

# Law in Alaska Colony Is the Law of the Gun

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## Pioneers Who Don't Want to Tie Up Dogs Find Sentiment—and .32s Are Against Them

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Palmer, Alaska—(By Radio)—You take in the old days of the golden west, when there arose trouble too minor for a gun to settle, the boys got together in a noisy caucus, cussed hell out of each other, maybe had a fist fight or two and then parted with handclaps given and the trouble ended.

They do that in the Matanuska valley, too.

It seems that there live those in the pioneer colony who thought that in the absence of any uniformed cop like back home they could damn well run things to suit themselves. Briefly, they decided that the new general council and its first law relative to hounds running wild at night—when it's tough enough trying to sleep anyway, what with the sun tanning your hide at midnight—could go plumb to the devil and lump it.

They've got a different slant on things now.

### It Is Dogs or Hogs?

Pat Hemmer, grizzled, sinewy and fast lipped, called his headquarters camp colonists together Thursday night and together they laid down the law—and they're backing it up with guns.

"What about people not tying up these pooches as per the council's orders?" Hemmer demanded.

"Make 'em tie 'em up. Make 'em tie 'em up," several in the crowd yelled.

"No, sir," a recalcitrant dog owner protested. "I'm not tying up my dog. Snodgrass' hogs go through the camp tipping over garbage cans, and don't that make a sweet song, maybe even sweeter than dogs."

### The Motion Is Made

M. D. Snodgrass is a resident settler living just across the railroad tracks from headquarters camp. Five or six of his little red pigs have been getting fat off the waste of some colonists, who have been living high, since all they have to do to get food is to sign for it at the commissary.

"We're talking about dogs, not hogs," Hemmer stoutly asserted.

"I make a motion the camp tie up all dogs after dark," a mackinawed, whiskered pioneer suggested. Hemmer repeated the motion.

"Whatdya mean, tie 'em up after dark?" the recalcitrant dog owner demanded of Hemmer.

"I didn't make that motion," Hemmer retorted.

"You said after dark and it never gets dark here."

### Urges Use of Guns

"Well, make it 9:30 to 10 o'clock. Everybody in favor of that say 'Aye,'" Hemmer shouted.

There was a chorus of ayes and the men who had been talking so loudly about letting their dogs run wild emitted nary a negative peep. Maybe they thought there'd be no way to enforce the convention's edict.

"Well, all right," Hemmer continued in a satisfied tone. "Pooches are supposed to be tied up by 9:30 or 10 o'clock. If they're not tied up what are you going to do?"

"Use your .32," a grim visaged colonist shouted, waving his fist.

The way his cohorts cheered left no doubt about acceptability of that type of enforcement.

### More About Garbage

With that business disposed of according to the best traditions of pioneering, the boys—and the women, too, for many had brought their wives along—got to arguing about

what to do with the garbage, the Snodgrass pigs being unable to consume all of it and the government health men beginning to get tough about sanitary conditions. Furthermore, Hemmer said he'd try to get Snodgrass to try to restrain his hogs, which, of course, would make the garbage disposal problem even more acute.

"Let each two streets dig a hole for dumping garbage," Charlie Ruddell recommended.

"Yeh, and then Butch won't dig and they'll come over and fill our hole with rubbish," Ted Giblin pouted.

"You've got a shotgun, ain't you," loudly interposed the man who had talked about the .32 before.

That seemed to settle that and the convention passed a motion that a garbage hole 12 by 12 by 10 feet deep be dug.

### Two of the Boys Mix

"Good grief," protested Lloyd Bell, objecting to the size of the proposed garbage pit, "you could bury a dozen horses in a hole that size. Why don't everybody burn their garbage, cans and all, like we do? Then you wouldn't need holes."

Bell was outvoted and the garbage disposal hole agreed on.

Later Ruddell challenged Bell, claiming he couldn't possibly burn cans. One hot word led to a hotter one and finally—s m a c k—Ruddell clouted Bell on the kisser! Bell bounced up and made a pass at Ruddell just as the others separated them.

"Forget it, forget it," the cooler heads cautioned and so the combatants shook hands. But Bell still insisted he burned those cans and Ruddell insisted he didn't.

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## Dissatisfied Transients Quit in Alaska



DISSATISFACTION at the Matanuska colonization project in Alaska has afflicted both the settlers themselves and the transient laborers. Some of the latter group are shown standing in front of the box car that serves as the Palmer depot just after they went out in a body claiming mismanagement of their affairs.

[Photo by Arville Schaleben of The Journal Staff]