

THE ALASKAN

25¢

AGRICULTURIST



*Published in the interests
of Alaska's Modern Pioneers*

Spring 1953



Our Front Cover

Mrs. Bannon candles eggs that will be weighed and graded on automatic machine, an Elmore Egg Grader made in Oneata, N. Y. (Inset) Part of the Leghorn breeding stock. Photo by Robert Matsen.

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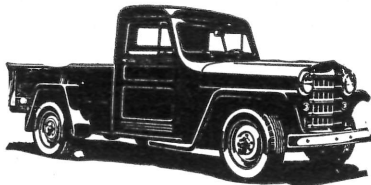
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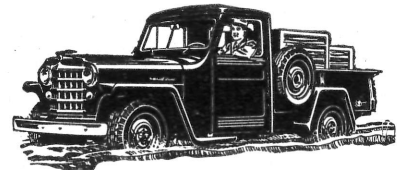
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COVER: Alaskan Egg Factory — Photo by Robert Matson

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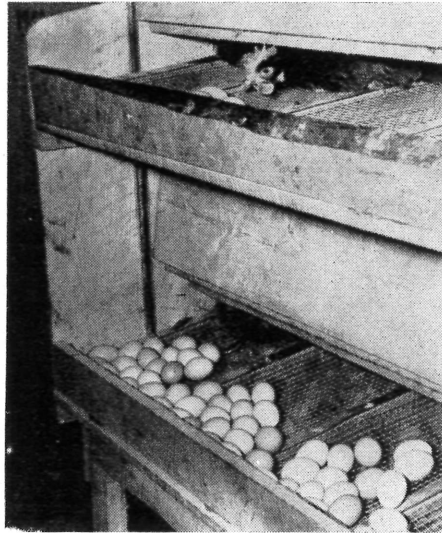
ALASKAN EGG FACTORY

By Robert Matsen

Going into its fifth year of production is one of the largest chicken and egg factories in Alaska. Located high on a bench on the north side of the Glenn Highway, it is sixteen miles east of Palmer and two miles east of Sutton Post Office. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bannon, the owners, started their enterprise in 1949, after having taken up their homestead there the previous year. Before coming to Alaska, the Bannons owned and operated a chicken farm and hatchery at Mesa, Arizona.

That first year of operation was one of the most difficult for the young couple. They had had neither the time nor the money to put up buildings of sufficient size so their beginning was crude at best. Their laying stock consisted of 125 White Leghorn hens. The following year they switched from the Leghorns to Rhode Island Reds, having obtained 400 baby chicks from Crooks Farm, North Brookfield, Massachusetts. They were flown from there to Alaska.

"We like the Reds better than the Leghorns," Bannon told me. "They are less tempermental, lay more eggs



"Hey, What Goes Here?" A Rhode Island Red hen looks under the edge of a nest to see what has been happening to her efforts. Nests were designed and built by Bannon. Eggs roll out of way as soon as they are laid.

to end a month's production would reach a mile and that's a lot of eggs," Albert said.

While they have been busy building up their laying flocks, the Bannons have been putting up buildings to house them. Their main building is a two-story frame structure of 30 x 60 feet. The egg-grading, hatchery and brooder house is 16 x 24 feet, built of railroad ties. "When we get our big chicken house finished we will be able to take care of twice as many chickens as we have now," Bannon stated. "Our biggest worry is that of having disease infect our flocks. So far we have been lucky here in Alaska where disease is concerned, but once it hits a flock, a chicken farmer can find himself out of business in a hurry."

Except for the animal heat from the chickens, the chicken house is unheated. Electrically-driven ventilating fans provide air circulation and fresh water is piped into the building from the creek that runs through the farm. In early summer Bannon places fresh sawdust litter a foot deep in the chicken house so that bacteria can develop before cold weather. Bacterial action disintegrates the droppings rapidly and eliminates the need for frequent cleaning of the chicken house.

Although they have cleared several acres of land the couple have not found time to raise their own feed so they buy commercial feed. Each chicken consumes between nine and ten pounds of feed each month at a

cost of seventy-five cents. That means the entire flock eats approximately six tons of feed every month.

While Albert takes care of the housing and feeding of the chickens, Mrs. Bannon supervises the candling, grading and packaging of the eggs, as well as watching over the incubator and brooders. She is sometimes assisted by her two daughters, aged five and two. They have an electrically-operated candler and grader which candles and grades every egg. Their incubator is a Jamesway with a capacity of 2400 eggs, is also electrically-operated and heated.

They hatch and sell around 5000 baby chicks every year, and while it does not furnish a large percentage of their income it provides a welcome supplement to it. Every other year they replace their own flock with baby chicks from the Crooks Farm.

The Bannons are well satisfied with their progress to date. It has meant a great deal of hard work for both of them, with little chance to get away from the farm and go to an occasional show. Mrs. Bannon told me that in the five years they have been in the business she has been to Anchorage only three times.

"We're just now beginning to show a profit in our business and as soon as we get our building done and our flock built up to full capacity we will be able to make a nice living. Right now it ties us to home pretty closely," they say, "But there's one thing we don't have to worry about. As long as we are in the chicken business we'll never be out of a job."



Mrs. Bannon checks 2400 eggs Jamesway Incubator

and produce more meat, so they are better all around chickens for us."

At present the Bannons have over 1200 layers, about half of them Leghorns and the other half Reds. From these they get over 900 eggs per day or 28,000 eggs per month. "Laid end

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By D. E. SKINNER

Vice-President and General Manager
Alaska Steamship Company

Millions of acres of Alaska muskegs, composed entirely of sphagnum moss and sedges, may provide the answer to the rapidly-growing demand for peat products in the United States.

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and keep well-tailored lawns, is beginning to tax present supply.

In the past, increased consumption has been met by improving the process of harvesting peat from small deposits in the Central and Western States and by imports from Canada and the Scandinavian Countries.

Now, urged by the uncertainty of the domestic supply and the desire to be less dependent on foreign imports, producers of peat can turn to the rich and highly attractive sources provided by the Alaska muskegs.

The big question facing those who are considering Alaska operations is: Can costs be kept low enough to com-

pete in major markets?

A recent report prepared by the U. S. Forest Service indicates several favorable factors with respect to peat deposits on the Tongass National Forest of Southeast Alaska.

1. Substantial commercial deposits, some of sphagnum peat and others of sedge peat, are within the Tongass National Forest, close to harbors and water transportation facilities.

2. Many are located where water is readily available for excavation by the hydraulic method.

3. The product could be economically piped from the pit to tidewater processing plants.

4. The large deposits make long term operations possible.

There are three types of peat bogs in Alaska—pure moss, pure sedge, and stratified layers of moss and sedge. In general, moss deposits range from ten to eighteen feet; sedge from six to ten feet.

Inquiries for more complete information should be directed to D. E. Skinner, Alaska Steamship Company, Pier 42, Seattle, Washington; Alaska Development Board, Box 50, Juneau, Alaska; or the Regional Forester, U. S. Forest Service, Juneau.

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THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

During the next few months the fate of next fall's harvest will be decided. Now, well before planting time, plans must be formulated and carried bit by bit as the spring and summer progresses, if we are to have crops to harvest come next September.

Quite a few of the folks who read this will be planting their first garden in Alaska this spring. Quite a number of others will be planting their first successful gardens, having learned the hard way that gardening up here is very different from what they followed successfully in the States.

One of the most common mistakes made by the newcomer is to assume that the soil is rich because it looks black and fertile. Alaska soil is not fertile, unless made so artificially. This in spite of all the propaganda to the contrary. Most of the soil here is potentially fertile, made up largely of moss and other vegetable matter. But since bacterial action has hardly started yet it is still in an undecayed form and therefore is releasing practically no plant food. The soil made up of dust and sand blown in, as in the Matanuska Valley, is somewhat better. But even here on the best of Alaska's soil large quantities of fertilizer is a **must** if good crops are to be harvested.

Much of Alaskan soil is shallow, sometimes being formed with less than a foot of top soil over gravel. This has advantages as well as disadvantages, because it can be worked quicker in the spring than can deep soil. As soon as the ground thaws out 18 inches or so deep it dries out so it can be worked.

The disadvantages are, because of drying out sooner, it gets drier during our annual drought the latter part of July and August, making the plants suffer more. No soil should be worked too soon. It should not be plowed or spaded until it will crumble when harrowed or raked without muddying up.

There is no object in planting in ground that is wet and cold because the reason it is wet is the winter ice is melting; and until it is dry it is too cold to start the seed. Even those varieties that sprout at a low temperature cannot grow until it is warm anyway.

TIME TO PLANT

Most people who are new to the country and some that are not, get fooled by the few warm days in the spring. There are always two or three weeks of the most pleasant kind of shirt-sleeve weather, before anything

starts growing. Of course it must warm up to even start the icy ground melting. Then after it melt down two or three feet the ground must warm up enough to start the seed and keep the little plants growing. This usually come about the latter part of May or the early part of June.

It is always better to let nature herself give the sign that it is time to

plant. The Birch trees are usually the first trees to put out leaves. When the Birch trees nearest the ground to be planted begin putting out their first leaves, it's time to plant, and not before. If seed is placed in the ground previous to this time, you are almost sure to get a poor stand or no stand at all, regardless of how good the seed is. Those plants that do manage to

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come up turn yellow and do badly. Don't plant too early.

HOW TO PLANT

Because Alaskan soils are cold, especially in the spring and get colder rapidly as greater depth is reached from the surface, until in many cases perma frost is reached, all crops must be planted shallow to take advantage of the warm surface soil.

Crops root shallow for the same reason. All small seeds like carrots, radishes and turnips should be covered about one-fourth inch and firmed down over the row to insure moisture. Potatoes should be planted about one-inch deep and then hilled up about two inches. In all cases, the ground should be firmed down over the planted row, with a hoe or the feet, because the top inch or so of soil tends to dry out too quickly. All mechanical planters have wheels that do this firming job. It is advisable to place a little more tension on these wheels than is ordinarily recommended with the machine.

WHERE TO PLANT

Usually the backyard gardner is limited in his choice for a place to plant. Planting as he does, all of his ground to garden stuff. If a gardner has a plot of ground 50 feet square, it doesn't make too much difference what part of the garden he puts different kinds of vegetables. Except those things like tomatoes and cucumbers that most people insist on trying. These things should be planted on the sunny side of a building or along hedges with southern exposures, to give them the best possible chance to produce. Some people think there is an advantage in running rows north and south, claiming more sun will reach the individual plant this way.

WHAT TO PLANT

There are really only two things to consider when deciding what to plant. The first of course is "What will grow here and produce good crops." The second is "What will the family use and enjoy the most," or "What does the market demand," in case of commercial production.

Alaskan gardens are rather limited in what they can produce, although those things that do well do wonderful when handled right. The summers here are rather short in days, but long in sunshine and it's the hours of sunshine that make the crops anywhere.

FERTILIZER

Heavy applications of fertilizer is absolutely necessary if crops are to be harvested. Different farmers have different ideas of how much fertilizer to add to each acre. Using 5-20-10 or 10-20-10 the amount used by farmers range from 700 to 2000 pounds, with the heavy application consistently

getting good crops and the lighter application falling short.

Only a few farmers in Alaska have enough acres of land to plow under cover crops occasionally. Those that do, are building up their soil every year. Most farmers must depend entirely on commercial fertilizer to make their crop.

The backyard gardner of course can't plow under cover crops. A few have compost heaps that are very beneficial. The making of a compost is a slow process due to the fact that the heap is frozen so much of the year.

A good compost maker should be added in the spring to give the thing a boost. The commercial grower of garden stuff has specialized equipment designed to do much of his work accurately and easily. Seed and fertilizer placed in the ground at the same time with the same machine.

A small gardner must do this work by hand. The best way to apply fertilizer on the home garden is to broadcast the required amount over the entire area, after it is spaded or plowed. Then rake it in. Never spade it under. Too much is wasted in this way.

On a garden 50x50 feet, 100 pounds of 10-20-10 or 200 pounds of 5-10-5 is about right. That amount will make a good crop and will not burn a thing if broadcasted evenly and raked in before planting the seed.

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plainly marked as to what it contains. If the formula marked on the sack is 5-10-10, that means that to each 100 pounds there is 5 pounds of nitrogen, 10 pounds of phosphate and 10 pounds of potash. The balance is inert matter used as a filler. The higher grade fertilizer is always cheaper per usable unit, especially here in Alaska where the freight rates are so high. Naturally formula 10-20-10 is worth twice as much as formula 5-10-5 and there is freight charge on only one sack instead of two.

LIME

Lime is seldom needed here although many people think it is. It should never be used unless a test is taken to make sure. Our soils are too sweet more often than too sour. To use lime when it isn't needed is an expensive mistake. Not only is money spent for

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lime wasted but the ability of the soil to produce a crop is lessened.

BEST VARIETIES

Choosing the proper varieties for the Alaskan garden is an important part of pre-spring planning. Alaska soil is cold especially down a few inches, so it stands to reason that deep rooted crops do not do so well. For instance, the long varieties of carrots and parsnips do not do well, unless under very favorable conditions seldom found.

It is always better to plant the half long varieties such as Danvers half long carrots and short thick parsnips.

All of the greens do well except Noble spinach. This spinach goes to seed so badly it is almost useless to plant it. New Zealand spinach, however, does very well. Chard, either the Lucullus or the Rhubarb, mustard, kale, collards are all grown extensive-

ly in home gardens, where they can be harvested when ready and canned or used right away. Greens don't seem to be a profitable market crop because they wilt so quickly after harvest.

Radishes, probably the most popular for the home garden, is Sparkler, a round, red, white tipped radish that is crisp and looks pretty on the table. The Sparkler is inclined to show the scars of harvest on the white portion of the radish after a day or two and so is not quite so popular as a market radish. The Scarlet Globe is usually the market gardeners choice. Scarlet Globe and Sparkler are much alike except that the Scarlet Globe does not have a white tip. White icicles do fairly well when the soil is in good shape. Radishes should be planted in small quantities about every ten days all summer, to insure a continuous supply. Winter varieties for storing should be planted in extra rich soil, about the

middle of July. They will store with and keep like potatoes.

Turnips and rutabagas for winter use should be planted about the middle of July. If planted in the spring they get too large and it is hard to keep the root maggets out of them. Cabbage, broccili and cauliflower are among those plants that do extra well here. There are several varieties of cabbage used, Golden Acre leading. Most any of the early cabages and many of the mid-season varieties are O.K. Late varieties are doubtful.

Celery is a fine crop when the soil is kept extra rich and moist, Utah Green is used almost exclusively. Celery must be set out as big husky plants in spring to make it. Lettuce, beets, squash (Zucchini), green onions, leek, selsify, kohlrabi, peas, potatoes, green beans (under good conditions). Peas do wonderful. The dwarf variety is favored by most people because this variety is easy to care for. They can be planted in rows about six inches apart, instead of just one row. In this way they tend to hold themselves up. Peas should always be inoculated to insure a good crop. Potatoes are one of our best crops. The most popular variety of potatoes is the Arctic Seedling. They are heavy producers and good keeping spuds.

The Experiment Station is starting this year to release a new potato that will probably beat the Arctic Seedling, but the seed is not too plentiful yet. It is a bad idea to plant stateside potatoes as shipped into the grocery stores. Green beans do pretty well some years. It is doubtful if it pays to raise beans when the garden is small. When there is plenty of space it's fun to raise a few messes of beans. Bush beans are the only ones that will do, Golden Wax and Tender Green are the best. Zucchini Squash either black or grey, do well if given plenty of fertilizer and water.

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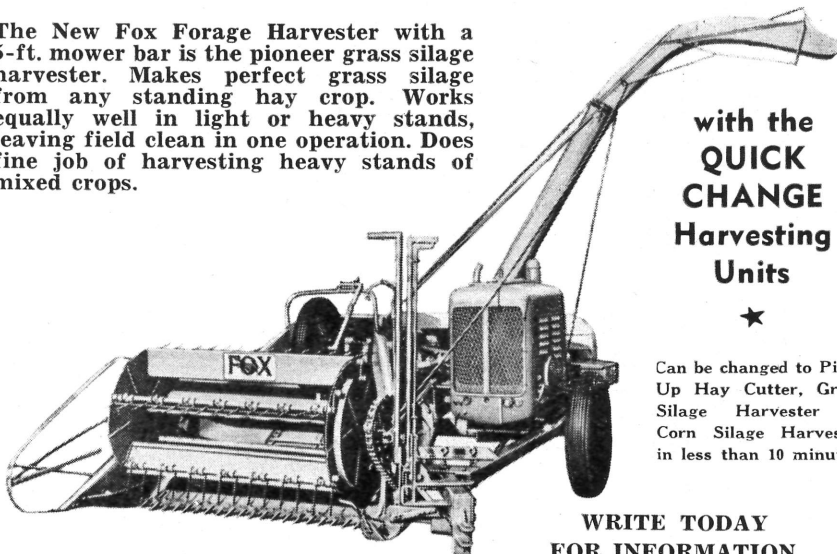
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IS ALASKAN FARMING A GAMBLE?

By E. Kavanaugh

"This is no farming country," a homesteader told me in Homer. "And homesteading is a big humbug — a deception and a swindle!"

I wonder if the farmers in the Mid West weren't saying the same thing when their country became the Dust Bowl. And how about the citrus fruit growers when heavy frosts and snow freeze the profits? What would we hear, if we could eavesdrop, after a Florida hurricane had left the ground strewn with a ruined crop?

Well I remember that unseasonable cold wave that settled over the Willamette Valley in Oregon, when my unharvested carrots froze solidly overnight. I was not the only one who re-

peated that statement, as old as agriculture, itself, — "Farming is certainly a gamble!" A friend of mine had been counting heavily on a field of fine cabbages almost ready for the market.

Late last fall the rains came to the lower end of the Kenai Peninsula. Water came down in the traditional buckets and blew in thick sheets and blankets, in my little valley. Streams went wild and took on the proportions of rivers, doing a good deal of damage. I was not only disgruntled, I was shocked that nature could become so severe in my favorite country. But, recalling the time I watched the Clackamas River, near Oregon City, eat away an orchard that had stood safely along its banks for more than forty years, I easily refrained from boarding the next boat south.

Old Man Frost annoys us, too. But he doesn't pick on us, alone. He takes his turn everywhere, outside the tropics. I saw snow in San Francisco and heavy frost in Los Angeles and Long

Beach, where it was just as unwelcome as the visitations I grumble about away up here in Alaska.

In Homer, which is called the Banana Belt of the Territory, frost paid a call as late as June 15, in 1949. Early visits are made on occasion, too, as witness September 1, 1943. And, at higher elevations or farther from salt water, frost can descend almost any time.

Nature being what she is, I believe that farming is a gamble in Alaska—but then, I think farming is a gamble practically every place in the world. If it isn't some climatic factor that turns a farmer's hair grey, then it is an outbreak of plant virus or a plague of insects. Farmers, north, south, east or west will agree, I think, that while farming is a gamble, the odds usually leave them on top. It's my opinion that this holds true in Alaska, too.

Naturally, we can't go in for corn and expect to have any odds at all—our choice of chips we throw into the game must be considered carefully. Very few of us can be big-time operators now, so the kitty is small, but this picture may change later on.

To insure more favorable odds, the farmer who studies the weather records is wise, for it will help him to guess the future by the past. There is one fact we must face up to and that is, no matter what location we choose, our weather is erratic.

Using common horse sense reasoning, it would seem that we could look over the terrain and say that since the prevailing summer winds and the winter air movements are so and so, and here looms a range of mountains that will affect climate such and so, and the salt water so many miles distant will equalize to this extent. But there is where we'd get tripped up because of the erratic element!

Here is an illustration of the point: Kenai and Kasilof, —two settlements on the Kenai Peninsula located on the shores of Cook Inlet—are only about fifteen miles apart, as the crow flies.

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In 1944 Kenai had an 88-day frost-free summer and Kasilof had 114 days free of frost, while in 1946 the tables were turned when Kenai had 132 to Kasilof's 57!

That sounds discouraging, doesn't it! But this eccentric weather is part and parcel of our gamble. And farmers can take it. A great uncle of mine, farming in Alberta, would probably have dropped dead had he ever succeeded in harvesting his crops three years in a row! But on the long-term haul he made money.

If would-be farmers in Alaska take this lengthy over-all view and plan accordingly, I think they will be greatly encouraged at the bright prospects. Making money is essential, our society being what it is, so naturally this consideration must be placed high on the list. But usually a farmer picks his vocation for other than the monetary rewards. These compensations are practically endless, and they vary with individuals, of course. So the man who is thinking of farming in Alaska is considering other things besides the cash income he can wrest from the soil.

This is brought home to me in letter after letter of inquiry from the States. They would like to farm in Alaska because: they love to fish and hunt; everything is rushing at too fast a pace Stateside; they want to get their children away from the mad crowd; they are being suffocated; they want good, pure air to breathe; they want to have done with red tape.

After deciding on the particular piece of ground to call the farm, the weather, whatever, must be accepted. However, something can still be done about it. Remembering that cold air flows over the land very much like water, will help in picking out locations for particular crops—giving the more favorable spots to the crops most sensitive to temperature. Another good way for checking this is to go over

your farm after the first light frost—before it melts. Then you can see the spots that are cold pockets and you may find places that have escaped entirely. If you can place your crops to avoid a summer frost, you "have it made."

It is also well to remember that wind is an enemy to plant life and it sometimes pays to put up windbreaks. Heat will bounce back from a steep hill that faces the sun, allowing an increase in warmth.

Last summer a few farmers on the Kenai resorted to smudges to stave off frost threatening to ruin their potatoes before they were developed enough to harvest. For the future, I can visualize portable heating plants equipped with blowers or fans, as insurance against that odd year of unseasonable cold waves.

Agriculture is bound to grow in Alaska because Alaska is going to grow in population. There will be a few set-

backs due to one thing or another, for that's in the nature of development, but in the near future this feeding of ourselves is going to be a big factor in our economy.

That money now spent for Outside potatoes, carrots (at five cents per carrot) rutabagas, beets, cabbage, celery, cauliflower and all the other vegetables that grow well here, could do more for our Territory if kept at home.

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THE GREENHOUSE

The first planting in the spring is of course in the green-house, for those folks who are fortunate to own one of these "indicators of spring." Here in Alaska we are more liable to hear people say, "We saw so and so working in the green-house," than to say "We saw the spring's first robin."

There is a lot of work to do around the green-house previous to the actual planting of seeds. The ground should be thawed out two or three weeks before planting time, and disinfected if there is any trouble with damping off or bugs. Sometimes when the green-house has been in operation several years and the benches weren't treated with a good wood-preservative, it is necessary to replace the benches. This is a good time to correct any defects in the original planning of the green-

house. Perhaps the benches were too wide or too narrow, too low or too high.

One common mistake is having the dirt too shallow. It should be at least twelve inches deep. One of the first things to do is cleaning the glass. Often without being noticed, dirt and cobwebs and the like, will clutter up the glass, holding out as much as 40% of the light. This light, especially in the early spring is very important. If you don't believe a good going over with plenty of soap and water will help, just try it on a small section and see what a difference it makes.

Soil can be used for many years in a green-house if rejuvenated with compost, or, lacking compost, a good grade of peat. Of course, fertilizer must be added each year. Dirt that has been leached out by years of watering from above will soon become hard to work, hard to water and hard to grow plants in, if new humus is not added each year. If there is plenty of humus the ground will absorb water and at the same time drain off excessive amounts.

If you have had trouble with damping-off, it is probably the texture of the soil that is the main cause. Soil that is heavily mixed with peat, say about one-third, will dry out quickly on the surface where it is exposed to the air. But will hold the moisture for days, an inch or so under the surface. When these conditions are maintain-

ed, so that plants stand most of the time in dry top soil, and the roots must seek out the moisture and fertilizer in the lower level of the soil, seldom is damping-off a problem.

Next to a complete lack of care, over-watering is probably a No. 1 fault, in a non-professional green-house operation. Plants, like people, don't develop very well if things are made to easy for them. Any good, complete fertilizer is satisfactory for green-house use. Probably the most satisfactory type for small green-house use, is highly soluble fertilizer. This is put on with the water. It is always better to under-fertilize a little to start with, than feed the plants up until they are doing well. Too much fertilizer and moisture discourages root growth, and encourages top growth in the early stages of plant life, causing an unbalanced condition, producing plants that are unsatisfactory for transplanting.

It is possible to get two complete crops in one season by raising field crops like cabbage and celery. About a week before these are ready to transplant, set in tomatoes and cucumbers in the green-house. In the small family type green-house the hybrid tomatoes are not too successful. They must have too much headroom. The best type of cucumbers are the long slicing varieties such as Straight eight or Longfellow.

The most common mistake made in Alaska is planting too early in the green-house or in the open ground. From the first to the 15th of June is usually the proper time to plant in the open ground. In the green-house from the time of planting seed until the plants are ready to be set out of course vary with the different types of plants.

Cauliflower, cabbage, broccili, brussel sprouts, head lettuce take about 45 days. Celery, pansies, snapdragons, take about 55 days. Most people like to start their gladiolas in the house. These should not be started more than three weeks before setting out. They shouldn't be much over six inches high when set out into the garden.

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Rabbits for Fur, Fun, and Frying

The raising of rabbits for home consumption interests quite a number of Alaskans, and it should be of interest, considering the cost of living in Alaska, especially the price we must pay for all kinds of meats.

Ordinarily rabbit productions increase sharply with the beginning of a war, when other meats are rationed. Or during depressions, when cash money is hard to come by. The fact that people are more conscious of waste during times of stress, also has a bearing on this.

When times are hard, people hate to see anything go to waste, and rabbits are a very efficient method of turning the waste from gardens and fields into delicious meat. The ordinary backyard garden has enough space and enough waste from the garden, in the form of outside leaves of lettuce, turnip tops, small potatoes and the like, to go a long way towards keeping the family supplied with meat. People, who do so, feel a sense of accomplishment in turning what would otherwise be waste into a fine food for their own table.

Often in families where there are boys and girls of teen-age or under, with nothing much to do, the raising of rabbits offers responsibility and education that is hard to get in any other way, besides the certainty of having a hobby that pays off. The growing of rabbits in commercial quantities fluctuates in every community. Because rabbits are so prolific, growers tend to oversupply the market, then all go out of business together, leaving the market completely unsatisfied, for a while.

There is always quite a market from the health laboratory. This market, when rabbits are scarce, takes all the available supply leaving none for the table trade. No doubt a steady supply of locally grown rabbits attractively packed and kept before the public the year 'round would be a profitable operation.

Rabbit skins are not to be overlooked when planning a rabbitry, whether for home use or whether the rabbits are to be grown in commercial quantities. There is a never ending demand for rabbit fur. The better grades go into fur coats, gloves and the like, while the cullskins are used in the making of felt and in the manufacturing of glue.

It is estimated that not more than two percent of the rabbit skins used in America are American grown. The grade of rabbit skins grown in Alaska is far superior to those grown in the

states and command a much higher price.

Beginners in the rabbit business should start small. There are things to learn that can't be learned entirely from a book, although a good book on rabbit growing should be the first investment of the beginners.

A steady demand can be built up in any community, even though rabbits have never been sold there before, if the grower will take pains to build up his market and grow with the demand. Ordinarily the best place to locate a commercial rabbitry is near the larger cities for the obvious reason that it is near the market and near the source of feed supply.

A choice of breeds to raise is of great importance in Alaska. The prime reason for raising rabbits is the meat. The value of the fur and fertilizer is of secondary importance. Although these things must be considered when entering the rabbit business. Therefore large quick growing breeds are best, such as Flemish Giants, New Zealand Reds or the Blue American. Mature animals of these breeds will weigh from 12 to 16 pounds at about one year of age.

It is very difficult right now to buy breeding stock in Alaska. The industry is at a low ebb, however, which makes it a good time to go into the business. Over the course of the next two or three years, the better rabbits could be sold for breeding stock right here in Alaska at a somewhat higher price than the meat animals usually bring.

There are several reliable rabbitries in Washington and Oregon. Since it is almost impossible to go personally

to pick out your own breeding stock, it is better to get in touch with several of these breeders, asking them for the best they have and be willing to pay the price. Ordinarily to start with, it is better to get only a few rabbits, maybe one buck and three or four does although if you plan on going into the rabbit business on a larger scale, one buck and up to ten does.

It is best for the beginner to choose his breed of rabbits carefully and then stick to them. Although in the future, when things are running smoothly, several breeds can be profitably raised, not because one would be superior for meat production or for fur, but in order to supply breeding stock of various breeds.

Rabbits are very prolific, usually having three or four litters a year. Probably it is better in Alaska to have them kindle, three times a year instead of four, missing the coldest time during the winter. This allows the doe to build up extra strength and probably produce larger litters.

We have found that rabbits are not bothered by the cold if given a simple box to sleep in with plenty of straw for bedding. They develop a very heavy fur and seem to be immune to cold even at 30 to 40 below.

The heavy breeds of rabbits should be bred the first time at from eight months to one year of age, depending on how well grown they are. Rabbits are ready for the table or the market at two months of age. They will dress out at this time from three to four pounds, dressing away about 25 percent from their live weight.

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way is to buy one of the scientifically prepared feeds in pellet form that is one the market. It is especially good for the backyard gardener and the beginner, as these feeds in themselves supply a complete and balanced ration. This in addition to the garden waste will make cheap meat.

The farm grower can feed local hay and grain to supplement his feeding program, providing the hay and grain are not moldy. Moldy hay seems to be often fatal to rabbits. I remember my own first attempt to raise rabbits when I was 12 years old which suddenly ended with a moldy armful of alfalfa hay.

There are not too many diseases effecting rabbits and there are many books on the subject telling how to prevent and treat outbreaks of diseases. Or the Department of Agriculture, through the extension offices, distributes bulletins on the subject, free.

Rabbits should be supplied with plenty of fresh, pure water. In summer they require large quantities; a 10 to 12 pound doe and her 8-week-old litter of seven will drink about a gallon in 24 hours. Water should be kept available at all times. When freezing temperatures prevail in the rabbitries

the rabbits should be offered water (not too cold) at least once a day just previous to feeding. The water containers should then be emptied to prevent freezing. Salt bricks should be kept before the rabbits at all times, preferably the mineralized type.

One common fault in the beginner, in feeding rabbits, is over-feeding. Many of the ills that rabbits suffer from are due to too much fat, especially failure to breed. Dry does and bucks should be fed once a day all of the pellets and protein mixture they will consume within 20 to 30 minutes. Nursing does with their young, should be fed all they will consume each 24 hours without waste.

A good quality of hay, preferably legumes such as alfalfa or clover should be kept before the rabbits at all times.

Green feed such as turnip tops or root crops should be fed very sparingly until the rabbits become accustomed to their use. One pound is plenty to feed ten rabbits to start with. The feeding can then be increased gradually until the rabbits are consuming all they will eat, without waste.

Regularity in feeding is more important than the number of times fed. Rabbits can be fed two or three times a day as long as they clean up without waste all of the feed they have been given. When they leave feed, the amount should be lessened at the next feeding to the point where they clean it up eagerly. Sometimes rabbits or a rabbit in the herd will go off its feed. When this happens it is best to skip a feeding, and then give the rabbit a special carrot or something else for an appetizer.

Most rabbit growers of any size, soon develop a market for roasting rabbits, weighing from five to seven pounds. This takes care of the old does and bucks and rabbits that are deliberately kept until they are this size for

the roasting trade. To condition these rabbits for slaughter they are simply fed a full ration that is kept before them at all times until they reach the desired weight.

The cost per pound of producing rabbits is tied of course to the cost of feed. When a rabbit ration is used, coupled with hay and green stuff from the garden, it takes about four pounds of all feed used to produce one pound of rabbit meat. This includes the feed used by the doe from the breeding date until the fryers are slaughtered at two months of age with an average weight of four pounds.

Rabbits are usually raised in close confinement and quite large numbers in the same enclosure. Therefore, sanitation is the ounce of prevention that prevents disease. Rabbits are usually raised in hutches with wire bottoms to facilitate the cleaning and the care of the rabbits. It is very important that the hutches be constructed properly from the start. Here again, books on rabbit growing, or bulletins from the extension service dealing with this subject, are essential.

Successful management, like the management of any other business, depends on careful organization. Records should be kept on individual animals, their age, date of breeding and all pertinent information. Costs of various feeds are important so that the grower can feed the type of feed that will put the most pounds of meat on his herd with the fewest possible dollars.

In the selection of breeding stock, great care should be taken. This should be done at weaning time, and only the very best out of each litter should be chosen for breeding stock. In the case of fryer stock, the object is to get the most meat on the rabbit in the shortest possible time. This is not true with breeding stock. They should be kept growing, but at no time be overly fat.

In the states in large rabbit growing areas, rabbits are usually sold "on the hoof," and are taken to central slaughter houses and handled by large companies. In Alaska, the grower must do his own killing and marketing because, as yet, there are not enough rabbits grown to support such a business and due to our limited population here, there probably never will be.

Fryer rabbits that are cut up and placed in cartons with small sprigs of parsley or watercress and covered with celophane, sell much more readily than the whole carcasses. In the case of roasters, of course, they are sold as complete carcasses, with head and feet removed. Either way they are fine and an enjoyable addition to the family larder.

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Beavie, the Beaver A Story For Children

By J. WRIGHT

Beavie, the Brown Beaver, stood all alone pulling the red neck tie tighter around his large neck.

There was a feeling of winter in the air and a cold wind blew the leaves around his feet. He was alone, lost in his dreams. Beavie couldn't seem to get over the spell the neck tie had cast upon him. It seemed to be a witch's spell. He had become lazier and lazier, so lazy that he couldn't get even one tree cut in a day. His main trouble was that he didn't want his beautiful neck tie soiled. Working on a beaver dam meant getting in the water and water would soil his lovely neck tie.

"Beavie, Oh, Beavie! Come here and see if this log is right for the pond," called Whack, Beavie's brother.

He slowly came out of his dream and started to run but Beavie fell over his neck tie and he couldn't get up. Beavie lay there and beat the ground with his large tail, crying "I wish I had never seen this neck tie. It's nothing but trouble!" Beavie was ashamed but got up and walked slowly down the hill, the neck tie dragging in front between his feet, getting soiled. He had forgotten himself and was walking like all beavers now instead of just on his hind feet, man fashion. The neck tie was an added burden trailing as it was.

When he arrived at the pond, every one of the beavers looked at him and shook their heads and said, "Beavie, what has happened to you? You have changed so."

"This neck tie is my downfall," said Beavie.

They said, "Why don't you take it off? It isn't worth it."

Beavie said, "Why, I can't take this off, someone else would get it. It belongs to me. I found it. Why, the wrong kind of animal might get it. But when the time is right, I'll put it

back on the stump — I mean when the moon is right." The beavers live by the moon. "I found it when the moon was round and full."

Beavie stood up full and appraised his beautiful brown coat. The red and white spotted neck tie really looked fine on him. He wished with all his heart it had been a bow tie. Bow ties weren't so much trouble. His thoughts were so wrapped up in the neck tie that he didn't hear Elmer, the Swamp Moose, approach. He should have for Elmer makes enough noise to be heard for miles.

Elmer said, in his swampy voice, which actually was so heavy you could hardly understand him, "Where did you get the rag around your neck?"

Beavie came awake. "What rag are you talking about?"

"That red and white thing tied on your neck."

"Now, my friend, that's a neck tie. Some man thing left it in the woods.

I found it and I'm going to wear it."

"What say I try it on?"

"It wouldn't go around your neck. It's not large enough."

Elmer looked unhappy. "I'm the most unlucky creature! I was born ugly and a moose and I've never had a neck tie. Just let me feel it on my neck."

"Well, O K, but you give it right back."

Meanwhile, Mortimer, the Black Bear, came up. He said, "What's cooking with you two?"

"Nothing much. Elmer is trying on my neck tie."

"May I try it on, too?"

"I guess so, just don't soil it."

By this time, Beavie began to wonder who would come up next. Elmer put the neck tie on his drab self, and breathed a great sigh. Stars came in

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his otherwise drab eyes, and his coat — it seemed to lose the drab, mossy look. Of course the neck tie wouldn't go around his large neck, but just the feel of it touching him made him so happy.

Beavie said, "Well, Elmer, don't you think you had better take off the neck tie?"

Elmer was under the spell of the spotted neck tie and he walked off into the swamp, leaving Beavie much troubled and disturbed. Mortimer said, "Why don't you get it back? It will be in the swamp if you let him have it."

Beavie said with a sigh, "Be at ease — just look at him, Mortimer, he has taken on new beauty."

Sure enough, Elmer's body seemed to glow.

Beavie said, "Mortimer, let us sit here on the side of the hill and watch Elmer."

Elmer wandered deep into the swamp and stood for a moment in

quiet. He then kicked up his hind feet and let out a loud moose call and then came dashing out of the swamp back to where his friends sat.

He said, "Beavie, this neck tie is magic. Let Mortimer wear it awhile."

"Well, take it off!" Elmer did so and handed it to Mortimer. Mortimer looked at it carefully. Mortimer said, "I don't know if I want to wear it or not. It made you a dreamer, Beavie, and made Elmer come out of the swamp. What will it do to me?"

"Try it on and see!"

Mortimer said, "I'm afraid. I think it's bewitched."

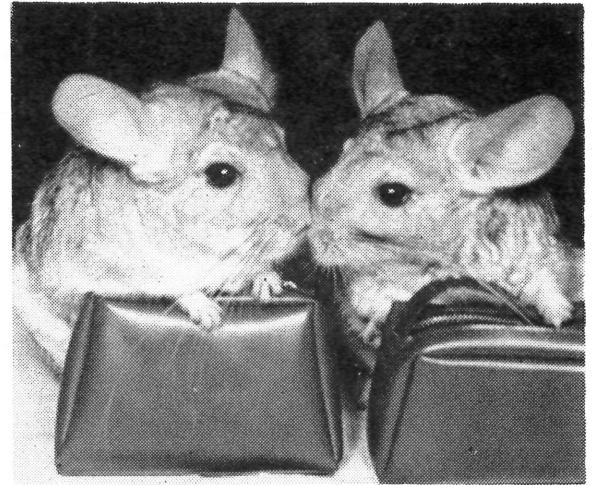
Beavie said, "Hurry up or I'll put it back on,"

Mortimer stood holding the neck tie. He slowly put it on his neck. The stupid look left his face and he lumbered off into the fading sunlight, leaving Beavie and Elmer standing watching him.

Evening came and the moon rose, large and full.

Beavie said, "It is time to return the

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neck tie to the stump. But where is the neck tie?"

Presently Mortimer returned with the neck tie and another bear. It was a lady bear. They had stars in their eyes.

"Here is the neck tie, Beavie. I hope it isn't too late."

"No, it isn't. Come, Elmer, let us return it."

Elmer had wandered off. The moon was the hunter's moon. Beavie hurried to the stump where he had found the neck tie. He laid it down and hurried off into the forest to watch what would happen. Several forest animals went to the stump and looked at the neck tie. But none of them put it on. The night passed. The moon went down and the sun arose. It was hunting season and the guns began to fire. Still the neck tie lay upon the stump forgotten.

It lay there for several days and then one day when the forest was quiet again, Beavie went to the stump and picked it up and again put it on. He wandered into the beaver pond and set to work. Ignoring the neck tie, but it got in his way. He took it off and laid it down. It was nothing but a nuisance.

But Beavie wasn't aware of a young lady beaver who was admiring him while he wasn't looking.

"Beavie, why don't you wear the neck tie? It makes you very handsome!"

Beavie reached down and picked up the neck tie. It had brought romance to many and last but not least to him.

Beavie and the lady beaver and the neck tie went off into the forest with stars in their eyes, in search of the stump. Beavie again returned the neck tie, hoping it would bring happiness to some other creature.

THE END

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SPENARD -- BOOM CITY

(The following story, written by Oliver P. Shaw, is the conclusion of an article that has told of the amazing growth of Spenard.)

The liquor question has, from time to time, been somewhat of a controversial question in Spenard. In 1946, with but a few local residents, Lena Hansen opened the first package store in what is now Sweum's Grocery. Some opposition was encountered, but there was no general dissatisfaction.

When, however, the Anchorage dealers decided to branch out and establish stores in Spenard, considerable more opposition was voiced. This was due particularly to the fact that true local option does not exist under Territorial Law, which states only that in order to secure a liquor dispensing license outside an incorporated city, consent of 51% of the residents within a two mile radius is necessary, making no provision for overlapping boundaries. Since a two mile radius with the business district of Spenard takes in most of the City of Anchorage itself, most petitions for a liquor store in Spenard are generally made up of residents of the City who have no real concern with liquor not too closely identified with their own neighborhoods.

On several occasions the anti's have been successful in opposing the granting of licenses, but in a majority of cases the applications have been approved. A greater and greater influx of transient-minded people is reflected in the gradual increase of liquor stores and bars, and it seems apparent now that, barring some changes in the law, no effective control will be possible.

At the present time there are some ten licenses operating in Spenard, with others pending. In fairness to these establishments it must be said that despite less rigorous control than is possible within the City, there is relatively little disturbance or nuisance evident. Since most of them are located in the business district pro-

per, their impact on the residential areas has not been too severe.

Probably the single interest in which Spenard residents have shown a sustained concern has been the school problem. Although since the inception of the District in 1947, and the virtual automatic election of W. D. McKinney to the Board, there has been no representative of Spenard on it, although each year has seen a Spenard candidate on the ballot, in 1948-Cyril Robar, 1949-Tron Anderson, 1950-Phil Durant, and 1951-Edward Bantz. Lack of an effective organization, however, has precluded the possibility of securing the organized PTA support, without which election is extremely doubtful.

Under a previous school administration, somewhat lacking in foresight and initiative, schools in the outlying areas were not contemplated, and largely in protest to this discrimination, it was the residents of Mt. View and Spenard who were instrumental in defeating the first bond issue which proposed a \$1,500,000 super-school where the Denali school is now located.

As a result of this opposition, the administration was forced to adopt a different outlook, and after a ding-dong battle of words in the Commu-

nity Hall in the winter of 1948, the Board went on record as advocating schools in both Spenard and Mt. View. Bonds for this construction were subsequently approved and Spenard residents felt confident that a school building would be erected on what is known as the Weiler Site, located just off Spenard Road, on Weiler Avenue.

The opening of the Woodland Park Subdivision earlier had prompted many to build there in the expectation that an elementary school would be built on the site. Bids were called for the building without specifying the location, only the type of building to be constructed. Approximately two weeks before the bids were to be opened, the Board announced, that, for reasons since found to be erron-

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eous, a building could not be constructed on the Weiler Site.

Considerable consternation reigned in the area, but protests were to no avail. With no real clarification of the issues and despite the opposition of a majority of Spenard residents, the school now named North Star, was subsequently built. At that time, no one felt that another school was likely for Spenard in the foreseeable future and, when the North Star Site was far removed from the center of population, the temper of the local inhabitants was indeed tried.

The advent of a new administration

and the election of new Board members has proved more favorable to Spenard. Not only is a new elementary school being built in the Woodland Park area, near the Community Hall, but the site of the much needed High School lies in a 65 acre tract overlooking Chester Creek, near the Romig Subdivision.

The controversial Weiler Site, no longer of strategic importance to the District, has been approved for sale by the voters at a recent election. It is unfortunate that the location could not be set aside as a public park or recreation center, so badly needed by

the community. No organized legal body of sufficient financial capacity exists, however, to promote such an endeavor, further evidence of the need for some type of governmental reorganization of the area.

While on the subject of schools, some mention should be made of the bus transportation problem, which for several years was one of the real headaches of the community. Under Territorial Law, the Commissioner of Education is empowered to let contracts for the transportation of students in all types of school districts.

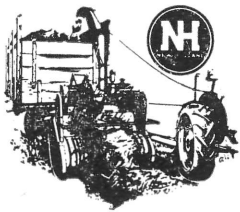
For a number of reasons none of which need to be discussed here, this system had degenerated, at least in the local district, into a haphazard, almost totally unsupervised operation, fraught with danger to pupils forced, of necessity to accept the only transportation available. Obsolete and completely worn-out equipment, unsatisfactory drivers, and scheduling which generally suited the convenience of the contractor and resulted in almost unbelievable overcrowding, was the rule rather than the exception.

Protest after protest to Juneau, the local superintendent, the contractor, and the Highway Patrol went virtually unheeded. The fact that almost all minor mishaps, of which there were an unlimited number, went unreported due to lack of supervision, and that despite the deplorable condition of the equipment used to transport the children, there were no serious accidents, made it extremely difficult to whip up any large scale public protest, since the large majority of parents naively assumed that school transportation here was handled as it is generally done in the states.

In a desperate but ultimately successful attempt to remedy a most unsatisfactory condition, some half dozen Spenard parents formed a Citizens Committee to gather the facts and

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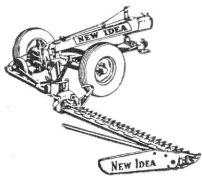
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place them before the authorities concerned. After some weeks of intensive effort a complete report on the transportation problem was presented to the Territorial Board of Education, at its annual meeting, detailing present grievances and outlining remedial measures necessary.

Fortunately a change in the local school administration about this time insured sympathetic and comprehensive hearings on the transportation problem, not previously obtainable. Too much credit cannot be given Mr. Don Dafoe, Assistant Superintendent, in charge of bus transportation, for his adamant stand in the matter of refusing to condone substandard and unsafe operating equipment.

As a result of the work of the Committee and the courageous stand of Mr. Dafoe, the beginning of the 1951 school year found the school system with no transportation whatsoever. Ultimately the local school board was prevailed upon to see its own responsibility in this matter, and an appropriation of some \$68,000 was authorized for the purchase of busses.

Pending negotiations for the purchase and delivery from the states, the parents co-operated by forming car pools for the transportation of the pupils. Some hardship was inevitable, but was well recompensed when, in January 1952, 14 new busses were placed in service, providing without doubt the safest, most comfortable, and most dependable school bus transportation to be found in the Territory.

In all, there have been three separate legal attempts to alter the gov-

ernmental status of Spenard, first, a hearing on behalf of the City to annex that part of Spenard known as Turnagain Heights, but denied on a technicality by the Third District Court; second, a hearing for the incorporation of Spenard as a first class city, dismissed without prejudice; and third, another hearing on this same subject, with the Court granting the petition but failing to set a date for the proposed election to determine the wishes of the voters.

This latter hearing was marked by demonstrations of extreme differences of opinion being aired in court, although the findings of the Court would in no way be final, since an affirmative vote of the residents was still to be required to accomplish in-

corporation. More than a year has elapsed since this hearing, but nothing further has been done in the matter, perhaps on the theory that it is better to let sleeping dogs lie.

One of the phenomenon common to all boom towns is similarly having its impact on Spenard. The trailer, and the resultant trailer court, have become landmarks in the community. The first known trailer in Spenard appeared early in 1945, having been shipped up by Alaska Steamship Co., since the Alaska highway was not yet opened to general public use. At that time there was not a single trailer park in the whole area, including Anchorage.

Gradually, as the highway conditions improved, more and more trailers

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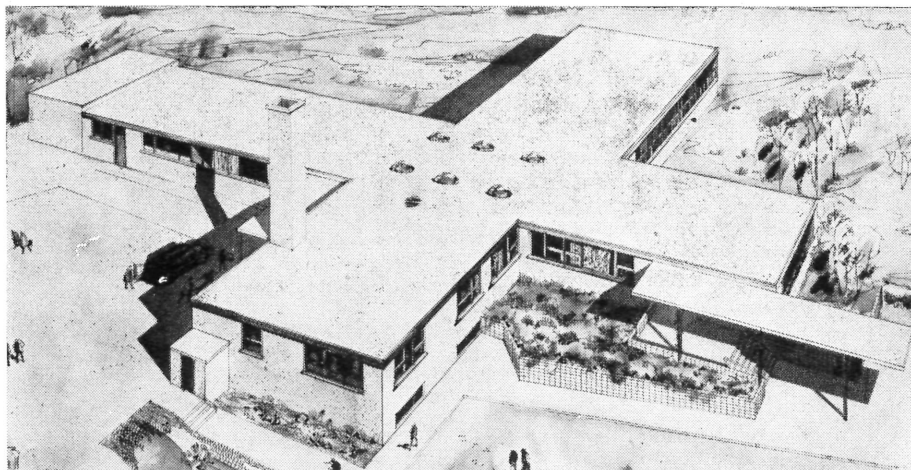
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appeared, and, with the rather rigid Anchorage code, virtually all trailer camps were forced outside the City. At this writing, Spenard has some twenty trailer establishments with an estimated total of perhaps 800 to 1000 trailers, with many more trailers located on private lots on which the owner is building or contemplating building a permanent residence.

What effect this influx of trailer dwellers has on the general tenor of the community is perhaps hard to define, but on wheels, rather than with any roots in the soil, it is doubtful whether too many of these people, by the very nature of their mode of living, will concern themselves with the ever-increasing problems that concern us; it is only fair to note, however, that those who live in trailers either by choice or necessity also contribute to the overcrowding of our highways, and avail themselves of all

New Hospital For The Matanuska Valley



This is an architect's drawing by Edwin B. Crittenden of the new Matanuska Valley Hospital now underway at Palmer, Alaska. The C. R. Foss Company of Anchorage won the contract on a bid of \$564,885 for this 24 bed structure. The building is constructed so an additional wing can be added when needed, furnishing an additional 20 beds. The folks of the Matanuska Valley have been working many years to get their sick and injured out of the Quonset Huts they have been forced to use since the hospital fire. Many a dance, box social and community effort was put into this project to raise money to get the ball rolling. About two years ago the Presbyterian Church took over the sponsorship of the project. The women of the Churches National Mission group made the Palmer Hospital their project of the year. A national drive was made through the church in every state of the union. The project was called "Pennies for Palmer" and raised a grand total of \$230,000. The balance of the money to construct this badly needed hospital is being raised in Alaska.



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other facilities which are strained to the breaking point.

So, on the point of strained facilities it is perhaps well to end this article, since that is invariably the place that any discussion of Spenard automatically begins and ends. The almost overnight conversion from a rural to an urban community would present a challenge to the most ambitious civic minded persons with both unlimited time and energy. How the problem will be resolved locally, if at all, is anyone's guess, but the prospects for orderly and systematic development seem more remote than ever.

For example, in the 1948 Utility District election, an estimated 50% of the eligible voters participated; in

the 1951 election probably not more than 10% took part. With such a paucity of individual interest, who is to solve the traffic problem where ten thousand vehicles daily are funneled through a solitary two-lane arterial highway?

Who is to provide a solution to the problem of a central water supply system in an area supplied entirely by individual wells with a constantly diminishing supply of water, and the ever present danger of contamination?

Who is to plan an adequate sewage disposal plant where each house has its own cesspool or privy, and where some types of soil will not admit the use of ordinary disposal methods, but must be designed by competent sanitary engineers?

Who is to preserve the law and give the ordinary citizen the protection to which he is entitled when every phase of his living is congested, confused, and confounded by a myriad of conflicts?

Living in Spenard is sometimes difficult, sometimes tedious, and sometimes downright exasperating, and a great many people refuse to put up with it. Almost no one is neutral in his opinion of Spenard in particular and Alaska in general. Both boosters and and knockers share one viewpoint in common. They wouldn't have missed it for anything in the world.

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ALASKA REINDEER NOTES

By J. SIDNEY ROOD

(Synopsis of December Issue)

If American Eskimos has raised no other species except sled dogs, American whalers raised nothing except hell with Eskimos. As killers, they surpassed Eskimos; for their harpoons and Winchesters beat Native spears. They stripped so many whales and walrus from the bloodied waters of Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean during the last century that our Eskimos got short of blubber, hides and meat.

So our Government's Sheldon Jackson had some domesticated reindeer breeders moved from Siberia to a new Reindeer Station built near Teller, Alaska. He knew Alaskan Eskimos liked reindeer meat and skins, and that the reindeer would like Alaska's plants as well as Siberia's. He reasoned that Alaskan Eskimos would become good reindeer farmers if they were taught HOW. He hired four Siberian Eskimo reindeer men to teach it.

The reindeer ate, fattened, rutted, fawned, increased during that biennium ending the spring of 1894. Wolves were absent killing caribou far away. But the local missionary whom Jackson hired to run the Station, William Lopp, thought the Siberian tutors were ill-tempered, jealous and cruel to reindeer. One of them stamped a tired sled reindeer almost to death.

(The story continues)

Although Alaskan Eskimos treated sled dogs unfeelingly and lacked pets, at least Lopp hadn't seen any of them appease anger by maiming or murdering the new reindeer. By July of 1894 he had 19 Eskimos helping at the station and nearby herd, including 13 youths. They had been impelled there by the prompting of missionaries, hunger and other forces. They had become willing to herd night shifts as well as daytimes, and, activated by competitive spirit, they had broken and driven some reindeer steers as well as the Siberian hirelings could do. Alaskan Eskimos were Lopp's flock, his challenge and his hope. The Siberians were sent home that summer.

But Dr. Jackson was wise enough not to minimize the importance of getting experienced herders to help protect the precious reindeer seed stock. And he was ethnologist enough to know that the world's best teachers of reindeer husbandry would be

needed, not merely to teach Eskimos the tricks of reindeer farming but, even more basic, to wean them from a hunting economy to a nomadic pastoral life until they, like the reindeer Lapps, would never leave it except with sorrow. Supported by Congress' first appropriation of \$6,000, he raised another \$1,000 from private donations and sent an alert Norwegian, person-

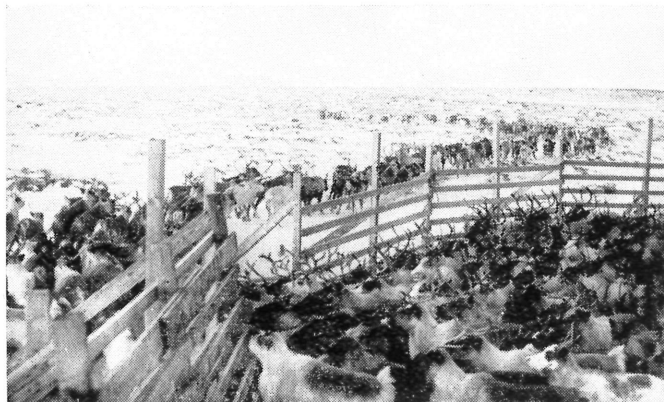


Photo by Gene Gyuriak, Stewart's Photo Shop

The deer are turned out of the corral after processing.

ally acquainted with Lapp reindeer men, over to Norway's Finmarken district to hire Lapps possessed of the finest herding, breaking and driving skills for an assignment at Teller Reindeer Station.

Now Lapps are like reindeer: they cannot be crowded or forced. And they hate to leave the fresh mountain air of their ancient homes. They are suspicious of strangers. But, after much parleying, seven were hired under 3 year contracts providing free transportation, subsistence, and up to \$400 per year cash, one of them being a hard-to-find Catholic youth (in a Lutheran country) who had run away from the confines of mission life to follow reindeer. Dressed in picturesque costumes they, with families and invaluable black Spitz herding dogs, crossed the Atlantic and America to a whaling brigg at San Francisco which landed them at the Reindeer Station six weeks later.

The black bearded Norwegian, William Kjellman, had guided them from Europe; and he promptly took Lopp's place as superintendent, the latter having to return to Wales to reopen the mission due to the murder of his associate missionary there by an irate Eskimo pupil with a whaling gun.

Already the herd totalled 491 head. Another 145 fawns had survived, despite a late spring. In 1893 the "Bear" had added 124 more Siberian deer to the original 171. Before October another 120 would be carried from life-

boats on stretchers up the beach to be loosed.

Although Mr. Kjellman's 7 Lapps and 19 Natives may appear to have been 5 to 8 times as many workers as the Government needed to tend its 588 reindeer, especially on a virgin, wolfless range, expansion of a widespread Alaskan industry was to be pushed as fast as the many daily chores permitted.

Driftwood for fuel had to be hauled by boat and sled reindeer. The Station, consisting of a 60-foot frame building, 2 log cabins and a storage cache, had to be expanded and made comfortable. Eskimo herd apprentices must hunt seal to enlarge the Station stock of skins and oil which the Government rationed to them and their families. Fish had to be caught and dried for winter. Lichens must be gathered and stored at the Station so sled deer could be kept there, as already there was no "reindeer moss" left within 3 or 4

miles. Tending a dog team was required, as reindeer are no good on ice. Reindeer milking in late summer, after fawns were weaned, was slow work. Instructions required castrating 90 percent of the bulls. Harnesses and sleds must be made, steers be broken and driven regularly. Fall, winter and sheltered fawning pastures had to be located before snow covered the plants. The Siberian reindeer were larger and wilder than Kautokeino's, so they needed more herding. There was no doctor, so Kjellman and a school teacher had to treat the sick. Rations were issued, ledgers kept.

And teaching about reindeer had to be made useful to the people by giving them reindeer. So 109 animals were given outright to the Wales Mission, 10 others to five apprentices who quit to drive and herd the Mission's deer 60 miles away.

As an experiment to determine how the most promising Eskimo apprentices would tend reindeer, if given the responsibility, a "bunch" of 109 was "cut out" and loaned to an Eskimo named Antisarluk, husband of the "Reindeer Queen" of later years, for nearby pasturing. The understanding was that Antisarluk and his four Eskimo associates would return 109 reindeer to the Government at the expiration of five years and keep the increase, which might be 225, as their private property.

Thus reindeer herds first began to

Glen Briggs

fan out from the busy Reindeer Station that winter of 1894-1895. Eleven private ownerships, each with its own earmark, were begun. And working at the Government herd there remained 10 Eskimo apprentices who, besides food and clothing, would earn live reindeer during each year until, at the end of a 5 year apprenticeship, each would obtain 50 animals to start 10 new herds under Dr. Jackson's original plan.

There was little danger of the small Wales, Antisarluk and Government herds getting mixed together again. The animals had ample food. At first the Wales and Antisarluk deer wanted to return to the home range from which they had been driven, for reindeer are like that; but they were watched. They could be kept close to the permanent sod igloos of their non-nomadic Eskimo herders, at least until the nearby supply of "reindeer moss" was gone.

If Mr. Lopp felt impelled to champion the pastoral aptitude of primitive Eskimos whose first missionary he had become four years earlier, his criticisms of the Lapps among the Natives aroused a competition which made the Lapps into livelier teachers and the Eskimos into more observant pupils. The Lapps showed Eskimos the "old country's" reindeer harness, much superior to the primitive Siberian, which placed the force of pull squarely against the front of the reindeer's neck and shoulder top and yet remained so simple, with its single tug between the deer's hind legs, that the impulsive animals could jump from side-to-side and over the tug without injury or tangling. They demonstrated how to milk standing reindeer, instead of extracting the half pint from each animal after making it so frantic, by lassoing and throwing it to be held under the brutal weight of men, that the reindeer fled desperately whenever they saw a lasso. They made inexpensive seines of twine with which they caught tubs of fish in the time it took Eskimos to snag dozens.

They taught milk drying, cheese making, the manufacture of butter. They showed how to waterproof leather after tanning it, instead of depending upon the smelly natural oils in untanned skins. They proved that a good herding dog is worth several men at times. They introduced simple pack saddles upon which reindeer can carry 80 pounds all day; their wonderfully cosy reindeer boots with turned-up toes; skis; and their native pulkas, like little dug-out canoes, were fine for sledding in forest and when snow was soft. They taught how to appraise plants for seasonal grazing, the high arts of lassoing, driving, breaking, defending sled reindeer from wolves and dogs armed only with their knives after throwing and straddling the



For many years Animal Husbandryman with the Alaska Reindeer Service. This picture was taken at Nome, Alaska just before the city was destroyed by fire.

deer. Kjellman proved the usefulness of sled reindeer by driving some 500 miles to Bethel and return via Anvik at a cost of \$1.53 per day. Those seven Lapps and Kjellman began making the Lapps' great contribution to our tundra life.

As manager, Kjellman observed the Eskimo apprentices closely. They were from coast villages between Pt. Hope and Unalakleet. One was from the Episcopal Mission at Tanana. It was so hard to keep them with the reindeer herd that finally, in desperation, he loaded those who returned to the Station with such heavy work that they preferred to quit or stay at the herd camp. This was necessary if, by actually tending reindeer, they were ever to develop the essential nomadic habits. He noted that those who had come from mission stations seemed to have developed a "taste for warm rooms," and he thought Eskimos taken from primitive villages where hunger was common might show more interest in managing reindeer. Although several showed promise, there were constant changes in the Eskimo crew, as some became tired of regular duty and others were dismissed because of habitual "carelessness." No Eskimos responded when, in the summer of 1895, "word was sent for apprentices up the coast . . . and Yukon River."

The Eskimos liked the Lapp herding dogs better than the Lapps, who were

early rising, future-planning task masters. Kjellman was ready to resign during that 1895 summer, although the immediate cause was argument over the sale of a wrecked schooner.

But the number of Alaska's reindeer herds increased again when, during the winter, Kjellman's perturbed successor had 130 animals driven to Golovin for later distribution to four Eskimos and the Golovin and Tanana missions. Every such distribution, by spreading Alaska's reindeer "eggs" to new "baskets," decreased risk of total loss.

The missions did not yet feel the "pinch" of having to feed and clothe Eskimos to herd their animals. But many wanted the prolific new species, the sooner the better. Dr. Joseph H. Romig was keen to get stock for his Moravian Mission at Bethel, while Jesuit Father Francis Barnum urged reindeer for Lower Yukon Eskimos. Famine was reported at Unalakleet and, as people could not raise seal, walrus, ptarmigan and other wild species, domesticated reindeer were requested. After all, Antisarluk's Eskimo herd had produced 71 fawns from 83 adult females the first year.

The Government's fawn percentage at Teller was more phenomenal the spring of 1896, 130 fawns resulting from 113 females. Healthy last-season bull fawns rutted; some females produced twins. Alaska's domesticated reindeer had increased to 1,175. Congressmen urged stocking the Aleutian Islands as a food supply to succor shipwrecked sailors, as the survivors of one vessel had lived only by eating their dead shipmates.

Two episodes during the fall of 1897 shook the world with "reindeer talk" and spread reindeer to our Arctic coast. The ice pack fastened its death grip around eight whaling ships and their 400 crewmen were reported in danger of starvation in the Barrow region. Low water in the Yukon halted the stern wheelers from St. Michael so that hundreds of stranded miners were feared to lack sufficient food to last the long winter. Our ingenious Government decided that reindeer must be the instrument to achieve relief.

After all, reindeer are useful to humans in the North. The meat, although deficient in fat tissue, has higher protein content than beef. Hides are thick-grown with hollow buoyant hairs having great insulation value for such things as sub-zero boots, mittens, sleeping bags and camp mattresses; and the light parka skins from fawns have an undercoat which makes them extra warm. Tanning will produce a velvet-like chamois, as well as tough shoe leather. Reindeer need no barns. Wherever their sharp hooves can paw down

through snow to "reindeer moss," they feast, which solves a problem for whoever may use them to draw sleds 30 miles per day or pack supplies. Although seasonal extraction of the milk is small and difficult, the milk has three times the fat of that from goats. Domesticated reindeer are a steadfast potential friend of all who need prolonged existence from our northern tundralands.

If images of ice-locked seamen and Yukon miners were packed with dammen's bold imaginations devised equally spectacular means of rescue. The Treasury Department would direct a drive of reindeer 600 miles north into Barrow's mid-winter gloom while, to aid the miners, Lapland would be promptly combed for herds-men and sled reindeer to be rushed to the Klondike's rich gold fields.

It was nearly Christmas of 1897 when the "Bear," oppressed by ice, managed to reach the Eskimo settlement of Tununuk, over 300 miles southwest of the nearest reindeer. Three fur clad officers, led by handsome Lt. Jarvis, were set ashore to commence a dog team journey overland to Antisarluk's herd, which was reached three weeks later.

Despite his family's poverty, that Eskimo, with the kind generosity of his race, agreed to loan the Government his entire herd to aid the hungry whalers. He and his Eskimo herders were hired and the hard drive north began, while Lt. Jarvis went ahead to borrow the Wales herd and, if possible, to get Mr. Lopp and his Eskimo herders to drive it. Successful in this, the two herds proceeded north separately along the coast and across 40 miles of pressure ice to Kotzebue Sound toward Barrow, which was reached two months later.

That drive was a greater feat than we can realize now. No weather stations existed. The Eskimos had not ranged among strangers far from home. The terrain ahead lay fogged in mystery. Yet White and primitive Eskimos together plodded north through storms and cold driving reindeer for 60 days, averaging 10 miles per day. And Lopp felt vindicated; his Eskimos were reindeer farmers, he felt sure.

So the Point Barrow herd began. For after everyone had gained a feast and more security from the slaughtering of 260 reindeer when the great drive ended, 201 remained alive to start herds which, later, spread to Eskimos along the Arctic Rim and back down the coast to Pt. Hope. Eskimos herded reindeer, thus earned some, applied their earmarks, hired other Eskimos, paid them reindeer. The chain of reindeer ownerships spread apace.

While reindeer were grunting, click-

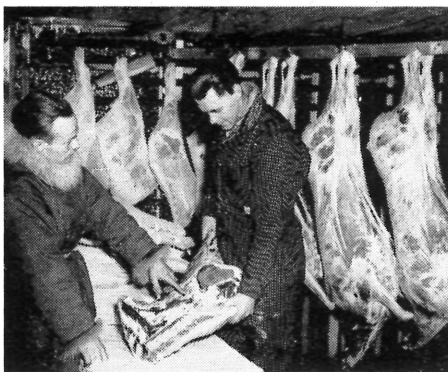


Photo by Gene Gyuriak, Stewart's Photo Shop

Reindeer ready for the market.

ing their ankle tendons and making fine snow fly on their trek toward Barrow, William Kjellman, re-appointed as superintendent, was busy in Lapland. He had returned four of the Lapp herders to their homes after expiration of their reindeer contracts. Now he sought a whole colony for Alaska. And the Secretary of War cabled him to buy 500 sled reindeer for conveyance to the Klondike. So he sent couriers throughout Lapland to buy and hire.

Of the 539 sled deer which left Norway's port of Trondhjem for New York on February 4, 1898, only 122 reached our Klondike's Circle City a year later. The herd survived the Atlantic's storms, the strain of rail travel to Seattle and trans-shipment in a towed bark to Haines, Alaska, then met terrible starvation caused by lack of "reindeer moss" near Haines despite

the frantic efforts of the Lapps to peel enough lichens from trees to feed the dying stock.

And when the survivors reached Circle City, after months of struggling against obstructive forests, wolf attacks, open streams and blood-thirsty insects, the seven tired Lapp drivers laid down heavy packs to find that no emergency existed. The reindeer were not needed then; and, being steers, they bred nothing for the future of Alaska's reindeer enterprise.

But this "Klondike Venture" did not fail. For Alaska secured value from the human energy and skills of the hardy, already-acclimated reindeer-folk among the 113 Lapps, Norwegians and Finns whom Mr. Kjellman brought to Unalakleet's new Reindeer Station during 1898.

Great names came to be noted among these people: Redmeyer, Hatta, Per and Hans Siri, Boini, Bahr and Kjedberg, who had delivered the reindeer to the Klondike; and others to become equally prominent in our "reindeer country", including Spein, Pulk, Nilima, Anthi, Sara, Bals and Bango. One of them, Japhet Lindberg, "struck it rich" at Nome and later became vice president of a big Seattle bank. Nearly half of the 68 men in this "colony" applied for American naturalization promptly.

The one-way transportation provided in their two-year contracts encouraged permanent residence. But it was encouraged by other terms, too: free food, clothing, medicine, freedom from taxes, a six-day week, \$268 to \$402 per year in cash, and opportunity to become owners of reindeer.

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Such terms tempted a people whose lives on Lapland's crowded pastures had required unusual thriftiness.

The contracts stated that should any, after two years' service, desire his salary to be paid with live reindeer, enough reindeer would be deeded to him to be worth the cash; furthermore, that every such person could borrow 100 reindeer breeders for up to five years without interest, so that the natural increase would be his private property after he had paid 100 similar breeders back to Uncle Sam.

This last feature was essential, for life without reindeer is empty of joy and promise to real reindeerfolk. The chance to earn reindeer compensated for such unpleasant things as homesickness, trying to "teach the Eskimo in Alaska in reindeer raising in all its details", and obedience to a host of strange Government rules and orders which the necessities of reindeer raising in Lapland had never imposed upon its resourceful nomads.

Even those who had not lived by herding the wandering reindeer in Lapland but, rather, had acted as drivers and trainers of sled deer for others, were captivated by Sheldon Jackson's confidence that Alaskan demand for cross-country freighting with sled reindeer would be substantial. Great new stampedes for Alaska's yellow gold were requiring more sledding and packing of goods across our roadless wilderness than ever before, and numerous were the pioneers who, considering the cost, weight and scarcity of dog feed, were anxious to

**Father Deschout
blessing Eskimo
herdsmen
and their families
before the annual
reindeer roundup
Tannunak on
Nelson Island.**



Photo by Gene Gyuriak, Stewart's Photo Shop

buy sled reindeer. The disadvantages of reindeer remained to be discovered by their buyers, such as: helplessness on glare ice, dependency during winter on the presence of "reindeer moss" along the trail, the bother of tethering and re-tethering them on good pasture, their vulnerability to loose dogs near settlements, and their retention of some of the capricious irritability of hitched cats that leave no doubt, while they yank at some damned weight tied behind them, that the entire situation is irksome.

If the Government's job was both to increase domesticated reindeer and to develop reindeer farming on the public lands, thus creating an industry of profit to the farmers and to the whole buying public, the opportunity given to expert Lapland reindeer men to acquire private herds was sound. They would do more than raise reindeer themselves. They were required to teach Eskimos HOW to raise them, and it has never been shown that these Lapp teachers did not prove to be sincere and capable. To the extent that Alaska's Eskimo hunters might not be impelled by the expert tutelage of Laplanders to become nomadic herdsman, the Laplanders could not be blamed except by men who, possessed of such profound contempt for Eskimos that they hold them accountable for nothing, might blame others for

failing to accomplish the Eskimos' transition to pastoral pursuits. This, however, contemplates a future not yet reached.

Alaska's Reindeer Station had just been moved from Teller to Unalakleet when the Laplander colony arrived in July, 1898, to help manage the Government's 623 reindeer. The mosquitoes were at their angry peak and the great piles of logs which Stephan Ivanof had hauled to the Station site were not yet whipsawed for erection of quarters.

The Laplanders, however, were happy to settle again on the tundra in tents after their tiresome voyage. The local resources inspired them: salmon crowding the clear streams, chattering ptarmigan, migratory waterfowl of many types, virgin stands of the coral-structured "reindeer moss", familiar "Old Country" linden berries (cranberry) in abundance, graceful foxes and much else. And mens' talk rang with exciting tales of great gold strikes near Nome. Who knew but that all Alaska held promise for such hardy folks as they?

Their chance to test that question occurred soon. For it became apparent to the Government, especially after the big log Station was built in readiness for chill winter, that a staff of 68 reindeer men was too large. So the Government enabled many to leave to search for the gold which was inducing White Americans from every walk of life to rush to Seward Peninsula in a hectic search for wealth. But there were those among them who returned to reindeer herding later.

Thus Scandiavia's reindeer people joined Eskimos and Missions to develop private reindeer herds on Alaska's west coast pastures. And most will succeed until, as we shall see, the industry is brought near death by the grip of forces from which neither reindeer owners nor our Government achieved escape.

(To be continued)

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BEAR ON THE MOUNTAIN

(A STORY)

By DOROTHY BJORNSGAARD

I have seen a good many bear stories written into experience since Ed and I began spending our summers in the camp of the Collinsville Mines west of Talkeetna in the Fairview Mountains. But the one which gave me the most thrill "for my money" happened last year.

On a gorgeous day in August this red headed, six foot Norwegian of mine put his head in the door of our cabin and said, "Throw on your travelling togs, Ma. We'll go up the crick and pick a mess of blueberries."

I shoved back the sad irons and folded away the pressing board. Who wants to iron clothes when he can get an equal backache in a more delightful way?

Ed's work in the camp does not follow a rigid schedule and he can take an occasional day off. He packed sandwiches and coffee in a berry bucket to have for a lunch in the wannigan of the deserted camp at the head of Mills Creek where the valley's south slope is one enormous blueberry park.

Ed lifted his 32 Special from the wall. "A darn good hawk shooter," some of the camp men had said of it in derision. "Just the thing to get you into a jam with a Brownie some time if you carry it in these hills." Remembering which, Ed looked at his 30-40 Krag.

"Should I take the big gun?" he asked himself and answered promptly, "No. If bears have the patch we'll let 'em keep it. Or if it's a little Black, this gun will take care of him."

Kobuck, our black malemute, marked with a white neck spot and a white tail tip, was lunging on his chain and pleading to go along. "Sure, you can go," Ed told him as he slipped off the collar. "You're our bear dog." And we took off on the old foot trail of Discovery days (1906).

An hour's threading of willows, shoulder-high grass, and ripening fireweed cotton brought us to the deserted camp. We made a pot of coffee and while we drank it we scanned the opposite hillside for questionable elements. The berry bushes were low, so the slope was open except for an occasional clump of tag alders.

"I guess we're safe to go over," Ed decided after studying the area with his field glasses. "I don't see anything, and there's no bear scent in the air or Kobuck would never be chasing parka squirrels."

The dog hadn't once scented the air.

He'd been searching all over camp for squirrel burrows and all we could see of him at any time was the white tail tip bobbing erratically through the grass. Everything appeared serene, but to be doubly sure we climbed a high ridge back of the wannigan to look from a better vantage. And that's when we saw the big brown spot that moved, high on a ridge directly opposite our own. The glasses made him look as big as a moose. Fascinated, we watched him for half an hour as he moved this way and that in motions a bear would make stripping blueberry bushes.

"I'm not hungry for blueberries any more." I declared with emphasis.

Ed's eyes grinned. "No? Well, I can't say that I am either. My gun's not heavy enough to protect my appetite with that boy around."

With a few slips and slides on the newly frost-bitten hellebore plants we climbed down from the ridge and held a council over another pot of coffee. While we were drinking and idly watching the hillside the bear sauntered into view and continued his feast. He was half way up the mountain and plenty far away to let us go quietly back home the way we came. And that's what we decided to do. Calling the dog from his squirrels we started down the trail, but watched the bear with a wary eye.

Suddenly the Brownie lost his serenity. Throwing up his head for a quick look around, he dodged into a clump of alders, Almost immediately

he ran out of the cover and loped up the hill to a larger alder thicket. Then back down to the first one. Up to a third, and then in greater frenzy he half-ran, half-rolled back to the first.

"What's the matter with him, is he crazy?" I asked, goose pimples bumping up my arms.

"I think he smells danger and doesn't know whether it lays above him or below him," Ed answered. "The air must be drawing up the hill from us. That's why Kobuck hasn't smelled him."

In a longer move than any yet, the bear dashed over a hogback and began running downstream. The same direction we were going. Although he was still halfway up the mountain side, we slowed our steps and wondered if we should turn back to the camp. We'd be caught with no refuge and only a "hawk shooter" gun, if he decided to come on down.

"If he just wasn't so big—," Ed cog-

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itated. "I've killed two Blacks with this gun. But I don't know."

Our minds were made up quick and without any waste of words when the bear started running down a draw toward us. Not that he wanted us, any more than we wanted him. But how far can you trust a bear that's so crazy-scared as this one?

Once back in camp we scrambled up to the roof of the wannigan by means of the cache ladder and that crazy mutt of a bear, instead of going on away from the scent he was afraid of, raced back up over the ridge and dropped down into the draw where he had first sented us. He played mad tag with the alders again, dropping lower and lower on the hillside. Closer and closer to us and our frail refuge. And even yet Kobuck hadn't seen him, which maybe was a blessing.

"He gets down into the crick and comes over here, I'll kick the ladder down in his face," Ed chuckled small-boy fashion. But his hands, I noticed, were tense on the gun.

Myself, I didn't chuckle. The wannigan wouldn't be very sturdy against the thunderbolt of a frenzied bear. I was remembering "Pappy" Walker of the Kenai area who'd had his scalp ribboned in the mouth of a Brownie. He had lived, to be sure. But there were those who hadn't. I didn't want "Pappy" and "Mammy" Bjornsgaard running that kind of a risk.

Maybe Ed sensed by thoughts for he added, "The bear's too far away for me to kill with this Hawk Shooter, but I might scare him back over the mountain so we can get home."

The bullet evidently was high and plunked into the slope above the bear because he left his zigzag course and headed pell-mell straight down the draw. The next shot, lowered a little, brought him rolling end over end downhill.

"By gosh, I hit him," Ed exulted as he threw in another shell.

With the first report of the gun, Kobuck had taken off across the creek valley as fast as his plump barrel could weave through the tangled willows. At last he had seen the bear. With the second shot he had reached the blueberry slope and we could see his white tail tip laboring through the bushes nearer and nearer to the rolling bear. But he didn't close in and start mauling the carcass as we had expected him to do. He circled wide and warily, yapping in excited screeches.

We soon learned why. With only the briefest of pauses in a little hollow where the bear stopped rolling, he gathered his feet under him and took off up the creek. Apparently he had not been hit at all but just startled into trying to go faster than his legs could move. Kobuck's black head and

waving tail followed close behind.

The bear had to round a ridge that brought him into definite gun range even of the Hawk Shooter, but he was really making tracks. Ed's third shot nicked a front foot and made him limp a little but that didn't slacken his speed to amount to anything. He had frightening endurance. Kobuck followed him a while, dropping further and further behind. The last we saw of the bear was a big brown dot hump-

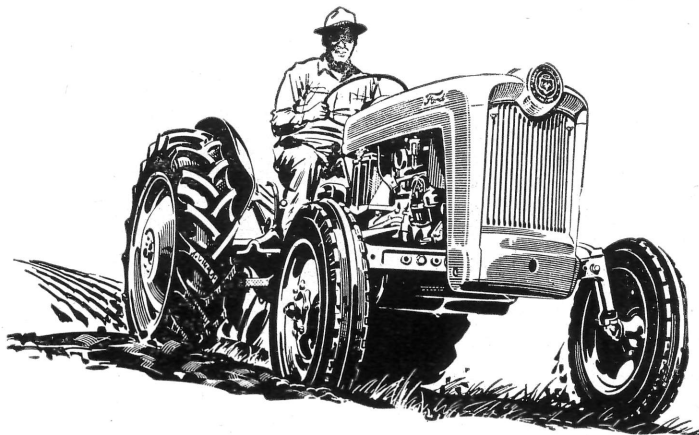
ity-humping over the saddle into the head of Twin Creek.

We had to go home without the berries and without the bear. But we didn't mind a bit. We got home. If anybody should happen to run across a big Brownie with hair prematurely gray and a front toe missing, that's the Boy.

Advice is like snow—we always get it when we don't need it.

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Rudolph's Berry Merry Christmas

By LOIS MELICKIAN

Once upon a Christmas-time, Seattle woke up short of cranberries because the large quantities she usually received from Norway and Sweden, had not arrived. It appeared many Christmas tables would not be decked with the cheery red berries that are as important as Santa Claus himself.

Though things looked bleak indeed, the magic of Christmas was hidden, only temporarily, for out of the frozen North, riding the crest of the waves, came another Santa Claus. It was the Veteran Alaskan sea-man, Hienie Berger, who on his previous trip South had noted the critical cranberry shortage. When he returned to Alaska, he talked to his sourdough friend Rudolph and told him of this.

"Well," snorted Rudolph, "I and my friends picked quite a few berries this year. Why don't you take them South with you and sell them for me?"

It was agreed upon, and Hienie and Rudolph, full of Christmas spirit, loaded this cargo aboard the ship at Anchorage. There were seventy-five gallons of Alaskan Cranberries in all.

It was two weeks later when Hienie arrived back in Anchorage. He sold the berries to a large chain store for one dollar a gallon, and now he was happy to present Rudolph, not only with a check for the delivered berries, but also an order for two thousand more gallons of the same.

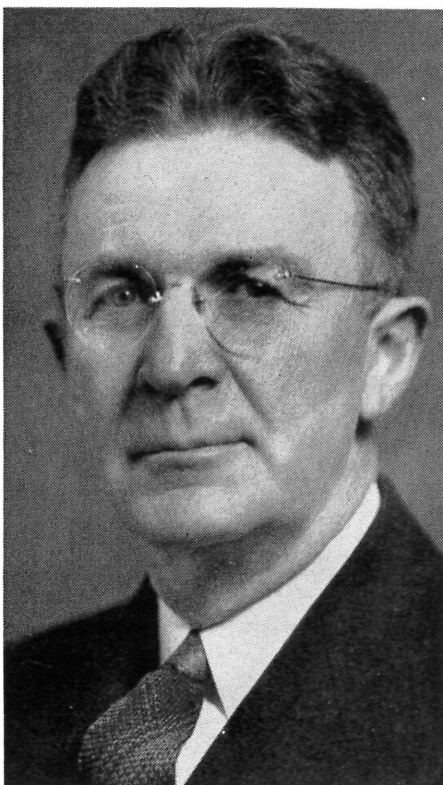
The seventy-five dollar check incidentally, made a Berry Merry Christmas for Rudolph.

THANKS (A Poem)

By Dolores B. Watson

Let us give thanks for eyes that see
Mountains of majestic beauty
Fields of crops to nourish its people
Millions of working people's homes
Nature and its changing seasons.
Let us give thanks for ears that hear
Music of happy people
Singing of birds in the wooded areas
Gleeful laughter of children at play
A baby's gurgle at feeding time.
Let us give thanks for hands
That discover the earth's many wonders
Which heal the sick and care for the wounded
That care for their loved ones
That help to make a better world.
Let us give thanks for hearts and souls
Of a generous understanding people.
Let us give thanks for a beautiful land
Untouched by war's destruction.
Let us give thanks for a land that is free
To men of all Nations and Creeds.

Governor Heintzelman



Alaska's new Chief of State

The Braswell & Sons ad below advertising White China Geese for sale is the first such ad ever to appear in the Alaskan Agriculturist from the Bristol Bay area. We wish the Braswells a lot of luck. Editor.

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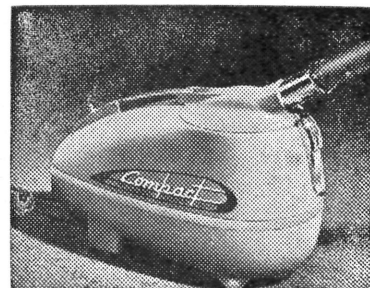
The Flower Garden

Not all flowers shown in the big Seed Catalogues will grow here. But those that do are marvelled at by visitors to Alaska, and enjoyed by everyone, especially by those of us who spent the long winter in Alaska. Due to the long days of summer from 18 to 24 hours of sunlight, depending on where you live, plants have an opportunity for uninterrupted growth, from planting time in the spring until the first frost of fall. No where else do flowers reach such size, perfection, colors and fragrance as those grown under the light of our own midnight sun. The list of flowers that do well here is given below:

Flowers usually planted from seed in the open ground after the ground warms up usually about June 1st, include alyssum, Calendula, Candy tuft, Bachelor buttons, Chinese forget-me-nots, Annual pinks, Baby breath, Scarlet runner, Senaria, Nasturtium, poppies, sweet peas, straw flowers, Nemaphelia.

Those that should be set out in the spring from started plants include: snapdragons, astors, cosmos, larkspur, lobelia, pansies, phlox, petunias, stocks glads, sweet williams.

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THE

Homesteader's Wife

By Laura Pedersen

For some reason Laura Pedersen's copy didn't show up in time for this issue. This below was left out of the winter issue. Can't get along without the homesteader's wife.

Just recently I have been informed that the farmers on the Kenai Peninsula are having a hard time selling their produce to the markets in Anchorage. There is one farmer with three tons of potatoes and he can't sell them. Another farmer has several head of cattle with no market for them.

I asked one party from Anchorage why the butcher shops there don't buy Kenai beef. He told me it was no good — the fat was too yellow. Now this I know for certain to be untrue. At one time I was in the restaurant business in Homer and I used all the local produce I could buy. I used thousands of pounds of the best beef money can buy, and thousands of pounds of potatoes that compared favorably with any State's potatoes, both for mashing and French frying.

Personally I think it's a sad condition when the local markets won't cooperate with the local farmers. Especially when one hears so much about trying to make Alaska independent and self-supporting.

* * *

Here's an idea sent in by Mrs. Fred Gerber of Minneapolis, Minn. I've had this one in before but it missed the Christmas issue.

Christmas Tree Decorations or Place Cards

- ½ cup water (may need a little more)
- 1 cup salt
- ½ cup corn starch

Science Steps Into Your Garden

Perhaps our worthy ancestor, the American Indian, had a great idea when he placed a fish in the soil under each hill of Corn. Surely the Corn grew better. And if the Indian liked to fish, he had a wonderful combination of activities.

The modern gardener has used whole fish, acidulated fish scrap, and fish meal in various forms. More recently, he has used the so-called liquid fish solubles. They are usually sold in bottles, offered as a concentrated emulsion to be mixed with water. Some are clotted and thick; some are thin; some smell rich and offensive, like a dead fish; others are partly or completely deodorized.

Within the past year new forms of liquid fish fertilizer, made by a different process, have appeared on the market. The appearance of these products suggests that 1953 gardeners may take a second look at the liquids. Out of these new elixirs resembling liquid sunshine, comes new life, new vigor, new growth and beauty.

Our old stand-bys, the Alaska Fish Fertilizer and the Atlas Fish fertilizer are made from concentrated waste water from the presses of fish meal and fish oil manufacturing plants. This so-called "glue" water, or "stick" water, is boiled down to a 50 per cent solids concentration. Insect and dog and cat repellants and deodorizer are added, and the material is bottled and

Bring water to a boil in sauce pan, add salt and cornstarch. Mix together until you have a ball. Roll out like pie crust ¼ inch thick and cut out any pattern you wish. Decorate with water colors and let them dry on flat surface. And with that I wish you all a very happy Holiday Season.

sold. The fertilizer analysis of these materials runs about 5-2-2: five per cent nitrogen, two per cent phosphoric acid, and two per cent soluble potash.

The liquid fish fertilizers made by a newer process have a higher analysis, due to the fact that the fish materials are supplemented with other plant foods. Ortho-Gro and Lilly's new Marina Liquid Fish Blend fertilizer are examples of this process.

In making these fertilizers, the whole fish or the fish cannery offal is dissolved by means of a protein solvent. When potassium hydroxide is used as the solvent, potash is added, and this supplements the potash plant food derived from the fish. In this process, the entire fish tissue, including bones, is converted to liquid form. Then urea is added to bring the nitrogen plant food factor up to a desired level for fertilizer purposes. Finally, the material is neutralized with liquid phosphoric acid, to bring the pH to exactly the proper point. The result is a liquid fertilizer with a ratio of about 10-5-5. In the case of Lilly's Marina Fish Blend, the analysis is ten per cent nitrogen, six per cent phosphoric acid, and five per cent soluble potash.

It is claimed that this process, which dissolves the whole fish tissue, gives the gardener all of the minor elements and growth factors contained in the bones, blood, glands, and viscera of the fish, in balanced organic form. Also, vitamin B complex is present, derived from the fish, and from addition of thiamin. Thus, for the first time, we have in one product all the thirteen essential minerals, hormones, and necessary trace elements in a single fertilizer solution. Such a product ends forever the need for separate application.

All of these products surely have value for the gardener, especially since they are ideally suited for leaf feeding, and for transplanting use. Liquid fertilizers have taken an important and interesting place in the supply of superior gardening materials. One reason is their possible use for nourishing growing plants through the leaves. It is clear that plants are able to absorb the mineral and all small organic plant foods when they are applied to the leaf surface. Feeding in this manner may supplement root feeding, with the result that faster and better growth can be obtained.

Early in the season when growth processes are slow, needed stimulus can be given with a skillfully applied liquid fertilizer, fed through the leaves. Later, when the spring application of fertilizer in the soil is used by the plant, leached out, or partially bound in the soil, another feeding in liquid form may be most timely.

—Stolen from Northwest Gardens and Homes

ALASKA SEED COMPANY

Has made arrangements with Lacombe Nursery, Lacombe, Alberta, to handle their hardy grown nursery stock including:

- American Mountain Ash
- Grafted French Lilacs, many colors
- Caragana "Siberian Pea"
- Hardest Crabapples
- Pixwell Gooseberries
- Red Lake Currants
- Newburg Raspberries

- Spirea
- Honeysuckles
- Flowering Currants
- Eskimo Rose (Sitka Rose), red, white and pink, doubles
- Rhubard (McDonald)
- Delphinium, white and purple
- Manitoba maple

This stock will be ready for delivery about May 15th from our Anchorage store.

Alaska Seed Company

1314 I Street, Anchorage, Alaska

Letters to the Editor ☆ ☆ ☆

Homer, Alaska

The Alaskan Agriculturist:

Intended to write some time ago to tell you we received much favorable comment on the article in the fall issue. Your introduction was especially appreciated by people who have goats.

Quite a few letters were received from the States as far east as Kansas and Wisconsin.

The Editor of the Capriculturist said your introduction was the most sensible thing he had read on the place the dairy goat has in the dairy product business.

Sincerely yours,
Willowridge Farm

Spenard, Alaska

Dear Sirs:

The wide circulation your magazine enjoys throughout the Territory has prompted me to write this letter of inquiry in the hope that some of your readers may be able to help me in a current project.

As you are aware, I have for some time been doing research into various phases of Alaskan history, and I am at the present time, endeavoring to reconstruct the establishment and development of Transportation and Postal Service from the early days to the present time.

I am anxious to secure therefore any old records regarding Yukon River boats, names, schedules, rates, etc., and all types of travel folders or guide books on Pacific Coast Steamship Co., Northwestern Steamship Co., and any information on the old Alaska Commercial Company and the North American Transportation and Trading Company.

With respect to Postal records, my principal needs are for post marks or cancellations from the earliest days to about 1940, or until the establishment of regular airmail service throughout the territory. I am in need too, of cancellations from discontinued offices and from offices that have had name changes. Any letter showing, aside from the regular cancellation, some indication as to how it was carried, might be of real interest to me.

I sincerely hope that any reader who has anything at all that seems pertinent will communicate with me thru the Agriculturist. No material will be considered too insignificant and every letter received will be answered.

Sincerely yours,
/s/ Oliver P. Shaw

The Alaskan Agriculturist:

I am writing to give your magazine my change of address and to ask help, if possible, in locating a supply of wheat for home consumption. The enclosed material will show you and Mrs. Pedersen the flour mill I have sent for. I trust that you may be interested enough to get one also. I guarantee that once you have tasted bread, corn bread and pie crust made with fresh ground whole grain flour you will not enjoy any commercial product ever again. Americans have lost track of what true taste is. As well as what is truly healthful.

We would appreciate if you could let us know if it is possible to get 100 pounds of wheat down your way as soon as possible and the cost of it. A couple of local farmers have wheat but it is not cleaned but we will be able to get all the wheat we need locally, I am sure, later on.

Altho we do no more than a bit of gardening for our own use, we are keenly interested in your fine magazine and hope that in time its articles will cover the whole territory. I am housekeeper for my Uncle who came over the Chilcoot as a young man in 1898. A more charming companion and well balanced mentality can not be found often among younger men. He knows Alaska as few moderns will take time to know it. He talks of forty sections of land that will out class any present farming area. When it is developed. Life is too short to realize the fruition of progress satisfactorily.

Wishing you people continued success in the fine work you are doing.

Respectfully yours,
/s/ Nickie Bell

* * *

(Editor's note: Thanks, Nickie Bell, for your nice letter. I hope some of the farmers in the Matanuska Valley with wheat suitable for your purposes will write you a letter. Address: 453 12th St., Fairbanks, Alaska.)

Box 277
Holbrook, Arizona

Gentlemen:

At last we are permanently located at the above address, so kindly send my Alaskan Agriculturist here. Should be one or two back numbers. Tho I am a long ways from Alaska, I still take a deep interest in it. We came here for health reasons and not because we don't like Alaska, for we most certainly do. Wishing you the best of success in helping to develop Alaska, I am,

Very sincerely,
/s/ E. S. Moore

Dear Editor:

We want to thank you for the space you so generously gave to the Chinchilla industry in the winter issue.

I imagine the interesting cover you used plus the personal autograph by George Ahgupuk added many subscribers to your list.

From our own experience we can tell you your circulation covers a large area, for we have had letters of inquiry from many obscure corners of Alaska and many visitors from close at home, because of our ad in the Agriculturist.

I'm enclosing a fetching little picture you might care to share with the public, to acquaint them with our cunning creatures. Perhaps we will send in pictures of our latest Chin twins (three weeks old) or our famous world's smallest Chinchilla cape made for a doll to model at the Rendezvous style show by the Alaska Fur Factory.

We feel we Alaskans, no matter what our individual job, have a great future ahead if we all pull together.

Don't forget to re-run our ad this issue.

Thanks again.

Elliott's Chinchilla Ranch

(Ed's note: We won't forget your ad. No, sir!)

How did the fool and his money ever get together in the first place?

CARR'S FOOD CENTER

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Complete Dinners

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Anchorage

Tractor Conditioning

There are busy days ahead, and before they start it is extremely important to get your farm machinery — your tractor, especially — in the best possible condition. A good place to start is on the air cleaner of your tractor. While most farmers do a good job of taking care of the pre-cleaner and oil cup, the air cleaner itself is often neglected. About 9,000 gallons of air goes through the cleaner for each gallon of fuel burned, and you must expect that a lot of dirt will lodge in the screen and element of the cleaner. The air cleaner should be removed at least twice a year and thoroughly washed in kerosene or a cleaning solvent. When it is replaced, be sure that all air hose connections are tight for a leaky hose makes the cleaner useless.

The next item that should be checked is the fuel system. The fuel screen located on most tractors near the sediment bowl and carburetor should be removed and cleaned. The carburetor should be cleaned and adjusted. You'll want to remember that the carburetor is not a gas plant but is a metering device, and it cannot measure the proper mixture of air and fuel unless properly adjusted. The motor should be warmed to operating temperature before any attempts are made to adjust the carburetor. There are three major adjustments on most tractor carburetors. The idle stop screw which merely stops the throttle lever at idling speed, the idle mixture adjustment; and the third is the load adjustment.

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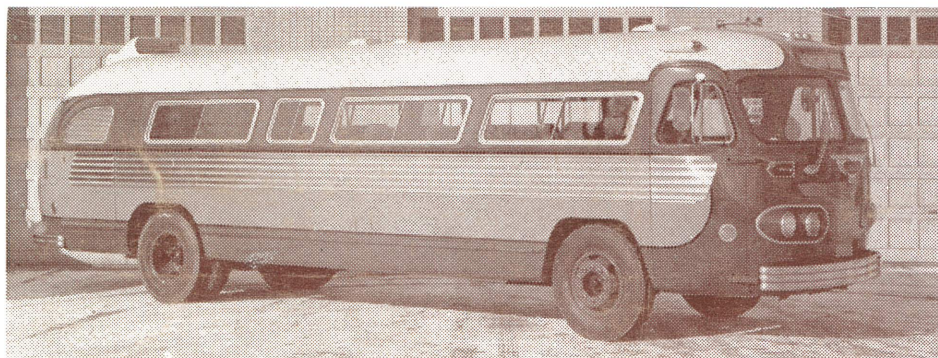
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How is this for a chance to get a start? Ten year lease on farm, \$600 a year, 10 acres cleared, excellent potato and truck garden soil, large house, four cabins on beautiful lake. Four miles from Wasilla. Look again. That's only \$50 per month.

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Leave Seward
2:30 p.m. Daily

Palmer

Leave Anchorage
8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Daily
Leave Palmer
10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Daily
4:00 p.m. trip also serves Wasilla



Valdez

Leave Anchorage
3:00 p.m. Monday and Friday
Leave Valdez
12:00 noon Tuesday
4:00 a.m. Sunday



Homer

and the Kenai Peninsula

Leave Anchorage
8:30 a.m. Daily
Except Sunday
Leave Seward
10:00 a.m. Daily
Except Sunday
Leave Homer
To Anchorage and Seward
9:00 a.m. Daily
Except Monday



Fairbanks

CANADA, U. S. A.

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Leave Fairbanks
To Valdez and Anchorage
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