A City Booms as of Yore in Alaska Wilds

By ARVILLE SCHULLEN

You Walk Down a Street in Palmer, When You Come Back There Is Something New

Palmer, Alaska—Life-Molder Boon City, where things that can’t be done are done every day... Boon City, mushrooming out of a wilderness... Boon City, which never sleeps... which thrives gloriously in your eyes and mine... which gives gold and working men a home (Boon City, that’s you)

In the same broad, fantastic, confounding, blundering, blustering, miraculous way, every man for himself and yet every man for his neighbor, contrary today and obedient tomorrow, America, that’s your Palmer.

Uncle Sam is doing this. He’s higher gold that’s guiding the city. It’s his men that’re in the streets. It’s his men keeping the valleys green and irrigating the ways.

For Air, New $1.00

They bid in the Colorado and Yukon and Nevada gold rush days that it couldn’t be done again—the mushroom city business. Maybe they were right. But Uncle Sam is weaving a pattern as incredible.

On May 3 Palmer’s population was five, all members of the Felton family. On May 6 it jumped to 122. That was when Uncle Sam’s training camp opened here.

Now the population exceeds 1,000.

The ERA DWELLERS FROM THE MOUNTAINS have scrunched in with their families; additional transferees are on hand; the administrative force has doubled, tripled and grown to tenfold, and the Bubble town boom drifters came along with their rooted ways. Why we even have a pastor or two.

And things that can’t be done are done every day. They dumped 500 women and children on the town at one time last week. There wasn’t any place for them to sleep. They had to sleep away from their and they ate.

Tons Fairly Bredly

Settled families gave room until some of them hit up to 70 tents bulging with 14 men, women and children besides their own breed. Food wasn’t ready to 20 men pitched into the commissary and clapped together hundreds and hundreds of sandwiches—cold meat, cheese and plain butter.

Alicona’s Drop In

Special excursion trains run out from Anchorage. The fare is 4 cents—cheaper one way. Wealthy excursionists now come in to the choons, for Alaska is admitted and enterprising pilots from Anchorage quickly established connections. The 49-mile trip costs $25.

Before Boon City boomed, the Alaska railroad ran once a week into Palmer. It covered this break in the line by the calendar, instead of the time table. Now trains come in every day, bringing gravel, bagged feed, coal, lumber, stoves, tools, tractors, pencils and what have you.

Much of this stuff is dumped off along the sidings. The tiny station platform can’t begin to accommodate it. Mattresses, bed springs, suitcases, dog tickers and all clutter the railroad grade. Try and by you disappear, who, the constraining rule to wander among them and find his own, only to be replaced in night or day by new shippers.

Trucks roll ceaselessly along the dirt roads—always either dusty or muddy. The workers operate them in shifts, for transportation is a real problem in Palmer and available equipment must not stand idle.

For 6 months the road crews with 6 men, the trucks cut roads... shovels. Roads must be repaired continually. A mudslide develops. Gravel raffles off the road cars into dump trucks. Two or three loads are poured into the road hole. Half a dozen men spread them to a layer of parade of trucks over them.

Forty-horsepower, three-ton tractors round the town, flagging wagons and tractors laden with the dirt. Gravel and earth are thrown onto the road beds with glistening glow from their iron bodies.

In every great development capture power has man’s achievements. In the winning of America’s west it was the horse. In the building of America’s metropolitan sea it was the steam shovel and the derrick. In Palmer it is the truck and the tractor. What has been done could not have been done without trucks.

But Things Are Done

Yes, we’re jumbled and rough in Boon City. But there’s directions here, too, that steps in miraculously and rights things just when it seems confusion is getting the upper hand. And there’s no confusion about the main objective—putting 200 farmers in the Matanuska valley operation. It is just the individual effort that is jumbled, most indi-vidual rights when things move as swiftly as here.

“I hear the tread of pioneers, 100,000 ahead of me. The first low wash of waves where the sun sets...”

Small shall a human sea. The elements of empire here are plastic yet warm and the chaos of a mighty world is rounding into form.”

Wisconsin

Best of Land Given Settlers

Brother, Let Me Roll In One; Pioneer Exclaims on Seeing Rich Loam of Valley

By ARVILLE SCHULLEN

Palmer, Alaska—By Ma-Mi, you can’t find a man among the unshaven, tobacco-puffing outdoorsmen who inhabit the wild Matanuska valley who speaks badly of its soil. Even the dour boys back in the hills, who since Kisikwak days have been "clean mad for the muck called gold," concede its fertility.

Small wonder then that not one of the new colonists from Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota has uttered a complaint against the soil they have come to till.

Take Nicholas Weiler of Medford, Wis. He dig his beetroot toe into the black sandy loam, fashioning a tiny railroad around his new home.

Looms Ft Feet Deep

"See this?" he inquired. "You can’t beat it. There’s nothing like it and a lot of it—red and yellow. Even the sand is black as coal here. It’s loaded with humus. All you got to do is work it up and then plant it. Then have your crops to the land and it’ll push ‘em up. We’ve got a hold of some land here that’ll really produce.

This is the kind of soil a farmer dreams about. About Andrew Johnson of Crystal Falls, Mich., in his new home in the red-clay belt.

In a road cut where the low was 12 feet deep.

Claire La Flam from Shell Lake, Wis., said that he was almost a bit around the United States but he had never seen anything that looked better to him.

And the land does mean innovation on anyone who knows anything about farming, especially when compared with the sterile stuff the colonists abandoned. You can see in the patches under cultivation how well it works up. No chlops, no big rocks, no sandy wastes—just jet black, fancy soil that needs only the right growing weather to build heavy yields.

Undoubtedly some of the soil in the valley is sour. Moss is one indication of that. Director Don Irwin of the colonisation, says, however, that in laying out the farm tracts, efforts were made to avoid sour and through tests. Of course, even though some sour acres are found on that stuff, he’ll fix it. You’ll be amazed at the oats. The colonists already have amazed by the stories of how Low—grain four and five feet tests as big as a man’s hands that rise above the size of coffee cups. When you see your crops emerge from the ground and merge into day with a way of darkness and when the Matanuska’s soil in your hand and the mud talks, it makes one decide to explode, as Perle Archibald did.

"Brother, let me at that land. By