

# MATANUSKA VALLEY

61° 30' N. Lat.  
149° 15' W. Long.

## PIONEER

BUY  
"MATANUSKA MAID"  
PRODUCTS

Vol. I

Palmer, Alaska - February 6, 1936

No. 25

### CLOSE RACE PROMISED IN BEAUTY QUEEN CONTEST

Voting at the various business houses has been quite active since nomination voting was closed on Sunday and the five ranking highest at that time entered into the finals.

The race has simmered down to the following girls whose names appear in the order of their standings: Virginia Berg, Beatrice McNally, Margaret Snodgrass, June Hermon and Betty Hermon.

Many groups have formed to cast their votes for one candidate and rivalry is keen.

### ANCHORAGE MAKES LAVISH SPORTS TOURNAMENT PLANS

With a whole train of Fairbanks sports enthusiasts scheduled for a visit; with teams and delegations of boosters from Palmer and Seward planning to attend, the entertainment committee of the Anchorage Sports Tournament organization have gone 'first class' in their plans to entertain.

Visitors will find every moment filled while in the hospitable town. Days will be filled with a variety of open air sports events and the evenings with dances and such games as basketball.

### PALMER HOCKEY TEAM WHIPPING INTO SHAPE

"Andy" Anderson, captain and speedy center of the Palmer Pioneers, has been demanding hundred per cent attendance at hockey practice each evening at the pond in Bugge's field.

The Pioneers suffered a set-back when Roland Pasco injured his leg, but Les Wernberg is showing up well in the difficult goalie position.

Special stamps depicting Alaskan scenes is a worthy idea we have been hearing a lot about recently. With the Territory using about 5 million stamps a year the publicity value of such a move is quite apparent. We are not certain whose idea this is but it sounds a lot like Editor Earle Knight of the Alaska Weekly.

### COLONEL OHLSON TELLS 'EM JUST WHAT'S WHAT UP HERE

Colonel O. F. Ohlson, convincing salesman of everything Alaskan, and president of the AFRC, gave Seattle newshawks some really first hand information about the Territory in general and the Matanuska Valley in particular.

Of our colony here the Colonel said:

"They're getting along fine, but there was a lot of propaganda against the project -- political propaganda.

"Unforeseen circumstances retarded its progress. A steamship with road equipment was lost and road construction slowed up. A mill strike in the States retarded delivery of construction material for dwelling houses. But they were all up before winter set in. There can be no question about the success of the project.

"There is an ample market for the produce. There are 1000 people employed on the railroad alone during the summer. There's a miners' market, too. A great new mining market has opened up to the westward because of the increased price of gold, and old properties can be operated at a profit again."

Colonel Ohlson is in the States arranging for the routing of the hordes of tourists that will be coming north this next season.

He has expressed the belief that the appropriation for the hotels and cabins to be erected at McKinley National Park would be forthcoming soon.

### ROSSITER AND POWELL SILENT ABOUT PROJECT

Hank Rossiter and Ores Powell, colonists now on their way back to their former homes, had little to say to newspaper men when their boat stopped at Juneau.

"I don't care for conditions there," said Hank, but refused to amplify his statement. He did say, however: "I didn't see anything wrong with the colony," and added, "And I have nothing to say that I would want quoted."

Powell had nothing to say.

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## THE MATANUSKA VALLEY PIONEER

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PIONEERS at Bert's Drugs Anchorage

Saturday in front of the Trading Post nine men will draw by lot for tracts left vacant by returning colonists.

Some of these men have lived in the valley since long before the ARRC was ever dreamed of; some have worked as employees on the project.

All of them have had a splendid opportunity to study the set-up from all angles. They have heard the disgruntled rumblings of the dissatisfied and have heard the expressions of confidence by those who intend giving the deal a fair trial.

They have seen families return to the States with the lame excuse that the majority of the people were not the class they had been promised as future neighbors; and they have heard colonists say that they couldn't be driven from the country with a gun.

Having heard both sides and seen all angles of the set-up as it now stands these men are not only willing to assume the debt for the house and for work done on the tracts they will draw, but each and every one considers himself lucky to be offered the opportunity.

What better answer to the howls of those who felt their return to the States had to be justified by adverse reports!

What better argument to meet the long distance criticism expounded by those who have never been in the valley and know nothing of its potentialities.

Gee, but it's great to meet a friend from your old home town.

Someone once wrote a song on that theme. Whoever it was must have known the thrill that comes with meeting a pal after years of separation. It is a thrill, you know, and we have had many since establishing ourselves here.

All this is brought to mind by Heinie Snider, effervescent Hollander, soldier, seaman, studious vagabond, and more recently successful mink farmer of Wasilla who walked into the office the other day.

The last time we had seen Heinie was 21 years ago. We were prospecting on a sunny hillside 8 miles above timberline in the Chisana district when Charley Schnell came

along and told us that all Eurone was at war. This was about a month or six weeks after the big show had started. Charley, a German, figured it would be all over by that time, but he got an argument out of Heinie who even then was carrying a couple of bullet scars from South African fighting. Heinie said it would last four years.

Heinie, by the way, has written a book on mink raising; a complete, thorough and comprehensive treatise on the care, feeding, breeding, pelting and marketing of the little animals. Anyone here owning mink will enjoy the copy we have in the office.

Charley Ruddell had some tough luck with his trio of mink. They froze to death.

Tom Snyder of Tract #50 now has the pair left by Hank Rossiter.

Howard Lyng, member of the Territorial Legislature, has resigned as Assistant General Manager of the ARRC.

Mr. Lyng, whose resignation is effective February 15, will leave for his home at Nome where he will be in closer touch with the local political situation. Mr. Lyng has filed his candidacy for the Senate on the Democratic ticket.

Mr. M. D. Snodgrass has filed for the Senate and Mr. John Bugge for the House. Both are from Palmer and both on the Republican ticket.

A letter from "Stew" Campbell states that he is again associated with Eugene Carr on the Cherry Lakes farm project in Madison, Florida. Givens is in New Orleans, Sullivan is on a WPA job near Washington and Rex Atwood has his old job back again.

From another source we hear that Lt. H. V. Martin is stationed down in the Virgin Islands where Panama Canal fortifications are being installed.

LOST: A big reddish dog, part malamute. Answers to the name of "Red" and is wearing a new collar. Report to Pete Wick, bunkhouse L-1

LOST: Gus Raschke's horse, a dark chestnut has wandered off. Please notify Gus at Tract 154 or leave word at the PIONEER office.

WHY BOTHER WRITING - PIONEERS 5¢

## NEW POST OFFICE OPEN

Palmer's new post office will be open to handle the next mail through from the States. Applications for boxes are now being taken by Mr. Felton and soon the long line before the window will be a thing of the past.

Though the building was first erected as the community bakery shop it is readily adaptable to the new use and will be a great improvement over the inadequate facilities with which Mr. Felton has had to contend since the sudden increase of population in the valley.

In a delayed letter to Ray Wilkes the Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota asks that his personal season's greetings be extended to the colony.

Bill Hyneck of #91 reports the first attack upon stock by a predatory animal. Because there was not enough snow to get a good study of the tracks there is some doubt as to what it was that had the nerve to jump into the pig pen and rip his sow across the back. Sounds like a wolverine, but none have been seen around the place.

Walt Manginan, who got slammed right in the middle by one of Clarence Green's horses, is out of the hospital and dropped in to say that he felt able to again start snaking out logs. This, he said, would give him a swell chance to get even with that horse.

Clair Patten of #49 had the misfortune to lose his cow just four days after she had freshened. Death was due to injury during calving.

LOST: Black bitch, 5 months old, three white paws and white on chest. Answers to the name of Goofus. Please notify Eino Wirtanen Tract #143 or PIONEER office.

ALSO: Big red dog showing some Malamute strain. Is wearing new collar and answers to name of "Red." Notify Pete Wick at L-1 Bunkhouse or leave word at PIONEER office.

## VALLEY CITY CAFE

CAKES PIES PASTRY AND BREAD

FRESH DAILY

CIGARETTES CANDY TOBACCO

HORTON'S VALLEY CITY CAFE

## HOSPITAL NOTES

If you see George Conners of Tract #132 hiking night and morning toward the hospital don't forget it's because he's the proud daddy of a fine big 7 pound and 11 ounce baby girl, born to Mrs. George on the 31st and already named Patricia Mae.

Another proud father is John Bixler, prof at the Wasilla school.

Little Miss Bixler weighed 8 pounds and 2 ounces when born on February 2nd. After hearing the nurses remark of her infant beauty Daddy Bixler was right over here at the office trying to enter her in the "Miss Palmer" contest.

John Pfieff has had his infected knee opened and drained and is getting along as well as can be expected.

John Herdman whose back was badly wrenched in an accident at the tumbling of a scaffold timber in the Community Hall is doing well.

"Tykie" Griese is getting to be a great big fellow...growing every day...and gets a big kick out of being whooped around in a wheelchair. Sports a lot of new clothes his mother made, too.

Gust Schiebel is open for advice on how to dry up his fine Folstein cow. She's due to come fresh March 20th, but still insists upon giving 8 quarts to the milking. Must be something wrong with our native feed up here.

In the District #2 election for a councilman to fill the vacancy created when Jack Lund 'pulled the pin,' there were a total of 74 votes cast out of the 100 eligible. This is a far better record than previous elections.

August Raschke of #154 received the highest number, 28; Walter Pippel next with 22. Others polling were George Conners 14; Lawrence Borrisson and Virgil Eckert 4 apiece, and Clarence Sjodin 2.

The Womens' Club held a meeting at the Gift Shop on Wednesday afternoon.

An act of the Womens' Club which shows a fine spirit of co-operation is their offer to make all the curtains for our fine new hospital. The material to be used is white scrim.

The following article is the first of a number that will be prepared by Mr. H.J. Lechner, Superintendent of the Matanuska Experiment Station, and appear in the pages of the PIONEER.

#### THIS SOIL OF OURS

In 1914 the Bureau of Soils of the U.S. Department of Agriculture made an Alaskan soil survey which included the Cook Inlet-Susitna-Matanuska Region.

As in any other region we find here more than one type of soil. Our best soil is designated as Knik loam, of which there are 1300 square miles in the region surveyed. This is equal to about 3/4 of the area of Delaware, and this is the soil upon which practically all homes in the Matanuska Valley are located. The Alaska Survey Report rates Knik Loam with the best soils found in the U. S.

Physically this soil is about 60% silt, 26% fine and very fine sand, and only 12% clay. The small remainder being coarse material. Knik Loam has excellent qualities. (1) It holds moisture well for most satisfactory crop growth. (2) Particularly, the silt and clay are rich in mineral food for plants. (3) The soil does not puddle or bake. (4) It warms up quickly and (5) has excellent drainage, especially with clay subsoil.

Along with these good qualities we have what might be called one weakness. This soil becomes difficult to pack if it becomes too dry. Another point is that the humus and nitrogen goes quickly with careless farming, but these are also easily built up by the careful farmer.

A word about the soil minerals. The U. S. Soil Report shows 2.36% lime in the soil and subsoil - a high lime content. However, for some reason, at least a portion of the Knik Loam responds to lime. Apparently the lime is not in a readily available form. If this is true we should be able to hit upon some way to make it so. Based upon the analysis given in the soil report each acre foot of soil contains some over 5,000 phosphate, and over 25,000 pounds of potash. The mineral requirements of most crops is not very high. Even the phosphate supply is sufficient to last a good many years of usual cropping, provided, of course, this phosphate is all available for plant use. We know that it isn't all available, and neither is all the potash.

Nature has a way of locking up plant foods for a time, and even for "keeps." Proper soil management and the use of fertilizer

supplements; particularly on the older lands, will do much to give our crops the minerals needed for proper production.

In conclusion might we add that our low rainfall with its distribution, and the winter freezing, are very important factors in holding down wastes in fertility so common in many places where the rainfall is high and the winter weather mild.

H.J. Lechner, Sup't.,  
Experiment Station.

#### FOAMITE SOUP IS BRAND NEW VALLEY CITY CAFE DISH

Fire, due to an overheated pipe, broke out in the roof of the Valley City Cafe the other day just when Ralph Horton had his big dinner on the range.

The volunteer fire department again proved its efficiency by smothering the blaze before any damage was done to the building. But you should have seen the dinner! With our new forty gallon "Foamite" tank doing its stuff the kitchen range soon took on the appearance of a foam smothered headland of the Aleuts with a norther tramping down across Bering Sea.

Elmer Waugh was the only casualty. He thought he could walk on a celotex ceiling.

"Bellowing Bill" Taylor sprained both ankles. He was running to the fire with an extinguisher when someone rang the dinner gong for an alarm. Bill thought it was the regular call to grub and slammed on both brakes before he saw his mistake.

How about sending a subscription for the PIONEER cut to the folks? They want to know what's going on up here, and reports from the outside state that almost everyone back home is asking for old copies.

#### PALMER MOTOR SERVICE

REASONABLE, RELIABLE, RESPONSIBLE

WE GO

WHEREVER THERE'S A ROAD & A LOAD

AGENTS FOR

NEW METHOD CLEANERS 5 DAY SERVICE

ALSO AGENTS FOR STAR AIRWAYS

LARGEST FLEET OF PLANES IN ALASKA

E. N. KLING

MANAGER