

STEWART RIVER

Looks Good to the Eyes of Recent Excursionists.

STEAMER FLORA REACHES THE FALLS.

Had No Trouble With Bars or Rocks—Plenty of Water.

SPLENDID FARMING COUNTRY.

Several Hundred Prospectors on the River Mainly Above the Forks—Below McQuesten Is Closed.

The little steamer Flora, famous up and down the entire Yukon valley as the pioneer of river navigation, has added another laurel to the already long list which she possesses by virtue of numerous important achievements.

The Flora has a unique record. In the fall of 1898, the first year which steamboats engaged in navigating the upper Yukon, the Flora was the last steamer to leave Dawson for Whitehorse and succeeded in reaching her destination only after a hard and prolonged struggle with the ice. In the following spring she was the first boat to get through from Lake Lebarge after the opening of navigation. Upon that trip the staunch little craft struggled for 16 days against the combined force of sand bars and ice jams. Thirtymile river, always the terror of steamboat men, had scarcely 12 inches of water and only the skill and untiring watchfulness of Capt. Martineau saved the Flora from destruction on numerous occasions. In recognition of the manner in which the boat was handled on her perilous voyage, Capt. Martineau was tendered the following statement by the passengers:

Str. Flora, May 23, 1899.

Whereas, The recent trip of the steamer Flora has been attended with many difficulties and dangers, and

Whereas, In spite of this fact the said trip has been accomplished without injury to passengers or cargo; therefore, be it

Resolved by the undersigned passengers on said steamer that we hereby express our earnest appreciation of the ability and skill exhibited by Capt. Martineau as a navigator, and be it further

Resolved, That we acknowledge the uniform courtesy that has been shown toward the passengers by the captain and other officers during the most trying circumstances.

The statement was signed by all the passengers, of whom there were about 25, and is among the most cherished of all Capt. Martineau's treasures.

Again in the fall of the same year the Flora maintained her record by carrying out the last boat load of passengers bound for the outside. At the beginning of the present season, after a close race with the ill-fated Florence-S., her title of pioneer was again established, the Flora tying up at her dock a few minutes ahead of the first named boat, on the first trip down the river from Lebarge.

It was eminently fitting, therefore, that the little boat which so often and so successfully has battled with the ice and sand bars of the Yukon should be designated as the pioneer to open up the Stewart river for steamboat navigation and demonstrate the practicability of operating boats upon that stream from the mouth to Frazier falls.

The Flora left Dawson on Monday, the 30th ult., with the following passenger list, most of whom were bound for the falls:

A. Lameroux, L. Beroit, E. F. Christensen, P. Fisher, J. C. Donahue, J. O. Cosgriff, J. A. McMullen, Fred Hasler, R. B. Horn, J. Dooner, J. H. Kincaid, H. Rasberg, J. W. Chisholm, J. A. Stewart, D. Verwaerde, H. Jones, C. Lueders, L. Rudolph, W. H. B. Lyons, F. Runkler, M. D. F. Yates, J. Walsh, W. Inkster, L. T. Burwartz, Sergt. Pringle, W. A. Ryan, Geo. M. Allen, J. H. Thomlinson.

Of the above a number, including Messrs. Hasler, Horn, Dooner and Kincaid, were bound for the upper Stewart country, where they anticipate spending the winter at prospecting. The

balance of the passengers were for way points or excursionists who availed themselves of the first opportunity ever afforded of seeing the interior country from a steamer's deck. It is true that several small boats have been up the Stewart as far as the McQuesten, but for the balance of the distance the Flora is the first boat to make the trip. The record made by the Flora has proven conclusively that the difficulties which have been popularly supposed to oppose navigation on the Stewart are purely mythical. It is the opinion of Manager Potts, who personally took charge of the excursion, and of Capts. Campbell and Martineau as well, that for all around purposes the Stewart as far as the Frazier falls is the best river in the Yukon country upon which the operation of steamboats has been attempted.

The voyage up the river was accomplished without delay other than necessary stops for wood and on account of darkness. Sand bars were few and far between and those which were encountered offered no obstacles to the light draught boat. Notwithstanding the fact that neither of the pilots had ever been on the river before, the channel was never lost for a minute, and the destination of the excursion was reached at 4:10 Saturday morning without the occurrence of any incident calculated to mar the pleasure of the voyage. The general opinion among the tourists is that the Stewart river country has bright possibilities before it which must certainly be realized in time. The valley drained by the river is much more open than the territory adjacent to the Yukon proper and offers thousands of acres of low lands suitable in every respect for agricultural purposes.

At Mazymay creek a stop was made at Sonnicksen and Henry's farm where a large field of fine oats and barley as is raised in Manitoba, is rapidly approaching harvest time. Sonnicksen has a hay rake, ploughs, scythes and other farm implements and it was difficult to realize that the farm is located so far distant from the centers of civilization. Immense fields of hay occur at intervals all along the river which could be cut by the hundreds of tons without difficulty.

As to the mineral resources of the country it must be said that as yet but little has been accomplished in the way of their development. Between the mouth of Stewart river and McQuesten the country is practically closed. This condition came about by reason of the fact that all the creeks in the territory mentioned were staked and recorded in the stamped of '98. Practically none of the claims were represented and in consequence nearly all have reverted to the crown and are closed against relocations.

L. T. Burwash, mining recorder for the Stewart river district, was a passenger on the boat. Mr. Burwash has gone into the McQuesten river country for the purpose of ascertaining the authenticity of several strikes which are reported to have been made there. It is his opinion that some disposition of the reserved ground will be made by the government at no distant date. He expects to go up as far as Haggart creek, a distance of 110 miles from the mouth. Above the McQuesten all creeks are open for location, and in that territory Mr. Burwash estimates that there are at the present time between 300 and 400 men. A recording office for the upper Stewart district has been opened at the forks, a distance of about 60 miles above Frazier falls. Hamilton Fish is the recorder for this new district. Some prospecting has been done on the north fork, particularly on Lansing creek, but with results as yet unknown. A trading post is also located on the same fork about 40 miles above the mouth. Some prospecting is also being done on the south fork. One party of four men, Messrs. Crowley, Johnson, Langlow and McDonald will winter in the country, two of them being engaged on the south fork and the others on Lake creek, which comes into the Stewart 75 miles above McQuesten.

At Frazier falls a government survey party, consisting of Messrs. McConnell, Johnson and Burdette, was found. They have been engaged in the preliminary work of surveying the Stewart from the mouth to the falls. They expect to complete their work and return down the river in about 10 days.

The following parties were met at the falls en route on prospecting trips to various points on the upper Stewart: F. A. Kirkpatrick, R. F. Dean, C. A. Dean, W. S. Myer, A. B. Farnsworth, P. I. Partridge, Wm. Nelson, — Horton, G. Gordon, T. E. Heney, P. H. Thompson, R. Houghton, R. B. Houghton, C. Blundon, G. H. Fraser.

At the mouth of McQuesten the Trading & Exploring Company has platted a townsite, which was surveyed in March last. They have erected a large building on the site.

Game is abundant in the upper Stewart country. Several parties were en-

gaged in trapping last winter, the result of the season's catch being estimated by Recorder Burwash as follows: Martin skins 600, fox 50, bear 50. Otter and mink were also caught, but to what extent is unknown. This winter Mr. Burwash estimates that more men will engage in trapping and a large catch is anticipated. As the boat remained at the falls for one day only no great opportunities for hunting were allowed, but several parties from the boat explored the hills surrounding the falls and several good bags of feathered game were brought in. Moose and caribou tracks were discovered in plenty, but time for hunting the much prized animals was lacking.

From a scenic standpoint the Stewart river country undoubtedly surpasses any other portion of the Yukon river system. Such is the opinion of men who have covered the system from source to mouth and certain it is that it would be difficult to imagine anything more beautiful than the panoramic view afforded from the deck of the Flora as she sped in her voyage up the stream, the hills adjoining which had never before echoed to the notes of a steamer's whistle.

Frazier falls, the head of navigation on the Stewart and the destination of the excursion alone furnish inducements to the scenic enthusiast sufficient to warrant the trip. The falls occur in a narrow gorge, which in places does not exceed 75 feet in width. Through this gorge, which is lined on either side with high granite walls, the whole volume of the river plunges at a terrific rate. A sheer drop of about 12 feet occurs at the opening of the canyon, a few rods below which the river dashes squarely into the unyielding granite embankment and is thrown at almost a right angle to its previous course. An immense rock in the center of the canyon divides the stream which plunges down another sheer fall a short distance below. A second sharp turn in the canyon occurs from which the water finally emerges in a series of leaps and plunges similar to the last dip in Whitehorse, but upon a much grander scale. The entire fall is estimated at 22 feet. A number of views of the falls were secured by Mr. W. A. Ryan, which will furnish interesting souvenirs of a trip which all who participated in it agree was a most pleasant and profitable one.

As noted above no survey of the Stewart river has as yet been completed by the government. The following table of distances may be given, however, which is generally accepted by prospectors on the river. The distances are all estimated from the mouth of Stewart to the various points noted

Swiftwater Island	5
Jay creek	10
Three King creek	15
Lenc creek	18
Scroggy creek	25
Mazymay creek	30
Black Hill creek	35
Rose Bud creek	43
Lake creek	73
McQuesten river	110
Big Bend	130
Crooked creek	150
Mayo river	180
Frazier falls	220

Too much cannot be said for the manner in which Manager Potts and his officers looked out for the welfare and comfort of the passengers. Capts. Campbell and Martineau, as also Stewart McDonald and Purser Fletcher exerted themselves to the utmost to make the trip a pleasurable one for all concerned, and to say that they succeeded admirably is speaking mildly. The voyage home was made without exciting incident. At 11:15 yesterday morning the Flora tied up at the dock after a week of travel which will linger a long time in the memories of everyone whose good fortune it was to share in its pleasures.

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