ALASKA, BIG DELTA, AND

THE GOODPASTER REGION

***

THE TRUE EXPERIENCES OF A YOUNG MAN WORKING IN ALASKA DURING THE 1930'S, TRAPPING, PROSPECTING, AND MINING.

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BY CARL O. TWEITEN

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OFF TO ALASKA

In the spring of 1932, economic times were getting hard in the United States. I had heard gold mining stories about Alaska from many of my relatives. I decided to go to Alaska to mine gold. Alaska was not affected by the hard times. Although I lived for a time at Big Delta and for a winter in Fairbanks, most of my time in Alaska was spent in the region called the Goodpaster.

Many of my relatives had been in Alaska in the early days. Uncle Karl K. Tveiten and Ole Tveten, in the late 1800's, traveled over the Chilcoot Pass and into Dawson City. (See Footnote 1 in Appendix). Most of his lifetime, Ole mined at Chicken in the Fortymile District, and later sold out to the Purdy family. After Nome was struck, my father went to Nome and mined for one summer. (See Footnote 2 in Appendix). In later years, my Uncle Karl Tveiten had a homestead at Wasilla and was one of its founders. Two of my mother's brothers, Alex Leland and John Leland, were in Anchorage while it was being established and while the railroad to Fairbanks was being built. So many stories had been told to me from the North country that I had no hesitation in going north.

Times were hard in Tacoma, Washington. I was 22 years old and had been working in the logging camps on contract work, falling and bucking, which we called bushling. The pay had been very good until the crash in 1929. With so many people out of work and no pay, it was time to move.

I bought a ticket in steerage on the S. S. Alaska of the Alaska Steamship Company. The cost was $39.00 from Seattle to Valdez, which included room and board. There were about twenty men in steerage and most of us were young. We slept in bunks which were triple decker fashion, all in one room, and we ate in the same room at a big table. Eats were poor--big unpeeled, soggy spuds and a little meat and bread. The food was poor but we weren't too particular in those days. The ship stopped at every small village and town. Men got off, going to work at different canneries and mines. The trip was slow, taking about eight or nine days to Valdez.

We were twelve men that got off in Valdez and we had heard of a road to Fairbanks which all planned to hike over together. This was early May and, to our surprise, the road was still closed on account of snow over the pass. I paid for a room that night and one meal. I remember that the houses, which were two stories, had an upstairs door, so, when the snow got too deep to use the lower door, people could enter through the upper door. As I had only twelve dollars left, there was no way I could stay longer in Valdez where there was no work for a cheechaco or tenderfoot.

None of the other men I came up with would venture over the road because the townspeople had advised against it. I had just

come from a logging camp and was in good shape. I had my logging shoes on, still with the corks in. My mother had sent with me an Old Country woolen blanket, woven at home in Sirdal, Norway. That little gray blanket, two loaves of bread and butter I bought, and a map was all I took. I stored my other small belongings at the hotel until I could send for them. I thought I could buy more food here and there. I started out alone early in the morning. This road, called "The Trail", had been a car road to Fairbanks for eight or ten years. Of course, there were no cars on the road that spring. I sure liked the rugged mountains and hills as I walked. I followed the river up through the valley to Thompson Pass which led over the Coastal Range. I was surprised at the amount of snow and I hadn't thought how I would follow a road buried in the snow. A single telephone line followed fairly close to the road so I followed that. Before going over the summit, I spread my blanket and slept on a sidehill. The night was clear and cold. I woke up shivering near daybreak, surprised to hear ptarmigan crackling and hollering nearby. I knew I was in a land that was so new that man had not yet destroyed the game. After I had some bread, the day was light enough for me to travel on. The snow was fairly firm and, with my high leather shoes, it was easy to travel.

When I had crossed over the high pass, there was a long flat below the Tonsina Glacier where some days before there must have been warm weather and a big thaw. Over this flat was three or four feet of overflow. The night before had been cold so just a small inch of ice was over all. This was not quite thick enough to carry my weight when walking. Crossing it, I broke through and was in up to my waist. I didn't want to turn back to Valdez. Having lived in Norway on an old ancestral farm in the mountain country for seven years during my teens, I had learned many ways to cope with ice and snow. Nearby were many small birch saplings the size of one's finger. One can twist these a certain way and make a strong rope. I cut four small bundles and tied each of these together like a snowshoe. I used one tied on each knee and one held in each hand, and crawled nearly a half mile across the long overflow without getting wet. A lucky thing, there was no trapper around, for it must have looked like an old bear was walking over the ice.

Walking, it was now bare ground and the days were warm and sunny. I took a good nap in the middle of the day for rest. One big surprise on my way was the lack of people. My map had big round marks with names. I was expecting people and buildings at all of these places but I did not even see a trapper at most of them. A dot on the map looked like a place I could buy food and talk to someone about the road ahead. But, when I got there, I found an old vacant roadhouse and other places proved to be old trappers' cabins. I did find the Roadhouse Tonsina open and there was a road commission crew getting ready for spring. Here I had a good meal and tried not to overeat with all that good food. At this time one dollar was the standard price of a meal at all places. From there I hiked on to the Copper River country and went to Gulkana Roadhouse. An old-timer who was friendly got me some slippers so my corks wouldn't chew up the floor. There I

splurged, had supper, stayed overnight in a warm bed, and had breakfast the next morning. There went three more dollars. I think I stopped again near Paxson and bought a meal. Off again, I walked to the Isabell Pass, crossing the Alaska Range, where there was not much snow.

The next stop was a cabin some distance off the road. A lone prospector was there driving a tunnel looking for a vein of ore. He had a caribou stew cooked up and asked me to have lunch with him. The man did not want money. I was glad, for there was not much left of my twelve dollars. While I was eating, though, I bit into a bad chunk of meat. Perhaps the meat hadn't been trimmed well. When the prospector wasn't looking, I slipped the chunk of meat out of my mouth. A hungry dog under the table solved my problem.

Walking on the road along the Big Delta River, I met Carl Armstrum. He had an old Model T Ford. This had no top on it. He gave me a ride and we stopped in at the Rapids Roadhouse.

Carl Armstrum mentioned that there was a lady at the Big Delta Roadhouse that might hire a man for the summer. I did not realize it at the time, but found out later, that he was always asked to work some at the roadhouse. This he did not care to do, but did not like to say no, either. Carl had several cabins in the Delta country for trapping and he was as independent as Alaska can make them. When we got to the roadhouse, I met Rika Wallen. Yes, she did want someone to work there for the summer. The pay of one hundred dollars a month and room and board was agreed upon. (See more stories about Rika Wallen and others in the Appendix).

BIG DELTA

Big Delta was the pivoting point for all the activity going on in the Upper Tanana region. Much of the activity was due to the prospecting. Much has been told and written about this region. Some of it is legend. Some is hearsay. Some is fact. I will try to tell what I can from my memories of more than fifty years ago.

I worked for Rika Wallen as a handy man doing all sorts of work such as clearing land, gardening, carpentry work, farming, and wood chopping. Rika had the roadhouse at the ferry landing at Big Delta and farmed at the same time. She had a few cows and horses. I learned to milk cows and I cut hay.

I cut hay with a man by the name of Orbeck. He had come over from Sweden in the earliest days and had settled down in Wiseman up on the Koyukuk River. He had found a sixty or eighty ounce nugget worth about nine hundred dollars, then spent almost the rest of his life looking for more but never finding it. He was getting old and sort of feeble when I knew him but was a kind old man. I learned one good lesson from old Orbeck. He and I had the old wagon and mower and set up a tent out at the Four Mile Hill going up the old trail to Clearwater towards Healy. There we set up camp for two or three days to cut hay for Rika. The large meadows had waist-high grass that had never been cleared or cultivated but was open for the taking. I had one of John Hajdukovich's horses. That summer the mosquitos were terrifically thick. It was so hard for the horse to be tethered or hobbled down with all the mosquitos annoying it. We had a smudge going but that did not help the horse much. One evening after work, the horse broke loose and headed across country to the Big Delta River above Jarvis Creek. Late in the evening I had to take off to find the horse. I knew our horse was headed for the grazing herd of twenty or thirty horses also belonging to John. It was past midnight before I found the horse and rode it back to camp. After the long trip I was hungry. Old Orbeck had closed the tent flaps and was sleeping. When he heard me rattling around with dishes, he awoke and thought I was a bear. Being sleepy and scared, he yelled and made an awful noise. I thought he had lost his senses. When I opened the tent flaps and looked in to ask old Orbeck what was the matter, he was sitting on his bunk holding an old 30/40 Crag Jorgensen rifle and pointing it at me. I guess he was too scared and excited to pull the trigger. The lesson I learned then was, when traveling out in the mountains where someone is living in isolation, whenever coming to their cabin or camp to stand off a distance and call out to see if anyone is home. If one went to a cabin door and knocked, one could just as soon meet up with a bullet first and then be noticed afterward.

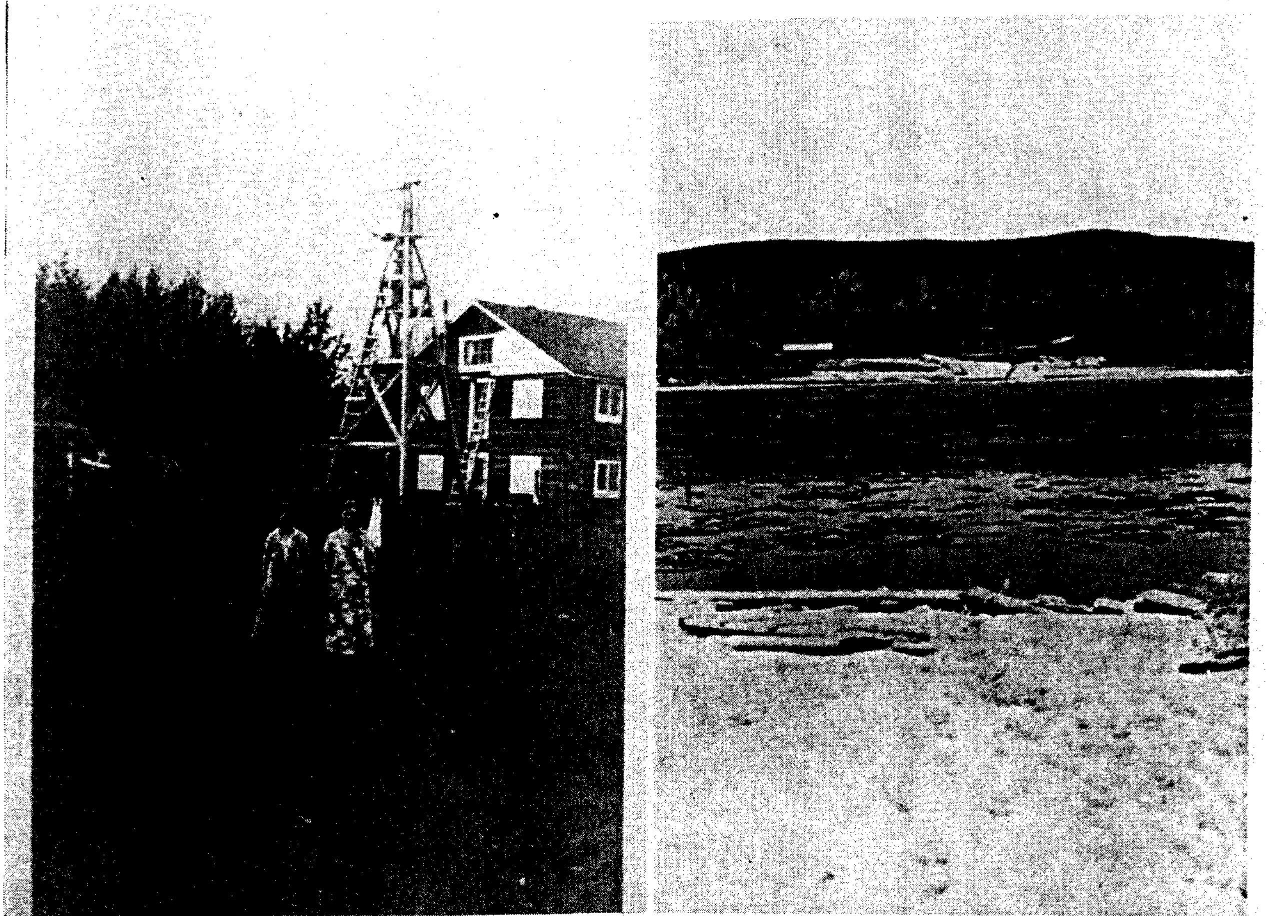
Big Delta was an active place in the summertime where I met most of the trappers and traders. Several people lived right

there at Big Delta. Louis Grimsmore ran the ferry. He was a tall, rawboned Norwegian man who had earlier helped found Petersberg where he had built a sawmill. Other men in the area were trappers and prospectors. Across the river was a German fellow. Further up the river was Steve Loring and then Henry Stock, who we called Butch because he was an old time butcher from Tacoma, then Orbeck who was Swedish, then two brothers, Walter and Lawrence Johnson, and then Carl Armstrum who lived quite a ways away. They all told stories about the Goodpaster. (See Appendix).

For the six spring and summer months, I worked for Rika. Then, in the wintertime, I went trapping across Big Delta towards the Alaska Range. Louis Grimsmore taught me to trap and gave me his trap lines. I was tenting that winter when I was out on the trap line, sometimes in temperatures of forty below. I had my little gray wool blanket to sleep in and a Yukon stove for warmth. This little stove was about two feet long by ten inches high by fourteen inches wide. It was made of sheet iron and one half of it was an oven. It would take pieces of wood about eight inches long. It had a stovepipe which went through a hole in the top of the tent. When I got cold in the night I would turn over and put a few more pieces of wood in to keep warm. I set up camp twelve or fifteen miles from Big Delta and was trapping at the head of the Clearwater, across from Richardson. I would stay at camp for two or three nights and run the branches of the trap line. Then I would return to Big Delta for a few days where I stayed in the Signal Corps building.

I had borrowed an old rifle from Louis Grimsmore and shot a fine moose several miles from Big Delta. I'd never seen a moose before and thought it was a caribou. After butchering the moose, I took the hind quarter, the liver, and part of the front quarter and carried it home on my pack. I set it down and went into Rika's place for a cup of coffee and a piece of cake. It was the custom to give anyone around some of the fresh liver and a big steak. Rika went out to see the meat and, when she tried to lift the pack, she could hardly budge it. Louis Grimsmore came over and felt the pack. Later on, Butch came down and cut off a large steak of the hind quarter. He was happy and said he was going up to his cabin and there he would put the steak through the meat grinder because his teeth were not too good. After carrying out that heavy pack, probably over a hundred pounds in weight, on skis, it seemed that I was one of the gang and they never referred to me again as a cheechaco.

Coming to Big Delta at this time was a time of much learning. I made a point of always being a good listener. Lessons learned from so many of the old-timers' stories could save a life in a tight pinch. Listening to these stories, I learned one thing: to respect the real cold weather in wintertime. I would always carry a waterproof match box, a candle, in case a fire was hard to start, and I would never waste matches. An extra pair of dry socks was essential in case feet got wet in creeks or overflows. I will relate some of those experiences as I come to them in this writing.



(Left) Rika's Roadhouse at Big Delta. Rika is the woman on the right. Carl built the windmill tower. (Right) The ferry at Rika's crossing is pulled up on the opposite bank for the winter, across from the roadhouse. The overhead lines were used to move the ferry back and forth across the Tanana River.

In my teen years, I had lived in Norway, a high mountainous country, so I was well acquainted with snow and ice. When the snow came at Big Delta, I got a pair of broad, long, cross country skis and all were surprised how I could carry a pack and travel on skis with relative ease, in comparison to others who used snowshoes. No one else used skis in that area at that time. The skis enabled me to walk over the large flats across the Delta and Tanana River with ease as well as travel in the high mountains.

At this time, only about twenty or so white folks were in this Big Delta and Upper Tanana Region. This included three or four traders of the Upper Tanana River, who traded with the many Indians of the villages.

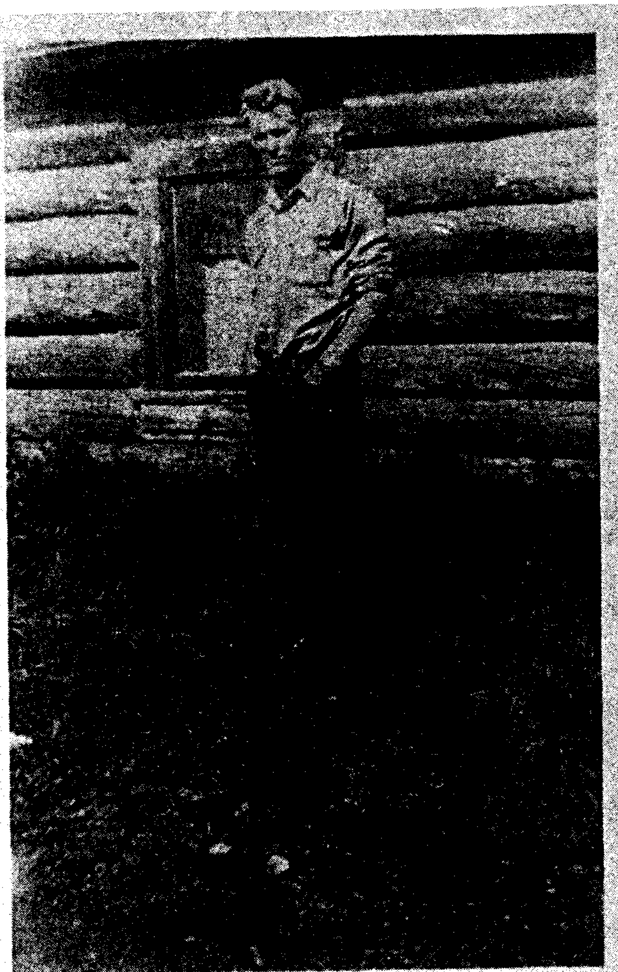
In summer, the traders would have the Indians help on the boats while coming down to Big Delta to pick up supplies for the coming winter. The Indians were good to have on the boats because they understood the muddy, glacial-silt river so well.

The white folks had come to this country in the very early 1900's after gold was first discovered by Felix Pedro near what is now Fairbanks. Most came in to prospect for gold. Later, they

went trapping for furs and hunting for meat of all sorts to be sold to the Fairbanks market. I knew almost everyone personally and listened well to the stories they told. Many of the stories were about the Goodpaster Region. Yes, tall tales were told, but most of the stories were true.

After one full year, I went to Fairbanks and worked for Tom King and Helmer Johnson on the dredge at Chatham Creek. There, I gained valuable experience in gold mining. That spring, my brother, Oscar, and my cousin, Lee Leland, came to Alaska from Tacoma. (Lee sometimes went by the name of Bunk, but later went by the name of Lee Leland again.)

Later in the summer, Oscar and I worked in an open-cut placer mine with a pick and shovel. We would fill a wheelbarrow then hoist it up to the dump for sluicing. At this time we were working for Helmer Johnson. (In later years, Oscar married Helmer Johnson's daughter, Irene, and in 1988, he is still mining at Chatham and Cleary Creeks.)



(Left) Carl Tweiten standing beside the cabin they rented in Fairbanks. (Right) Oscar Tweiten, Carl's younger brother, worked for Helmer Johnson during the summer of 1933. This shows Oscar working the sluice on Cleary Creek.

THE GOODPASTER

In the fall of 1933, Oscar, Lee, and I scraped together enough money and bought an outfit--a hungry outfit, I called it--and went out to Big Delta, and then up the Goodpaster River on the South Fork. An outfit consisted of white flour, a couple packages of Magic yeast to start the sourdough, baking powder, oatmeal, rice, salt, sugar, tea, some coffee, dried or powdered milk, one case of canned milk, dried apples, raisins, and prunes, granulated dried potatoes, slab bacon and three kinds of beans: big brown beans which were like large kidney beans and were called "Alaska strawberries", Lima beans, and navy beans, a frying pan, coffee can which we put handles on, ax, saw, shovel, rope, hunting knives, gold pans, pick, and rifles. Oscar had money enough to buy a three star eider down sleeping bag, one of the best at that period of time. Lee and I each had a bag but not such good ones and we probably shivered a little more on cold nights when out and away from camp.

The Goodpaster River enters the Tanana on the right limit about eight or ten miles above Big Delta. At the mouth of the Goodpaster River, on the right limit, there were remnants of an old Indian village which could be seen when passing by. A young French Canadian by the name of French John lived with them in the early days.

I met French John several years later. Once, he and another man came poling up the river. He was a great big, tall man, a typical Canadian Frenchman, terrifically good on the poling boat, standing there with a great big mustache, pushing that boat up the swift water. He went up the North Fork of the Goodpaster River to look because legend had it that Old Pedro, before discovering gold near Fairbanks, had gone into the Goodpaster in the summer then would go back into Dawson with quite a bit of gold. No one ever knew where he got it.

French John told of how the Indians would go up the Goodpaster River every summer. They would go up the North Fork and make camp on what is now called Indian Creek. Then they would go to the headwaters to hunt for the caribou that were so plentiful. Caribou were needed for food and clothing, bedding and snowshoes. It has been told that, at the extreme headwater of the North Fork, in a high pass over to the Fortymile country, there was rock piled up in the shape of a "V". When the caribou migrated through this narrow pass in their vast numbers, it is said that it was possible for the Indians to stand on the small end of the "V" and manually club down all the animals they needed.

French John told a legend about an old Indian woman. One summer there was an old Indian lady who was in poor health and was no longer of any help to the tribe. She was just lying in her tipi. In the fall, the tribe loaded up the canoes and early one morning they took off for the lower river before the ice set in.

They did not wake up the sick woman but left her to her own fate. It is said that she managed to survive when it meant life or death. She probably caught grayling in the river and snared rabbits and grouse. It is told that, when the tribe returned the following summer, the old woman stood on the river bank to greet them.

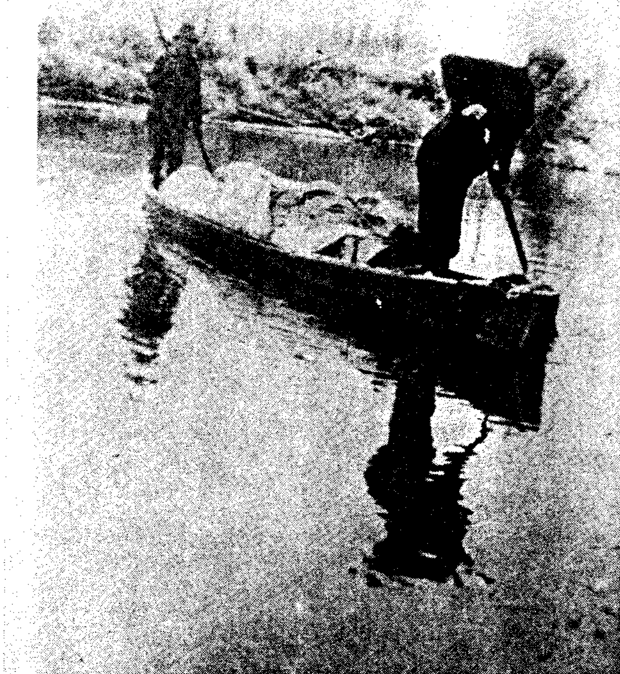
So, this fall of 1933, Oscar, my brother, and Lee Leland and I, all of us in our twenties, went up the Goodpaster for prospecting and trapping. Lawrence Johnson, who had his home at the forks, took our outfit up there. He had an outboard motor for his poling boat.

Going up this clear, beautiful river, there were mostly grayling fish to be seen. Moose and other game were also seen. Four miles up on the right limit, Jim Thomson lived. He had good cabins and lived alone with his dogs, where he mostly trapped for a living. On the way up the river, Lawrence killed a moose to feed us and his dogs. It was the first moose Oscar or Lee had seen.

This lower Goodpaster River is what a geologist would call an old age river. The lower part of the country and hills are low and worn down. The river meanders back and forth, sometimes a mile or more, in the broad valley. It comes back on itself with only a few feet between the loops of the river.

About thirty miles up the forks, we purchased a poling boat from Lawrence and then learned how to pole and push our way up the lower South Fork. The North Fork of the Goodpaster River runs fairly straight and fast, which is by far the biggest part of the river. In poling up the South Fork of the river, we learned fast. We had to push our way up the swift places, and some shallow places. Many times we had to get out in front of the boat, with our hip boots on, and pull the boat forward.

We learned to pitch our tent in a hurry in the evening. It took seven poles to set up our tent. We could find the poles, cut them, and set up our tent in about twenty minutes.



The poling boat with Oscar at the bow and Carl at the stern on the main Goodpaster River.

After setting up the tent and getting the small Yukon stove in place, we would prepare spruce bows for our bed. The winter before, I had made a trip up to Healy with the horse and old double-ender sled that was used so much in older days. It was with Jim Hudson from Livengood. (Jim Hudson and Livengood were the discoverers of Livengood.) On the trip to Healy, we had one of John's horses. At night we camped close to the Gerstle River. There, Jim was very particular in showing me how to break off short spruce bows, start them at a forty-five degree angle, and lay them in thick. It made a soft spring-like mattress. The good smell of fresh bows really made for a good night's sleep. This bed-making we followed for years even if it did take a little extra work to pluck the branches. These bows were mostly from the tops of the trees we had cut to make the poles for the tent frame.

The lower country of the Goodpaster had burned in some past years. Whether the fire had been set by lightning or man, we didn't know. It did make for lots of good, dry wood. On the sunny side of the hills, the burn made it possible for many berries to grow, such as blueberries, low bush and high bush cranberries, and in some places, raspberries. This made an ideal place for much game. There were grouse of all descriptions. Also, rabbits and moose would be browsing there much of the time in winter. As for the fire in the past, it was only in the lower valleys where the fire had been. In the higher country there was not enough vegetation to carry a burn.

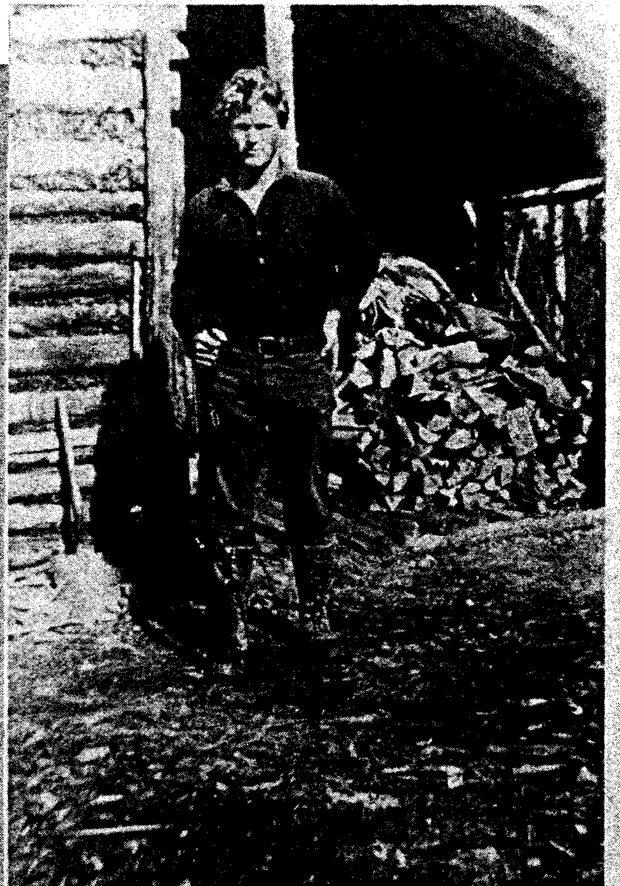
We tried to conserve food and the good Lord provided us with all the grouse we could eat. It was like manna from Heaven. The single shot twenty-two caliber gun was adequate. Sometimes when a flock of spruce hens would fly in and land in a spruce tree, if we shot a bird on a lower branch first, we could get several birds from one tree. But, if we shot one from a branch high above, when it came tumbling down amongst the others, the whole flock would be off. With good reason, many people call the spruce hen a fool hen. The spruce hen is actually a type of grouse with dark meat that has a spruce or pitchy flavor. We could always get a half-dozen for dinner. We were pretty fast at cleaning them. We would peel off the hide then save only the breast, legs and heart. We would fix them boiled or fried.

The South Fork of the Goodpaster River is mostly very slow running and it meanders back and forth up to a place called the Swede Cabin. A man named Jim Walsh had claimed the Swede Cabin this same fall. He was from New York City and had never been out in the wild. He had only read about it. He was up to trap marten and beaver, or whatever else he could find. He must have heard us coming as we were poling up the river, our pole splashing and banging on the rocks, and us talking as we came. I'll always remember that first time we pulled up to his place. He stood on the bank, held up both hands, and said, "This is my country and I came first." As the unwritten law acknowledged, we said we would not set any traps within miles of his traps, but we would prospect for gold anywhere that a claim had not been staked. In the end he was friendly and let us use his cache to store half of our supplies. The river was getting smaller and swifter and we could only take half. We spent a night with him before going on.

(Left) The cache at Swede Cabin. Looks like Jimmy Walsh on the ladder.

A cache like this one was built by cutting off three or four spruce trees high above the ground on which to build a platform. The little cabin or cache building was then built on the platform. Notice the metal around the legs of the platform half way up to keep small animals from climbing up to the cache.

(Below) Both pictures show Carl Tweiten outside Swede Cabin. Notice the snowshoes and Carl's long skis.



In earlier days many people had been up the South Fork of the Goodpaster River. There were many beautiful creeks of ten to fifteen miles long and also some shorter ones. About twenty cabins had been built in this region in the earlier days. At this time, three cabins were still good, and the rest had caved in. All of the creeks showed gold, but when trying to get down to bedrock, it was wet.

On Bear Creek, some Finnish men had what they thought was pay. There, John Hajdukovich brought up a steam boiler for mining. The steam boiler was used to power the hoists and for the thawing of the ground. The creek was about eighty feet deep. This means that beneath the shallow water of the creek which was small enough to wade or step across, beneath the gravel and rocks of the streambed, the muck and the gravel beneath the muck went down for eighty feet before the layer of bedrock. After digging way down and working near bedrock, live water would be reached. The water inundated the bedrock and the hole had to be abandoned. In those days there was no remedy. There were no gas pumps to pump out the water.

Swede Creek was on the right limit and entered the South Fork just opposite Bear Creek. There were a couple of fallen cabins here. During this fall we reached as far as Michigan Creek with our boat. We set up camp and started work on a high cache to protect our supplies from all of the animals. Already there was ice and snow. There was anchor ice along the river and already the rocks were turning white. There was ice floating in the river.

Oscar and Lee took off with the boat toward Swede Cabin, the next day, to get the other half of our supplies. On the way down, Lee was sitting in the stern of the boat with the paddle, steering through the swift and narrow river. At one point around Bear Creek there was a long sweeper or tree laying over the river, bobbing up and down in the current. Oscar, sitting in the bow of the boat, ducked as the boat went under it. But Lee, not fast enough to duck, was swept off. He grabbed on to the tree which kept sucking him under. He called for Oscar to help, but the boat had drifted down many yards. On a shallow ripple, Oscar got the boat ashore and called for Lee to let go. Lee, who was so cold in the icy water, let go and then Oscar helped him to shore. They got under a spruce tree with many limbs on it, which seemed to be a good shelter. Oscar built a big fire so Lee could get his clothes off and dry out some. But this same spruce tree was loaded with heavy snow. In one large avalanche the snow came down and once more Lee learned what the cold was.

Michigan Creek was a fifteen mile creek with many fallen cabins. The lower end was always wet when nearing bedrock. The upper end, where it was shallow, had been mined a little by Walter Johnson. There, in an open cut, it was told to me that he took out about sixty ounces of coarse gold.

From Michigan Creek we now packed our outfit up to where the river forked again. There, we built our main cabin and called the place Beaver Point. This cabin was about ten by sixteen feet. Behind the cabin there was a large beaver dam with beaver in it.

(Left) Carl, on the left, and Oscar, on right, just finishing work on the Beaver Point Cabin.

With the creeks now freezing up, we used an old Indian method and caught some grayling. We wove a basket out of some willow. In a small creek we built a dam and then we placed the basket under the dam. Then one night, when the fish were heading for deeper water, we caught a whole basket full. During the freeze-up, we kept the fish in a shady place. We had fresh fish for some time.

This fork in the river is what we call West Fork. On the right limit was a creek called Marten Creek. There were also three or four cabins which had fallen down. They had belonged to the prospectors of the earlier times. The winter before, Tom King and Chris Satter had left Big Delta and tried to reach this creek with a dog team to do some prospecting. What they knew or had heard about, we never learned. When they were up that winter, they could not find meat for the dog team because there were so many wolves which had scared the moose and caribou away. So they had to give up the trip without having dug or prospected. I have wondered many times why Tom King chose to look up there when he had the dredge on Chatham Creek, as partner of Helmer Johnson, one of the richest claims in the world.

On this West Fork, Oscar, Lee, and I went up about ten miles and built another cabin. This was done in the snow and cold. We slept under a spruce at night and the next morning we sawed and cut cabin logs as fast as we could. I remember, while I was hurrying, I cut a tree and it bent a smaller tree over like a strung bow. When I chopped the smaller tree, it sprung back and hit me in the face, sending a small knot or part of a limb up one of my nostrils. There it broke off. Of course it was painful and we were a hundred miles from civilization or doctors. So Oscar and Lee had me lie down and one held my head while the other got hold of the knot and pulled it out. The blood spurted out but stopped after a short time. It was a good thing that it bled freely, for there was no infection or lingering damage.

We got the walls of the cabin up on the first day, and we slept in the cabin the next day after the roof had been finished. The roof was fairly flat with moss and dirt piled on top so it

(Left) Oscar, in front of the cabin on West Fork.

stayed nice and warm inside. We had found an old tin stove in the ruins of one of the cabins. Although it was pretty well rusted out, it is amazing what you can do with a scrap. Once again we had a warm place to get in after we walked and properly scouted the country.

One humorous incident happened up in our cabin on West Fork. One winter day, a month or so after we had built our little cabin, we were out on one of our scouting trips. That night we went to our cabin for warmth and rest. We had left some flour and rice there so that we would always have some food when traveling. The next morning, after a good night's sleep, I arose first and made fire and started breakfast. This, as usual, was hotcakes made with flour and baking powder. It was dark still and with only one candle there was not much light. I fried my couple of hotcakes and then laid down on the bed to be out of the way for the cabin was small. Next it was Lee's turn to fry his breakfast. He thought something was strange about the hotcakes, thought some tea leaves had got into the dough, but he ate his fill. When it was Oscar's turn to fry his breakfast, he fried one hotcake then opened the cabin door and held the hotcake out in the good light and probed the black specks in the dough. Then, to his surprise, he noticed it was not tea leaves at all. A mouse had gotten in and left droppings in the flour. Needless to say, he was not hungry after that. Lee and I could do nothing about it, but for years afterwards, we were careful to watch our ingredients which were kept in a cabin for a long time.

There was a place further up the valley we called The Howling Butte. We called it this because twenty or thirty wolves had killed a big moose and on some nights their howling was unbelievable. I wish there were some recordings of the wild howling. These were big, gray, timber wolves. On the trap line, one would always grip the old rifle a little harder when the pack was close around. However, it has never been known for wolves to attack man in Alaska.

During this winter it was very cold and there was heavy snow. Every day we were either hiking, scouting around, or prospecting. There were many good-looking creeks in which to try for gold. To

this day, there are creeks which have no name and have no signs of a chopped tree or man's presence.

I have seen many wolves and I have seen tracks where there were over twenty in some packs. It was almost impossible to find any moose for meat. The wolves killed so many. One day I came upon a pack that had just killed a moose but did not have time to eat very much of the carcass. The meat was still warm. I cut off the two hind quarters that were not damaged and I took one to the cabin. We came back the next day for the other. This old bull moose was so tough that, after we boiled it for hours, still, we could hardly chew it. We still talk about it. Being short of supplies, we tried to fill ourselves with the meat. This skinny, tough moose would fill our stomachs, but had little nourishment. We still felt hungry.

One day I took off to ski down to Swede Cabin to see Jimmy Walsh. The snow was deep and loose and I broke trail half way down, thinking I would run into some of Jimmy's tracks. But there were no signs of any. I got as far as the moose lick just straight across from Bear Creek.

(Left) Oscar working the windlass on Snow Creek. (Right) Lee Leland, better known as Bunk, on top the dump with the windlass bucket. This picture was taken on a bench above the South Fork of the Goodpaster on a creek with no name.

On the right limit of the South Fork and on the right limit of Swede Creek, where hills come down to the flat, was a small pond. Earlier prospectors had built a high lookout platform by cutting off three spruce trees, perhaps twenty feet high or more and making a platform on top with a ladder up to it. All kinds of animals would come to the pond to lick the black mud. We never did have the mud analyzed to see what was in it. Moose or caribou could be shot right from the platform. This lick was perhaps eight miles from Swede Cabin.

I went home and started for Swede Cabin again the next day. This time when I came within three or four hundred yards of the cabin, I found tracks of snowshoes. Jim, being a man from the city of New York, and never having been out before, was in a panic. This was before Christmas time and there was no hope of seeing anyone before the spring break-up. Jim was certainly a happy man when he saw me.

Jim had been brooding over Johnny Patten, the man that died there a couple years before. Johnny had written in his diary how he had frozen his feet out on the trap line and gangrene had set in. He had died in that cabin. The bears had broken into the cabin and carried him out and scattered the bones all around.

Also, Jim was worried about getting scurvy, having no fresh meat. Salt pork, bacon, and ham for the main diet had him worried. He had read that when getting scurvy that if one punched in one's leg or arm muscle and the flesh did not spring out right away, it was a sign of scurvy. He was sure checking himself often. Jim had the presence of mind that he did go down to an open spot on the river and find some sand to throw on top of his cabin roof. There the spruce hens would land to get grinding material for their craw. There, Jim did get some fresh meat. Later on, when I had killed a moose, we did take him some meat. During the winter, one at a time, Lee or Oscar or I would go down to see how he was faring.

Late in the fall, after many days of hunting, I was on our trap line up around the Howling Butte when I saw several moose above timberline. On my skis, I climbed up the steep hill and got within a few hundred yards from them. When they got my scent or saw me, I picked out one and shot five times but could not tell if I had hit the moose. Ammunition was scarce and costly so I had only brought along six shots. I still had one bullet in the rifle when I skied over closer to where I had seen the moose. I saw blood in the snow and knew the animal had been wounded. The moose had taken the easier course and run down a long hill. I followed the tracks and, running swiftly on my skis, saw the moose. The moose ran fast but, on skis, I was faster. I caught up with the moose at timberline. It was wounded, standing by a spruce tree. I got up fairly close and fired my last rifle bullet toward the head of the moose. It went down at once. I got my hunting knife out of my small pack and walked up to the moose. I grabbed its chin to twist the head up to cut the throat for bleeding. When doing so, up jumped the moose, snorting and blowing. It tried to strike me down with its front feet. I managed to get behind the spruce tree and again the moose took off. With no more shells for the big rifle, it was useless. I had my small, single-shot

twenty-two in my pack. It was taken apart for easy carrying. Again I took after the moose on my skis. After a mile or two the poor animal gave up and I managed to finish it off with the little twenty-two caliber rifle. The next day I went back to Beaver Point to join Oscar and Lee and we had good and much-needed meat for the winter. I learned in later years that if we had gone further back into higher mountains, we could have found caribou. This moose was good, tender meat, and we really appreciated it after the tough old bull the wolves had killed.

When our cabins were built at Beaver Point and up the West Fork and before the heavy snows had come, we were scouting around in all directions. After the snow came, the nights were long. We settled down to do many important chores. I had skis but Oscar and Lee had brought only store-bought snowshoes which broke down. Lee and Oscar found a long, straight birch tree for a log. They used the cross-cut saw to whipsaw planks. With an ax and a hunting knife, they whittled the planks into skis. From an old ax or knife, they made a plane. As I remember, they used twisted birch for the toe straps. We found a long uniform birch sapling about the size of one's small finger. This was twisted to make it pliable and strong as a small rope. To get the ski strap through the wooden ski, a wire was heated red hot and burned slowly but surely through. When the birch strap dried out, it made the best ski band, safe to step out of the skis when necessary.

Reading material was scarce that first year. We did have a good Webster Dictionary which was of enormous pleasure and importance to us. We had a book or two by Mark Twain. I believe one was Huckleberry Finn. We also had a few magazines such as Liberty and Colliers. They were read over and over again.

For three young men alone together so much, we got along pretty well. We didn't argue or fight during that long winter. I remember that we had brought a case of canned milk along as a treat. We had opened one can upside down and kept it to enjoy a little milk in our coffee or tea. With little to read and few pictures to look at, Lee was upset that we had opened the can upside down and there, on our table, was the label with the picture of the upside down cow.

(Left) Winter brought snow to the cabin at Beaver Point.

During this winter some of the Indians from the Healy village came over. We treated them well and gave them several beaver carcasses that they could use for themselves and for the hungry dogs. We hiked over to the trading post for some supplies.

One day in late winter it was good skiing on a trail to Big Delta which the Indians had been over with their dog teams. I took off with some letters we had written. The going was good on skis so I went down by way of the Volkmar River to Healy and down to Rika's to the post office. I stayed one night and the next morning was heading back to the South Fork and Beaver Point. John Healy and some of the Indians were down at this time with their dog teams. John Healy, the chief, was kind and offered to take my pack on the sled half way up to a camp on a clearwater stream which was as far as they wanted to go that one day. He was surprised when I mentioned that I was traveling faster on my skis but thanked him anyway. He could not understand the ease one can go on skis if a good trail and good going. I knew his dogs were not fed too much good food so they did not have the stamina for fast travel. On my skis, with a light pack and good trail, it was not hard to travel by way of Healy and Volkmar from Big Delta to Beaver Point on the South Fork, which was about fifty miles, either direction, in one day.

Towards spring, Oscar and Lee hiked out to Big Delta. We had trapped marten and some beaver. I stayed until break-up time, until I had caught my ten beaver. Then I went down and caught some for Jim Walsh. (Ten was the limit. Oscar and Lee didn't have a license. They hadn't been in Alaska long enough to get the two dollar license. Theirs' would have cost too much. The license also allowed ten marten and all the fox you could get. Anyone, with or without a license, could kill wolves or coyotes, and could send in the ear tip and left front foreleg for the twenty dollar bounty.) When the river was free of ice, Jim and I went floating down the meandering river to Big Delta. Jim never went out alone again.

(Left) "Dinner time when floating down the river," Carl wrote on this picture which shows him on the riverbank with his little Yukon stove.

MINING AND THE SCHOOL OF MINES

In the summer of 1934, Oscar and I went in to Fairbanks where we went to work for Helmer Johnson up on Cleary Creek in open-cut mining. Lee Leland went to work on a dredge on Fish Creek that summer. By fall, we had all made a few dollars. Oscar and Lee were longing for the outside which is what we called the States. They wanted the bright lights and fun and to tell of their time in Alaska. For me, it was a hard decision to make. There always come some of these decisions in everyone's life that will more or less steer one's course in life.

I had decided that if I was to be prospecting and mining, I just had to learn more about it. At that time there was a good short course in mining at the Agriculture College and School of Mines as it was then called. Now it is the University of Alaska -- Fairbanks. The course was a few months long as I remember.

Early in the fall, before starting college, I went to work in the Hi Yu Quartz Mine to learn the underground work. I'll always remember the first day in the mine. A man by the name of Bill Thomas got me the job out there, so the first morning I went with him into the mine. First, we had to put our carbide lamp on our cap, then into a mile-long tunnel we went. It was damp, narrow, and low, and we had to watch so we did not bump our heads on the roof above. We got into where a one foot vein of ore was. This was a rich vein. It was almost vertical and about one foot wide. Ore chutes were placed thirty feet apart. This stope was a block of ore about two hundred feet long. In every ore chute was a ladder for men to climb up. This was an opening of about two feet by three feet. About the same size chutes were on both sides of the manhole. One chute was for ore and the

(Left) The Hi Yu Mine, where Carl worked during the fall of 1934, was a fine stampmill.

other was for waste material. Bill said, "Here we go up, in this black hole." There was dirty water dripping and running down over us. We tied some tools and timber on our shoulders and Bill started up. My thoughts were that I could not imagine a man having to work in such places and in those cramped conditions. Never to give up when others could do it, I went along with good cheer and no grumbling or complaint.

Here I learned underground mining, timbering, drilling, and blasting. This was the time of trying to convert from dry drilling to using water to hold down the dangerous silica dust. I knew the danger, so most of the time I did use a respirator. I have noticed so many hard rock miners that did not heed the warnings and have died of silicosis or other lung diseases.

Although this didn't happen until the next year, I will relate an incident which happened in this same mine. One year or so later I was up in a stope working with five or six other miners. We had drilled and loaded about a couple of hundred holes with dynamite. We used about a six-foot fuse to give us time to light the fuses, seal the shaft with a couple of wood planks, and get down the manhole to a couple hundred feet below. I remember one man by the name of Berg or something and he was in a far end lighting his fuses of forty shots. I was all through with mine but we would always wait for our companions to get through. This time he started hollering. A drop of water had put out his carbide light and, being wet, it could not be lit. The time was short with maybe a hundred or even more fuses lit. The smoke was dense but I crawled up the stope and hurried over to him. By this time he was frantic with fear. I talked low and slow to calm him and led him to the chute going down. I let him go down first. I followed in a hurry and then I got the cover over the chute. We had no more than got under the planks when the shots started going off. We did get dirt and dust on ourselves going down the two-hundred feet to the tunnel below.

Because we had another week or two left before winter, I had Joe Crosson enroll me in the college in Fairbanks. Joe Crosson was a famous Pan American Airways flyer who had shares in the mine and he would come out sometimes to look the place over.

When the snow came in heavy, the mine was closed down. A bus came out from Fairbanks to get the crew of about fifteen men and the wife of the cook. We were all anxious to get to town. But, going up Fairbanks Creek, the bus, because of the heavy snow, slid into the ditch. It meant we would have to walk several miles to the Summit Roadhouse to get to the nearest telephone which would take several hours. We all got out of the bus to look the situation over. Then I took the driver off to the side. I asked him if I could place the men where I wanted and try to pull the bus out of the ditch. With all of the strong men, I knew we could move the bus. I assured him no harm would come to the bus and to this he agreed. We took hold of the rear bumper and the fenders, and after calling out we lifted in unison. First we lifted out the rear of the machine and then the front. We were all very happy to get back on the warm bus and head to town.

Times were very hard in the States, so I took half of the money I had and sent it out to my father and mother who still had

four young children going to school. The other half of the money was for my own schooling and tuition. There was not much left for fun and pleasure but I was sure tied down to my studies and the terrifically good library out at the school. Judge Bunnel was the president of the school. And in mining and geology, Dean Ernest Patty was one of the good instructors. Otto Gyste gathered and worked with the prehistoric bones. For geology and mineralogy, there were good displays of rocks and minerals from all over the world. The library had information pertaining to all phases of geology and mining and all other subjects.

That winter I spent at school was of great importance to me because of all the things I learned and all of the people I met and became acquainted with. After the short course was over, I enrolled as a specialty student until spring. When spring came, I went out to the Hi Yu mine again.

GEORGE K. POND

During this spring, Dean Ernest Patty, the Dean of Mines, received a letter from a rich man, George K. Pond of Boston. He had been in the Federal Tax Appeals Court in Washington D. C. This was part of the Hoover Administration. But when the Roosevelt Administration came in, George was let go. An elderly man, George K. Pond had heard so much about the territory of Alaska. He wrote to the University for information on anyone willing to guide and show him the life in the rough, prospecting in Alaska. Ernest Patty, knowing I had been up in the Big Delta and the Goodpaster region and that I had a boat and cabins up in the South Fork, asked me to be the guide when Pond came up. So, the summer of 1935, arrangements were made for me to be a guide for George K. Pond. I was to guide him out in the Alaska hills about which he had read so much. Pat O'Neil, a young student at the college, was to go along.

After getting an outfit together which would do for a couple months, we headed for Big Delta. From there, we took a motor boat up to the South Fork of the Goodpaster River. This was also a new experience for Pat. He had been born in Cordova, Alaska, but had never been out in the hills. He soon learned to build a fire and help set up our small eight-by-ten tent. We had it better at this time than when Oscar, Lee, and I went up the river. We had to make our beds on spruce bows before, but this time we had canvas cots to sleep on and each had our own sleeping bag. Again, going up this beautiful meandering river, so much of the country had never been touched by humans, and the moose, beaver, and other wildlife were still plentiful. One evening we made camp on a sandy river bar. We pitched our tent but we were not aware of a large cloudburst back in the high mountains. Then the river had risen and, at two o'clock in the morning, we awoke with our shoes and clothing afloat. To step out of a warm bed into the cold water meant a cold, wet morning!

We managed to get the poling boat up to our cabin at Beaver Point. That was about as far upstream as the poling boat could go. There the old man could see that it was too rugged for him to hike out. He stayed in the cabin alone and sent Pat and me on a prospecting trip into the higher mountains of West Fork. We did get up around what I later knew as The Black Mountain. On this trip we did not know that we were not too far from three other prospectors at the headwaters of Tibbs Creek. We brought back some mineralized quartz but it was not rich enough to be of commercial value. We went back to Beaver Point. At the cabin, Mr. Pond decided that, with the enormous amount of mosquitos, he would rather get back to civilization.

Drifting down a swift and narrow part of the river was an adventure for Pond. We had taken on some water already. At one swift spot on the river, there was a sapling spruce hanging low

over the water. Pat, being inexperienced and sitting in the bow of the boat, grabbed the sapling and lifted it up but he held on for a few seconds. This made a fine bow and, when he had to let go of it, it flew back and hit Pond across his chest, which knocked him flat in the bottom of the boat that was now half filled with water. I was steering the boat with the paddle and had ducked the sapling. Mr. Pond was very angry at Pat for a short while.

Back at Fairbanks we parted company, but, into later years, I kept corresponding with Pond. He knew I liked to read and he sent me volumes of books that I have always been grateful for. The books were The Fall of the Roman Empire, The Conquest of Mexico and Peru, Plutarch's Lives, and many others. I still have a copy of Plato that he sent to me.

After working for Pond, I used some of my earnings to buy a good pair of binoculars and a Zeiss camera from a fellow student who needed the money. That was one of the best cameras in the area at that time. I also bought a Colt Woodsman twenty-two caliber pistol.

PROSPECTING

During the summer of 1935, there was much activity up on Tibbs Creek. This creek is far up on the left limit of the North Fork of the Goodpaster River. Tibbs Creek is a creek about fifteen miles long and at the head of the creek on the right limit are five creeks: King, Johnson, Antimony, Ruby, and Granite. At the headwaters of these small creeks, above timberline, the hills were strewn with gold bearing quartz. The previous year at the mouth of Tibbs Creek, on the main river bar, a small landing field was cleared of debris and larger rocks so small planes could land. Here, at the river's edge, was a good cabin to stay in overnight while waiting for a plane. This was the beginning of the activities of the bush pilots in that area. The Tibbs Creek river bar was the first landing field in the Goodpaster Region and at that time Big Delta didn't have a field yet.

That summer, after I had completed being a guide for George K. Pond up the South Fork, I went out to Big Delta and up the river again. Having left the food and supplies at Beaver Point, which I had paid Pond for when he left, I had food for a couple of months for prospecting. When going up the West Fork, a crossing over a high divide goes over to Tibbs Creek. At the head of Johnson Creek, at timberline, three camps were set up. Lawrence Johnson was there with a small tent. Lou Colbert and Bill McConn shared another small tent. Bill Eisenminger had his tent. I had a small canvas and made a lean-to and camped out in the open for a couple of months.

(Left) Carl, holding bucket, and Bill McConn using a Long Tom at Tibbs Creek to test some of the placer ground. Carl wrote, "None too rich here."

Lawrence Johnson and Hershberger, an old prospector from Tenderfoot, had been up here the previous year and staked the Blue Lead. Lou Colbert and Bill McConn had staked the Grizzly Bear Claim. Eisenminger had staked the Grey Lead over on the saddle between King Creek and upper Tibbs Creek. These claims were to be of so much importance in the next few years. I staked a couple of quartz claims in this same group and the quartz showed high value in gold. In all rock, the gold was visible with the naked eye. Towards fall, caribou came through by the tens of thousands. Then we all had plenty of good meat and I got a couple of good caribou hides for a warm and good bed. Just before that I was almost living on ptarmigan. I had to ration my small amount of food that I had packed in from Beaver Point. This time I roamed far and wide back through the high mountains between the watersheds of Healy River, the Fortymile, and the Goodpaster River. This was before any aerial photographic maps were made. All creeks on maps were only dotted lines where they had been cut in by plane table survey in approximate places. After the few months at the college, all rocks and minerals were of much interest to me. There were so many creeks and places man had never been. In the creeks, there were no ax marks or sign of blazing or chopping on any small trees. In the higher hills and mountains, there were no signs of a prospector's pick having ever touched.

When food ran out, I hiked over to the Volkmar River watershed. I noticed some ridges with much asbestos. (I will note here that a few years later, during the war years, Bruce Thomas, a mining engineer, Lee Leland, and I came back and looked over the asbestos in that ridge and took notes for the Bureau of Mines concerning this strategic mineral.)

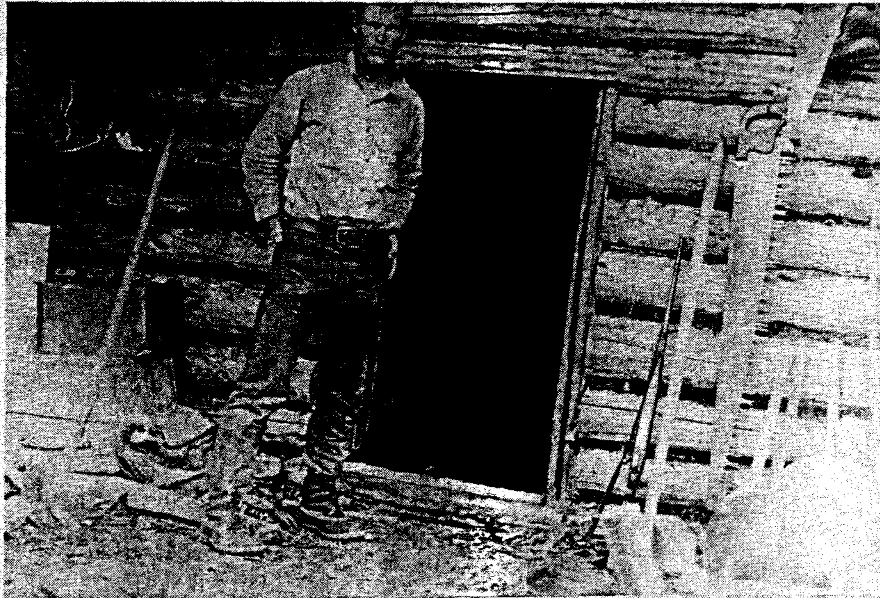
Walking further, I reached the Tanana. I spent a day making a raft out of dry spruce trees. I keyed it together without any nails as the old timers had done. At the time I made the raft, I had only a few large brown beans left. These I was boiling in an open coffee can with the muddy silt ridden Tanana River water. I worked at building the raft. As the water boiled and steamed away, I kept adding more water. When the beans were ready, they were half mud and half beans. But they were still nourishing and it was just good to have something to eat. The next day I drifted down the river to Big Delta.

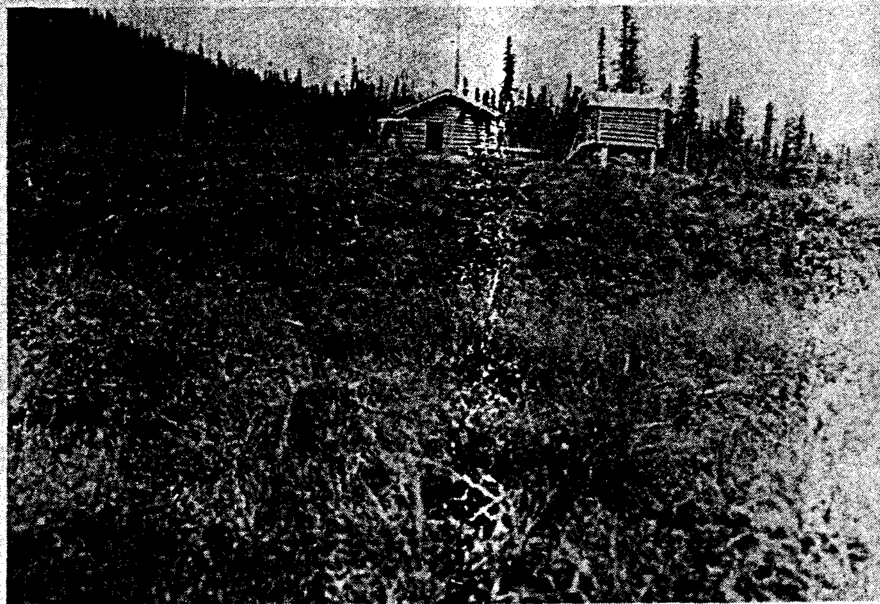
In the fall of 1935, Oscar and I got a winter's supply of food and an outfit together and this time one of Pollock's planes took us out to Tibbs Creek on the river bar. We felt a little lonely when the airplane took off. Again we were out in nowhere with no expectations of seeing anyone before the next spring. It was of great comfort when we set up our first Silvertone radio and heard the Anchorage radio station, which was the only radio station in Alaska at the time. Radio could only be heard at nighttime from Anchorage or from the States.

First we walked over to Beaver Point on South Fork to get a small tent and stove and some other tools that would be needed. This time, with heavy packs, we were walking up the West Fork. There had been cold weather and ice on the river. Then came a thaw and the ice had broken down. Next came a hard freeze and

again, at times, we could walk on the new ice if we were careful. In one place, with my heavy pack, I fell through. Underneath the new ice was the old ice laying at an angle and leading into the deeper and swifter water. Falling through, I sat still in the icy water and did not move so as not to slide in deeper. Oscar saw my plight and I was then able to get the heavy pack off and crawl out. A big warm fire was made to dry out before hiking on.

Over on Tibbs Creek, at the mouth of Granite Creek, we built the first cabin in the area, twelve by fourteen or twelve by sixteen feet maybe. This cabin was almost used like a roadhouse for so many stayed overnight in later years. Of course no money was ever taken in. Our unwritten law was to welcome everyone, no matter how many came in the cabin. Some slept in the two bunks and others were on the floor.





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(Upper left) Carl, in front of cabin on Tibbs Creek.

(Lower left) "Home sweet home," Carl wrote on the back of this picture of the cabin and cache at Tibbs Creek.

After Oscar and I had finished our cabin on Tibbs Creek, we had to scout around for meat for the winter. One day we set out for Beaver Point where a few tools and small items were left that were so much needed with everything so scarce in new country. On our way down the West Fork to our Howling Butte cabin, we saw a big moose not far from the cabin. Oscar had never shot a moose so it was his turn to have the gun. The moose was running away fast. Oscar fired and the moose went down. But, alas, the bullet went in from behind. It sure made a mess of some of the meat. We butchered it carefully. Being a long way from our cabin on Tibbs Creek, we had to leave much of the meat for a later date. We piled the meat on top of the roof of the cabin for some safety from animals. After a few days I went back to get another load of meat but the wolverines that were plentiful around there had carried away or ate up all the meat. I made a fire in the cabin for the night. When the stove began to warm up, the most awful stench came forth. Then, looking on the cabin roof, I saw that the mean old wolverine had used the short stovepipe for his toilet. Then I could agree with Hughey Ross from Big Delta, that the wolverine truly was a cross between a weasel and the devil.

That winter we prospected near our new cabin. Oscar and I sank down several holes with the slow, old method using wood fire. A hole would be dug about four feet or a little more in diameter, big enough to work in. The ground was frozen so a fire would be built in the hole at night. The next morning, when the fire had died we could dig another ten inches deep maybe. This process took one day. That night another fire would be built. This was repeated until bedrock was reached when a hole might reach as much as eighty or a hundred feet deep. The hole was dug in the winter when the creek wasn't running. The gravel was piled and worked in the spring or summer. It was in the gravel above the bedrock that gold could be found.

Below the cabin, on the right limit, we got down with one hole. It was about thirty feet deep and all gravel. The bedrock panned out only at ten cents a foot which, at the twenty dollar gold price, was not enough. Later I washed out the gravel we had hoisted out of the hole and had about one dollar. We put down a couple of holes on Antimony Creek, about half way up the creek, but we hit water and did not reach bedrock.

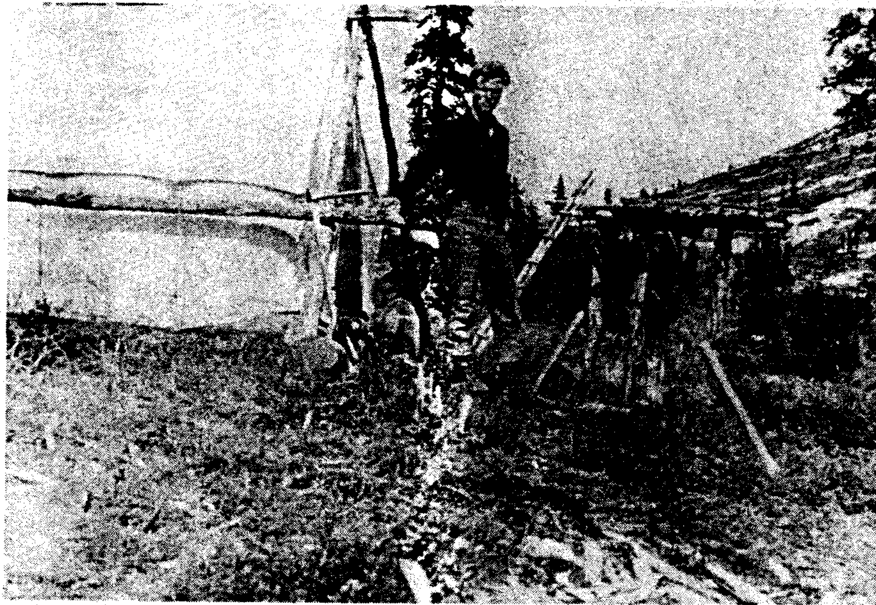
Three or four years later, Jack Boswell and Charly Holky came up with a four inch drill and we again put down three holes. Only ten cent a yard was all we could find. Further up the creek, Lawrence Johnson and Hershberger dug into the rim on the right limit. They showed me some coarse gold from these holes. But not having dug it out myself, I cannot vouch for its accuracy.

Late in the winter we were running low on food, so Oscar decided to walk out. He went down the North Fork, the first night, to Central Creek. There, Lawrence Johnson's brother, Walter, was located with his wife Lila and their son, Bob. Then Oscar skied on. Below Central, he told, a large old grizzly bear had come out of hibernation and was sitting up on the hillside watching him. He had no gun so he was glad to get by the old bear. Oscar traveled on to Big Delta and then skied into

Fairbanks. Not many cars were on the road that early in the spring.

I have mentioned some of the wildlife in this region at that period of time. We did not shoot or kill any wildlife wantonly but only when food was needed. In the lower valleys there was the small black bear and brown bear. I saw them several times but never shot or killed one. With the big brown or grizzly bear it was different. The grizzly bear was usually in the higher country. Most of the ones I saw were near timberline. The big bear was so destructive and dangerous that we did not like them close around.

In the summer of 1936 I traveled much around in the high hills and mountains. I had set up a camp out on a creek I called Divide Creek. This creek had an even grade from the Lower South Fork over to Boulder Creek, a tributary of the Upper South Fork of the Goodpaster River. On Divide Creek, right at timberline, I had set up a tent and built a high bear-proof cache. This cache was a platform on three tall spruce trees that were cut off for the purpose. From camp I could travel far and wide where no one had been before.



(Left) Carl's camera had a delay. He took this picture of himself alone at Divide Creek and sent it home with the message written on back, "My tent and cache a long ways from nowhere." Notice that this is a platform cache with no building atop the platform. Also note all the tools he packed in on his back in addition to the tent.

I remember one day I had been over towards the Healy River watershed and came home to camp close to midnight. It was in summertime so nights were fairly light. Tired and hungry, I found food and built a smudge fire to keep away some of the enormous swarms of mosquitos on this warm and sultry night. I tied up the front flaps of the tent on this eight by ten foot tent. I stood my rifle up at the entrance of the tent then crawled in my light sleeping bag which was under a bed net to keep the mosquitos away. Just ready to fall asleep, I heard something walking towards the

side of the tent and then a light touch on the tent. I knew that there was no other man in these parts. I did not have long to think for then I heard a big slap on the tent right above my head. It ripped a hole in the tent. Then I knew it was a bear. It walked in front of the tent and looked in. My rifle was standing where the bear was. Then a couple of yearling cubs also came to look in. The smoke from the smudge did not seem to bother them at all. I am sure they had never encountered man before. I had my twenty-two Woodsman automatic by my side, loaded with eleven shots, but I was afraid to use it, thinking it would only sting the old bear and make her mad. Then I remembered some stories I had heard, that these animals had never heard any metal sound and it would scare them. So, reaching out from my mosquito net, I grabbed the frying pan. This I banged hard and fast on the small Yukon stove. Then I added my own hollering which must have been pretty good in this spot. At this time the old bear was on her hind legs and, with one big swat, tore the tent down over me. I heard the bears walk away. I crawled from under the tent and got the big rifle in my hands. With the semi-darkness and millions of mosquitos, I fired towards the bears but did not hit any. From that day on, I have more or less been what they call a light sleeper.

This same summer, the Smelting Company sent engineers in to look over the prospects. E. N. Patty came in with a geologist, Joraleman, who was well known at the time. He had written books of the enrichment of certain copper ores in Arizona and Utah. Jack McCord, a promoter, well known over all Alaska, came in to look it over. He was the promoter that later got the Standard Oil Company in on the Kenai Peninsula. Jack McCord came in with a mining man from Dan Creek. He came in with a Mr. Price who was working for the American Smelting and Refining Company. It was the company who had the Kenecut Copper Company. I showed them around to the three main claims and they took many samples for assaying. These proved to be a fifth of value in gold and silver. Pat Doherty, from Richardson, and I had a claim called the Hidden Treasure with high grade gold ore in it. The American Smelting and Refining Company took leases and options on some of the best claims. The leases and options went from a hundred thousand dollars down to ten thousand dollars. We all got a down payment from a couple of thousand to a few hundred dollars. Henry Joesting, a professor from the college, came out. I was with him as he made a good map of all the claims by the plane table survey.

An engineer by the name of Lock, from the A. S. R. Company, who was well known for other mines he had recommended to the company, came in and recommended the A. S. R. Company to take up leases and options and explore these mines. Mr. Lock made all the arrangements in Fairbanks with money and payments and he arranged for a crew of men to go out and build a camp.

Showing these mining men around gave me a chance to earn a little cash money. The summer gave me good experience. I was with some of the best geologists in the land. I got well acquainted with them and learned a lot.

In between times, I traveled around with others and I also traveled around alone. Being younger than all of the men, I could

travel far and wide with ease. Many nights, without a bed for comfort, I slept under a spruce tree.

Once I was out with Lawrence Johnson. We were walking down about half way between Central and the lower South Fork when he showed me a geological oddity of nature. On a sort of hogback between Central and South Fork was a large, natural hole through the rock of the mountain. It looked large enough to take a house through. We did not have time to go up and explore it but I've always wished we had. Lawrence, on this trip, showed me some river bars where we could pan gold but not enough for pay. It was on this trip that we met French John poling up the river looking for the long-lost Pedro mine.

THE HINES' PLANE

One trip I was with John Hajdukovich and Bill McConn. We arranged a trip over in the high mountains of the Healy River watershed and the Goodpaster and Fortymile watersheds. John and Bill started out a couple of days before I did. I was busy helping to gather samples of ore for the company. Knowing the mountains so well, I made a shortcut over the headwaters of the Healy River. By arrangement, we were to fire two shots in succession to locate each other.

On my way over, I found the burnt wreckage of a small airplane. It was the lost Hines' airplane. This plane had been lost the previous year and many days of searching for it did not locate it. Four people died in that crash: Art Hines who was the pilot, Tubby Nordale, and a newlywed couple, Mr. and Mrs. John Lonz. They had gone from Fairbanks to a celebration in Dawson. On the return trip, the plane crashed right below the pass.

After I found the wreckage, I traveled on and fired a couple of shots at intervals until I met up with John and Bill. After returning to the plane, we went back to Tibbs Creek. John and Bill went into Fairbanks to report it. A few days later, the three of us went back in with four powder cases and gathered up what little ashes and remains of the bodies could be found in the wreckage. John had asked some women in town to fix up food and supplies. We never had such good food in the hills as they fixed. The three of us split the $1400.00 reward that was given.

(Left) Carl found the lost Hines' plane.

Left to right: Carl Tweiten, John Hajdukovich, and Bill McConn.

Here I want to add a note about an interesting geographical formation. There is a pass or divide between the branch of the Goodpaster and a branch of the Healy River where the Hines' plane was found. This pass could be called the Molybdenite Pass. Here, in some bygone day, some prospector's pick had found and broken many quartz and mineralized rocks to find much molybdenite but not enough for commercial value. One day alone, I traveled North on this divide between the two watersheds. This sharp, high ridge with its large, broken blocks of loose talus slide was too dangerous to walk. Blocks of rock were the size of a car and larger. When walking from rock to rock to find my way along this rocky ridge, my small added weight made the large rocks shift and move. I saw much evidence of molybdenite here also. When alone, I decided, all the mineral in the world was not worth taking a chance walking here. The Indians were superstitious of these mountains. They called them Rainy Mountains. I wish I knew the words in their own language.

In the 1930's, we knew the Indians so well, especially the Healy Lake tribe. Johnny Healy, the chief, and his son, Arthur, could speak and write fairly well. But at this time they kept no garden and had no fences or any restriction around their whole area so were free to hunt and fish. In summertime when hunting over on the Volkmar River, when moose or caribou were found, some families moved over where the kill was made and stayed there until it was used up. Moving was better than packing the meat for miles on their backs as we did. In the forties, after I had moved back to Washington, I heard that most of the tribe had died of spinal meningitis . One thing that is regrettable from the earliest times is that the white folks did not record the old Indian names for rivers and lakes up in this region. Their names would have typified or had some ancient historical meaning for these places.

TRACTOR TRAIN TO THE GOODPASTER

In the late fall of 1936, Clarence Burglin was selected to be the superintendent for the A. S. R. Company and Don Fowler, a newly graduated student from the college, to be the mining engineer and foreman up at camp. With no tractors and no machinery, it was hard work to pack the supplies on our back from the river bar landing field down at Maxie's Cache on Tibbs Creek fourteen miles up to Summit Creek, where we set up camp. The camp was above timberline at what we called the Blue Lead Extension, a claim which showed the most promising outcrop of quartz with high gold values in it. Including the cook there were about ten men who started mining, driving tunnel with the single jack. These men stayed at camp and kept mining. After snow came we made a landing field.

In the fall after freezeup, I was called into Fairbanks. The mining company wanted to find a road up to the Goodpaster instead of flying everything in. In Fairbanks, Clarence Burglin was getting together one of the first tractor trains in the Interior. He chose Walter Rinerson who was foreman on the Alaska Road Commission. Burglin was also a superintendent with the Alaska Road Commission. Walter had been an old teamster and had experience with sleds and horses. The company bought a T. D. Forty, an International tractor, brand new and perhaps the first International in Alaska, with an Isaacson hydraulic blade and a Braden winch on it. Three Common Sense sleds, made of oak and iron, were bought and brought in from Minnesota. A wanagan was built for one sled, to provide a place for four men to eat and sleep. Two large beds were made for the other two sleds, one for oil drums, the other for a compressor and other mining machinery. The sleds were towed with an arrangement made by crossing heavy link chains and, when hooked together, they could trail one another as a train on a railroad track.

Our camp was set up at Shaw Creek, three or four miles below Big Delta. There, several truck loads were brought out from Fairbanks by the Miller Hauling Company. Leo Hardy and Johnny Vinyard were the operators and Walter Rinerson, the boss. Lawrence Johnson was to guide the tractor train up to the South Fork of the Goodpaster River. He was well acquainted with the lower part of the country. I was to be scout from the South Fork on up.

We went in over Quartz Lake, traveling on the frozen lake, following low foothills and over a small pass into Liscum Slough, a tributary of the Goodpaster River. Already there was some snow on the ground. The T. D. Forty was a relatively small cat compared to 1980's measurement of machines. Through small spruce and birch groves, it pushed the trees down before it. We had to steer clear of large stands, though, for this small tractor could not handle or push its way through the thickets. The heavy load

was often too much for the small machine which would have to then take one sled at a time, with much slow winching in places. Many times while going up the Liscum Slough, the tractor was high centered on the terrific, large tussocks (or niggerheads, as they were then referred to). When we got up to the North Fork of the Goodpaster River, the ice was strong enough for the tractor to cross. No one sat on the tractor when crossing the water because of the deep and strong current under the ice. We had rigged lines on the steering clutches to guide the tractor across. Then, with long winch lines, the sleds were pulled across.

This was about thirty miles on our journey from the highway at Shaw Creek. We now had another sixty or seventy miles to go. Lawrence Johnson dropped out when we reached his home at the South Fork. Then I took over to guide up the South Fork, to find the best route and to find the best spots to get across the South Fork of the river in the lower valley. We had to cross the river several times because of its meandering.

I was on skis, scouting out the path ahead. One man would be driving the tractor. The other two rode on a sled or in the wanagan. After finding the best route, I would return and walk ahead of the tractor or ride in the wanagan. The ground was so uneven that the wanagan ride could be very rough. During this trip it was often snowing, adding to the depth of the snow already on the ground.

Nearing Christmas time, we had reached Beaver Point. By then, we were traveling in two feet of snow. We came to where the river forked again. We called this the West Fork of the Lower South. It had been hard going with this small tractor, getting more snow and getting very cold. At this period of time the diesel machine had not really been tried in this extreme cold weather. The diesel fuel was thick, like syrup, and it clogged up the fuel lines and pump. Leo Hardy and Johnny Vinyard could not get the tractor to go any further. They said it needed a new fuel pump which would have to be sent out for to the lower forty-eight, but we didn't know that the problem was that the fuel was too cold and too thick in this nearly fifty degree below zero weather. Now, half a hundred miles from Big Delta, we decided to cut down brush out on the flat and snowshoe the loose snow down to make a small landing field at Beaver Point. Then it was up to me to get on my skis and go up West Fork to the head stream and over a high pass to Tibbs Creek to the camp where there was a radio phone and to call into town with the news of the breakdown. I went to the camp at the head of Summit Creek. A small airplane was sent out to Beaver Point and, being close to Christmas and knowing it would be a long wait for a new fuel pump, the other three men went to Fairbanks for Christmas. We lost about a month waiting for the fuel pump.

Earlier I told that, at camp, when the deep snow came, there had been a landing field made below the cabin Oscar and I still had at our claim at Tibbs Creek, three miles from camp. Also, a field for winter was made down on a bench of Summit Creek nearer to where the camp was located. The two main flying services were Pollock Flying Service and Noel Wien with his planes. It should be mentioned that, at this time, Noel Wien had his large Ford

airplane. When he came in on Tibbs Creek, it seemed like the plane took up the whole width of the valley. On Summit Creek, the bench was extremely steep and sloping so there was only one way to land and that was uphill. Taking off on this field, it was a do or die situation. The bench was short and the plane had to take off downhill. Abruptly below the bench was the deep Boulder Creek gorge. When a plane took off on this field, at the end of the runway, it dipped far down before enough speed was reached to gain altitude. We would watch, wondering and hoping, waiting to see the plane climb into sight again.

(Left) A plane coming in for a landing in the snow at Summit Air Field. The dogs wait patiently with the dogsled belonging to A. S. R. Company.

After Christmas, the fuel pump had come in and that, too, was sent out to Big Delta and Lawrence Johnson, with his dog team, was to bring it up to Beaver Point. Clarence Burglin came up to Tibbs Creek with Noel Wien in a small plane. I've many times wondered why the fuel pump wasn't sent out in the airplane. Instead of me walking back to Beaver Point, they lashed my skis onto the skis of the airplane since there was not room in the small plane for them to fit. On landing at the rough field at Beaver Point, Noel Wien almost tore off one of the skis on his plane. But Noel crudely wired the broken ski onto the plane again. Now he had only one good ski on the airplane. When taking off at the end of the field, he had me hold back on the plane all I could and when it was revved up, it shot forward. He managed to hold the weight on the one good ski and made it fine. Back in Fairbanks, he landed on the side of the runway, again with no mishap.

I stayed at the wanagan waiting for Lawrence Johnson to come in with the fuel pump. Late one night, he pulled in with his dog

team. It was a cold, black night when he came. The dogs were tired and cranky. I remember that he gave the dogs food but two of them got into a bad fight. Lawrence did not want to lose any dogs and he knew they would fight until it was the end for at least one of them. I was not used to dogs, but Lawrence had me grab hold of one dog's tail. He did the same on the other dog. We dug our heels in and Lawrence said to pull hard and steady. The dogs, in their deadly grip with each other, had to unfasten their hold and let go and we managed to draw them apart inch by inch. When separated, one was bleeding and badly torn up. To prevent infection, Lawrence took a can of Blazo gasoline and poured it on the wound. The temperature was forty below. The gas in the raw wound made the tough old dog howl.

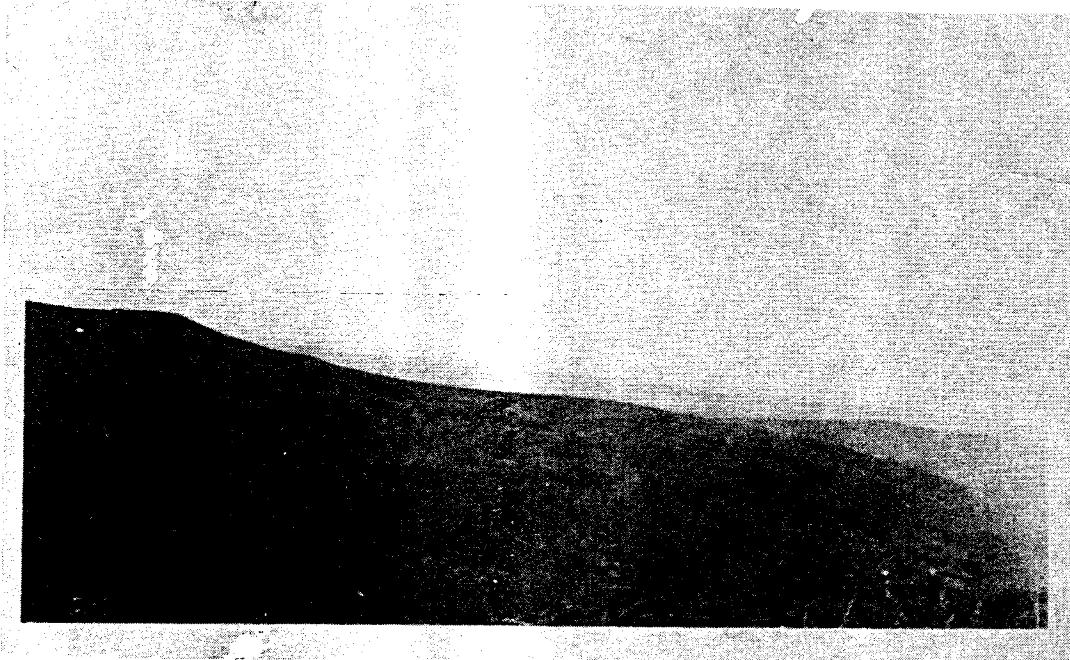
Early in January of 1937, Walter Rinerson and Leo Hardy and Johnny Vinyard came back up to Beaver Point where I was waiting. They were flown in. The pump repaired, we resumed our journey up the South Fork to Divide Creek. This creek was unknown to most of the people in the region. As stated before, I had set up a camp at timberline on this creek where I had built a high cache to be bear proof. We went up Divide Creek, over a low pass into Boulder Creek watershed and up to Summit Creek where the camp was set up. The snow was deep and hard going for the small tractor, mostly pulling one sled at a time.

When we got to the summit, we dropped off one sled and went into camp. The cat was much needed there to haul up wood and timber for the camp. A tunnel had been started on the Blue Lead Extension claim and a shaft was being blasted down on an ore chute. Now with a compressor and machines, the tunnel went forward fast. Some men went back to town and only a few miners and cat operators were left.

The camp had been set up with twenty by twenty-four tents. These we made double with a six or eight inch space between them to keep out the cold. With large oil drums for heating, the tents were comfortable. One tent was the cook house, one was for the bunk house, and one was for storing compressors and tools. All this was above timberline where the blizzards and snow could be ferocious.

Some men found a new experience when going over the bald summit and down to the landing field on Tibbs Creek. This summit was the divide between Summit Creek and Antimony. The wind could blow so hard that one had to lie flat at times and crawl across the summit.

We had left one sled with supplies out on Divide Creek. This, Leo Hardy and Johnny Vinyard had tried to get out to several times, but had no luck in finding the abandoned sled. At this time I was working in driving the tunnel ahead, but, being used to these hard winters, I left the tunnel and led the way on my skis. The snow was drifting so fierce that the cat tracks were covered at once so it was almost impossible to see them. Out in the pass where the sled had been left, I had to leave the tractor to find the sled. I could tell from the small brush and the terrain and the direction of the wind which way to search. I located the sled. I went back to the tractor where there were two worried men. Even though I was probably gone for less than an hour, they



(Left) Although not taken in winter, this shows divide between Summit Creek and Antimony.
Winter blizzards could blow so hard that a man would have to lie flat and crawl across summit.

were afraid I had been lost. They had kept the cat running. Leo was sitting on the tractor and all he could say, repeating over and over again, was, "We are crazy," and crying like a baby. He knew they would perish if left alone. We hooked up the sled and brought it back to camp in spite of the weather.

Leo asked me later how I could find my way. I could not answer him on that. Living a few years in the high-mountain country of Norway, hunting and trapping in similar places and conditions, and now a few years in this upper country of Alaska, I had learned, as so many folks out in the hills, that it is necessary to be keenly observant of brush or any object of the terrain which can be remembered. In summertime with my prospecting pick always chipping away on all types of rocks, it was easy to retrace my steps even if it was a hundred miles or more.

(Left) "Our house out at the mine. Wanagan standing on sled out front. Taken day before we started to the highway," Carl wrote referring to trip back to highway to haul more supplies to Blue Lead Extension.

MINING THE GRIZZLY BEAR

Early in the spring of 1937, John Hajdukovich, being aware of all the activity up in this district, decided to bring his larger Caterpillar No. 7 with a Latorneau blade on it. He brought up a sawmill and Louis Grimsmore came up to operate the mill. Many plans were changed when A. S. R. Company decided to pull out, not having found rich enough or large enough ore deposits to warrant further development.

C. W. Tibbets and his wife, Mamie, had the Pioneer Hotel in Fairbanks. A few years before, Mamie had won the Nenana Ice Pool and had some dollars to risk in a mining venture. Tibbets bought the machinery for a song from the A. S. R. Company and decided to look further into the mining. Four of us formed a group and we continued further prospecting. It was Doc Cripe, who was nicknamed "Doc" for being a mechanic, Chris Elengen, a hard rock miner from Fairbanks and formerly from Juneau, my brother, Oscar Tweiten, who was good on the cat, and myself. The four of us would do the work and Tibbets would furnish the capital, all five of us to be even partners in the venture. First it was to be decided on what claim we would start. Oscar and I wanted to go on Bill Eisenminger's Grey Lead claim at the head of Tibbs Creek. It had fine but uniform gold all through. But Tibbets and Eisenminger were at odds and Eisenminger didn't want us to take over the option. It was decided to go into the Grizzly Bear claim which showed so much coarse gold that it should be easy to mill and extract the gold. A camp was set up on the Grizzly Bear claim owned by Lou Colbert and Bill McConn. The first thing we did was to make a road from the camp on the Blue Lead over to the Grizzly Bear. We bulldozed out a level spot where we set up a large tent to live in and cook in and another tent for the compressor and machinery.

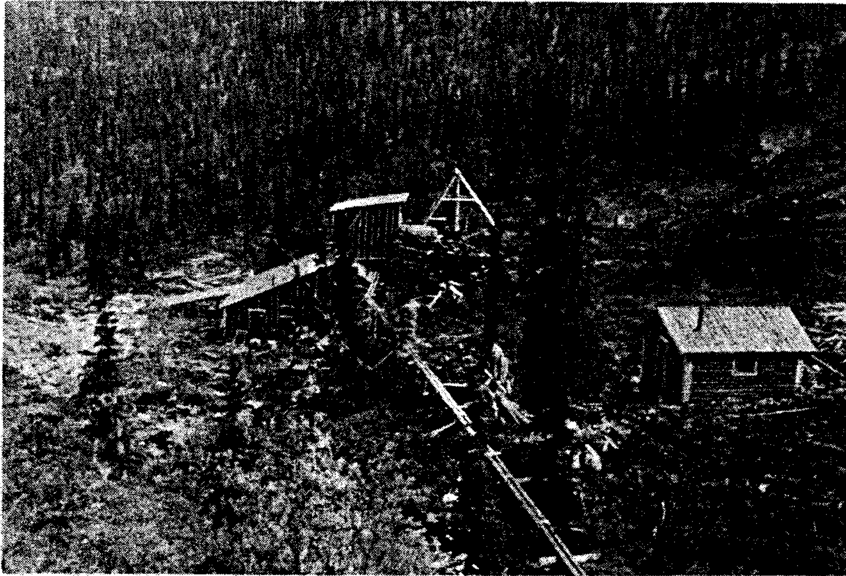
All machinery was brought over and we hired three other men, Bill Thomas, Carl Larson who was a neighbor and school friend from Tacoma, and Frankie Bach, the cook. Frankie was from Juneau. His father had been mayor of Douglas when that was a booming mining town. Frankie Bach was a small, feisty young man. He was a friend of Chris Elengen from Juneau. Frankie had only one good arm, the other he called a flipper. He was a good practical cook in most things, but kneading bread was a disaster. Sometimes streaks of flour were noted in the bread. We delicately asked if we could knead the dough for him but then with strong words he would say he would get up in it and do it with his feet. I am sure he would have done so if we had pressed him further on the subject. Frankie was well educated, being of well-to-do folks so he was a fine fellow to have in camp.

(Left) The lineup from left to right:
Frank Bach, the cook,
Carly Larson,
Carl Tweiten, and
Bill Thomas.

We also made a road for the sled or go-devil from Summit Creek down to Tibbs Creek to our cabin and the landing field we had made for planes to come in on wheels. The Grizzly Bear claim was above timberline in a rocky hillside. Here we worked until late fall when snow and the freezeup came. We started to drive a long tunnel to get under the main ore chute. Incidentally, for others to learn by, here we made our big mistake. We should have sunk a shaft right on the ore chute to see if values would hold out going down on the rich vein. But, instead, we drove a long tunnel and drove a raise up to the good ore. But there, to our chagrin, it was found that it was only a small deposit until we got within about fifteen feet of the top, where the rich ore was.

We had started work on this tunnel that fall. When the snows came, we took sleds and a wanagan on the long trip out to the highway at Shaw Creek, three to four miles below Big Delta, to get a load of supplies. We got dynamite and diesel oil and food. (The charge on airplane freight at that time was about ten cents or more a pound. In the small planes it was about one hundred dollars for each trip which was quite a bit of money at that period of time.) The tractor trip went fine. The four of us could take turns and so have a chance to get off the tractor. We made several trips. In the mean-time we had ordered two ball mills for grinding ore. We also brought in a good crusher and tables for concentrating ore.

In the spring we hired a couple more men to saw timber and boards for the mill building. We found plenty of timber at the mouth of Johnson Creek on Tibbs Creek. John Hajdukovich had brought up his sawmill and he let us use it. Louis Grimsmore ran the sawmill. He sawed some logs on three sides for some cabins. We set the two ball mills up on Johnson Creek a mile or so below the Grizzly Bear where there was water for milling. We built a go-devil or ore sled with a large bin and, with the tractor, dragged down many tons of ore and milled it. But, as stated before, the ore chute had no depth and we soon ran out of the good ore. We only took out about a thousand ounces of gold or about



(Left) Buildings were set up about a mile below the Grizzly Bear Mine. The largest building houses the two ball mills.

(Below left) Although the hills are hard to make out on this old picture, the cross marked in with pen shows location on the hillside where the mine is. Ore was hauled down from there to the mill.

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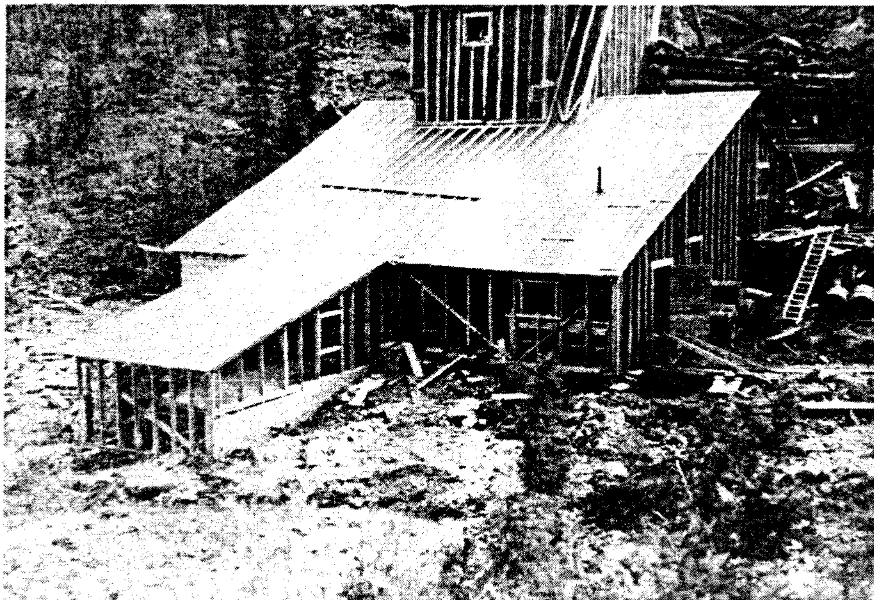
fifteen thousand dollars which was nothing compared to the expenses and work done on the tunnel. When this ore chute gave out, still with more ambition than good judgment, we moved our mill including camp and buildings over on Summit Creek, on the Blue Lead Extension claim, to try on this ore body.

First, though, we laid off our paid help, knowing it would be a long and tedious job to move the mill and set up anew on the Blue Lead. I had told Bill Thomas and Carly Larson about the Goldrun Creek over at the headwaters of one branch of the Fortymile River. They decided to walk over the pass and see and stake the ground. This creek had been mined for placer gold in earlier days. Bill and Carly went down on Tibbs Creek and stayed in Oscar's and my cabin to wait for a plane to come out. We asked them when they took off to fly over our camp to let us know they were off.

One day Pollock came out and picked them up and came flying up Johnson Creek over our mill. This creek has a steep creek

grade and the summit ahead. Pollock was flying low but trying to gain altitude. We were waving to Carly and Bill, smiling as they went by. But we could see the airplane would never make it over the pass. The plane was too low and the valley too narrow to turn. Pollock had but one choice, to crash land in the steep creek. Pollock was one of the best bush pilots and must have timed it so that he just stalled the plane before crashing. This he did and all three men got out of the airplane without a scratch. You can't imagine that steep rock place! When the men stepped out, a large herd of caribou could be seen up in the higher hills. Bill said, "Look at all the caribou!" Pollock, in an anguished voice, countered, "Look at my plane!" Later, the plane was taken apart and we hauled it down on the go-devil to the landing field. There it was repaired and flown back to town. Carly and Bill then took a day or two and hiked over to Goldrun Creek and staked the ground. I have heard it has been mined some in later years.



(Left) Another view of building housing ball mills on the Grizzly Bear Mine.

THE BLUE LEAD

In moving over to the Blue Lead Extension, the first job was to get living quarters. We sawed some logs on Tibbs Creek. A Finnish man by the name of John Hill did the carpentry work. He mortised in those corners and laid up the logs in such fine work to build a good cabin. The corners were neatly dove-tailed instead of notched as on most log cabins. Note that later this building was moved and may still be standing on the Grey Lead. The tents for compressor and machinery were set up. Then the mill building had to be torn down, hauled over to the Blue Lead and set up anew.

On the Blue Lead, again we worked like slaves driving hundreds of feet with tunnels and raises. Expenses were terrific. This hard granite formation took one case of dynamite for each round. What we called one round meant drilling about fourteen to twenty holes, six feet in depth, to pull out in one blast. All holes were set with the long fuses to go off in proper time. This tunnel work was to extend our track for the tram. We would muck out by hand twenty or so loads for each round. One thing in our favor was that the work was in hard rock. Timbering was needed only around the portal. Once in the firm mountain there was no danger of caving or sluffing in. Another thing in our favor was the thirty-two degree temperature. This made it good winter work when blizzards and snow flying outside made it forty or fifty below. These tunnels in time will never cave in except at the outer entrances where timbers will fall in. This was not like the hard rock mines in the Fairbanks vicinity where there was always seepage and some water running. At the Blue Lead, it was bone dry underground.

One spring when the landing field could not be used we had supplies dropped from an airplane. We even had dynamite cases dropped. There was a large snowbank above our camp which was the target area but they missed the snow sometimes. The forty percent powder did not go off on impact even if cases were torn open.

We had dynamite and food and even beer dropped. Chris Elengen liked his beer. When beer was dropped, he ran for that case and tried to save the cans which had broken the seal. The pressure of the impact caused those cans to leak and he could hear the beer fizzing out.

The mining in these isolated places was hard because airplanes had no flying schedule. We were fortunate to get the mail out twice a month or so if some prospector came out. In the spring it could be more than a month when landing on the field was impossible.

For food and cooking, it is hard to imagine that, at this period of time, there was no refrigeration. So much was canned food, which was expensive. We had large hams and slabs of bacon and lots of corned beef and such. One thing, for fresh meat, it

was legal when out like this that we could get a caribou whenever we needed it. In summertime there would be no waste of meat. For a group of hungry men, a caribou did not last many days. After several dozen caribou a year, though, we sure got tired of this meat all the time. In the fall, when I got a good moose, it was a pleasant change. Of course, beef or pork or mutton were luxuries we did not often have.

Again in the wintertime, we made trips out to the highway for supplies. Oscar, my brother, and Doc Cripe made a trip or two while Chris Elengen and I were mining.

The rich ore on the Extension lead did not last. Driving several hundred feet further into the Blue Lead, we took out much ore. But here the lead laying at a twenty or so degree angle and good ore only on the hanging wall, it still did not pay for us to mine in that period of time. The ore chutes still kept going down into lower levels which we did not explore. We did not have the smaller diamond drill to probe ahead with. We took out about a thousand ounces of gold which was nothing for all the work done. It was hard and expensive to mine. To this day, when folks ask how we made out, I always tell them that the men working for us for wages, six or seven dollars a day and room and board, made out fine, but the five of us who were owners did not have money with which to buy socks when we had to give up the venture.

North Fork. We went up this creek as far as timberline. In the evening, while we were making the fire and frying some bacon and warming water for tea, there came an enormous herd of caribou traveling up this somewhat narrow draw. The herd was so thick that some were all around us, even rattling our pots and pans. We stood behind the tree for there were feet and horns all around. We did not want the meat to carry so we did not shoot any. After the herd had passed, we ate and went to bed for the night.

In the morning I woke up early and was making the fire. Then Pat, in a strange voice, looking out of the tent, said, "Carl, look!" I turned and there by the creek, not twenty or thirty feet away, was a terrifically large bear. I grabbed my rifle and, sitting down, laid it over my knee pointing at the big bear. In the meantime, Pat was climbing the heavy limbed spruce tree and trying to holler and make a loud sound, but, of all things, he was so scared his voice would not work. The bear was so close that I did not dare fire, for the bear, with a couple of jumps, could have battered me down. The old bear stood looking at these strange creatures then slowly walked away a short distance. Then he turned and looked like he was coming back. By then he was far enough away so I shot. I always regretted killing the king of the woods up there. When Pat and I looked this bear over, we could hardly lift one front paw. The teeth and claws were large. Pat, in all of his journeys, had never seen so large a bear. Thinking afterwards, I imagine the bear was following the big caribou herd and picking up any sick or stragglers. This was not too far from the place earlier I told about where the Indians had built their big "V" to get caribou in ages past.

When we had our camp on the Grizzly Bear claim, perhaps a summer day in 1939, I took off on a prospecting trip around The Black Mountain. I would always take a different path to look for float or outcroppings of ore. This time I had one of our big Husky sled dogs called Tuffy. This dog had been caught in some trapper's steel trap one winter and had lost a couple of toes on one front foot, which made him useless for a sled dog but he was a fine pet. When nearing the head of Divide Creek and walking above timberline where very little brush of any kind was growing, there, out on a flat a couple of hundred yards away, I saw a large bear. This was not too far from my camp on Divide Creek. I did not want this destructive bear around so close to camp. In my Winchester thirty ought six, I had six rounds of ammunition. I fired a couple of shots at the bear and he disappeared in small buckbrush that was growing between where the bear had been and where I was standing. I waited a while to see if there was any movement by the bear, thinking that I had crippled the bear and should go down to finish him off so as not to let him lie there and suffer. When I was ready to go, the big grizzly came charging towards me. At that moment I wondered why I had fired any shots at that poor bear when he had done no harm. I called out, thinking the bear did not see me. The bear was getting closer so I ran at right angles to get out of its path but the bear turned and came full speed at me. There was no rock or tree to climb. Old Tuffy, the dog, was more scared than I. Standing there, I managed to get a couple of shots and the bear went down only a few feet away from me. With the

(Left) Carl Tweiten and a grizzly bear he killed on the Grey Lead.

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bear down, the dog tore into him, thinking, I guess, that he had dropped the bear. Once more I regretted that I had shot one of these large fine animals. After this I did not go out of my way to shoot any bear if it let me alone and I could pass by with no trouble. There were times that a bear would not get off the trail but I could walk around him. Most of the time they would run away. A bear looks large and clumsy but when angry, a bear can be as quick as a cat. It was always a good rule not to fire at a bear that was on a steep hill and above oneself. For, with a few jumps downhill, even a mortally wounded bear might finish off a man with one big slap.

One winter night on the Grizzly Bear claim, there was a large pack of wolves howling around camp in the higher hills. We still had Tuffy, our pet dog. Hearing all the wolves howling around, he went out to investigate. Poor Tuffy! That was the end of him. He never came back. The fat Tuffy must have made a good morsel for some of the wolves.

ACCIDENT ON THE GREY LEAD

After we had abandoned the mining ventures and pulled out of Tibbs Creek, then Gold Placer Incorporated, a Canadian company, bought out all the machinery and the two log cabin buildings we had built on the Blue Lead claim. This company had made arrangements with Bill Eisenminger to try the Grey Lead at the head of Tibbs Creek. E. N. Patty, from the college was the consulting engineer. Bruce Thomas, a young mining engineer from the college, was in charge in this new adventure in the Goodpaster. All this was purchased from Tibbets and moved over to the head of Tibbs Creek on the Grey Lead. This lead on the surface showed high values in gold. Again much tunnel work was done, driving to hit what they thought was the Grey Lead. Faulting and earth movement made it hard to locate.

In the summer of 1940, I made a trip into the Goodpaster to represent some of Oscar's and my claims as this had to be done every year or lose them. Patty had laid off the men working on the Grey Lead and was contemplating what to do next. John Hajdukovich was over on Central Creek with the Miskovitch brothers mining placer. I went to work there for a few days to see how it was going. Coarse gold had been found here by Lawrence and Walter Johnson. John was doing hydraulic mining, open-cut. Again the values were not enough to warrant mining, so it was later abandoned.

Bruce Thomas, the mining engineer came over and asked if I would go over on the Grey Lead and see what I could figure out. There I noticed that much tunnel work had been done on a lead that had no value. With the dozer I dug down on the end of the good ore chute and saw a large fault had shifted the vein of ore. This was done in such fashion that the drag of vein was laid up as in a picture book with illustrations of mining. Now, again, Patty sent out one miner and the two of us went to work driving more tunnel to locate the vein at the lower level. Bill Eisenminger, the owner, was to be the cook in camp.

One day Ralph Sayer, the miner, was drilling and I was out in the shop sharpening bits and getting primers ready for blasting. I was testing some old fuses we had found to see if they were still good. Standing by a small bench with the powder and caps open, a spark must have got into the blasting caps and dynamite. The blinding flash and explosion hit my face and my body above my waist. It stunned me and blood was running profusely from different wounds. I managed to shut off the compressor and walk down to the bunk house where I lay down. It was like a nightmare. I was trying to wake up as from a bad dream. Bill Eisenminger had gone somewhere to find more fuse as he knew we were running low. Having my rifle loaded, I managed to fire a couple of shots at intervals to get someone's attention. The mine was on a high, bald hill three miles from the airfield. We had an old fashioned

radio phone where we had to start an electric generator to get power. This I would do and had not showed anyone else how to run so they could not call to town for help. I was glad though that a day or two before that, I had showed Sayer how to start and run the tractor. So a mattress was laid on the go-devil and I was moved down to the landing field. The nearest neighbors were Walter Johnson and his wife Lila May and Bob, her son. They were about thirty miles away at the mouth of Central Creek where they had their home. Bill knew the way so he hiked out. There, Lila May was the only one home and, with her radio phone, managed to get Fairbanks. A plane came out and Doctor Haglund that we knew well came out to see me and take me in to town. There, in St. Joseph's hospital, several doctors decided it best for me to go out to the states. One thing was sure, Patty and the company, Gold Placer Incorporated, did choose the Mayo clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Here I spent several months.

At the Mayo clinic, they attempted to needle one eye for the traumatic cataract. The attempt was a failure so I lost one eye. Many months later, I had the cataract on the other eye removed in Seattle which proved successful, but of course I did not again have the clear vision that I was used to. I could see well enough to read a little bit.

It was after this that I went into the Goodpaster to scout for the Bureau of Mines, during the war years. Bruce Thomas, a mining engineer, Lee Leland, and I came back and looked over the asbestos in that ridge, near the Volkmar watershed, and took notes for the Bureau of Mines concerning this strategic mineral. With poor vision, I could not walk with ease and lost much of my enthusiasm and interest in mining.

In the meantime, a new crew worked further on the Grey Lead but did not find enough ore. With the Second World War coming on, and considering the isolation and expense, it was abandoned by Gold Placer Incorporated.

John Hajdukovich also pulled out of the Goodpaster region, taking all his machinery to Big Delta where the tractor was needed for the new air base being built there.

To this day I have heard of no further mining in the Goodpaster.

BACK TO THE GOODPASTER

In the mid-forties, after the Second World War, I made my last trip into the Goodpaster region. This was in early March and was for the purpose of seeing what was going on in mining and prospecting and to go trapping for beaver over on the Lower South Fork. Erick Brandholm and I flew into Tibbs Creek and landed below Oscar's and my cabin on Tibbs Creek. Our former placer claims had run out with no assessment work done. We found the creek totally abandoned, no tracks of anyone this spring. Erick was one of the best cross-country skiers. We both had our sleeping bags and enough food for a couple of weeks. In the morning, the weather cold and clear, we set off to the head of Tibbs Creek to go over the high pass into West Fork. The snow was deep and our fifty or sixty pound packs made the going harder. Erick was not used to carrying a heavy pack. Breaking trail up and over the pass, he soon tired and he complained of his heart palpitating and we had to slow down. From then on it was up to me to break trail, which was hard, for the skis were deep into the snow. The snow was up to our knees. If we tried to step out of the skis, we went way down in the snow and floundered like any animal too deep in snow or mud. We did get over the pass before dark and, to Erick's surprise, it was not an easy task to go down the steep hill with a heavy pack on one's back breaking trail in deep snow. When we came down into timber and dry wood, I made a fire for the night and kept it going until morning. Erick crawled into his sleeping bag and hardly stirred all night. The next day we set off and got down to the river and on the ice it was easy going to our upper cabin. Going down the river it was a sad surprise to find that there was not the many beaver that there used to be. Very few places did we see any marking or cuttings of the beaver. Someone had been in trapping a few years before and had destroyed most of the beaver without regard for the future. Here, Indians in past ages had never trapped too close. In later years, white men had known better than to trap too close and we followed the limit of ten beaver each to the tee. Erick and I walked to Big Delta and of course did not try to get any beaver. The few that were left could probably, in time, replenish the streams and creeks as in days gone past.

Now, looking back in time, I can appreciate the Indians so much better. In regard to all their hunting and trapping, every part of an animal was utilized, either for food or the fur for clothing. Beaver and bear meat was eaten and all other animals were used for food for the Indians or for their dogs.

In summary, much work was done in the Goodpaster during this ten-year period with so many places showing much gold in both placer and hard rock. What the future will be in this large region will depend on the times and rules and regulations. To

think of the hundreds of creeks that show gold but were wet and could not be prospected with the old method of wood fire! The only creeks that had a four inch drill on them were Tibbs Creek where there were only three holes and two or three holes drilled on Central Creek. In placer, the best and most likely creeks have never been prospected. Old Hershberger showed me samples of quartz he found. Two of these places I myself have found. The gold is still there for a careful and observant prospector. The same is true in placer. Some of the streams, in higher country, would not be damaged too much where there is no overburden, only coarse gravel to the very top creek. Being an old prospector, I still have mixed emotions whether it is right to turn some of the most beautiful creeks in the world upside down for the gold in them.

THE END

APPENDIX

FOOTNOTES:

Footnote 1. Uncle Karl K. Tveiten told how he walked from Dawson to Nome when that city had its stampede in the early 1900's. He had staked ground in the Circle District where much dredging and mining took place later, many years after he had left those parts.

Footnote 2. Our father, Ommund K. Tweiten, was mining in Nome for one summer. He learned mining and became inquisitive. Then he took a trip to his old home in Norway. There in the valleys and creeks he panned to see if there was any gold. In the uniform, hard granite, there were no veins of gold. In that recently glaciated country, the rock had not weathered or eroded out to give free gold as in Nome Creek. In the mountains he shot and blasted in veins of copper and silver and molybdenite which was most plentiful there. These markings are still there in the Tweiten mountains of Norway.

APPENDIX

I REMEMBER. . .

Rika Wallen

Rika Wallen was a remarkable woman. She was forty or fifty years before her time when it came to farming. This, I would say, was one of her main goals, to have a going, prosperous farm. Here, she held back no money for clearing and cultivating new land. It was expensive before the time of the tractor and bulldozer.

This was a natural place for all people to stop because there was a short wait for the ferry. Rika knew most of the people and many just came in for a cup of coffee which was free. It cost one dollar for a full meal.

There were many humorous events at that time. Rika always kept a drum or two of gasoline for anyone that ran low. These drums she kept in the backyard with a pump and told them to help themselves and come in and pay her afterwards. Some folks, after their tanks were filled, would drive around in front and wave their money for her to hurry out and get. She would open up the window from the kitchen and, in no uncertain terms, yell for them to walk around to her back door and come in and pay her. She was independent as most Alaskans at that time.

Once the missionary teacher came down from the upper Tanacross with a boat. These days money was tight and many did not care to spend a dollar for a meal. I won't give his name, but he came in to the kitchen and Rika had just made a white, double layered cake. It had white frosting and coconut sprinkled over the top. It looked and smelled good so the minister went over and cut out a good slice of the cake and ate it. Then he went over and threw his arm around Rika's shoulders and told her what a wonderful cook she was and how good the cake was. Rika's response was, "I know the cake is good but it will cost you one dollar." When he heard that, he came and sat down at the table with the rest of us and had his full meal.

In the winter time in cold weather, people would like to listen in on the telephone. There was one line from Fairbanks to Paxson and every household had an identifiable ring. By picking up the receiver, this made it easy to listen in on someone else's conversation. It was very hard to hear when too many came on a line. So Rika talked Swedish with some of her Swede friends and other friends in Fairbanks, then there would be many clickings and hangups and the line would be clear.

Rika, the only woman around Big Delta, liked to talk. She had met her match. This was one spring when Hughey Ross,

who was trapping up the Tanana and the Gerstle Rivers, came down in the spring. He had lived alone and not talked to anyone for months. So, when he came down to Rika's, he started to ask for news both local and from the outside. He would never wait for the finished answer and kept asking one question after another. I remember Hughey Ross for his description of a wolverine. To him a wolverine was a cross between a weasel and the devil. Some wolverines would go ahead of him on the trap line and tear up and eat the good fur.

During the war in the forties, I went out to Big Delta and stopped in at Rika's. She asked if I would take in some cash money and deliver it to a man at the Nordale Hotel. This was several thousand dollars rolled up in a large roll. She did not tell me how much, and I did not count it but delivered it to the man specified. In his room I sat down and he counted the money and gave me a receipt. There was five dollars too much so he gave this back to me which I sent out to Rika again. The man did remark, "Only in Alaska so much trust can be handled without all sorts of written receipts."

After 1940, I only stopped into Rika's place occasionally. There was much change when the Airfield and the Alaska Highway were started. The bridge was built and the ferry abandoned.

John Hajdukovich

Much could be written about John Hajdukovich. He was active in so many endeavors and helped so many things to come to pass. We mostly called him by his first name but some used "John-the-Duke". John came from what was then called Montenegro. He was better educated than most folks from that part of Europe. He could speak several of those Eastern languages as I remember, even some Russian.

I knew John from the first time I came up to Big Delta. Later in the thirties, I was together with him on many prospecting trips. Some of his first years in Alaska at Big Delta were spent prospecting, trapping, and hunting for the market in Fairbanks. This would be for moose, caribou, and sheep. In summertime, the meat was rafted down to Fairbanks and in wintertime he used a dog team. I do not know when John built his big roadhouse and McCarty abandoned his small one. I also don't know when John gave up the roadhouse and Rika took over.

At this time John went trading with the Indians up the Tanana and built his main post at what we then called Tanana crossing. At this time I cannot remember if he had one or two boats on the river. As I remember it, Louis Grimsmore built the boats there at Big Delta. John had a small sawmill at Big Delta that Louis Grimsmore ran for him. He also set one up on the upper Tanana. In the later twenties John became acquainted with some wealthy folks from back East. They, together with John, brought in some thirty horses to be used for saddle and packing. John was the main guide when hunting for bear, moose, caribou, and sheep which were mostly for trophies. Their mainstay and headquarters was at Rika's place. These folks, I heard, donated money and helped do much for the Indians up the river.

John used one of the large buildings and warehouses at the Signal Corps. John was good to all people. When anyone needed anything they could go to his warehouse and get it. Sometimes they paid him back but mostly not. John was always told what was taken.

I think it was John that cultivated and planted potatoes on a small hillside on the other side of the Delta riverbank of the old roadhouse. Also he planted a potato patch on a hillside back from where Bert and Mary Hanson set up their last roadhouse. I believe I was the last one to plant potatoes and harvest them for Rika the first summer I was there. It was John that had first cleared the place. Maybe they had the same idea as when potatoes were first introduced into the Scandinavian countries. They had to be in a warm, sunny hillside.

In the mid thirties there was gold quartz discovered up on Tibbs Creek in the Goodpaster. Many claims were staked and the American Smelting and Refining Company came in and took an option and lease on some of the claims. This, we thought, would be a big mining camp. There was much activity and John had purchased a Caterpillar 7 tractor with a

Latourno blade on it. This he brought up to the Tibbs Creek with a sawmill. The intention was of being first to saw and furnish lumber for the camp. The American Smelting and Refining Company only worked one year and found it not to their liking and left. Later we used his mill to saw lumber when we set up a mill for grinding ore. Later, John went mining placer on Central Creek with not much success. When the Second World War broke out, all mining ceased.

One feat that John accomplished will not be duplicated. His tractor had been brought up in the wintertime in the Goodpaster and was not taken back out again during the winter. It was sitting out in the flats from the lower South Fork of Goodpaster. The Big Delta Airfield was to be built and the first one in there with a large dozer would have an advantage. Lytell and Green Construction Company was to start on the airfield. Two or three men went up to John's tractor and drove it across the flats below the Volkmar River to the Tanana. John, who knew the Tanana River so well in high and low water, had a spot lined out where he figured there was good bottom and shallow enough for the tractor to go across. The mechanics took off the fanbelt and extended a long pipe for air. Then they drove the tractor into the river. When talking or telling a story, John used his hands for emphasis. He described many times crossing the river with the tractor. When crossing, the tractor was completely submerged, still going deeper and the water was almost over the air intake pipe when it finally began to crawl out the other side.

John claimed he had so much to do when the highway was built. It came down on the left limit of the Tanana from Junction to Big Delta. The army engineers had asked for his advice. The opposite side of the Tanana had deep muck and no gravel and would have made a much costlier project. But John knew the country so well. He knew where there was good gravel bottom for the road foundation.

One story John told about was when he and his partner were up on Cumberland Creek, prospecting for placer, and he ran out of tobacco. It was in the wintertime and extremely cold but he decided to go to the Big Delta Roadhouse anyway. John, running into heavy overflow on the Jarvis River, was in danger of losing his life. When he did reach Rika's Roadhouse, he settled down in the kitchen. Then he told of his trip coming down and his great need for the tobacco that he was craving. Rika went out to the storeroom at once for his favorite brand and set it down before him. Then he looked at it and remarked that anything that had that much power over a person, for him to risk anything for tobacco, even his life, was not common sense. He decided right there, after buying it, to never use tobacco again. This pledge he kept and often told us.

I mentioned before that John used his hands when telling a story. John was Greek Orthodox and Pat Doherty was Roman Catholic but both attended the Catholic church in Fairbanks. John told this story about Pat: Pat Doherty was very

religious. There was a landing field on the river bar at Tibbs Creek which was often referred to as Maxie's Cache. This was a dangerous field, short, with a high stand of trees at the end so a plane had to bank taking off to miss the treetops. Once when John and Pat were to fly out of that field, John got in front with the pilot. Pat Doherty rode in back. Pat was nervous and scared. He was belted in but also hanging onto the straps by the window. When taking off he didn't know whether to hang on or let go of the straps to cross himself. If the plane had crashed, hanging onto the straps wouldn't have done much good. John, in telling the story, made a face showing how scared Pat looked and John made the Sign of the Cross.

Butch Henry Stock and others

From Rika's Roadhouse, going up the river, first there was the Signal Corps building, called Grundler Station. Further on was the old McCarty Roadhouse which was only used as a storehouse by Rika. A few hundred yards along the river bank were four other cabins spaced a few hundred feet apart, Orbeck's, Steve Loring's, Butch Henry Stock's, then Lawrence and Walter Johnson's.

First a note on Orbeck. With him one could make a question mark about his life, whether it was lucky or unlucky. He came over from Sweden in the early days and settled down on the Koyukuk River at Wiseman. The first part of his life he was prospecting and driftmining. There he found a nine hundred dollar nugget which at that time was some sixty ounces. He spent the rest of his young life looking for more but only eking out a bare living. Later he came and settled down at Big Delta and worked some for the Road Commission and for Rika. He was old when I knew him then in the early thirties. His sisters in Sweden wrote and asked him to go back to his old home which he did.

Another cabin was that of Steve Loring. Steve was not one of the early pioneers. He came sometime in the twenties. Steve was mostly trapping when we knew him. He told of when he first came to Alaska but I cannot remember what river he and his partner built their first cabin on. He told of how the first cabin was built. He had heard how cold it would be in the wintertime, so he and his partner built another cabin tight around the first for double thickness. He laughed when he told about his warm cabin.

Butch Henry Stock, in my opinion, would be the typical trapper or early mountain man from the early pioneer days of the west. He got his nickname from being an early butcher from what is now called Old Tacoma. Butch came to Alaska in the early days of Fairbanks. He hunted for the market in Fairbanks. In summertime he rafted meat down the river and in wintertime brought it down with a dog team. When I knew Butch, his only occupation was trapping. Butch could not read or write. Once in a while he would come to me with a letter and say he had forgot his glasses and ask if I would read it for him. But without reading he was as well informed and could talk on any subject as well as anyone else. Butch was the opposite from finicky in dress, cabin cleaning and with himself. We all liked him.

John Hajdukovich once told about when he and Butch were out one winter prospecting. It was Butch's turn to get up in the morning and make breakfast. Then John, in his bunk, noticed while Butch was mixing up the sourdough that Butch was trying to shield John from seeing what he was doing. John saw that he pulled out a mouse that drowned in the sourdough. He threw the dead mouse away and continued mixing

and frying the hot cakes. John mentioned that he had no appetite that morning.

This was a story told several times about Butch. He met a hooker from Fairbanks that was tired of her rough life. They were married in town and she moved out with Butch to his cabin. For how long the marriage lasted, I don't know. One winter when he was trapping, he had five sled dogs. One day he took three of the dogs with him and left two at home. He was out on the trap line for a couple of weeks. His wife, who was lonely, heard him one day coming up the road from his tour on the trap line. She was outside of the cabin door to greet him. The first thing Butch did was to go over and hug and pet his two dogs that had stayed home. Then he went over to his wife for a big hug but that was just too much for her, being second best to the dogs. After that she left him.

Carl Armstrum

Carl Armstrum I knew well from the first day I rode with him from the upper Big Delta down to the roadhouse at Rika's place. Carl Armstrum mentioned that as a young man from Sweden or Denmark he went to France and joined the French Foreign Legion. Then he went to southern Africa and fought in what he called the Boer Wars. He spoke the Scandinavian languages, French, Spanish and Portuguese, as I remember, and also German. I don't recall seeing many books at his main cabin. His cabin was on the left limit of Jarvis Creek, not too far from the road where the Delta Airfield and buildings were built in the early forties. Carl Armstrum made his living in trapping on the upper Delta River and tributaries. He had several cabins for his trap line. I was only in the one at the mouth of Jarvis Creek.

I recall one evening in the summer he came all excited down to Rika's place. A man, I won't give his mane, had moved into Beele's Cache which Carl claimed was his. Carl then asked me to go up to Beele's Cache with him for he was going to throw out the "so-and-so" and wanted me as a witness to this affair. I was young and foolish enough to go with him. When we crossed the Jarvis Bridge, he had thought better of it and invited me over to his cabin for a cup of coffee. This we did. We sat and talked for a while and he decided then that it was probably not such a good idea to go up and pick a fight with the intruder, then throw him out, for he was equally well armed and strong. At this time he did go over to his bunk and show me a long, wicked looking pistol under his pillow. He mentioned that "no son-of-a-bitch with a gun" would get at him.

Years later I heard of Carl Armstrum's death. He and another man were axed to death by their roommate. The three had been living together in a cabin on the Gerstle River.

Jim Thomson

Jim Thomson lived on the Goodpaster River. This was about twelve or fourteen miles by river from Big Delta. He was located about four miles from the mouth of the Goodpaster River on the right limit of the river. There he had a good cabin, a cache, and a smaller cabin. This was the early thirties. Jim, as I remember it , came from the mountain states. I believe it was Colorado. At this time he was above middle age and lived solely from trapping. He had a few dogs, enough to run him around his trap line.

I knew Jim quite well. We made many trips up the river by boat. The first time was with my brother Oscar and a cousin, Lee Leland, the fall we went prospecting and trapping for the winter on the South Fork of the Goodpaster. Sometime later, after I had taken my courses at the college, when traveling by Jim's place, he asked me to stay with him a few days and see and sample many quartz leads and other mineral deposits that could be of value.

One incident that always stands out in my memory was when he told of his operation on his hemorrhoids or piles. This problem he had experienced before. He had been unable to get out on his trap line and he was far away from any doctor. He read up on the subject as best he could. He proceeded to tell me and act out what he did. In the cabin he had a large round wood block which was sometimes used as a chair. This he rolled out on the floor. Then he had a large looking glass which he laid on the rough board floor. He showed how he took his razor and disinfected it with Listerine, which at that time most of us thought was a disinfectant. For a minute I was worried when he told and acted this out that he was going to take down his trousers, which of course he did not do. But he did cock his leg on the stool and told how he had operated on himself. He told how it hurt and how dirty blood spurted. He showed me the marks on the rough floor that had not yet worn off. The operation must have been a success because he never complained of the problem again.

Jim was a Mason.

In the morning, Jim wanted tea. He had a large tea kettle, filled it with water and a large handful of tea and then boiled it for a long time. It was powerful tea and this he kept warm and used for the rest of the day.

Jim was a rugged individual and outspoken in all subjects he believed in. Jim's place was an interesting place to stay. He had many shelves of books and he had read most of them. He was well versed in history, politics, and religion. Since I have read some in different languages, I always remember one of Jim's quotes when discussing history. To use his exact words, "History is a bunch of lies agreed upon." I cannot remember when Jim moved away.

Lawrence and Walter Johnson

Lawrence and Walter Johnson were brothers and lived the longest time in the Goodpaster prospecting and trapping. They both came to Fairbanks and Big Delta before the First World War. Walter, it was said, stayed in the Goodpaster for nine years, part time mining at the head of Michigan Creek. He did not wish to take part in the war so he stayed away from civilization. Later, in the twenties, he came to Big Delta and Fairbanks and married Lila May. They lived for many years at Central Creek on the North Fork of the Goodpaster.

It should be mentioned that Lawrence and Walter Johnson had their cabin at Big Delta to stay in when coming down from the Goodpaster. Lawrence Johnson had his main home up at the South Fork of the Goodpaster River where he had cabins and cache and a good garden. Walter had his home up at Central Creek where he lived with his wife Lila May and her son Bob.

Walter died walking up Antimony Creek, probably from a heart attack. Lawrence was found dead in his cabin at the forks. After Walter's death, Lila May moved to Fairbanks and later was married to a man named King.

One day we were down at the river bar landing at Maxie's cache waiting for an airplane to come in. This summer day Walter Johnson and his family had come up from their main home at Central, thirty or more miles away. They had four or five large sled dogs with them. Here at Maxie's cache was one of their good cabins used for running their trap line and also the good cache to keep supplies safe from wild animals. Four or five good dog houses were set up in back of the cabin among the spruce trees. These individual dog houses were built with the same size logs as in a cabin, with flat roofs on which was much moss and dirt for the warm summer and cold winter. The size of these dog houses was about four by four and three feet in height. This one day, when hearing the airplane coming, we all ran out to the field, dogs and all, to see the plane land. The plane was a red Balanca. The wind coming upriver, he came in low and set down on the upper end of the field then taxied down the short field to stop. This would have been a time to get a humorous picture if one had a movie camera, for these dogs had never seen an airplane before (or any motor vehicle except for an outboard motor on a boat). To the dogs the plane must have looked like a giant bird coming in for a landing. While the plane was landing and running down the field to stop, the dogs, with tails wagging, chased this big bird down the runway. On the short field, when the plane came to the end, the pilot had to rev up the motor to spin the plane around and come taxiing up the field. This time the large dogs, who had never had anything like that chase them, ran with their tails between their legs and, as fast as they could go, crawled into their individual dog houses.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carl O. Tweiten was born June 12, 1909 in a logging camp in Deming, Washington. He was the first of eight children born to Norwegian parents. His father came to America in the late 1800's and his mother came in 1905. They met in Tacoma. After Carl was a year old, his family moved to University Place on the outskirts of Tacoma. Carl attended school there until he was eleven years old then the family moved to Norway. Carl finished grade school and high school in Sirdal, Norway. He moved back to Tacoma when he was 18 years old. Carl worked in a sawmill and logging before going to Alaska.

In the early forties, for a couple years during the war, Carl worked at Weeks Field near Fairbanks as assistant airport manager filing flight plans as required at that time for all planes coming in and going out.

In 1946, with his failing eyesight and needing medical care to try to keep a glimmer of light in the eye, he then moved out to the state of Washington. There he built a good home in University Place where he had first attended school as a child. He found work in lumber and plywood mills. All this time he was making investments in land and forest on the side. He was later self-employed at different ventures, running a nursery and selling peat. When retired, he went over to the Gig Harbor area and built a house for himself on one of his pieces of land. Since then he has been tree farming and selling land. With the good library for the blind in Seattle and many magazines to be had, at the time of writing this book, he is still living in his home in the Gig Harbor area, healthy and happy.

Many Alaska visitors, his brothers Oscar and Barney, and many nieces and nephews still living in Alaska in 1988, help him keep in touch with the changing times up there.

With much time on his hands and his old Remington typewriter, he has been putting down his memories of Alaska.

Carl made trips to Norway in 1962 and 1970. He has written several articles which have been published in a newspaper in Sirdal, Norway.

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