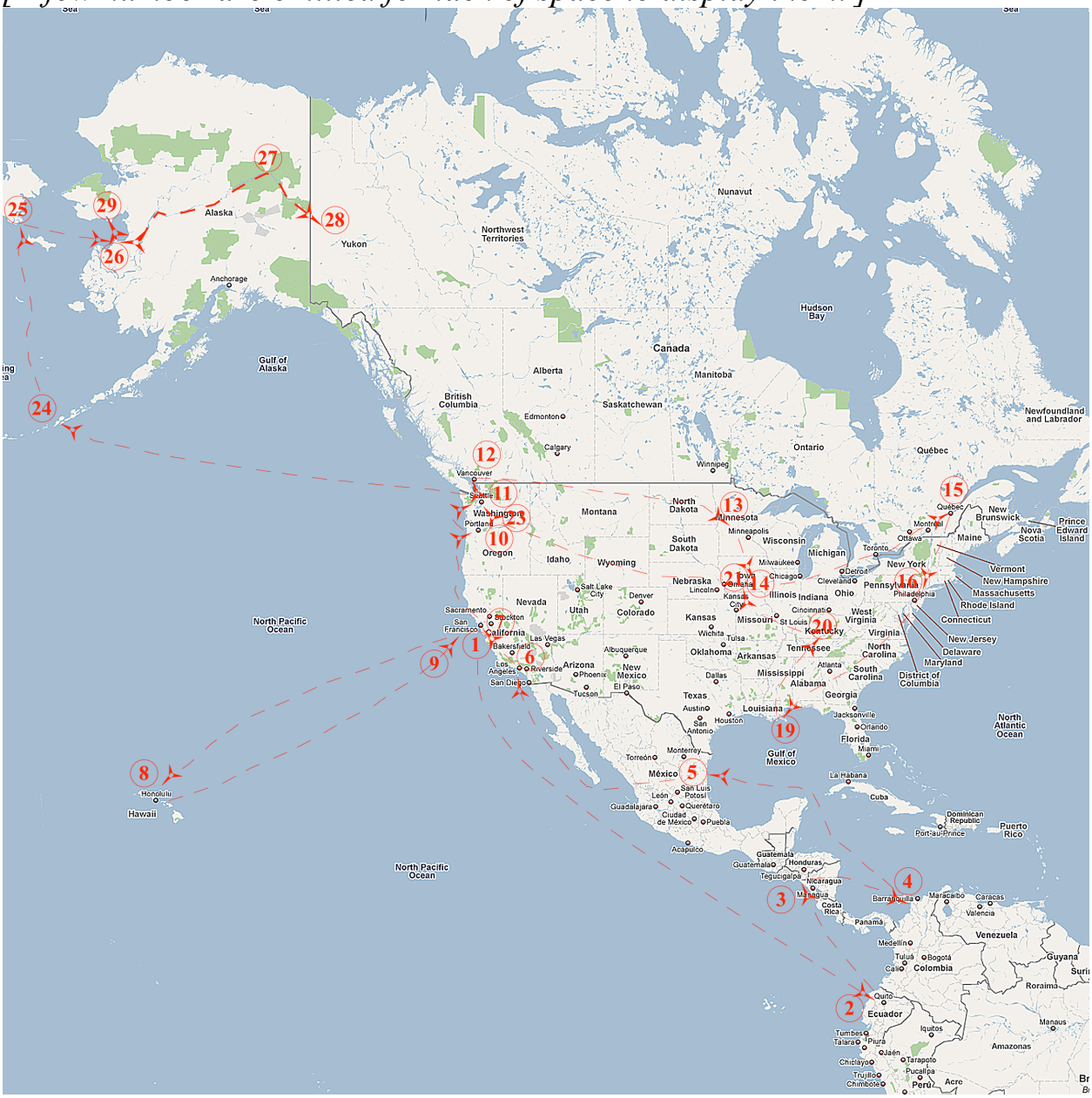
These activities and quite a few more along a similar line—although in a minor way—represent and are typical of a rather monotonous country life. As an example of those times, everybody arose at 5 am. The men-folk, which included my oldest brother, had to look after the stock to be ready for 6 am breakfast, to get an early start at their days work. Mother and I were in the kitchen frying ham and eggs, or bacon and a big stack of wheat cakes to be eaten with butter and sorghum molasses.

In those days everything had to be done by hand by the men. For example, planting corn, sowing and cutting grain, in contrast with what we have to do today: reapers, mowers, corn huskers, tractors and riding plows. The women also lacked all the modern conveniences we have now. There were no such things as kerosene lamps, gas or electric lights, washing machines, sinks or lavatories. Few floors had coverings, and their floors were rough—generally scrubbed three times a week. Water had to be carried in—in a bucket and the 'slop' had to be carried out.

We molded our own candles to read by and the cooking was mostly done on the open fireplace or the out-door grille. Mother spun her own yarn and knitted our socks, mittens and jackets.

After seven years this arduous work began to tell on Mother's health, plus the death of three children in five years, so Father decided to sell the farm, move to town and embark in the shoe business within the year.

Map of North and South America, with the journeys of John Henry Stoessel numbered, starting at San Francisco and ending at Kotzebue, Alaska (1-29) [A few number are omitted for lack of space to display them.]



Key to Travel Location Map

1 San Francisco (ca 1886)
2 Quito, Ecuador
3 Tagucigalpa, Nicaragua
4 Colombia
5 Old Mexico
6 Los Angeles
7 San Francisco
8 Hawaii
9 San Francisco
10 Portland. OR
11 Seattle, WA
12 Vancouver, BC
13 St. Paul
14 Ottumwa (2 months later)
15 Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre, Beaupre, Canada (near Quebec) (1888)
16 New York
17 Washington, DC (Not shown on map)
18 Norfolk, VA (Not shown on map)
19 New Orleans
20 Mammoth Cave, KY
21 Quincy, IA
22 Ottumwa, IA (Not shown on map)
23 Seattle, WA (1897)
24 Dutch Harbor, AK
25 Siberian Coast
26 St. Michael (June 1, 1898)
27 Fr. Yukon
28 Ft. Selkirk / Dawson, YT
29 Kotzebue

Chapter III: Life in Town

Life in town seemed strange to me but I soon learned to adjust to the new conditions from new acquaintances and soon was one of the regular boys. I assisted Father in the store and attended grade school, graduating in the spring of 1880. On September in the same year I was sent to St. Francis College at Quincy, Illinois. I took special courses in Commercial Law, Banking, Elocution, Shorthand, Bookkeeping and Telegraphy, graduating in 1883. During those three years many incidents happened in everyday boarding school life, unnecessary to mention. There were two incidents of interest—the first was a balloon ascension which I took in a regular balloon all by my self in 1881. It came about this way: a few days previous it was advertised in the papers that Mr. Baldwin, a man of national reputation in balloon flying, would make an ascension from the fair grounds, the admittance fee being fifty cents. This seemed so interesting to our faculty that we were given the day off to see it. About 50 of us attended. The balance of us (not interested) took in the town. When we arrived on the grounds, outside the fair grounds enclosure, we saw a big balloon seemingly to us as big as the Earth, being held with guy ropes ready to be taken into the grounds. I might mention incidentally, that I was one of the twenty guys holding onto the ropes, as I saw the advantage of putting fifty cents in my other pocket since we were entitled to free entrance to the grounds with the balloon.

About this time a fierce fight was taking place, about fifty feet away between two dogs and two boys—the owners of the dogs. The noise created quite a furor and there was a grand rush to witness the outcome. This caused nineteen of the boys to get so excited that they forgot about the balloon—except your humble servant—and before you could say ‘scat’ up shot the balloon with me dangling on one of the ropes! It surely was a queer sensation—you didn’t feel like you were rising up in the air as much as the earth seemed like it was dropping away from you.

I forgot to mention that while we were all holding the ropes the man in charge of the balloon explained to us how the balloon worked—the gas valve opened to let out gas when you wanted to come down and the sand bags in the bottom of the basket were thrown out when you wanted to go up. I suppose it is hardly necessary to say I was not interested in the latter at this particular time. We shot up about 2,000 feet but I sized up the situation, that something had to be done. The talk the man gave us came back to my mind and I began to shin up the rope until I got to the basket and swung myself in. For a few seconds everything was so quiet and peaceful you almost felt like you'd like to stay there. Then I noticed the prevailing wind was blowing toward the east, a prairie country and noticed the large field glass at the bottom of the basket. I picked it up, glanced on the ground in that direction and found ground favorable for a landing. I reached for the string to the gas valve and began to pull in gently at first, then a little harder till I saw the balloon beginning to drop. It seemed about a week before we descended near enough so I could see the earth and the contour of the country with my naked eye. Everything seemed favorable so I began to pull a little harder until it seemed to be just moving fifteen to twenty feet from the Earth. I worried about getting crushed under the balloon when it landed—which it did in a wheat field where farmers were cutting wheat. A number of farmers ran towards the balloon and grabbed the dangling ropes. The gas was all but exhausted so I pulled the valve again and it began to collapse. When it was under control on the ground, an old farmer with long chin whiskers came over to me and inquired quizzically, "Bub," he said, "how old are you?" I told him sixteen. With that he turned, spit a big quid of tobacco juice out of his mouth and said, "What the hell were you doing up in that balloon all alone?" Being on terra firma again, my spirits returned and I looked at him quietly and said, "Oh, I thought I'd just take a trip to the Moon."

Without going into further details they wired Baldwin that I was safe and landed on their field, that they had charge of the balloon and were waiting for his instructions. He wired them back that a crew would take charge of it the next day and to furnish me enough money to get back to Quincy where I arrived next day. A week later I received $25 from Mr. Baldwin saying, "Not as a reward for your courage, for you had no time to show it, if you did have it, but for your good judgment in bringing the balloon to the ground safely which otherwise would have been lost." I might add incidentally, that I had landed 30 miles from Quincy.

An Unforgettable Character

The other incident mentioned during college life is an excerpt from a letter I wrote some years ago to one of my nephews. The following is the episode mentioned: there was an old timer by the name of John Barry, seventy-five years old, who lived near the college and used to drop in on us two or three times a week for a friendly visit. He was one of those aristocratic old chaps, highly educated, refined and good-hearted to a fault; very interesting to all those coming in contact with him; his fund of information and good will seemed inexhaustible and as he had in his younger days been a student of the same school, he was in a position to put us wise to many little tricks of the game so dear to the heart of every school boy. In addition to these he had such an understanding nice way of telling things in boy's language, that we adopted him from the start as "one of the boys."

He also seemed to have a special knack of understanding and sympathizing with all of our various troubles. In time of need, he stood almost supreme as an intermediary between us and 'the powers that be.'

There were 450 of us in the school. I'd venture to say there was not one of us that would not have fought at the drop of the hat for him.

Two of us once spent a weekend with him and his 73 year old wife, and I never saw an old couple so kind and devoted—indeed they seemed to have been just born for each other. It was truly a beautiful sight to see them wandering in their rose garden, arm in arm like boys and girls in their teens; every now and then lingering here and there to inhale the sweet aroma of some attractive rose, perhaps partially hidden behind some dense foliage.

Over fifty years have passed since I witnessed this scene which has been indelibly fixed in my mind.

When school was over we invited them to meet us in our large study hall the day before we left for home. With a neat little speech one of us presented him with a large gold-headed cane (costing us over fifty dollars) and to her we gave a lovely pair of gold rosary beads. Thru correspondence with one of the boys living there I learned he lived to be 98 and she 96, and he added, "They were sweethearts to the end, dying only a few days apart." Is this not a beautiful thought? They were sweethearts to the end!

Chapter IV: Beginning a New Life

I graduated June 15, 1882 and returned home the same day. A week later I was hired as an assistant bookkeeper in one of the home town national banks and a year later entered the oil business for myself, making quite a success of it. However after these first few years my health became much impaired and my doctor advised me to place my business under a competent manager and just drift about the West or South for a year or so. This I did with a congenial companion, whom I will call 'Flanigan,' who was in about the same fix bodily and financially.

Our first place of note was San Francisco, where we spent a few days taking in the sights, including China Town. One day while we were eating in a restaurant near the docks a couple of young sailors came over to our table—which had two vacant seats left—to request permission to have their lunch brought to the same table. As we had never met sailors in uniform we were pleased to accord them the privilege. After they ordered their meal they started talking about their experiences at sea and visits to a number of ports within the last 5 years. For young inland fellows who had never seen the ocean their talk was highly exciting. After about half an hour they asked us if we would like to have a bottle of wine to stimulate our brain power, so they ordered 2 pints—one for them and one for us. After we had taken a couple of sips we found ourselves aboard a vessel in bunks, tossing up and down on the ocean waves. It came suddenly upon us that we had been doped—shanghaied—and were bound for some unknown port. For those who do not know the meaning of this I will say it was the custom in those days for sailors often to shanghai men and keep them for a couple of long trips, sometimes extending into months or even years, make them do all the drudgery work without pay and then drop them in some strange port. If they had money of their own they'd be allowed to keep it, and perhaps given a little extra so they wouldn't be destitute.

In our case we found that they had not taken our loose money, which amounted to about $20 between us and we also found that our travelers

checks sewn in the lining of our clothes were still intact. After we talked over our situation a couple of hours, a sailor came, unlocked the door and said the mate wanted to see us. When we approached him he said, "You know what has happened?" and we said, "Shanghaied." He nodded, called a couple of sailors and told them to put us to work.

They had us scrub the decks and one of the sailors asked Flanigan how he liked it. Flanigan, being a pugnacious type and pretty sturdy too, landed one on the fellow's kisser, knocking him out. Then the other fellow interfered and Flanigan was locked up and fed bread and water until he had lost some of his belligerency. I quickly sized up the situation when they came back to ask me if I had a temper too. While I haven't got the sweetest temper, I recalled what Dad had told me years before—that temper never got you any place and that discretion was the better part of valor. So I said it had been my ambition for years to see something of sea life and gave them my sweetest smile. A broad grin spread over his face and he asked me what I could do. When I said I could cook he said, "Wait a minute." He sent a man for the chef and said to him, "You said you needed some help; here's a young fellow who says he can cook."

After answering a few questions seemingly to the chef's satisfaction, he told me to come down with him. After I told him what I had done, assisting Mother with the cooking on the farm, he took me under his wing, and my duties began at once. In a conversation with the chef that evening I found out that he was a Frenchman—born within twenty-five miles of the place where my Father was born—and we became pretty close friends. I wormed out of him during the conversation that they were going around the Horn (South America), expecting their voyage to end at New York, but he added he was not sure. During the next week or so I found he had a lot of influence with those in charge so I used it to play on his sympathy and with the use of $10 convinced him that it was his duty to advise us when the first stopping place came for food, and to arrange that we could both slip off the vessel and go ashore.

In order to carry this out without raising suspicion he pretended to the captain and mates that if I weren't so useful to him as an assistant he would never tolerate my nasty disposition. Some time later he came to me in my bunk room and said, "We're going to cast anchor at a wharf eight to ten miles from Quito (Ecuador) to lay in a stock of provisions after dark." He had spoken to several friends of his on the QT that we were going along. At 11

pm that night about twenty of the crew cast off in three boats. After we landed at the wharf he took us uptown to a provision house where as chef, he of course bought the supplies and after a whispered conversation with a duck-legged little Frenchman gave us a wink and we followed this new fellow to a back room where he in turn sent us away with another Frenchman to stay at his house—with a caution that we remain invisible until the ship pulled out, as the rest of the crew would likely ransack the town. If they found us they would tell the authorities that we were runaway sailors on a contract lasting six more months. For two days we lived in the garret with our food brought to us until we were informed that the ship was gone, but since a description had been given of us, our host thought it wise for us to leave on a ship sailing that night to Tagucigalpa (Nicaragua). After staying there a few days we caught a ship going back to Columbia, (South America), then over to Old Mexico, up to Los Angeles, and San Francisco, where we wired our folks back home where we were.

Then we went over to the Hawaiian Islands, back to San Francisco, where we spent some more time, on to Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, returning to St. Paul and Ottumwa after being gone for over two months, with much improved health though minus quite a few dollars. I found everything all right at home.

Two years later, after hearing much about the Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre in Canada, where the shrine contains as a relic a part of the finger of St. Anne (Mother of the Blessed Virgin) enclosed in a glass casket, I arranged for a trip there in 1888 going by way of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. When I arrived at the little village of Beaupre (near Quebec) I found it filled with people, bent on the same mission as myself. All the hotels and boarding houses were filled, but on the outskirts of the town I found a nice little modern house occupied by a widow lady and her two daughters, aged 14 and 16 years. They were all especially nice to me when they found I was of French descent and although none of them could speak English, a cousin of theirs nearby could, and they brought her over the first afternoon. Thru her help we formed a delightful acquaintance.

During my two weeks stay at the shrine I saw many beautiful and interesting things. In the large church there were two enormous pillars with crutches piled up against them, possibly ten feet high, and eyeglasses, seemingly by the hundreds, and many other kinds of tokens left by grateful people who needed them no more.

The first Mass I attended was jammed with people and at the Gospel the priest went up to the rostrum, about a third of the way up the church aisle, and began his sermon, dwelling particularly and going back to the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin and the joy that must have entered the heart of her Mother when she received the news. Then he discussed the building of that beautiful edifice and the many miracles performed there through her intercession during the past few years.

It was a grand sermon after which Holy Communion was given, followed by a priest carrying the relic in a casket which he placed against your lips, then rubbed it off with a cloth and went to the next.

It was during this period that the miracles if any, were performed, and I witnessed several. Then came the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and those that desired went home.

There were fourteen side altars representing the Stations of the Cross. The life sized wax figures were under the altar table and encased in glass. In the grotto near the church, the complete Crucifixion was represented by full sized wax figures tinted to look lifelike so when you looked up at them you could imagine you were really witnessing the Crucifixion. The quietness of the surroundings—away from all worldly noises—caused a feeling of reverential awe to steal over you, as if you were in another world.

I returned home by way of New York, Washington and Norfolk, where I took a boat for New Orleans, then to Kentucky where I spent a week exploring the Mammoth Cave. Then after stopping at my old Alma Mater in Quincy for a week, I returned home.

Chapter V: Alaska Adventures, Part 1

In the spring of 1897,* in that exciting time of the gold rush to the Klondike—being a free agent and having nothing in view to do—I became imbued with the idea that this was a golden opportunity for me too, so I got my worldly possessions together, the first junction on my road. I spent about a month gathering up enthusiasm, watching for a chance to leave and buying the necessary outfit. Also during this time I was employed as special correspondence for the Ottumwa (Iowa) Courier.

We left Seattle on the steamer *Charles Nelson** for the gold fields in Alaska via the ocean route and the Aleutian Islands, which lie just off the southwest coast of the Alaska mainland. We landed at Dutch Harbor after a very stormy passage of over two weeks. The following is an account of the trip: the *Charles Nelson* was only an 800 ton vessel, loaded down almost to its water line with 700,000 ft of lumber to be used at Dutch Harbor to build river steamers during the winter for use on the Yukon River in the spring to haul cargo up to Dawson. The lumber was all chained down to the upper deck to prevent its being washed overboard during the fierce winter storms that prevailed in this locality.

In addition to this very heavy load on such a relatively small steamer, we also had a miscellaneous cargo of merchandise for the Yukon. Besides forty herd of live cattle, also on the upper deck in temporary sheds built for that purpose, we had forty of us prospective prospectors, consisting of ship carpenters, boiler makers, mechanics, laborers, bakers, and candlestick makers—all robust, healthy citizens—with little money but of a class similar to the early settlers of America, endowed with stout hearts, plenty of ambition and a determination to win, whatever the cost.

Going back to our trip from Seattle to Dutch Harbor; the captain said it was absolutely the fiercest thing he had ever encountered in the way of storms during all his thirty years experience on the seven seas.

For days at a time we were obliged to remain below deck with all the hatches closed as great waves frequently rushed over the deck—almost

swamping the ship and sweeping the deck clean of everything excepting the chained lumber; the first high wave swept all the cattle overboard, which we were expecting to have for our winter meat supply. At times we would be riding over huge waves twenty to forty feet high or more, then down to what seemed to be the bottomless pit of the ocean. When we entered these huge troughs of the sea, which were miles in length, our propeller would occasionally whirl in empty space with such diabolical noise that it scared us nearly out of our wits. And were we sick? I'll say we were—not only sick but so *terribly* sick that we didn't give a tinker's damn if we went down with the ship or not. So sick that our eats came up, our liver turned over in dismay 'steen times or more, and no doubt our kidneys did likewise.

During the worst of these periods we would remain in our bunks fully clothed—our life preservers at out sides, as we expected momentarily to hear the pre-arranged signal from the captain to jump overboard into the briny deep and fight for our lives. To make matters worse, blinding snow storms followed by heavy sleet covered the masts and deck of the vessel adding immensely to its weight, making it look for all the world like a big mountain of ice and making the ship very difficult to guide. In consequence we were driven far off course (the one usually taken by ships) so if we had been forced to take to the water, in case the ship went down, there would have been little chance of being picked up by a passing steamer and we would not have lasted as long as a snowball in Hades.

As long as we remained in bed we were free from sea-sickness, but we sometimes thought we had to eat. When the big gong sounded the announcement that the festivities were about to begin we hastily swallowed our adam's apple, which was generally in our mouths, hopped out of our bunks like jack-rabbits and made a bee line for the dining room, where we always found each meal complete, ready served on a large plate—all ready for business.

If there was any etiquette observed on these occasions, I failed to observe it. It was not a matter as to whether it was proper to use a knife or fork to convey food into your mouth but how you could get it there the quickest and that generally was with your fingers. Even at that you were not at all sure, for perhaps as you were lifting a piece of potato or meat to your mouth, the ship might give a sudden lurch and you would miss your mouth entirely, jabbing the food into your nose or eyes.

If after some of these acrobatic performances, you actually did get a few mouthfuls down you had no assurances whatever that it was going to stay down—it generally didn't. To fully convince yourself in this respect, all you had to do was occasionally glance casually at your neighbor, who had perhaps taken only a mouthful, and the chances are you would notice him already getting pale about the mouth—his eyes looking wildly and his head becoming wobbly back and forth—as these were infallible signs that he could hold out no longer. He would look fearfully around, put his hand over his mouth to prevent premature excretion and beat it to his room where he could be alone and unseen by human eyes as he proceeded to dispose of his meager earnings and then lie down trying to convince himself that eating was perhaps not so necessary after all.

Very few were exempt from bad weather and I'm sorry to say that I was not in the excepted class either. Those who held out the longest watched their companions of the first class with sort of a fiendish glee, but soon lost their temporary advantages when *their* time came—perhaps only a few moments later—because they had eaten more and therefore had just that much more to dispose of. Believe me, those extra mouthfuls contained misery with compound interest.

I recall the following incident with particular satisfaction: the commanding captain of the steamer always sat at the head of the table, the first mate to his right, the second mate to his left and then down the line according to rank or precedent. Of course none of those got sick during the rough weather as they were all old time sailors perfectly seasoned to such things. As meals served on most ships are generally considered festive occasions they are always served ceremoniously in courses and this old freight steamer was no exception to the rule.

The first course on the menu was always soup, which was always served in deep bowls during rough weather and even at that on occasions it was necessary to hold the bowl in our hands to keep from spilling the contents all over us.

We all thought—whether justly or not—that the captain took some pleasure at our expense watching us get what he called 'hootchy-kootchy pale around the kisser,' which occurred just previous to the rush to leave the dining room for the sides of the vessel—and we were watching for an opportunity to get even. It soon came about this way: at this dinner he had invited a Missouri river captain to the seat of honor on his right. He was just

as susceptible to seasickness as we were, of course. So there he was, sitting next to the captain, looking anything but pleased with the honor shown him—as the weather was particularly rough. On this occasion he was already beginning to feel pretty squeamish in the region of his 'tummie,' as was plainly seen by all of us, so we watched him closely and we were not disappointed. He picked up his bowl of soup in one hand, spoon in the other, put a spoonful in his mouth and as it went down we noticed he was beginning to look pretty pale about the mouth and his head began to move back and forth in a way we knew from experience that the moment had arrived—that something was going to happen soon. Our captain noticed it too for he told him not to bother using his spoon but to drink it and get back to his bunk. He took a big mouthful but was too sick to swallow it and there he sat with his mouth full of soup, looking the picture of agony and despair. The captain said something to him about 'holding it' and as he turned his face toward him his head began moving back and forth. About this time the boat gave a lurch and so did his stomach—right into our captain's face! It made him look like a drowned rat and was he mad!

Needless to say we all had a good laugh (when we got to our rooms) at his expense even though it caused us all to heave up too, right after that. But our hearts seemed to soften a bit after this towards the captain and he seemed to sense it too, for he was not quite so raw after that.

On the morning of January 10th (1898),* sixteen days after we left Seattle, we were aroused from sleep by someone yelling at the top of his voice, "Dutch Harbor!" We all dressed quickly, rushed to the upper deck, and there met a vision that did our eyes and hearts good. In our excitement we nearly fell over each other getting on deck. Our first and greatest surprise was the great change which had taken place in the weather as compared to what we had experienced the past two weeks in the snow storms, sleet, giant waves, and rain.

We could hardly feel the gentle breeze wafting along the deck and there was hardly a ripple on the placid water shimmering under the glow of the early morning sun. As Old Sol was seemingly out for keeps in all his magnificence and glory—after an absence of over 2 weeks—you may be sure a feeling of joy and comfort filled our hearts; it was a feeling of peace and well-being in our minds and a real sense of quietness to our 'tummies.'

All nature seemed strangely at rest, arrayed in all its wonderful beauty, seeming as a sort of recompense for all we had been obliged to suffer on its

account. As we cast our eyes westward we saw in the distant horizon hundreds of islands, numerous mountain peaks, and smoke from some active volcano[‡] which was constantly drifting lazily along the sides of other mountains and then blown out to sea.

North of us large groups of small whales were spouting water into the air as they moved along majestically here and there to bask in the bright sunshine. All about us were a large number of porpoises, gamboling playfully in the deep, jumping out of the water at times in pursuit of each other while others dove under the ship with great splashes. And last but not least great flocks of sea birds were on land, among them thousands of some kind of duck, apparently without wings, or rather sort of stubs for wings. They were unable to raise themselves more than a few feet out of the water but they were so numerous that we were unable to avoid them entirely, and in consequence large numbers were killed by the propeller.

We landed in Dutch Harbor that afternoon about one o'clock and spent the balance of the day getting acquainted with those working for the company and the next week visiting native Eskimos on the different islands and seeing the mountains in the distance with my powerful telescope—which I was fortunate enough to bring along.

On the boat to Dutch Harbor there were two Englishmen, father and son, aged about fifty and twenty-five years respectively. Both were plasterers and lathers. The father was a contractor who had saved quite a bit of money and also inherited some, leaving his wife with enough while they were gone—they had planned to spend about three years in the Klondike.

Both father and son had good health and plenty of means so it seemed their success was assured. They had brought with them about half a dozen music boxes and used one to amuse the local natives in Dutch Harbor. They intended to remain there, like the rest of us, until the steamer *Roanoke* would take us up to the Yukon. During the six months in Dutch Harbor they spent much of their time visiting the surrounding islands, even going as far as the Pribilof Islands. They also took many fishing trips out in native boats and were very popular with the natives, particularly because of their little music box.

About two months before we were to leave Dutch Harbor for Alaska, they got several of their music boxes ready, intending to go to Unalaska; the distance being about seven miles—three miles by water which is always very turbulent—and dangerous as quick storms appear without notice.

They were warned by their friends not to make the trip but their many trips to other islands on similar occasions seemed to make them insensible to the danger. So they went and that was the last of them as a fierce gale arose when they were about half way over, lashing the shore with great fury for several hours. All that was ever found of them were a couple of parts of music boxes and two broken oars. All their money and effects (which were with the North American Transportation Company for safe keeping) were sent back to their home in the States by the first returning steamer in June. Needless to mention they had left their address with same company. We missed them very much and they were good sports.

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[*] *The Charles Nelson ship's registry lists the vessel as* ***built in 1898*** *by Hay and Wright, Alameda, 196.5 length by 37.8 beam, 629 gross tons. It fits the merchant vessel class that ran between Seattle and Alaska ports but JHS's date of 1897 has to suggest* ***another ship by the same name****. This needs to be researched through Alaska's local ports of call records.*

[‡] *The volcano in question is on Unalaska Island and there is another volcano on an island east of Unalaska. The whole Aleutian Island chain is part of the huge Pacific 'ring of fire.' Modern Alaskan maps have also changed many older settlement names from the ones in use a century ago.*

Chapter VI: Alaska Adventures, Part 2

After studying over the different routes of going to Alaska I concluded that the all water route via Dutch Harbor was the best route to take. We left Dutch Harbor with three river steamers in tow of the Ocean Liner *Roanoke* for the Yukon River the following May where we arrived without any particular incident except that we were driven by floating icebergs across the Bering Sea, along the Siberian Coast, were we were obliged to land in a protected bay and remain for several weeks until the ice had cleared away.

During those weeks we witnessed many beautiful sights of floating icebergs, covered with walruses and seals, hundreds of whales spouting in the distance and seemingly millions of aquatic birds skimming over the surface of the water making weird noises.

We arrived at St. Michael June 1, 1898. This was the last junction of the Yukon River before the open sea. The three steamers brought with us in tow were put into commission at once and headed up to the gold fields.

I had promised the *Courier* to keep its readers informed as to my progress and experiences when I arrived at the Klondike, but neglected to do so for these two reasons—the lack of time for correspondence under such unusual and prevailing conditions in Alaska at that particular time—and the lack of dependable mail service.

We cast anchor twelve miles from the Alaska shore (St. Michael) as the water in the Bering Sea was too shallow to get closer with ocean going steamers. Government launches took the passengers ashore and the freight had to be taken over with ‘lighters’ (flat boats).

The first thing of interest that met my eyes upon landing was a typical Eskimo and his wife. He was riding a ‘jack’ and smoking his pipe while his wife walked along by his side—with a papoose strapped to her back and a small bundle of small wood picked up on the seashore under each arm! I stopped them and asked the man how come he was riding while his wife, with her big load, was walking. He smiled amiably and said, “Huh! Wife

have no jack to ride." [I might mention incidentally there are no mules in Alaska, but this one with a few others were brought up just to serve a certain purpose and traded to some Eskimos for seal skins. As soon as the feed brought up for the mules was exhausted (about 6 months), that was the end of the mules as there was no feed of that kind in Alaska.]

We landed June 20, 1898 at 2 am, but it was daylight because of its nearness to the Arctic Circle. As an illustration a year later (when I was Postmaster at St. Michael) the landing of the first boats about the middle of June bring an immense amount of mail for the miners and I would be swamped for lack of help. On one particular occasion when I was at my wits end, a young fellow from the States came in with a smile that was really catching and said, "It looks like you're swamped; can you use any help?" He told me he had worked in the post office at San Francisco several years and was *en route* for Cape Nome but he was $15 short of his steamer fare—which was about forty total. I told him that the wages were $10 a day, but since it was 8 am, and if he would work until dark, I would pay him $15. That seemed to strike him as a snap and we began sorting mail at once and he sure knew his business. We worked until about 2 pm, got something to eat and continued working till about 9 pm. As he had no watch with him and was working hard, he did not think of the time. When we got through another lunch we began to work again. About 3 am he said he was hungry, and wanted to know how long it would be before it got dark. I told him it didn't *get dark that time of year* except a little twilight about 2 am as we were in the circle. Being an intelligent man he realized this but just hadn't thought of it—and he said, "How am I going to earn my $15 before dark?" I told him that he could knock off now and I would pay him $20 in gold dust (it was worth $16 an ounce) and put it in a little sack we had for that purpose. I went down to the wharf with him and an hour later he was aboard the vessel heading for Nome. I might mention that I met the young man two years later on his way to the States. During that time he had accumulated $60,000 in the Cape Nome district.

There was a regiment of U. S. Army soldiers St. Michael's Island, where the post office was. The garrison included a colonel, captain, first and second lieutenant, a doctor, and a commissary department. About this time I had a bad toothache and a dentist in the commissary department wanted to charge me $20 to put in a temporary bone filling. He had no other and I thought it was too much. Being well acquainted with the doctor, whom I had

favored on many occasions, I went to him and asked him if he could pull it for me, stating that the dentist wanted to charge me $20 for filling it. I thought perhaps he might have a pair of forceps, and as an old friend, he might pull it. He said, “Sure.” In a few minutes he had yanked it out and was smiling graciously on me while I was spitting up blood. After a little time, thinking I would be generous I offered him a $10 gold piece which I felt sure he would not accept. However, he said, “What’s that for?” I told him for pulling the tooth but he told me it was $30.00. “Why,” I said, “I could have had it filled for $20 and here you want to charge me $30 for pulling. I won’t pay it.” He said, “Yes, you will, for you know you are working for the government and the it requires its employees to pay all honest debts or be blacklisted for future work.”

I sure was sore, and being well acquainted with the colonel I decided to see him about it. I found him sitting in a big armchair with his feet up on a table, smoking a fine cigar the likes of which I had not smoked in many moons. After saluting him, he saw by my face that something was wrong. He said to sit down, take a Havana, quiet your nerves a bit and tell me about it, which I did in full detail. He turned around and told his orderly to call in the sergeant. When he arrived he said, “Sergeant, tell the doctor I want to see him, and damn quick too.” The doctor was rather fleshy and his office was about 2 blocks from the colonel’s headquarters, so he came in puffing like a porpoise and saluted the colonel. The colonel said, “Sit down, Doctor.” He sat down and the colonel said to him, “Doctor, this man tells me that you wanted to charge him $30 for pulling a tooth. Isn’t that exorbitant?” The doctor answered, “No, in this country there are no fixed fees.” The colonel said, “That’s all, doctor.” After he had gone the colonel said to me, “You had better pay it, because it might stick to you later if the doctor should meanly report it—but watch and get even with him.” I paid him and he said, “You’re not sore, are you?” I said, “No.”

Shortly after that Eskimo runners brought him a letter from a camp forty miles away where one of the men had a bad attack of appendicitis requiring an immediate operation. As there had been a rush to a new field where gold had been struck about fifty miles away every man who had a dog team was gone—so the doctor came to me and with his sweetest smile, told me of the circumstances, and wanted to know if I would be kind enough to hitch up my dog team to take him there. I told him of course and added further, “You go and get your outfit ready. I’ll be over inside of an hour.” As

it was about 10 below zero he brought his furs and I packed him in the sled. Of course I had to run behind to guide the sled by the handles or the sled would tip over. The only chance I had of riding was the occasional stepping on the runners behind long enough to get second breath. When we arrived, the case was so urgent that the doctor got out his instruments at once, took off his coat, handed me the ether—for he knew I had used it many times before—and he got busy with his operation, which was a success. By now it was evening so they prevailed on us to remain over long enough to rest, which we did. After breakfast, consisting of seal oil and dried salmon, we made preparations to return. Two Eskimos helped me get the team ready, which was about half a block from where the doctor was. When we were ready one of the Eskimos notified him and he came wobbling down and got in the sled. As he was getting himself comfortably in the sled I noticed several of the men—where the operation had been performed—talking rather excitedly so I told the doctor that I had forgotten something and he should sit quietly in the sled until I came back as there was an Eskimo holding the sled and its dog team.

When I got to the men I asked, "Did you pay him?" They said, "Yes." I said, "How much?" They showed me a receipt that they had paid him $700.00 in gold dust. Upon my request they gave me the receipt with my promise to return it to them if necessary, to prove that they had paid it. I then went back to the sled, got hold of the two stays behind (like the handles of a baby buggy), and asked the doctor if he was ready. He turned around and smiled sweetly. By this time the dog leader was jumping up and down waiting for the word. I put up my hand and hollered, "Mush," and they were off like a flash. We broke the record for 60 miles as I had an exceptional team and the road was good. When we arrived and the doctor had gotten out of the sled I told him I'd unhitch my team, then come back to see him. When I returned he was seated snugly, smoking a good cigar. Beaming all over he rubbed his chubby hands together and said, "Well, we had a fine trip," and I said, "*You* did, riding all the way, but I have no complaint to make." And he said, "Do you know, I've been thinking over what you did, and made up my mind to be generous." With that he placed two $10 gold pieces on his desk, smilingly. I asked him what that was for, and he said, "For your trip." I told him that wouldn't pay for it and he asked me how much. I told him $125. The smile quickly vanished and he said he wouldn't pay it. I answered, "Doctor, you know the government requires all its employees to pay their honest

debts." I marched out, and walked directly to the colonel's office. The colonel handed me a good cigar and told me to sit down. I said to him, "You remember, colonel, about three weeks ago I came into your office regarding the pulling of a tooth by your doctor and you said, 'Yes, pay it, but damn it, get even.'" I told him I just had that opportunity and told him about the trip. He said, "How much did you charge him?" and I told him and also how much the doctor got and handed him the doctor's receipt for $700. He laughed until he almost cried and then sent for the doctor. When the doctor came in he saluted and the colonel said, "Doctor, I understand you don't want to pay your honest debts which you know the government requires." The doctor said, "Who says so?" The colonel answered, "The postmaster, regarding the trip you just made—how much did he charge you?" The doctor said, "I wanted to pay him $20 for one day's trip but he wanted $125 dollars." The colonel said, "Is that exorbitant, doctor?" The doctor said, "Why that is nearly as much as I got." The colonel reached into his desk and drew out the receipt for $700 and asked the doctor if he had ever seen that before. The doctor's face got as red as a beet and he stammered, "Well, I *thought* $20 was liberal." He said to the doctor, "Doctor, the postmaster has been mighty kind to you in many ways. When the mail came in he would probably work late into the night, he would bring your mail, wake you up and deliver it to you—which he didn't have to do, but he knew you were anxiously awaiting letters from home and he did it. Now when he had a tooth to pull for which you should have charged him nothing, you charged him $30, repaying good with evil. As you remember, he came over here and told me about it and you told me there was no set price so I told him to pay it and I told him further to get even, which he has. Now, doctor, I'll give you five minutes to get to your office and bring $125 or its equivalent in gold dust, or in the spring your job will have gone glimmering." Needless to say, he was there on the dot.

In 1898—while I was in camp along the Yukon River at Fort Selkirk, 80 miles from Dawson, during the Spanish-American War—we were surprised one morning to see a big red-headed Irishman come into camp with only a two-dog team. He and his dogs seemed pretty well worn out because, as we found out later, he had covered about 700 miles from Dyea (in southern Alaska) with a special message. After we had filled him with a square meal and his dogs on frozen salmon and cooked oatmeal (which was a luxury up there) he was ready to tell us the object of his visit—which was as follows: he came to apprise us of the Spanish-American War. We all yelled at one time,

"The Spanish-American War!" Of course we didn't believe it, but from the folds of his parka he produced a San Francisco *Chronicle*, got up on a stump, opened it up, and showed us the picture of Manila Bay and many others.

Of course we wanted him to tell us the all about it but he said, "It's contained in this paper which I will sell." We asked him at once how much he wanted for it and we bid the paper up to $100—which he refused. We demanded his terms but he saw by the glint in our eyes he couldn't monkey around too long with us in our present state of expectancy and he said, "How many of you boys, working out West in the mountains back in the States, not having heard from home for six months like all of you have, would not give a day's wages to get a paper containing the news in *this* one? Well, this is a parallel case, only in the States you'd be making $2 a day and here you are making $10." We saw the point at once. He continued, "Now, if each of you will turn over $10 worth of gold dust to me—or all promise you will turn it over before I leave—I will let you read it out loud to the crowd and pass the paper around so they can view the pictures and then return it to me, as this is the only paper I have." We doubted that, but his offer seemed fair to us as he had traveled so many miles to bring the news, which we otherwise would not have received. So on a vote, the proposition was accepted unanimously—and your humble servant was the first to get on a tree stump and read until he got hoarse.

Others followed until the paper was read—with most of the advertisements too—to get their money's worth, some of the boys said. Then we went over to the Alaska Commercial Company store and authorized its agent to weigh out $1700 in gold dust in one sum, give it to him and charge it to us, as it would take too much time for each individual to weigh out $10 separately. After he had the money we sold him three more dogs, including a leader, and the company sold him a new sled and grub to continue his journey. As there existed no resentment among us regarding the deal we got the company to charge him only normal prices for the goods and sled. We chipped in individually and paid $450 for the three dogs and presented them to him as a gift, thanking him very much. He remained with us two more days and then moved off to another camp, no doubt to repeat the same deal, and we figured that since there were at least ten more camps the size of ours he would receive about ten times the amount for his newspaper. I'd venture to say there was not one of them who would not have felt happier for the

pleasure that he brought, or begrudged the compensation he received for it. We never saw him again.

In early October 1898 a friend and I took passage on a Yukon River steamer expecting to go to Dawson. The fare and board cost us nothing as we worked our way in the kitchen. Early in November we both got frozen in and the crew pulled the boat in on its ways to remain with it all winter, until the river's reopening in June. Since neither I nor my partner belonged to the boat's permanent crew we took our dog team for Fort Yukon, expecting to prospect and stake a claim. However all the claims on the small rivers and creeks were already staked out. As we had some means we tried to buy a part of a claim from somebody who did not have enough money to work it. This fact about money needs further explanation.

The prospect of striking gold at the bottom of a creek was always problematical and cost quite a bit of money as you had to chop logs, lay them on a twenty foot square and burn them. After they were burnt the ground would be thawed about fifteen inches down, and you'd throw out the soft ground and proceed as before until you got to bed rock where the placer gold would lie—if there were any.

We ran across a fellow with a claim but no money to work it, and he was willing to sell us a small part for $1500. As both owner and we were also the gainers (providing we struck gold) he would get half of it without any cost to himself, and he could get all the money he wanted to work the balance of the claim. We quickly came to an agreement and started to work. When we came to bed rock, we found some evidence of gold, which inspired us to continue along the creek, hoping to strike more in larger paying quantities, but after we'd gotten to the end of our claim and found nothing we climbed up to the surface, planning to abandon the mine. At this time a couple of Swedes came along who had just arrived in the country, and they asked us where they could get a claim. We told them we would sell them ours, explaining that we only had a part of a claim.

They asked us how much we wanted for it. We told them that we had spent $1000 on the work but would sell it to them for $1500. They immediately got out their money to buy it. We asked them what experience they had in mining. They said "None, we just came to the country." So my partner and I (after talking over the matter) explained to them that we had gotten to the end of the claim on bed rock of the creek—the only place where the gold is supposed to be—and found nothing worth mentioning. After a

consultation between themselves they said, “We buy ’em.” In order that there could be no misunderstanding, we called a man working nearby as a witness and got one of the Swedes to repeat what we had told them, and then they paid over the money. After resting a day we bought grub, filled our sled for a long trip and started further north. After three months we came back without any results, and since we were passing within five miles of this old claim I mentioned that we might drive by there to see what the Swedes were doing. He said, “Those Swedes are no doubt gone long ago.” However we drove our train over there and found everything in great activity. I looked in the shaft and asked for permission to come down. When we arrived the first person we met was Alec MacDonald, one of the richest mine owners. Like all prominent men, everyone knew them—including ourselves—but he didn’t know us, so using the old Yukon vernacular, I put out my hand and said, “Hello, Alec! What the hell are you doing in this little piece of a mine?” He said, “Oh, I bought this “dog” from a couple of Swedes for $30,000.” We asked him if he had gotten that much out of it. He said, “I already have taken out over $80,000 and haven’t worked one-fifth of the lay yet.” We the told him we had originally owned it, sold it to those two Swedes for $1500 and said, “You must think we are simps.” He said, “ No, I would have done the same thing myself, as we are experienced and know that placer diggings only exist in this country on the bedrock of the creeks, but these Swedes did not know that, although they told me that you had explained it to them.”

With a perversity characteristic of Northern people—after they had gone to the end of the claim—it struck them to dig a little farther west. After they had dug about 40 feet they struck it rich in the old original creek—which caught deposits perhaps thousands of years before the new creek began to exist. We worked for him in the claim about two months at $10 a day and “found” (meaning board). Then we took our dog teams and caught a downstream river steamer for our old camping ground.

Chapter VII: About Special Subjects

For proper understanding, it would seem necessary to give a few details as to how we dressed, how the sleds were made, and as regards to seals and walrus, how they were captured. Seals and walrus are not fun animals, like most people think, as fur seals only exist on the Pribilof Islands and it is the only place in the world where they seem to exist—although they do not seem to breed there. At a certain time each year they seem to disappear from the islands more into southern waters where it is warmer and they breed. After the young seals are strong enough to swim they start back to their home. To guard the young ones from sharks and other predators they are kept in the center of the group which swims at almost incredible speeds for such shaped animals. Nobody knows where they breed but they appear off the coast of lower California on their route home at almost the exact time where they are met by a number of U.S. Navy vessels to keep them from being killed by other nations such as Japan. So much for fur seals.

Clothing

The other kind of seals have no fur, just thick hair—something like a cow—generally reddish in color. The fur is very warm and worn almost exclusively for dress by both the natives and whites in that region. Speaking of whites only, we wore medium woolen underwear and trousers made of these seal skins and a parka which is sort of a jacket made without a front opening but with a draw string around the neck. It reaches to about eight inches above the knees. The head piece is sort of a hood extended about an inch or so, fringed with some kind of fur (usually rabbit fur). This hood extends over the neck of the parka about three inches to keep the wind out.

The lower part of the hood (about two inches wide) extends on each side far enough so it can be wrapped around the back of neck and tied in front. This leaves you pretty protected above with the exception of the nose and cheeks in extremely cold weather. For the nose I hit upon the idea of

taking a tuft of a rabbit's tail and sticking it, fur side down on my nose, just fastening top edge so it would flap up and down to keep the nose warm.

The wind was always quiet when it was extremely cold (forty to sixty below). You couldn't have anything over your face as the breath caused frost, and you couldn't see anything so the face got a good lathering. When you returned from a long trip the skin would usually peel off. The mittens were made out of seal lined with rabbit skin. The footwear for white people were moccasins made of moose hide—which is very heavy, with the bottom lined half an inch deep and renewed frequently with short tundra grass over which were lumbermen's socks.

Sleeping bags were also used by whites for long trips where you did not expect to run into Eskimo villages to pass the night. They were made double—one inserted into the other with the fur side in and with a flap on the head end. You crawled in feet first with your clothes on, pulled the flap down over your head, said good night, and you were in the land of dreams.

Sleds and Food

I won't attempt to describe the sleds in detail except to say they were about ten feet long with wooden runners and cross pieces near the top and side pieces, about fourteen inches deep. The entire sled was fastened together with seal skin thongs and a pair of handles in the back extending at an angle of about thirty-five degrees—with a cross piece on the top to hold on to when guiding the sled, which was used to carry provisions for ourselves and the dog team. The latter generally numbered from five to eleven dogs, according to your means.

Our food consisted of bacon, ham, dried potatoes, navy beans, sugar, salt, flour and so forth. The cooking was done in camp at the first best place for stopping. We generally cooked a week's ration of beans, Boston style, and as we had small sheet iron stoves we baked hot cakes or 'sea biscuits,' as we called them. After we started out on a trip—for the first meal—we would get out our little stove, which was about twelve by sixteen inches and weighed about eight pounds (knocked down). Then we would get out our batch of beans which would be frozen, get out our little George Washington hatchet, chop off what we needed, heated them in a frying pan, fried our bacon or ham and brewed a little tea or coffee, which in those regions was a feast for a king. The dogs were fed only once a day on sun dried salmon. If we fed them more often they'd lay down on the job. We generally fed them at

night, a half salmon each, after which they would have a general fight (more noise than fighting as you hardly ever saw a scratch on any of them). Then they'd lie down in a bunch, curved around, with their tails over their heads and soon they'd be in the land of nod until about four o'clock each morning, or eight hours after they'd gone to sleep. They would all get up, put their heads up in the air and give the most dismal howl—which we always heeded—and got up.

Of course when we came across Eskimo villages (and some of us could speak the Eskimo Language) they would take us in at night, feed us and the dogs out of their own larder, which was generally dried salmon, and limburger smelling seal oil—and we liked it.

Food, etc.

The food was served in the following manner during the cold season: sun dried salmon was put on a covering on the floor together with some kind of gourd (holding about a quart) filled with seal oil. All sat around Japanese fashion and began operations. The head of the house would pick up half a dried salmon, fasten his teeth at the top and tear out a strip about half an inch wide. After all had proceeded to do likewise each one began to munch pieces off of his strip (which wasn't bad at all) and then they would pass around the gourd with the seal oil. When each in turn would take a crack at that (which wasn't nearly as good, especially the smell) there was nothing to clear away when the meal was completed and no dishes to wash. When you had finished your meal (and after the night's stay), the natives would have your dog team hitched up and ready with fresh grass put into your moccasins. You'd pay them (if they took pay) with a handful of tea dust: they didn't use coffee. This tea dust would go farther in paying value than the same amount of gold or money because they had no use for either of the latter.

We decided to take a trip further north in late November to a rougher section of the country, and on hilly spots as a booster. We ran across two Newfoundland dogs and bought them. For the first few days we had no occasion to use them but thereafter we hitched them with the dogs to help over the rougher country. They were slower than the other dogs but the two of them were stronger than four of the "regulars" on account of their size. After we had been gone about a week we struck some extremely cold weather, and that night—after feeding our dogs as usual—we had to use cooked oatmeal for the Newfoundlands because the fish alone with seal oil

did not seem to agree with them. They also wouldn't sleep with the rest of the team. After all the dogs had been served we built a nice fire of big logs, got out our little stove, chopped off a chunk of beans, fried some bacon, etcetera. We got our sleeping bags ready, drew them up near the fire—close together—pulled the flap over our heads and said good night. I forgot to mention earlier that after you pulled the flap over your head and fell asleep the warmth of your body would sometimes generate too much heat for comfort. You could unconsciously push the flap open a little until later, when you got cold. Then you'd duck under the covers like you were in bed and pull the flap back over your head. On this particular night I got cold in my bag for the first time. I reached over and punched my partner who still had his flap open and was snoring away like a good fellow. I told him I was cold but afraid to get out to stir up the fire for fear of getting chilled, so he pulled himself out and began to throw logs on the fire and pulled me up closer, where I soon warmed up and crawled out too. When he looked at his watch we found out it was about five in the morning and we decided—since it was near our usual time to get up—to start breakfast and continue our journey. We went over to our Eskimo dogs to see if everything was all right and they were sleeping like babies, but when we went over to the protected place where the Newfoundlands were, they were frozen stiff. My partner looked at the government grade thermometer we had and it read sixty below! We attributed that reason to their freezing, plus the fact that we could not get them to drink the seal oil, which is a great factor in keeping warm in that country, and that their skin and fur was less than half as heavy as that of the Eskimo dogs. As this cold continued for the next few days at about the same temperature we dug a hole in a snow bank on the side of a hill to remain until the worst was over.

About the Bull Moose

At the end of that time we traveled another day, but towards morning (when we were in our sleeping bags) I felt something rolling me around a little. As I couldn't think what it might be I opened up the flap a bit, peeped out and saw a big bull moose glancing curiously at my partner's sleeping bag, and pawing at it with his front hooves. I saw my partner open his flap to take a peek and one was enough. We saw we were in for it: the old bull's mate was viewing the scene about half a block away, and as we had no weapons we saw some trees a short distance away. We came to the unanimous opinion that perhaps

under such circumstances discretion was the better part of valor. We left the sleeping bags quickly, yelling loudly to take their minds off us for the moment and made a bee line for two trees which were close together. I never knew a man with that much flesh could move as fast as he did but by the time I got to the tree he was nearly up to the first limb already. I think in a split second later I was on my first limb too. We thought yelling would scare them away as it was pretty darn cold, but the old bull lay down by the tree, staring at us with a sort of "President Wilson watchful waiting" slogan, seeming to say, "I'm in no hurry, boys, take your time." Our yelling brought the dogs over—there were seven of them—and as they came in sight the old bull (who may have had experience with rear attacks) got up quickly, backed his rump against the tree and bellowed a deep challenge. The lead dog by that time was near his bent antlers and the bull caught him under the belly and almost tossed him up into my partner's lap before he dropped down and lay quiet. With six dogs left who had no experience with this kind of fighting we figured the moose would dispatch them one by one while we froze to death. It was a matter of good luck that a group of six prospectors with dog teams happened to be passing by. They heard the noise, investigated where it was, since they had rifles, and drove up to about twenty feet. That was the end of Mr. Moose. All our dogs were more or less scratched up but not injured severely as they kept pretty well beyond the antlers range after seeing their mate killed.

After relating our close call to our rescuers and telling them where we were going, they said there was nothing there but there was an Eskimo village about ten miles away where they had already stopped. They knew we would be welcome because the Eskimos had learned English from one of the Catholic missionaries farther south. As this village was only two miles out of our way we gratefully accepted their kind invitation and were soon relating our experiences to the Eskimos, who received us in all kindness and told us we must remain with them until our dogs' sores were all healed. We spent nearly ten days with them, learning much of the Eskimo language and lore before we started back to from where we had set out, minus one dog and a lot of experience.

Before leaving we offered to pay them with some trinkets we had or gold dust, but they would accept neither, so we opened up a box we had in our sled containing five pounds of tea dust. Before opening this one however, I showed one of them a box having about a quart in it. He took out a handful

and seemed to be satisfied. I made him put it back, telling him "no." He looked a bit hurt but didn't say anything, so I pried off the lid of the new five pound box and said to him, "all yours." I thought he was going to drop dead! He tried to get us to stay another week, but we left the next morning accompanied by a guide, arriving at our starting quarters and some time later journeyed back to St. Michael.

At Sea on a Cake of Ice

In the spring a party of eight of us with two dog teams started north for the Kotzebue Sound, expecting to go further on later if at all practical. Of course at this time of the year sleighing is at its best as the sun leaves a glaze on the snow and the longer days make it possible to make good progress. During one of these days we were traveling along the ocean beach where the water is frozen ten miles out or more on the Bering Sea toward Siberia. The same condition on the other side often leaves an open water gap only a few miles between the two shores, and it seems as if you could jump over it. As the snow covers this frozen ice the same as on the shore, and the beach is practically level, it is impossible to distinguish where the shore line is, so we probably traveled in ignorance over the ocean and part time on land. Being new at this game we found ourselves floating on ice at sea, some distance from shore—the ice having broken loose during a thaw while we were asleep. We concluded a receding tide had pulled us away from shore. When we realized our dilemma (eight men and two dog teams of seven dogs each) we began to plan what was the best thing to do. We knew we couldn't possibly get back until a high tide came to carry us back to shore. There were no boats—not even Eskimo boats in that vicinity at this time of the year.

We set up camp after figuring about how long we'd have to wait for the tide, fed our dogs, filled our 'tummies,' got out our pipes and held a council of war. We came to the conclusion that the longer we stayed there the more precarious our position would be because each receding tide could take us a little further out to sea. We therefore kept our dog teams hitched and everything packed on the sleds awaiting that event—and when sleeping time arrived we kept two men on guard to warn us when that time had arrived. We approached shore a number of times within a period but at no time did we come near enough for the grand rush without risking disaster. We began to think we were fighting a lost cause and feeling very blue, and pretty hungry. While the dogs were howling for something to eat we all felt a sensation of

the ice moving toward the shore. As this move was somewhat earlier than expected we figured we were probably in for an extra high tide, which made sense, as the clouds cleared away to give us a view of a full moon—which signified a higher tide.

We broke camp immediately and drove the teams as near to the edge of the ice as was safe and opposite a point on the shore which was clear of debris. We had agreed that as soon as we felt the ice touching the shore we would make the rush with our teams and provisions. As soon as we felt it touching we were off, six men on foot and one each behind a dog team holding the sleds steady from behind. As we got a foot on shore we ran like the devil was after us for a distance of about fifty yards, then turned around to see how the dog teams were doing. We found them coming strong, making more noise than a pack of wolves. We ran a little farther and waited for them. It was a good thing we ran far up on the shore as the high tide, assisted by strong winds from Siberia, sent the ice crashing and crumbling in with a roar that reminded me of the storm on the ocean during our voyage to Dutch Harbor. For an hour afterwards the dogs sat back on their haunches and growled!

Polar Bears in Action and a Whaling Expedition

This was the best season of the year for traveling (in June) as the icebergs were covered with walrus and sea lions, easily seen in full view, moving down toward the warmer waters. We decided to get a preview of these situations by going still further north near Kotzebue. We were rewarded for our trouble when we saw our first polar bear on an ice flow, sneaking up on seals, killing them, and also watching at the edge of the ice, patiently waiting for a fish. When one came near enough he would reach out with his long claws and hook him in—sometimes falling into the water himself to finish the job there. We were able to see this clearly because I had brought my sixty power telescope with me.

Going out on a promontory (which rose about 200 feet) gave us a view out to sea for about thirty miles and the telescope brought the objects within half a mile from where you were. During our week's stay we also saw several whalers in action from this same point.

The whalers would anchor their ship several miles out until they saw a whale, and then send out a large boat manned with eight oarsmen and a harpoon thrower. They would sneak up on the whale who was apparently

dozing, and when they got within throwing distance the harpoon thrower would stand up in the front, and when everything was still he would throw the harpoon. We only saw one hit—or rather, where the hit was effective. The whale seemed to kind of hump up as the harpoon struck him. Then he would dive down and we could see the rope (which was attached to a reel) begin to unwind with incredible speed as the whale descended. After a time it would slack up a little which showed he was coming to the surface for air for another trial. In order to be prepared the men on the boat began to rewind the reel, and by the time the whale reached the surface and seemed to rest a little, the boatmen had taken much of the slack up, just like a fisherman catching a fish on line. The next time he'd shoot along the water toward the boat and these were certainly exciting periods, but they seemed to skillfully avoid him, and would shoot him with something which we couldn't make out. The whale would go down again and repeat the routine just mentioned until he seemed 'all in.' Then the steamship drew slowly near until it came alongside of him after which he spouted up water several times, and that seemed to be the last of him. Several boats were then let down beside him, making him fast to the ship.

As they ceased operations for a time we thought we would come out again in the morning to see them finish their job. After eating supper we drove a little farther inland and witnessed a battle royal between a polar bear and seven Eskimo dogs which evidently had gotten loose from their owner, whose sled we saw a short distance away. Two dogs rushed toward him a first and he stood up on his hind legs with gleaming eyes and snarling teeth, opened up his long front claws and ripped the two dogs from stem to stern. The others followed suit in the attack and by the time their owner arrived a few moments later he found his dogs strewn about in shreds and the old bear lumbering off toward the iceberg. We took the owner along with us on our sled until he had an opportunity to buy some more dogs from the Eskimos, a few days later.

The next morning when we went to have another view of the whaling vessel with the telescope it had gone. I don't know if it had disappeared on the other side of the iceberg or not, but we were very disappointed since we missed seeing the carving of the whale. As near as we could judge the whale seemed to be about sixty feet long.

About the Mastodon

On our way back to Nome and St. Michael we ran into a camp of prospectors, who on digging down about ninety feet, came upon a huge mastodon completely frozen in the ice. A couple of scientists happened to be there from the Geodetic Survey and they helped dig it out, stating that it had probably been there over fifty thousand years, probably frozen in some tropical climate during one of the glacial periods, and in the swirl of human events carried up here. "Of course," they added, "these are only scientific surmises as there are many other possibilities."

The first part of the mastodon that came to view was the trunk which seemed raised to a height of three or four feet above his body, and at someone's suggestion a hatchet was brought forward to cut off a piece and thaw it. Since it was frozen all these years without striking air, it seemed perfectly fresh when it was thawed, and someone suggested cooking a piece of it to see what it would taste like. We all took a small nibble so we could say what we had done, and proceeded to further excavation. The huge body was covered with long hair, not very thick, and the tusks were about six feet long and curved. After the body was completely uncovered it deteriorated very fast. Since that time quite a number of the same types were found in Alaska under similar circumstances.

Returning to Seattle on the Way Home

Having spent about three and a half years in these hyperborean regions and meeting with many hardships, driving dog teams and reindeer for many miles under various conditions for various purposes, having spent some time in Government service connected to the Postal Department and Geodetic Survey, doing considerable prospecting, meeting with many unusual experiences, interesting, but too numerous to mention, I will bring this to a close as this was only intended to be a sketch, giving highlights.

We sold our dog teams and other paraphernalia and gathered together a few souvenirs to take back home including four large walrus tusks, a miniature sled as described previously, two walrus skinned canoes—all closed excepting three openings for the three oarsmen to sit, some gold nuggets and a few snap shots. One, of myself, with whiskers, standing in front of the Post Office at St. Michael, the other an Eskimo squaw carrying a papoose on her back and some wood in her arms, and last but not least, a

picture of the ‘midnight sun’ as it appeared, just peeping above the horizon at midnight.

We returned home on the *Roanoke*, the same vessel we had come up on from Dutch Harbor three years before, with the same captain and crew in charge. And (as mentioned before) because of the shallow water in the Bering Sea he anchored about eight miles from shore. As the weather was a little rough and the sea choppy, and dangerous to go out in small boats to reach the steamer (as they would crash against its sides), they took passengers aboard from a large ‘lighter’ or scow. Freight was taken up on large cranes which had nets hung to the hook. These nets were large enough to hold eight to ten tons of freight and the crane would swing fifteen to twenty feet from the vessel down to the barge or lighter, then swing back to the vessel. Passengers had to be picked up the same way and all had been loaded except for myself and a woman of about forty, weighing over 180 pounds. At first she balked on going in that way but when told that this was the last ship going to Seattle for the season, and if she didn’t go she’d be the only woman on the island, she changed her mind. She had come to Alaska for two months for a pleasure trip but was soured very much on staying any longer. They put her in the net (which would lay flat on the boat) and told me to get in too. When the net was picked it began to grow taut, but some other parts caught in some improper way in the upper part of the net and it rolled us to the other end. We would have been all right if she could have kept her temper and equilibrium, and not gotten scared, but in the excitement she lost all three, thought she was going overboard, and like a drowning man clutching to a straw, she grabbed me around the body and let out an unearthly scream. At this critical moment the part of the net that had caught improperly suddenly came loose, and so did we. I didn’t see much after that because we both went into the sea. I went in head first and I thought I’d wind up in China but I came up and three or four seamen were there to grab me.

The woman—having on a dress and probably balloon pants—landed in the water feet first. She only went down a few feet before the sailors grabbed her. The first thing she did after spitting out some of the water was to knock down a grinning sailor standing in front of her—for which she apologized later. She was a very fine woman and made many friends on the boat. As I had good sense to hold my breath I suffered no inconveniences except a good ducking, but I found after I changed my clothes that a wallet with some papers which I had in my inside coat pocket had dropped out. These papers

contained notes of my whole trip through Alaska, written on fine paper, and I valued them very much. I planned to use these notes later with someone who knew the 'law' to write a book of my experiences.

The first two days out at sea were beautiful—the sea was almost as smooth as glass. The following three days were very stormy, reminding me of my trip to Dutch Harbor on the *Charles Nelson.*

Of course this was a larger steamer—some 4000 tons and a passenger boat compared to the 800 ton freighter—and it made all the difference in the world as the big steamer would straddle most of the shorter waves. All the same, almost everyone was sick during those three days and only a few went to the dining room. On account of my acquaintance with the captain, the doctor took me in charge and after the first stormy day I could watch the other passengers go through their various acrobatic performances that I had done myself on the earlier trip. After the storm had passed everybody had their stomachs cleaned out and enjoyed the excellent food.

The balance of the trip was very enjoyable.

Thus we landed in Seattle.

-Finis-

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