

TWENTY-FOUR HUNDRED MILES ON FOOT

Lieut. Cassler, of the U. S. Army, Completes a Remarkable Trip.

His Instructions Were to Discover an All-American Overland Route to the Yukon - Details of an Adventurous Journey.

Lieutenant Cassler, of the 4th United States Infantry, stationed at Fort Sheridan, near Chicago, arrived in Dawson on Monday after a trip on foot of over 2,400 miles, and during most of which time he has been utterly unheard of by his government or his people. It will be remembered that Lieutenant Low, also of the United States army, passed through Dawson before the boats stopped running, on his way to the outside, having, with a party of soldiers, explored the country from Valdes glacier up the Copper river to the head of Forty-mile and down that stream to the Yukon. Low and Cassler and another lieutenant headed three expeditions last May, starting from the southern coast of Alaska and commissioned to explore, if possible, an all-American route to the interior. Mr. Low had the easier trip and is now safely at home, his report in the hands of his government and his work done.

Lieutenant Cassler had by far the harder trip. It was the intention at first to start in over the Valdes glacier, but that was given up in favor of a more western route. Each succeeding arm of the sea was visited by the little steamer carrying the party and each, in turn, was found to end in a gigantic glacier in place of a river. At last Cook's Inlet was reached and expeditions Nos. 2 and 3 found two large rivers penetrating into the interior, the Matanuska and the Sushitna. One party took the latter river and our informant was the lieutenant of the second going up the unknown waters of the Matanuska. With 12 men and 5 pack mules a 90-mile trail was cut. A consultation was held here. It was impossible to carry enough food for 23 men with but 5 mules. The lieutenant obtained permission to go ahead with two men, taking the mules and provisions; the balance of the party returned to the coast.

It was now the trip commenced in real earnest. The provisions were to last out the trip that trip must be made in mighty quick time. Very fortunately a pass was seen in the rugged and mighty Alaskan range, and the party headed for it. It proved to be passable and 70 miles from end to end gave rise within a short distance of each other to three streams, one flowing into the Tanana, one into the Matanuska and one into the Copper rivers. The descent to the valley of the Tanana was steep but the stout-hearted three pushed on and on with provisions down to half-rations. While yet 20 miles from an unknown part of the Tanana, they had but one mule left - the other four had been killed and eaten. Crossing the Tanana on a raft the party pushed up one of the valleys to cross over to Birch and thence to Circle City. After a week of stupendous difficulties the passage was found to be impossible and our party started down on a raft again. The raft was wrecked under a jam of driftwood and axes, rifles and the last of the estates went by the board. A few ropes only were saved. With these a pole raft was constructed and away they went. For six days the party lived on berries and rose apples. On the seventh they stumbled across the Tanana Indians and were most hospitably received. For weeks they had been without shoes or even moccasins and were very lame from wearing just a piece of canvas tied on with strips. The Indians advised them that though the river was apparently deserted by white prospectors and miners who went up the stream last summer, there was a party of whites still up the Voltmar, a stream entering the Tanana 250 miles from its mouth. The Indians took our travelers in canoes a hundred miles up that stream and a little steamer was discovered in winter quarters. Provisions and shoes were purchased and then a boat carried the party to Ware, at the mouth of the Tanana, on the Yukon. All was plain sailing now. The ice stopped running and Rampart was reached over the trail. The two privates were left there with Lieutenant Bell, who, with a detachment was stationed there. With Mr. W. J. Cram, of Rampart, Lieutenant Cassler pushed on for Dawson and the outside to report the safety of himself and party, knowing full well that not a word had been heard from them since they parted from their companions some 90 miles from the southern coast of Alaska last May.

The trip was a stupendous undertaking for, of course, the interior is absolutely unknown and all maps were found to be incorrect. The aneroid barometer failed to work, so the height of the passes and mountains is not known. Though wasted to skin and bone by their journey, the party suffered no serious accident and are quickly recovering flesh. The information obtained of the interior of Alaska will prove most valuable to the government in framing its plans for the future development of the country. The lieutenant says there is both a feasible route for a trail or a railway from the coast to a point on the Yukon, below Circle, and says, further, that it was only the lack of provisions which prevented him following it and mapping it out. No great amount of prospecting was done, but the geological formation of the country was noted down and gold, silver, copper and coal are evidently present in many places.

The Ins and Outs of the Ice Monopoly. It was an excited crowd in "Dud" McKennie's saloon at Klondike City, last Wednesday when the news first arrived of the granting of the ice monopoly to the Brown company. It really looked for a while as if there would be trouble and Heidrick Brown, Esq., he made to sit upon a cask of his own ice until he disgorged his ill-gotten concession. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon when Heidrick returned from the metropolis in a state of excited joy and burst in upon the throng of lawmakers discussing the weal and woe (chiefly woe) of the Klondike country, around McKennie's stove. Heidrick was triumphant and ordered a round of drinks. He felt himself a millionaire and duplicated the order. The mystified crowd gathered closer and begged to be let onto the cause of such joy unconfined and extravagant. It was then Brown's tongue loosened and he informed them with much gusto of his great good fortune. At last he had succeeded. He had made his fortune at one full swoop. He had been granted the exclusive privilege of cutting ice on the Yukon and its tributaries for 25 miles up and down from the mouth of the Klondike; also upon the Klondike and its tributaries for 52 miles.

A murmur of dissatisfaction went up and someone respectfully suggested to the soon-to-be millionaire that there were not enough police to guard his concession. Brown pointed out that it was not necessary; anyone found with ice in his possession without a receipt from the Heidrick, Brown Ice Co., would, upon such prima facie evidence be at once convicted of theft and his ice confiscated.

Brown's figures on the profit to the company at 10 cents per square for retaining the privilege of cutting were something like \$10,000,000 in three years, though he admitted he would probably sell for less. "Dud" McKennie, with his usual keen scent for such things, made an offer of \$20,000 on the spot and Brown said he would consult his partners.

"Ikey" Goldstein had been listening very attentively throughout and now advanced hesitatingly and proffered \$1.50 for four feet square wherever he chose to cut it. Though this was the short of the stipulated price it was accepted and he was asked what he proposed to do with four feet square of ice. Having obtained the free key was smiling broadly and readily unfolded his plan. He was going to construct ice depots and warehouses immediately and would then cut his four foot block and store it. Next day the hole would be frozen up and he would cut another block and store that also. A loud laugh at Brown's expense resulted from the unfolding of "Ikey's" scheme, but "Ikey" was crestfallen when Brown entered into the details of his franchise secured from Mr. I. M. Irit, the franchise dispenser. The second and succeeding crops of ice had already been disposed of to the gentlemen who had pushed the thing through. G. Raball got the second crop; and so on to the sixth crop which was supposed to exhaust the ground.

There has been much murmuring about the granting of the monopoly and the worst of the entire story is that not a man hears of the grant but believes it off-hand showing their utter distrust of their own governors.

Farewell Dinner to Nigger Jim. Thursday morning Mr. James Daugherty, known to the entire Yukon Territory as "Nigger Jim," left for Victoria in the interests of his company, the Yukon Gold Fields Mining Co. On Monday evening a farewell dinner was tendered to him at the residence of Mr. Henry Berry on No. 6 Eldorado, which partook of the character of a banquet and to which some 30 or more guests were invited and participated in a dinner that would be even a surprise to a party assembled in the most metropolitan city. The genial host had placed the preparation of the elaborate menu in the hands of Mrs. Lewis who displayed her ability in the handling of such affairs as being in the most competent of hands. Dr. W. Semple was invited to preside at the banquet table and the company will long remember the hospitality of Mr. Berry, and the lavish extension of geniality upon the host's part. Among those present were Jim Daugherty, George G. Hard, Wm. Shuler, Bert Shuler, Geo. Brown, Max Engleman, F. Wilson, Skiff Mitchell, Samuel Stanley, John Stanley, Wm. Fairbanks, Charlie Deering, Joseph Irvine, D. W. Semple and others. Elegant music was furnished by an orchestra of five pieces led by Mr. Sam Stanley and the Burkhardt brothers, the festivities being maintained until a late hour, all joining in a hearty bon voyage to the departing Yukoner.

The Lower Country. George Howard arrived in Dawson on Friday last from Munook on the road to the outside. He states that outside of Dawson he considers Munook the liveliest place on the river. The water frontage of the town is pretty well covered with buildings. There are ten stores and three saw mills. A brewery and electric light plant are also in active operation beside the usual quota of saloons. There seems to be a good deal of money in circulation and a fair amount of business is being done.

John H. McGraw and Gen. Carr are still at Munook and Howard thinks bid fair to take out a stake. Little Munook is turning out to meet all expectations. There are about a dozen other creeks in the vicinity, all of which are being prospected with the outlook on some of them for a good yield. There are probably 2000 men in and around Munook, all of whom seem to be employed in one way or another either on the creeks or in the town.

A form of local government was organized last summer but at the present time a detachment of U. S. Troops are stationed in the town under the command of Lieut. Bell and the town is now under the immediate supervision of the military.

Mr. Howard is en route to the outside over the ice. He expects to make a flying trip, re-

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turning to Dawson at the earliest possible moment before the breaking up of the ice in the spring. Howard is an old timer on the river and like all old timers is full of interesting stories of the early days. He was down at Fort Adams some six years ago when the first newspaper plant ever brought into the Yukon country was set up. The Rev. J. L. Provost, missionary for the Episcopal church at Fort Adams, had the plant sent in with the original idea of printing tracts for use among the Indians. The press was a rather cumbersome affair but did good work. The supply of type was decidedly limited but there was enough to enable the energetic missionary to carry out his idea.

Not being himself a printer, he called in the assistance of Howard and Gordon Bittles, an old time Chicago typo, and these two men set up the plant. The name of the paper was the Northern Light. It has appeared each year with one exception since its first publication was begun. Mr. Provost is now located at Circle City where he proposes issuing the paper as often as once a month.

Money to Loan. Apply at the Nugget Express office, Front st. A Good Map for 50 Cents. The Mine Exchange Map of the Klondike Gold Fields should be in the hands of every miner. For sale at the Nugget office. Price 50 cts. Claims Bought and Sold. By Louis Couture, North West House, two miles above mouth of Hunker.

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