

Matanuska Valley Pioneer

61 30' N. Lat.

149 15' W. Long.

Vol. I

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No. 5

LT. COL. HUNT GETS O. K. ON MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING

The good news hinted at last week is here. We are to have the permanent school building this fall and plans for the erection of temporary buildings have been cancelled.

Washington's permission to go ahead with the big Community Center unit meets with the hearty approval of everyone. Colonists have expressed themselves quite freely on the subject and officials here have backed them.

The school unit includes the community hall which will be of the utmost importance to the Colony this winter. Without it the fine moving picture equipment we have would be useless. There would be no place to hold public meetings or have any kind of entertainment. Col. Hunt has estimated sixty days as the length of time it will take to fit it for occupancy.

In his weekly report to Washington, Col. Hunt gives only fourteen houses left to be started, as against 51 the week before. Sixty wells have been completed and six more are either being drilled or dug by hand. The barn construction program is well under way and the inside finishing of occupied homes is receiving its share of attention. The major construction phase is well over the top.

Eugene Carr who, as head of the procurement division, has charge of all employment, states that he will not be hiring any more men at present. In fact he intimated that the next move would be the cutting of existing crews.

ARRC STAFF STENOGRAPHER SUFFERS PAINFUL ACCIDENT

Miss Rita Revolle slipped on a muddy path during the rain Tuesday morning and fractured her left leg between the ankle and knee.

While extremely painful, it is, fortunately, only a simple fracture and Doctor Nathaniel Brown, who set the broken bone into place between splints, predicts an early recovery.

Miss Revolle was taken to Anchorage for X rays in one of the small railroad speeders. Father Sulzman accompanied her.

GEORGE DAVIS; Your bed roll found and now at General Office.

SIX TEACHERS ARRIVE TO TAKE OVER TUTORING TASKS

The Matanuska Valley school staff is now complete with the arrival this week of six additional teachers who are already at their task of travelling from home to home, holding classes for those children who are too far from either Matanuska or Wasilla to attend either school.

Five of the teachers came north on the last trip of the Yukon. They were Miss Mildred Ferguson, from Minneapolis; Miss Marjorie Potter, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Miss Peggy Pimperton, whose home is Great Falls, Montana; Miss Janet Forges, of Anchorage; and Miss Zelda King, from Mabton, Washington.

Miss Lorinda Ward, who had sailed North two weeks previously, is another who hails from Anchorage. Miss King taught school at Seward last term after three years as teacher at Matanuska. Miss Ward taught a term at Hope.

Miss Borges is not a stranger to the valley, either, having taught right here in Palmer last year. Miss Pimperton's Alaska experience includes teaching at Douglas.

They are all comfortably quartered with the Victor Johnsons on Tract 97, about a mile and a half West on Finger Lake Road, and they get around to the various homes by car.

NEWS-REEL MAN GETS REAL NEWS

Fred Fordham, veteran knight of the tripod and crank, who is nationally known for discovering new camera shots through a technique all his own, is here on the project to get a true pictorial record of the development.

"Film," said Mr. Fordham, "is the one medium that can tell a story more concisely and more lucidly than any other. No written words can possibly capture the bustling activity I have caught with the lens."

Mr. Fordham is covering every angle of the project and has "canoned" some exceptional scenes.

A cow in a stand of oat hay tall enough to hide her will probably make a farmer curse, but to camera man it is a shot at which no skeptic can shout 'fake' when projected on a screen.

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A DELIBERATE LIAR OR
JUST PLAIN DUMBNESS?

Read the following and answer
the above question yourself. Your
guess is as good as ours.

It seems incredible that any
Alaskan would tell such deliberate
and bare faced lies about his home
Territory as these we have before
us. On the other hand, it seems
equally incredible that any man
could live in a country five years
without learning something about
it; at least as much as the aver-
age ten-year-old school boy would
know.

Yes, the answer is in one of the
two premises submitted above. Take
your choice.

Mr. Erick W. Voss, of St. Joseph,
Michigan, has written Dr. Charles
E. Bunnell, president of the Uni-
versity of Alaska, asking if there
is any truth in a feature article
which appeared in a St. Joseph
paper. Evidently Mr. Voss is a
thinking man, for he suggests that
it sounds just like so much polit-
ical bunk to him.

President Bunnell has sent the
inquiry on to Ross Sheely here as
there are some questions regarding
the soil that Mr. Sheely, in his
capacity as Director of Agricul-
tural Extension for the U., can
answer with authority.

We have been asked to answer
some of the other gross misstate-
ments which were set down by a man
named Pledge Brown, who claims to
have been a newspaper man during
his five years of residence in
Ketchikan.

Perhaps he was, but we can't help
feeling that he should have left
printer's ink alone and stuck more
closely to the tin shop he ran in
that coastal city.

Copies of this paper will be sent
to Mr. Voss, The Ketchikan Chron-
icle, where Mr. Brown claims to
have worked, and to the St. Joseph
Herald-press. If the papers publish
it we can discount the suggestion
of Mr. Voss and score against the
second half of the question expres-
sed in our heading. A man seldom
sets out deliberate lies without a
reason for them.

The statements in quotation marks
are Mr. Brown's, the others our
answers.

"Alaska's new 'pioneers,' wards of
a generous government, will be
shouting to return home after they

(Continued on page 4)

MAPLE SUGAR! MAYBE!

How about Matanuska Maple Sugar?
Is it not possible that this may
have been overlooked? When one
can harvest as much as 77 bushels
of Leader or Victory oats to the
acre he is liable to forget such
things as by-products from his un-
cleared land, or from areas that
do not lend themselves to plowing.

There is not a great deal of dif-
ference between the climate of the
sugar raising section of New Eng-
land and that of the valley but
what it would be worth the exper-
iment.

Sap runs freely up here. You
can sock an axe into a tree here
in the Spring and have the sap spit
right out at you, and old timers
have made a fair grade of sugar
from birch.

If any of the old settlers of the
valley have tried out the Eastern
Sugar Maple here we would be glad
to hear what success attended the
experiment. If it has never been
tried we can write the chambers of
commerce back in some of the cities
of Vermont and New Hampshire and
have them send in grafts for plant-
ing next Spring.

LEGION DANCE CALLED OFF--
TOO MANY HOUSE WARMINGS

With so many Colonist families
moving into their completed homes,
and so many house warmings sched-
uled for Saturday eve, the Legion
has decided to postpone its pro-
posed dance until the following
Saturday night.

Mr. Cook, of the experimental
farm, who has the hall at Matan-
uska has kindly accepted the can-
cellation, and announces that he
will hold the regular week-end
dance there for those who will not
be out christening new homes.

Next Saturday evening at eight
o'clock transportation for the Col-
onists will be at each of the sev-
eral camps.

The members of the American Leg-
ion post now being formed ask that
everyone in the Colonist group who
can play any instrument please be
there. It is proposed to select a
permanent orchestra which will
play at all social functions where
music is desired. Compensation
for their services will be arrange
with the musicians chosen, so get
out the old "stretch organ," mouth
harp, fiddle, guitar or what have
you. Polish her up and be there
for a big time. Don't forget the
date: September 28th, at the hall
in Matanuska.

Legion meeting at the Library
tent on 'C' Street at 8 o'clock
Friday evening. Secretary Atwood
asks you all to bring your cre-
dentials.

--COMINGS AND GOINGS--

Father Sulzman left Tuesday for Seward and expects to return on the 28th. Captain Jim Halloran will be Fire Warden during Fr. Sulzman's absence.

Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Snyder, of Anchorage's famous restaurant, The Log Cabin, were visitors to the project Wednesday.

"Oklahoma" Jack Stahler is back with his wife and family, and that ought to change the betting. When Oklahoma, who was here to greet the first of the colonists, left to get his family there was plenty of even money that he wouldn't return. He fooled them, and now he says he's here to stay.

Porter Berryhill, Chief Engineer of the Alaska Railroad, and Dewey Metzendorf were Valley visitors on Wednesday.

CHURCH NOTICES

Undenominational Services will be held at the tent of Mrs. Parkins on E Street Sunday afternoon at 2 P. M. Mid-week prayer meetings at the same place Wednesdays at 7:30, with either Rev. Patterson or Rev. Crabb conducting. All are cordially invited.

Lutheran Services will be held by Rev. Mr. Frieling at 11 o'clock Sunday at his tent on A Street. Sunday school an hour earlier.

Last Sunday Father Sulzman baptised four Colonist babies in the temporary chapel upstairs in the Trading Center. The children christened were: Lynn Henry Stephan, Barbara Anne Lund; Monty Melvin stephan Larsh and Mavis Therese La Valley.

FINNISH BATHS POPULAR

Madeleine de Foras, our popular Red Cross nurse, had her initiation into the revivifying mysteries of a Finnish bath at the Heganson tract last Monday. She reported it a most popular institution.

David Onkka of tract 61 near camp 8 also has a Finnish bath and 35 of his friends enjoyed it last Saturday.

He explained it as a low log building 12x16 feet, with a fire in a steel drum and hot rocks on top of it. Pour water over the hot rocks and the place fills with steam.

That's all there is to it; except finding your way out through the fog after you are thoroughly soaked.

NOTICE

Unless unexpectedly called away, M. de Foras, Red Cross Nurse, will have an office day each Wednesday at her tent.

Miss de Foras asks that those who left eye glasses, clothes such as dresses, boys cap and a coat on the St. Mihiel please call for them at her tent.

HUGE TROPHY BAGGED ACROSS RIVER

Last Saturday evening four mighty hunters left here for the Knik River bridge site, where they were ferried over and entertained by Mr. Littlejohn of the Road Commission at his camp.

Bright and early Sunday morning they were off up the mountain, grim faced and determined, boding bad luck for any of the genus Capra they might see. But it seems some Indians were ahead of them frightening all goats from their path.

High up the canyon, just when their legs were beginning to get springy at the knees, they spotted game. Ross Sheely threaded his unerring eye through the sights.... and there was the goat. Just as simple as that. It was getting into the afternoon and they had to hurry. It being Sheely's game, he threw the three hundred pound goat over his shoulder and they started down the mountain. Then they saw four brown bear in a blueberry patch. They took some shots at seventeen hundred yards (of course it really was getting late) and succeeded in getting the bears to do a bewildered merry-go-round.

When they started off again Don Irwin insisted upon doing his share of the packing. He carried the five hundred pound carcass for some distance. Then Sears, old Hurry-up Harry himself, spelled Irwin, but going down the hill was harder than climbing and the seven hundred pound goat soon became a load. Colonel LeRoy Hunt, trained to pack in the Marine Corp -- map cases, binoculars and the like -- got his military hardened shoulders under the big twelve hundred pound beast and staggered into camp with it.

The trophy can be viewed at Irwin's game cache. It's the white one...the one that looks like a rabbit only it has horns instead of big ears.

Wanted: A girl to work in Colonist home at Palmer Camp for ten days. Four children to take care of but all over five years. Inquire of Mrs. William Bennett, B Street, Palmer.

A DELIBERATE LIAR OR --
(Continued from page 1)

have harvested their first crop."

Part of the first crop has already been harvested and all remaining Colonists eager to stay and make good. Eighteen hundred people here being fed peas, carrots, lettuce, cauliflower, rutagagas, turnips, potatoes, cabbage, rhubarb, low- and high-bush cranberries and raspberries out of community gardens planted by themselves, and from wild fruit bushes growing around their homes.

"The sending of farmers from Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota to Alaska to farm is one of the most foolish moves this administration has done to date," says Mr. Brown, and continues: "First of all there is no top soil anywhere in Alaska."

We'll pass over whatever "foolish moves the administration has done," and ask Mr. Brown to talk with any man who has seen the basement excavations around here. The top soil is from four to seven feet thick.

"There is an annual rainfall in southeastern Alaska of 164 inches, thereby making the soil unfit for farming and the melting of winter snows in Matanuska valley, where the "pioneers" are now located, with no drainage makes the country unfit for crop raising," Mr. Brown tells us.

Granted they have rain at Ketchikan, but we are over a thousand miles from there, and the Matanuska Valley can boast of only a 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch average annual precipitation over a continuous U. S. Weather Bureau observation for twelve years.

"The potatoes and strawberries are perhaps the largest grown in the world," admits our informant, but adds: "When the potatoes are cut open they are soggy and unfit for human consumption and the strawberries are tasteless and stringy. Wheat, barley and oats are mouldy by harvest time."

We have wheat here that mills into the finest kind of flour, and mouldy barley doesn't thresh and prove by test to be 97% as fattening as corn. Oats fully mature and have been a staple crop in the valley for years. The potatoes we are eating here are splendidly firm, smooth and shallow eyed. They are not soggy and Colonists have been heard to say they were better than what they raised back home.

Brown says that the crops are bum "...because of too rich a lower soil."

Our lower soil here happens to be gravel, which, by the way is fine for drainage, and that answers the question of our spring snow melting -- 43 inches average annual fall.

He almost gets onto the right track when he says: "During the short summer in the Matanuska Valley, nine weeks at the most, two and three crops can be grown."

Two crops of clover and alfalfa can be grown. Hay of the latter variety was cut twice this summer from a ten-year-old stand and each cutting was 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet tall.

With government observers recording an average of 130 consecutive frost-free days over a period of years it looks like Mr. Brown had just about cut our summer in half. We have as many hours of growing sunlight here as there are along the northern boundary of the United States.

OUT OF STEP AGAIN

Brown gets worse as he goes along. Mr. Sheely's report will more thoroughly cover the crop, soil and climatic angles, but like all other Alaskans he can only laugh at the rest of our tin-snipping historian's aberrational ravings.

"One of the complaints of the "pioneers" is the lack of medical service. They have one doctor and a trained nurse to the 1800 odd souls in the valley. The Matanuska Valley is 175 miles northeast of Seward and on the government railroad. If one is seriously ill, he must be removed to the hospital by either train or plane."

We might inform Mr. Brown that we have a corps of two doctors and six nurses running two temporary hospitals, with a big and permanent building nearing completion. And the inference is that we have to go to Seward for treatment in cases involving the use of modern appliances. What's the matter with Anchorage, only forty-four miles away, and equipped with the best hospital along the line?

"Not only will the "pioneers" be disappointed in their crops, they will have to face life in the raw. They will have no modern facilities of any kind such as even the poorest of farms "down below" have. They will have oil lamps and wood and coke fires."

If warm houses, plenty of fuel last minute gasoline lights and radios; living within ten miles of a well-stocked library and a sound projection movie show; having a bus service for their children to attend school -- if that is seeing life in the raw, then surely the Colonists will experience it this winter.

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WOLF?

Trappers Attention! Mr. Brown is about to let you in on something "During the long winter months the new "pioneers" will have to

combat the huge wolf-packs that invade even the larger cities and towns in search for food. It is not safe to venture to the edge of any towns after nightfall during the winter, unarmed."

Now there's a break for the Colonists. A real break. He throws some bait, say the carcass of a snowshoe rabbit, out into the back yard, then he goes into the house and sits by the radio with his favorite pipe and a good book. At the first blood curdling howl -- foraging wolf packs are always supposed to let out blood curdling howls, aren't they? -- well, he throws up the window, only a few inches mind you, just enough to stick his rifle barrel out, but not enough so that the savage, hunger-crazed brutes can squeeze in, and then he lets 'em have it. Even if it is at night he can't miss. The moonlight here is bright as day.

When the first one falls the rest of the pack will jump on him and eat him up. They invariably do that in stories, you know, and what in the world is this masterpiece of misstatement by Mr. Pledge Brown but a fiction yarn of the first water?

When the wolves pounce upon the unfortunate one our Colonist has a minute or two in which to relight his pipe, then he can polish the rest off at leisure while they are at their cannibalistic feast.

Now he brings them in and skins them. Let's say he got ten, there should be at least ten in a 'hugo' pack. At twenty dollars apiece bounty which the Territory pays and sale of the pelts bringing another twenty on an average, our Colonist has made himself \$360.00 -- one out for the feast. He can then turn off the radio and go to bed.

The only thing wrong with that picture is that there aren't enough wolves to go around. A good Matanuska Valley trapper like Emil La Walters would consider a winter's catch of three a big year. It's the mink, fox, lynx and ermine that he depends upon to buy his outfit.

As for it being safe to travel around, well, this valley has had settlers in it for over twenty years and no one has ever been attacked by wolves.

And now Mr. Brown tells us about the mosquitoes that "...have been known to strangle a man to death in several minutes."

We've seen them pretty bad, but never that bad. A veil and gloves were always protection enough, but this thing of strangling....maybe he's thinking of those big Kodiak bear. And here's something else we never knew. Brown says: "Alaska is a rough, tough and wild today as it was in the stirring days of the Klondike.....Men still kill

for the passing of a dirty name, and get thirty days suspended sentence in the government jail."

Wow! Are we tough up here! The only place in the world, too, where suspended sentences are served in jail. We're just different, that's all.

"The owner of a fishing boat, halibut or salmon, averages from \$15,000 to \$20,000 net, in the five months of the fishing season or he has had a bad year."

Some of the boys will be glad to know about that. They've been going by those darned Fisheries Bureau bulletins which give seven weeks as the longest salmon fishing season. And won't they be sore when they find that the cannery left a cipher off their pay check?

"Vice, gambling and liquor are legalized and the saloons are filled to capacity every night of the year. In fact every night is New Year's eve. Individual prospectors blow into town from some "unknown" point far up in the frozen north, tilt their poke of dust on the bar, and call on drinks for the house, the same as has been going on in Alaska since gold was first discovered."

Shades of Dan Magrew!

Right here is where we speak our little piece. It's too much to wade through any more of such seditious slaverling. Away goes the editorial 'we' while I get this off my chest.

I came to Alaska as a very small boy, I've travelled over a lot of it, have poled my boat up nameless rivers and mushed my dogs over trails of my own making. I've lived in established cities and in towns that have boomed and died, but I don't know the Alaska of which this fellow Brown writes.

I was one of the first from Fairbanks to reach the Chisana at the time of the big stampede, and it was the last camp I know of where dust couldn't be changed into cheechako money....1913.

I think I know about most of the murder cases during the past thirty years, but I don't know of any where a man got 30 days. He either was acquitted or paid the penalty.

I burned up my head net once while lighting my pipe, and I was in real mosquito country, not a clear, breezy valley like this. I suffered from the blamed things, yes, but they never got to first base on this strangling business, nor did they even close my eyes.

There is only one conclusion I can reach about Mr. Pledge Brown and his article. It is written out on a piece of asbestos and will be attached to a copy of this paper. I'd like to hand it to to him....personally.