

MER'S VIEW OF KLONDIKE

Very Few Claims Have Borne Out
Stories of Richness—Many
Wild Cat Schemes.

Creeks Prospected Far Back From
the Yukon Brought Very
Small Returns.

(From the San Francisco Chronicle.)

Bear Creek (Klondike), June 17.—Since my last letter the situation remains practically the same. The winter work is over, and there is no more theorizing or speculation as to the merits or demerits of the various claims which have been worked. During the past few days I have been to Bonanza and El Dorado creeks, and through acquaintances of these claim owners I have learned the true facts regarding the output of gold from a number of claims. You will probably be surprised to learn that I do not give the numbers of locations and the amount mined from each, for though I have data which would enable me to do so, I should consider it most injudicious to give them, from the fact that nearly every claim in this country is for sale, and I do not as a miner want the reputation of having sold a claim. However, the cause of all this mad rush, has not taken as a whole, nearly equalled the amount expected of it. Some claims have been worked, and with the exception of two or three claims, not one of the whole creek has produced a return of gold. Bonanza is a bitter disappointment. In conversation with a claim owner you will learn that the creek is "all right, but a little spotted of course," and that those laymen who worked all winter and now are staking their claims, as they cannot make wages shovelling it into the boxes, are fools and did not work as they should. The laymen tell the truth, as a rule, and we find things are not what they seem. El Dorado and Bonanza creeks are now thoroughly prospected, and the only thing about how much gold there is left. Prior to the season just now closed comparatively little work had been done on either. All other creeks are now in the embryonic state. Bonanza was a year ago. We hear big reports from Dominion, Donkey, and other creeks in the same neighborhood. But little work has yet been done on them, and we only hear of the big prospects. Little or nothing is said of the mines down on these creeks that drew blankets around the claim, and that they were not on the "pay." These creeks are as good or better than El Dorado, but this remains to be proved. One thing is noticeable, however, that all those who have property in that district are disposing of it as rapidly as possible, the excitement being in most cases that of ill-health and a desire to get out.

Everything is very much overestimated, simply because a few men were fortunate enough to secure good property on El Dorado and Bonanza within a few months of their arrival. It is the height of folly to imagine that all can do so, yet with a supreme confidence, born of ignorance I have met chinchillas, and one which was loaded down like a pack mule with blankets, food, frying pan, stew kettle, pick, shovel, gold pan and axe on their way to El Dorado. They are not the only arrivals are those from Wrangell, Dyea or Skagway, but when they come from the outside they are not so well equipped. St. Michaels being so far from the Yukon, and that even these creeks now staked have only been run over. This may be true. There is no doubt that the gold is there, but one way to get to the Rockies, which seem to be the goal of most who are now starting out, and that is to build a long narrow boat, a double-ended, and to pull up the larger streams or rivers, such as Klondike and Indian. As these waterways have been closed for years and men have prospected on the bars with varying results it would seem that there are some creeks yet to be explored, but while you are waiting for the mines away from the Yukon and have spent days or weeks to reach a certain creek, it is very much better to find the first blazed tree you meet. If claim five feet for mining purposes, J. Brown. Yet such has been my experience, and that of others, that I have found the country for miles is staked, and the only new finds since last spring are Doonah, and Skagway. The latter is a tributary of Bonanza. Skookum gulch (which claims) and the now famous French gulch benches. There may be some rich creeks, but all are staked, and it is not until the truth is told, and it is not impossible that with the vast numbers of new creeks staked this winter, a portion of them may prove to be good.

Most of the articles that were published this winter in the papers, so far as I have been able to read, are false, rare and simple, and were inspired by people who have just arrived on the coast from the interior of the Yukon. The reason for these exaggerated reports is not hard to find when one knows that the persons making them have been told by some one that they have discovered gold. As a matter of fact there are not more than four, or at the very outside five claims on this bench that can be considered as being extremely rich. Others back of them will pay, but when one has to sink forty or fifty feet to bed rock through gravel and wash more water than you can use, and read that such things are not what they seem.

Do not think that I am a misanthrope and can see nothing in this country. Gold can be found in small quantities almost everywhere. Phenomenally rich claims are only to be found in the favored spots. Some of these have been found, others may be. The Klondike boom, as we see it personally on the decline, but when the excitement is over and we get down to legitimate business principles again this country will not be so hard to live in as now, but at the present rate charged for goods and accommodation one needs to be an El Dorado king to purchase anything.

Dawson is growing extensively, but the buildings are chiefly frame structures covered with canvas. Tents abound everywhere, and it is with difficulty that camping ground can be obtained. For a few days last week no whisky was to be purchased in town and gambling was very quiet—in fact, the town was nearly dead. On the 10th inst. a snow arrived with whisky, and all night there were large crowds on the streets as during the day time. We have daylight during the whole 24 hours now and nearly all the travelling is done at night, as the weather is cooler and the mosquitoes not so plentiful as in the day. Speaking of travelling reminds me that I saw a man who is called Dawson City's most noted millionaire, "Swifwater Bill," packing his outfit on his back to No. 13 El Dorado, of which he owns a one-eighth interest only, and who to-day is as poor as any one. He borrowed money last fall to go out on and agreed to pay \$25,000 for the use of but \$10,000. His theatrical troupe are now to be seen in the dance halls waiting for some fools to dance with them at \$1.50 per dance. Others who were rich during the winter stay in civilization are now settling down to their accustomed places and are no more sought after here than any other individual. The greatest anxiety is for money with which to get out of this country.

The first boat to arrive here this season was the May, N. W. Wear, the Victoria this year is to be piloted by Dawson and Pelly (Port Selkirk), carrying a large cargo of goods and passengers. The boat is expected to run a pack train of 300 animals this summer. The North American Transportation Co. have made a contract for \$300 from Dawson to Seattle and 2 per cent. on all goods carried—baggage being searched—which is considered exorbitant. The first freight train will start all the way down the Yukon was the Bellington, which arrived on June 15th with four passengers and mail. The very same concern, but came through the Canyon and White Horse Rapids successfully. It is rumored that she is to be used as a tug on the Yukon. Dawson. Food is now more plentiful and prices are falling down, though boots and shoes cost from \$10 to \$30 a pair. A large number of persons who have just arrived are selling out their outfits and are going down to St. Michaels and home.

The Canadian laws which are constantly being changed; the imposition of 10 per cent. royalty, which claim owners are loath to submit to, make mining as a business very tedious. For instance, you first take out a license at a cost of \$10. On the face of this you read that you are entitled to all the privileges of a free miner; to hunt, fish, to cut wood, to build boats, houses, etc. But when you purchase a lot in town and ask for permission to cut a set of house logs you are told that it will not be issued, but that permit will be given later to sawmill owners. You must purchase logs from them. Most of the officials are openly declared to be corrupt. All other creeks are now in the embryonic state. Bonanza was a year ago. We hear big reports from Dominion, Donkey, and other creeks in the same neighborhood. But little work has yet been done on them, and we only hear of the big prospects. Little or nothing is said of the mines down on these creeks that drew blankets around the claim, and that they were not on the "pay." These creeks are as good or better than El Dorado, but this remains to be proved. One thing is noticeable, however, that all those who have property in that district are disposing of it as rapidly as possible, the excitement being in most cases that of ill-health and a desire to get out.

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BUSY ST. MICHAELS

The Harbor Crowded With Steam and
Sailing Vessels Laden With
Passengers.

Scores of River Boats Being Con-
structed—The Seashore Lined
With People.

(From the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.)

St. Michaels, July 21.—In the harbor of St. Michaels are thirty-five steam and sailing vessels, all heavily laden with passengers, general cargo and mail. Several steamers are in port with large lists of passengers who purchased tickets direct to Dawson City. The passengers are all on arriving here learned that no arrangements had been made for their river transportation. The steamers insisted that the passengers and mail be taken to their own river.

St. Michaels is under military jurisdiction, and the commanding officers refuse to allow such people to be put ashore, and the result is that there are four or five steamers in port with passengers and mail on board. The passengers are all on arriving here learned that no arrangements had been made for their river transportation. The steamers insisted that the passengers and mail be taken to their own river.

Scores of river boats are being constructed, and for several miles around the city the seashore is lined with people. The old line commercial companies have built and equipped six magnificent modern river steamers. The first of these, the Columbia, owned by the Columbia Navigation Company, was the first steamer to leave the city to start on her trip to Dawson. She made excellent progress and reached the Yukon flats, 250 miles from Dawson, on July 13, where she got into the wrong channel and ran aground. The water was falling fast and the latest information received by John J. Healey, which arrived to-day, is that she is still aground, and that so much time will be required to get her off and into deep water that it is doubtful if she can reach Dawson in time to return before the season commences to run in September.

The Sovereign, belonging to the same company, was built this year, left the middle of July. The steamer Rock Island No. 1 and Rock Island No. 2, also constructed this year, are now in the harbor. The great obstacle that the new companies have to overcome is the scarcity of competent pilots. The old companies have employed a few experienced men on the river, and the outside companies are compelled to employ whomever they can. It is not difficult to find pilots, but it is difficult to find men who are competent to pilot a steamer in the river. The wages of Indian pilots have advanced to \$15 a day, and some instances to \$25. Up to this season wages along the river have been \$4 and now it is worth \$15. A mine above Manook is selling a poor quality of coal for \$1.50 a ton.

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She Brings \$200,000 in Gold Dust From
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Latest News From Ocean Fleet Lying
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Discharge.

(Seattle, Aug. 5.—The steam schooner

Dirigo, in command of Captain Hall, arrived from St. Michaels at 5 o'clock this morning with ninety-seven passengers and \$200,000 in gold.

The largest sums held by individuals were: H. Miller, \$70,000; Charles Moore and J. H. Brown, \$70,000; between them and Captain E. W. Spencer, Portland, Oregon, \$40,000. This latter sum was not made in mining, it is said, but in the sale of gold dust. Miller and Moore are residents of Ontario, and Miller resides in the East. Between the remaining ninety-seven passengers there was some \$20,000, but as nearly all of these parties were laborers returning home, the majority of this \$20,000 was held by two or three of the miners on board.

There were twenty-seven persons on board from Dawson, and of these there were many who had gone over the Skagway trail last winter and never returned. They just came down the river until they reached St. Michaels, where they boarded the Dirigo for home. The Dirigo is a fine vessel, and the passengers were well taken care of. The Dirigo is a fine vessel, and the passengers were well taken care of.

Whaler Alexander May be Lost. Grave fears are entertained for the safety of the steam whaler Alexander, of San Francisco, which was wrecked on the north of Behring strait by E. W. Beasley, a prospector, under date of June 27, send advices that the vessel is still missing. The Alexander was in the Aleutian group. The Beasley reports that the missing vessel was then in what might become a dangerous place. Her nose was wedged on the ice, but she was not thought at the time to have been in serious danger. The vessel proceeded north, and did not become visible until late in June, when the Alexander failed to show up.

All the other whalers that were in the vicinity of Fox island have reached Behring strait and reported. No trace of the Alexander was seen. In the fleet the opinion was general that either the Alexander was lost or that she sustained serious damage and was compelled to return to San Francisco for repairs. No indications of the wreck in the vicinity of Fox island have been reported at the harbor or Alaska.

In the latter part of the Beasley was in Pulver bay with six whales, the Karlik at Kiggins island with five whales, and the Karlik at Norton island with three whales.

Raid on the Seal Rookeries. Unalaska, July 25.—Well founded reports are in circulation that a concerted effort is being made next month by a fleet of Canadian sealers to raid the rookeries on the islands of St. Paul and St. George. There is but one government vessel in the vicinity, and the guard is being kept against pelagic sealing. The department has ordered her to visit the various fish canneries along the Alaskan coast, and to keep a close watch on the Canadian sealers. No law is violated. Around Unalaska and Dutch harbor, where the larger portion of the sealing fleet rendezvoused before the season opened, are only small islands, and it seems to be an open secret that in the event of the animals being scarce in the proscribed zone allowed for sealing, the sealers will raid the rookeries. The absence of the whalers, therefore, seems to imply a tacit invitation to invade the sea and kill the seals at will.

No Patrol This Year. For several years past both the United States and the British governments have maintained fleets in Behring sea, and by a strict police patrol system have enforced obedience to the regulations governing sealing. This year there is practically no surveillance exercised. The officers of the Whaling, unlike the commanders of the customs, send no reports to the patrol system, and the sealers anticipate little or no difficulty in raiding the rookeries. In August and September dense fogs envelop the seal islands, and a distance of sixty miles from the lawful sealing grounds presents splendid opportunities for daring Canadian sealers to raid the rookeries. In past years the islands have been raided in that manner, and the sealers have been successful.

The Dirigo's Fine Voyage. Pursur W. C. Sammons, of the Dirigo, states that she arrived at St. Michaels with ninety passengers on July 15. She had been chartered by the "Swiftwater Bill Company" the California-Alaska-British Columbia Navigation Co., and Mr. S. J. Kimball, the owner, sent her north after making arrangements to have the river steamer James E. take her passengers up the Yukon. Both the Dirigo and the James E. were in the National City, and it was necessary for the Dirigo to stop at St. Michaels to get her crew north. They did, and transferred the entire lot of ninety passengers to the Ridout, which went up the Yukon with them.

The Dirigo got away from St. Michaels on July 25 and made the run down in about 12 days, which shows her to be remarkably fast for a vessel of her type. She is a fine steam schooner, ably officered and carries 24 passengers in addition to a large amount of freight. She is now in the harbor at St. Michaels, and will be loaded with coal and passengers for the return trip to St. Michaels.

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STR. DIRIGO ARRIVES

She Brings \$200,000 in Gold Dust From
the Land of Snow and
Nuggets.

Latest News From Ocean Fleet Lying
at St. Michaels Waiting to
Discharge.

(Seattle, Aug. 5.—The steam schooner

Dirigo, in command of Captain Hall, arrived from St. Michaels at 5 o'clock this morning with ninety-seven passengers and \$200,000 in gold.

The largest sums held by individuals were: H. Miller, \$70,000; Charles Moore and J. H. Brown, \$70,000; between them and Captain E. W. Spencer, Portland, Oregon, \$40,000. This latter sum was not made in mining, it is said, but in the sale of gold dust. Miller and Moore are residents of Ontario, and Miller resides in the East. Between the remaining ninety-seven passengers there was some \$20,000, but as nearly all of these parties were laborers returning home, the majority of this \$20,000 was held by two or three of the miners on board.

There were twenty-seven persons on board from Dawson, and of these there were many who had gone over the Skagway trail last winter and never returned. They just came down the river until they reached St. Michaels, where they boarded the Dirigo for home. The Dirigo is a fine vessel, and the passengers were well taken care of. The Dirigo is a fine vessel, and the passengers were well taken care of.

Whaler Alexander May be Lost. Grave fears are entertained for the safety of the steam whaler Alexander, of San Francisco, which was wrecked on the north of Behring strait by E. W. Beasley, a prospector, under date of June 27, send advices that the vessel is still missing. The Alexander was in the Aleutian group. The Beasley reports that the missing vessel was then in what might become a dangerous place. Her nose was wedged on the ice, but she was not thought at the time to have been in serious danger. The vessel proceeded north, and did not become visible until late in June, when the Alexander failed to show up.

All the other whalers that were in the vicinity of Fox island have reached Behring strait and reported. No trace of the Alexander was seen. In the fleet the opinion was general that either the Alexander was lost or that she sustained serious damage and was compelled to return to San Francisco for repairs. No indications of the wreck in the vicinity of Fox island have been reported at the harbor or Alaska.

In the latter part of the Beasley was in Pulver bay with six whales, the Karlik at Kiggins island with five whales, and the Karlik at Norton island with three whales.

Raid on the Seal Rookeries. Unalaska, July 25.—Well founded reports are in circulation that a concerted effort is being made next month by a fleet of Canadian sealers to raid the rookeries on the islands of St. Paul and St. George. There is but one government vessel in the vicinity, and the guard is being kept against pelagic sealing. The department has ordered her to visit the various fish canneries along the Alaskan coast, and to keep a close watch on the Canadian sealers. No law is violated. Around Unalaska and Dutch harbor, where the larger portion of the sealing fleet rendezvoused before the season opened, are only small islands, and it seems to be an open secret that in the event of the animals being scarce in the proscribed zone allowed for sealing, the sealers will raid the rookeries. The absence of the whalers, therefore, seems to imply a tacit invitation to invade the sea and kill the seals at will.

No Patrol This Year. For several years past both the United States and the British governments have maintained fleets in Behring sea, and by a strict police patrol system have enforced obedience to the regulations governing sealing. This year there is practically no surveillance exercised. The officers of the Whaling, unlike the commanders of the customs, send no reports to the patrol system, and the sealers anticipate little or no difficulty in raiding the rookeries. In August and September dense fogs envelop the seal islands, and a distance of sixty miles from the lawful sealing grounds presents splendid opportunities for daring Canadian sealers to raid the rookeries. In past years the islands have been raided in that manner, and the sealers have been successful.

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