

Many of the women were so tearful at parting from their menfolk that one would think the separation was going to be permanent or at least for months, but remember that these women are in a strange country, more than 4,000 miles from home and can hardly be blamed for being upset.

The women and children will sleep and eat aboard the St. Mihiel until they leave for camp. The men were to draw lots Thursday for their 40-acre lots in the Matanuska valley.

All the colonists were at the rail Wednesday when the St. Mihiel steamed up to Seward's timbered dock. As the boat nosed in the 12-piece band on the pier blared forth martial music and 200 or so smiling Alaskans were on hand to welcome their new compatriots. Cheers were few, but the crowd on the dock left no doubt of Seward's curiosity about the strangers from the States.

Little Girl First Ashore

Of all the newcomers little Virginia Larose of Phillips, Wis., was first to disembark. She stepped shyly to shore looking cute as the doll she clutched to her. Her deep dimples showed as ready camera men snapped her and what she said was not "Alaska, we are here," but "Oh, daddy, they took my picture and it's going to be in the newspapers."

After Virginia came pioneers. They murmured excitedly about the mountain scenery which enfolds Seward, about stevedores who were already wrestling with their freight

couldn't find one of his 11 youngsters.

He Was Going Back

"Let me through here," he commanded, shouldering a husky sailor. "I'm going back on that boat."

"Never mind where you're going," the harried sailor barked gruffly. "I'm getting these kids off without any broken legs, ain't I? I can take care of them better than you can."

"No you can't," Bill pugnaciously insisted. "I've taken care of them 20 years and I'm not quitting now."

But finally he calmed down and presently his stray came bouncing out of the shuffle, right side up and laughing.

All the excitement, of course, was

ward's harbor.

Beelines for Saloons

In fact, men who had not eaten heartily since they left Seattle made beelines for the saloons. They hooked their heels over brass rails and cocked elbows on bars and im-

From a Box

Alaska Pioneers Get Plots but Some Trade, Now for Hard Work

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN
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Palmer, Alaska—It was journey's end Thursday for the 128 men settlers from Michigan and Wisconsin who are to establish new homes in the Matanuska valley.

After a sleepless rail ride from Seward they lined up in the open under a warm, smiling sky. They were joined by the Minnesota settlers who arrived here two weeks ago and drew lots for the 40-acre plots which will be their future farms.

Farm From a Box

Director Don Irwin stood on a crude platform of planks over steel barrels and briefly explained the procedure. Then a cardboard box was brought forth, containing little folded slips of paper, each giving the legal description of one of the 40-acre farms. Each settler stepped forth and drew his slip. Fate ruled those moments. It smiled kindly on some, giving them land near this tiny railroad station and to some tracts on fish filled creeks or placid blue lakes. Others it put on the outer fringes of the project, seven or eight miles from the proposed community center.

But the settlers had held their own little lottery first to determine places in line for the important drawing. Some of the Minnesota settlers played "hunches" and designated their wives or one of their children to draw for them. Arthur Hack of Ogilvie, Minn., pulled first. He got No. 168. No 1 stayed in the box until but a handful remained, then fell to Martin McCormick, East Tamas, Mich. So McCormick, tall and rawboned, stepped up to pick sight and unseen, the little slip that would allot him his new farm. He was intensely sober that moment. Not a muscle of his face moved as he thrust his hand into the lottery box, but his fingers trembled.

FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1935

McCormick slowly withdrew the slip, unfolded it and read aloud to the others the description. He pushed through the crowd to the map and discovered that his luck had indeed been good. He had drawn a fine piece just two miles from the station.

"That suits me," he smiled. "That's good land. I can make it there."

The drawing continued for three hours. Some got what they had hoped for, smiled ear to ear and clapped comrades on the back. Others were disappointed because they would be separated from close friends, or because they would be far from good fishing.

All this led to considerable consequent bartering. The men got together and exchanged slips. Some of those who had drawn better tracts demanded something to boot in the

exchange—and got it. Others to drive too hard a bargain found no takers. A surpise were completely satisfied with the drawing and bartering over and most of the lot who had come from Michigan or Minnesota had managed to get farms other.

One settler had swapped along the crystal clear Fl to a fishing enthusiast for near town with building acres cleared. That part farm was considered a prize, as indeed it should be of the tracts are covered with and light timber.

Care had been taken, that no sterile land should be signed. Every piece was surveyed and tested for fertility before surveyed.

Friday many of the settlers plodding out over narrow or across lots through the get their first look at the They must have realized stood looking over the va "Uncle Sam's joy ride" and from now on it was lame backs and aching arms