

# Matanuska Valley Pioneer

61° 30' N. Latitude

149° 15' W. Longitude

Vol. I

Palmer, Alaska. October 10, 1935

## DIFFICULTIES IRONED OUT AT TWO COLONIST MEETINGS

At a colonist meeting held last Friday evening in one of the unfinished bunkhouses, a committee of 3; William Bennett, Walter Huntley and Roy Wilkes, were chosen to put before Mr. Don L. Irwin three issues upon which they felt they should have some voice.

Hearing that Mr. Rex A. C. Atwood was to be returned east, they were to ask for his retention in his present job as Chief Clerk.

They were to protest the "framing" and "railroading" of Howard McKendrie back to the States, feeling that he hadn't had a proper chance to defend himself, and that none would be secure if such action was to be the rule.

The third issue was a protest against keeping Mr. Ed Cronin in his position as Fiscal Agent.

The committee reported at the meeting held Tuesday evening in the trading post.

## IRWIN'S ANSWERS REPORTED

At this meeting Mrs. Eino Wirtanen was elected Secretary of the permanent colonist organization which was set up. She promptly took her seat on a carpenter's horse before the steel table of a framing saw and the committee reported.

Mr. Irwin had informed them that there would be no place in the proposed administrative set-up for one of Mr. Atwood's talents, that there was nothing against him, and that his former position was waiting for him.

He also told them what had been fairly common knowledge around the camp; that is that McKendrie had freely admitted the charges against him. And in the matter of Mr. Cronin, Mr. Irwin said that Mr. Cronin was a very valuable man in his present place and that it would be almost impossible to replace him.

## HUNT GIVES TALK

After the reports were made Lt. Col. LeRoy Hunt addressed the group and told them: "I know you people. I haven't driven you home, visited with you and even helped hang up the laundry without learning that you are fine people, but...credit has gone to the heads of some of you, and the only way to keep that

situation from growing out of hand is to clamp down hard.

"The presents are all gone," he continued. "The Christmas tree has been thrown out onto the brush pile, and from now on you must manage to live within your budgetary allowance."

Col. Hunt explained that many would have to suffer for the actions of a few, and cited the case of the family of four who had run their bill up \$267.00 in one month. To illustrate what could be done he told of the family of five whose total since arriving here in May is only \$258.00. He called attention to the unreasonable demand that is sometimes made by telling of the single trip of the delivery truck with another brand substituted for Hills Brothers coffee, because they were out of the latter. And he told how thirteen families had sent their coffee back, demanding what they had ordered.

"This," said Col. Hunt, "is an attitude that has to change. Imagine a man with four new, credit purchased firearms in his home cursing the corporation up one side and down the other because Mr. Cronin wouldn't OK his requisition for another.

"Get in, pull together in harmony, and you have the chance of a lifetime," he told them.

## SNODGRASS ALSO SPEAKS

M. D. Snodgrass who has lived many years in the valley followed Col. Hunt with a fine talk on the bright future for a wonderful community the colonists faced.

"No one will make a fortune," he said, "But we will live, and live well, and I'd much rather have my home where all have a little, than where a few have it all.

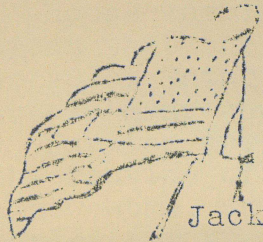
After Mr. Snodgrass finished Mr. William Bennett was elected permanent chairman. Regular meetings for the purpose of discussing their problems is the aim of the organization.

## ROMAN LEGIONS IN ETHIOPIA

Thursday dispatches from Geneva state that Mussolini's soldiers are in possession of 3600 miles of disputed area.

A dispatch from Rome: "We mowed them down with modern weapons."

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THE WAY WE LOOK AT IT

The last mail brought us a pair of eloquent word pictures of the Matanuska Valley and the colonization project; a syndicated newspaper article by Rex Beach, and Edward Doherty's story in "Liberty."

Beach, of course, is well-known for his fiction with an Alaskan background, but we feel that this last is by far his best effort in this field. He didn't fool us by setting it up as a fact article. We knew he was trying to kid us.

In fiction the heroes must always be pure white, and the villains deep-dyed black, so it necessarily follows that the viewpoint of either on a given subject must also be all right, or all wrong. How religiously Beach adheres to this fundamental rule of fiction writing!

Realizing that it was written solely for entertaining -- as is all fiction -- and having been with him here and understanding what a short time he has spent out in the valley, we have no hesitancy in declaring it a splendid piece of work. Beach spent ten hours here.

We are not altogether surprised that Mr. Beach didn't at least hint at the possibility of there being something behind this project other than the rehabilitation of a few farmer families. Very probably he saw only that which is on the surface. We doubt if he is a trained observer.

Ed Doherty is, though. This we know, for we worked for the same newspaper outfit in Paris when he was getting the dope on the diamond smuggling racket through the French capital.

But good reporter or not, one must remember that he was on assignment while up here and it is the big boss, who goes into conferences with the circulation managers and takes politicians to lunch, who

dictates the trend an article shall take and the thought control it shall possess.

It is well-known that the sensational angle of a news subject is what the man on the street enjoys reading, and no one has yet accused the MacFadden organization of muffing anything that will bring in circulation.

We can't help but believe that Doherty sensed what we feel is the real set-up here, and the answer to oft repeated questions. If he didn't, he certainly lacks the vision of a majority of the colonists.

We have no argument with his craftsmanship. He built a tremendous amount of pathos into his yarn over the sad but unavoidable death of a child, and he personalized the mountains till one felt they were monstrous enemies about to creep down and smother him. As a matter of fact those towering mountains, from a climatic standpoint, are sheltering friends of the valley.

Doherty saw muddy roads, and he saw tired-faced and impatient pioneers, but he says nothing of the light of determination in the eyes of those tired faces.

He saw families living in tents and noted the temporary shortage of tools, but he made a bum guess when he said: "...it is almost a miracle that even one house has been made ready in time."

Had he stayed a little more than the five days he spent here he would have seen more homes go up, and the menace of the much publicized Alaskan mosquito would have had no place in his story for he would have seen women -- not one but many -- running around wearing sockettes.

The greatest trouble with Mr. Doherty's article is that it should have been published on August 12th instead of October 12th. But again, perhaps MacFadden can make more money out of such stories by keeping the people thinking this project is a failure instead of an assured success.

WHERE'S EDWARD HOKANSON?

Edward Hokanson, who was in Alaska some years ago, is being searched for by W.C.Cox & Co., of Chicago, who are holding for him an estate valued at the rather sizable sum of \$40,000.00

House warmings are now so numerous that one is at a loss where to go on Saturday evenings, there are so many choices.

Parties are a sensible break in the routine of getting settled in a new home, and they are a welcome outlet for energies that hard work fails to satisfy. One must have recreation of some sort, and a good old get-together answers the problem in the most economical manner.

Mr. and Mrs. Hilmer Olson celebrated their seventh wedding anniversary in their new home on Tract 200 Saturday evening. There were twenty-two guests and they all enjoyed plenty of music, plenty of dancing, and plenty of lunch.

And Mrs. Einer Huseby had a birthday. We haven't been able to ascertain whether it was her twentieth or her twenty-first. She was very quiet about it, but a few friends knew and they dropped in for a little impromptu party.

And don't forget...another American Legion dance on the 12th... in the Trading Post if possible, if not in the big garage.

#### SNODGRASS SUBDIVISION STAKED OUT

Within a few years they may be calling it Matanuska Manor, River-view Heights or something like that, but today it is just a plain subdivision of residential lots staked out by Mr. M. D. Snodgrass.

The lots are 50x119½ feet in the clear, have 20 foot alleys and face on 60 foot streets. They will not be for sale, says Mr. Snodgrass, but are to be leased for a twenty year period.

The addition lies to both sides of the PIONEER office and runs to the south from Finger Lake Road. It is high and well drained.

#### PREPARE FOR WINTER WELL DRILLING

Ross Sheely asks that those who have no well as yet please choose the site carefully, then dig out about 4 by 6 feet to a depth of 6 or eight feet. This will give the drillers room to set up their first string of tools.

For safety, it will be well to cover the hole with poles or heavy brush.

If you already have a pump it is a good idea to check it and see that the automatic drain is working now that colder weather is coming on.

Lost: Last Friday evening in Palmer or vicinity, a pair of dark rimmed glasses. If found please return to David Onkka, Tract #61, or leave at General Office.

#### COMPLETION DATES ESTIMATED

In a memorandum to Don Irwin, Mr. F. L. Biggs gives the following estimate, based upon labor available and progress rate of the present time.

Date for the completion of colonist barns: December 1st.

Interior of colonist homes: April 1st, 1936.

Quarters for permanent personnel at the Community Center: December 15, 1935.

#### BUTTE GROUP IN HIGH SPIRITS

You can't talk with a resident of the Butte section for five minutes without getting an earfull of dope about what a great place they have over there.

Apparently every family is completely satisfied with its drawing, and all have only the highest praise for the construction outfit helping them with their homes.

Loren McKechnie, of Camp 10, suffered a painful accident to his eye when a piece of wood he was chopping flew up and hit him. He is now being treated with compresses by Dr. Albrecht.

Church services will be the same as last week, but the bus situation is a problem. New men have taken them over from the transient drivers and the policy as regards transportation has not yet been worked out. You may, or you may not, get bus rides in on Sunday morning. If you do the schedule will be the same as was announced last week.

There was great rejoicing in the Frank Ring home on Tract 93 last Monday. Little Lucille who has been in the hospital with infantile paralysis for so long, and who by her patience and good nature had endeared herself to everyone with whom she came in contact, had returned to her family. Frank was the happiest man on the project that day.

SOURDOUGH SAM SAYS:

"It's a funny thing, Jack, but I aint never saw an ant, a squirrel er a bee with a hongry look in his face."

Sam must have had something on his mind when he came in the other day spouting some of his backwoods philosophy. I never found out what it was. He just sat down, mulled his quid around, and studied the stove.

"Was in one of these here colynist homes t'other day. Good house, too. Better'n I spected. Some them fellers can handle tools.

"Had his stove up all wrong, though. You know, had the first joint fittin' inside the next one up. Burnin' green birch, too. Creosote leakin' at every joint 'stead of dripping inside. Messy stuff, that there creosote. Women folks hates it, I guess.

"So I jest punched four twenty penny spike holes intuh the pipe right above the damper. That sure fixed her. Guess it must be that it gives enough draft to carry it outer the pipe er somethin'. Don't have no more trouble after puttin' in them holes, anyway, but they got tuh be above the damper."

LEGION ELECTION OFFICERS

At a big turnout of ex-service men on last Friday evening, officers for the newly organized Matanuska Valley Post #15 of the American Legion were elected.

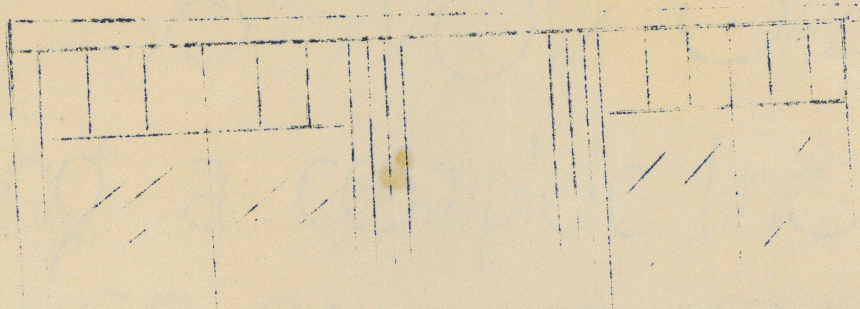
All candidates for office were accorded a unanimous vote. The results were as follows:

- Neil Miller Post Com'd'r
- Lawrence Rorrison V. P. . . .
- Rex A. C. Atwood Post Adj't
- George Connors Sgt. at Arms
- Lawrence Arndt P. Fin. Off.
- Jack Allman P. Historian
- Rev. B. J. Bingle P. Chaplain

Before the election Chairman Ernest Coffey appointed committees on building, entertainment, and to see what could be done about getting the furniture of Comrade Henry Roughan back to him at Monica, Wis.

The charter is expected to arrive within a week or so, and the Legion threatens a dance such as has never been seen in the valley in celebration of the event.

# KOSLOSKY'S



JUST ARRIVED

A COMPLETE LINE OF LIGHT AND SHELF HARDWARE

ALSO

SWEATERS FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY, AND

A FULL LINE OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR THE CHILDREN

CIGARS TOBACCOS CANDIES FRUIT GROCERIES

DOUBLE PNEUMONIA ACCIDENT  
FOR FIRST WORKER DEATH

Double pneumonia, complicated by a bad heart condition, caused the death Wednesday afternoon of Paul Ortiz, laborer of the Palmer Camp.

Mr. Ortiz was a member of the Moose lodge of Cordova and was a native of Spain. His is the first adult death in the valley since the start of the colonization project.

Burial was in the Palmer Cemetery Thursday afternoon, service being read by Father F. M. Sulzman.

NAVAL OFFICER VISITS PROJECT

H. V. Martin, Lt., j.g., U. S. N., of Anchorage, visited Palmer this week, and when interviewed said he was pleasantly surprised at the progress made by the construction division since he was last here.

Scene: The material depot.

Audience: Some of the boys.

Speaker: A colonist, boastfully:

"I sure told 'em over there in the office. I gave 'em just five days to get a radio in my home...or else...."

A voice: "Or else what?"

Colonist: "Or else a ticket back to the States. Whatcha suppose?"

It is impossible to find any official to whom such an ultimatum was given, but if the colonist who sounded off so loudly will call at the office he will find a slip of paper waiting for him.

It is NOT an order for a radio.

= Every item at "Outside" nationally advertised prices =

Bert's

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DRUG SUNDRIES - FILMS  
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