Men Draw Lots for Land; to Pitch Camp While Women Wait in Seward

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN

Seward, Alaska—The men of the Wisconsin and Michigan pioneers of the Seward Expedition to Alaska left here today for the interior of Alaska, where they are to set up new homes in the wilderness.

The flag waving, the cheering, the floating and sounds of entertainment that have been daily routine for the pioneers since they left their homes in the middle west is about over. Reality is at hand. Ahead there is mostly hard work and they know it.

The women and the children of the party were left behind here at Seward and will stay there until the men have set up camp at Palmer and have some kind of accommodations.

The day was a fine one. The sun shone bright and the spirit of the day was evident.

Many of the women wore blue uniforms and were very active in the work of preparing food for the men.

The men set up camp near the shore and began building small shelters for their families.

The day was a success and the men were happy with their work.

They had come a long way to start a new life, but they were determined to make it a success.

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Draw Farms From a Box

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

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN

Palmer, Alaska—It's an event in the history of Alaska and a milestone in the development of the territory.

A new community is being formed, and the people are hard at work.

The Alaska Pioneers have been awarded plots of land in the Matanuska Valley near Palmer, and they are working hard to make the most of their new homes.

The pioneers are determined to make the most of their land and to build a new community.

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Seattle, Wash.—A western symphony of dance seized Thursday for the federal colony in the Matanuska Valley of Alaska. There was a dancing and music all night long.

Sawmill workers joined in the fun and danced the night away.

The music was provided by a local band, and the crowd was enthusiastic.

The dance was a big success, and the pioneers were happy with their new homes.

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Seattle, Wash.—A native of Alaska is working on a new book about his life and the history of his people.

The book is called "Our Past and Our Future," and it is scheduled to be published next year.

The author is a native of Alaska and has spent his life in the state.

He is determined to share his knowledge and experience with others.

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From a Box

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

By ABIVILLE SCHALEN

Fairbanks, Alaska—It was* : day'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 60-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 60-acre farms. Each settler stepped forth and drew his slip. Fate ruled those moments. It smiled kindly on some, giving them land near the tiny railroad station and to some tracts on fish filled creeks or placid blue lakes. Others put on the other fringe 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 West of Ogilvie, Minn., pulled first. He got No. 16. No 1 stayed in the box until but a handful remained. Then fell to Martin McCormick, Earl Tanna, 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.

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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 exchanged—and got it. Others tried to drive too hard a bargain and found no takers. A surprising number were completely satisfied when the drawing and haying was all over and most of the little groups who had come from Michigan or Wisconsin or Minnesota together had managed to get farms near each other.

One settler had swapped a strip along the crystal clear Finger lake to a fishing enthusiast for a tract near town with buildings and 20 acres cleared. That partly cleared farm was considered a particular prize, as indeed it should be, for most of the tracts are covered with brush and light timber.

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

Friday many of the settlers were jollying out over narrow dirt roads or across lots through the brush to get their first look at their farms. They must have realized as they stood looking over the valley that "Uncle Sam's joy rides" was over and from now on it was sweat and late backs and aching arms.