

## THE EDMONTON ROUTE.

### True Account of a Trip Via McKenzie and Porcupine.

#### Eighteen Months of Terrible Travel—Fearful Rapids—Exposure—Starvation—Scurvy.

(The following is compiled by a traveler from a diary kept for a year and a half, which was required to reach Dawson. The matter of fact way in which the story is told carries conviction with it, many of the matters treated are entirely new, as for instance, the abundance of coal oil in certain districts. The length of the article requires its publication in several chapters.)

#### CHAPTER I.

On the 29th day of December, 1897, in company with a companion, I set out from Fort McLeod, South Alberta, for Calgary, taking only a pair of blankets, a gun and a little provisions, having previously got the remainder of our baggage checked through to Calgary. The time of our departure was about 8:45 a. m. A stiff breeze was blowing at the time and the glass stood several degrees below zero.

We found the trail in fairly good condition, save that in a few places much ice existed. We made about 20 miles the first day, staying at a ranch over night. At day break we again set forth. On this day we saw several wolves and met a band of Indians, and stayed this night at High river. On the 31st it got much colder and the wind was bitter. We stayed the night at Okotoks. On January 1st we arrived at Calgary where we had some difficulty in finding sleeping room, owing to the large influx of Klondikers.

The next day being Sunday we took a quiet stroll round town. For its size and situation it possesses many fine buildings, notably the Hudson Bay store and the postoffice, which are built of stone. The town is embraced in one long street with a few side streets connecting. Here one obtains a fine view of the Rockies. This place is in the direct influence of the Chinook winds which at times blow with great force.

Immediately in its vicinity are several large ranches, where great numbers of horses and cattle are reared. It is also the great central point west where stock is shipped for the east.

On the morrow, Monday, we were early astir, making inquiries about the train to Edmonton, and were informed that it left at 8 a. m. but it did not get away till after 9. After securing our tickets to Edmonton we got our baggage checked through and took our seats in the car. For about the first 50 or 60 miles from Calgary it is all rolling prairie, then small timber all along.

Arriving at Red Deer the train stops for an hour, where passengers can obtain a first class dinner for 50 cents. Red deer is also noted for ranches. The chief places between Red Deer and Calgary are olds and Innisfail, noted also for ranches.

It was 9 p. m. when the train steamed into Edmonton. A large concourse of Klondikers had gathered on the platform anxious to see the fresh arrivals bound for the "land of gold." Above the din the various hotel touts could be heard hawling themselves hoarse. We at once repaired to the Commercial hotel. Here were several Klondikers discussing Klondike, and most anxious to know where we came from, and how we intended reaching the Yukon.

This is South Edmonton, for the town is in two parts, separated by the river Saskatchewan and a short description here may not be out of place. South Edmonton is a non-incorporated town with a population of about 500. Here is the terminus of the C. P. R., which is the most northerly depot in Canada. This town comprises one main street running east and west of the railway, with a few isolated houses here and there. It has no fine buildings. The chief are the Edmonton hotel and the Royal hotel. Religion is represented by three churches: Protestant, Catholic and Methodist. The climate is dry and bracing. Winter sets in early in November and breaks up about April 17th. The thermometer sometimes registers 50 degrees below zero, but not often. The main support of Edmonton is the farmers, who bring large quantities of grain to town all the winter. When I left Edmonton for Klondike on May 8th, 1898, wheat stood at \$1.25 bushel, caused no doubt by the war between the States and Spain. Much of the grain in 1898 was shipped to the Kootenay;

the remainder of the grain finds its way to the grist mill. Petty offences are dealt with by the N. W. M. P., the law being administered in a primitive log house. Graver offences are dealt with on the north side by a circuit judge. Many settlers arrived in the spring of 1898, the majority of whom were Galicians and Russians. One arrival numbered 700 and during the following week 1000 more of the same nationality were expected. The various families were under the direct charge of the emigration agent who dispatched them in large parties to their respective lots, some being sent out as far as 90 miles. Summer frosts are most prevalent and the market value of wheat is most unsteady for in many instances the wheat gets frosted and has a shrivelled appearance. There is no lack of fuel here for there are many coal mines in the immediate vicinity. Coal can be purchased for from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per ton. The poplars make the best fuel. As soon as winter is passed, then gold washing on the Saskatchewan becomes a common pursuit.

The origin of the gold here is mysterious, and it has baffled the efforts of prospectors for many years to discover the mother lode. All the soil around Edmonton is auriferous, but strange to say the higher one goes up the river the less gold he finds. My opinion is that it was brought here by glacial deposits, for the ground is undoubtedly of sedimentary formation. I put forth a theory whilst in Edmonton that gold might exist in some of the muskeges contiguous to the river and that possibly some of the gold found on the bars might have been brought by means of some of the underground channels which connect the muskeges or swamps with lakes or rivers. During the gold washing season a man may earn from \$1 to \$2.50 per day. North Edmonton is reached from the south banks in summer by means of a ferry, and in winter the frozen river is crossed. It is more elevated than the South Town and has a greater population.

On arrival on the north bank by the upper ferry the first things which attract attention are the old fort and Hudson Bay post, both of which are now abandoned, but are still in good preservation. On entering the town by this trail we see first the new Hudson Bay house, standing close to which is the new and spacious building of Messrs McDougall and Secord. This is the chief emporium of the fur trade of Canada and the most northerly town in the Dominion. Means of communication between the two towns was of such a bad description that it was at last decided to build a bridge, and the work was begun in the fall of 1897, and continued through the summer of 1898.

Unlike South Edmonton, this town has no wells and all the water that is used has to be hauled up the hill from the river, where it is purchased by the barrel.

This is an incorporated town, and possesses a fire brigade and other useful institutions. The 2d of July is a great day here, when all the Indians from far and near come in and hold a grand pow-wow, when they are regaled by the inhabitants on as much tea as they can drink, and singing, dancing and other sports are kept up by them for hours. There is steamboat connection between Lake Winnipeg and Edmonton during the summer months.

During my stay in Edmonton I had received several offers to be outfitted for Klondike by the overland routes via Peace river and Pelly Banks, but it was not before early in May that I had an opportunity of joining a party going to Klondike via the Mackenzie river. This party consisted of two brothers hailing from Iowa, U. S. A., of whose discreditable behavior you shall hear more during my narrative. They had already procured the greater part of their outfit, so nothing remained to be done but to set out as soon as possible. We were, however, delayed some four days owing to the non arrival of a Peterborough canoe which they had purchased.

On Saturday, May 8th, 1898, we pulled out from Edmonton in high hopes of being successful in the "land of gold." I was very badly fixed for clothing and all that was put extra into the outfit on my account was 300 pounds of flour and 100 pounds of bacon. We procured a freighter to haul our outfit to Athabasca landing for \$1 per 100 pounds. He came to camp this evening at sundown on the north bank and we estimated that we had come some 30 or 40 miles. The next day being Sunday we decided to rest, but not so, for as soon as breakfast was over my companions thought that it would be a good opportunity for washing clothes. The washing might not have taken place but the discovery of a few obnoxious insects made it a necessity. Here we met an old time trapper and party tracking back to the Landing. They informed us that we were 50 miles from the Landing. One of the party was returning from Grand Rapids, where he had lost his entire outfit. The shore everywhere here was

commenced early to rearrange our load on the wagon, and at 1 p. m. the horses were hitched up. We bade adieu to the family and started off in earnest. This night we camped at Sturgeon river. Here the mosquitos were exceedingly numerous and bothered us much. Having ample daylight, I took the shotgun and proceeded up stream in search of ducks and was successful in securing a couple. In the meantime my companions had been busy fishing and when I returned they had killed several fine jack fish. Frosts were still prevalent, and early next morning camp fires were soon blazing, breakfast disposed of and we were on the trail again. Three other parties joining us in the night, we all proceeded in company. Quite a number of bears are seen at times on this trail. On the day previous to our arrival at the Landing we encountered a strong whirlwind which, when at its height, threatened to do considerable damage. This arrested our progress for some time, the wind whirling several of the wagon covers high in the air, and the rain descending in torrents. The forenoon of the 14th saw our arrival at the Landing. The trail we had just come over was an old Hudson Bay trail, having been in use by them for upwards of 100 years. This trail is very bad in places owing to the deep ruts up through which many rocks protrude, causing the wagon to thump and sway in a most unpleasant manner. Freighters during the winter on this trail stay over night at one of the numerous log cabins owned by half-breeds. Huge forest fires were blazing in all directions, some possibly originating from camp fires. The approach to the Landing is by a steep sandy hill. On arrival we pitched our tent west of the Hudson Bay stores, close to where a party of Klondikers had raised a rustic signboard on which was painted "States' street." There were some other 40 or 50 tents, which gave the place the appearance of a military camp. When the Klondike craze came into full swing there was quite a small stampede to the Landing, where a townsite was laid out by the Hudson Bay Company, but no buildings of any importance had been erected. There are a few other log houses occupied by traders, also a butcher's shop, a bakery and a church. A member of the N. W. M. P. is stationed here. In him is vested the power to issue free miners' licenses for British Columbia and the Yukon. He has also to keep a correct record of all parties arriving, whence they came and their destination also to see that no work is done on Sundays and above all to detect if possible if any of the parties are taking whisky as part of their outfit.

My companions put great faith in the Peterborough canoe, although at the time I urged upon them not to purchase it, for I was of the opinion that such a frail craft was quite unfit to contend with the mighty rapids of the Athabasca. They pooh poohed my advice, but when they saw the class of boats that others were building they altered their minds. Before they had decided to build an additional boat and a larger one much valuable time was lost. Ultimately we started to build a scow some 22 feet long, which took 350 feet of one-inch lumber at \$35 per 1000 feet unplaned. I rigged her with a spritsail and foresail. At this stage my companions calculated reaching the Klondike by the last week of August or the first week in September.

There are some traits in an Indian's character which one cannot but admire. During our stay at the Landing I saw a party of Indians trading a boat in which was one of their sick companions. They had brought him along thus for many days, not leaving him, as many would suppose, to perish. They were bound for Lesser Slave lake.

Before daybreak on the morning of the 20th we were busy loading our boat and getting ready for an early start. It was a frosty morning, the sun having great difficulty in penetrating the heavy fog which overhang everything like a pall. The usual early breakfast having been hastily disposed of, we loaded our boat and left Athabasca Landing behind. At the start we simply drifted with the current we knew not where, for the fog remained so thick we could not see ten yards ahead of us; but as the day wore on the fog lifted and a strong wind taking its place, we were enabled to make good headway. We came to camp this evening at sundown on the north bank and we estimated that we had come some 30 or 40 miles. The next day being Sunday we decided to rest, but not so, for as soon as breakfast was over my companions thought that it would be a good opportunity for washing clothes. The washing might not have taken place but the discovery of a few obnoxious insects made it a necessity. Here we met an old time trapper and party tracking back to the Landing. They informed us that we were 50 miles from the Landing. One of the party was returning from Grand Rapids, where he had lost his entire outfit. The shore everywhere here was

strewn with fossils of every description in countless numbers, amongst them many interesting specimens.

The next point of interest carries us to Pelican rapids. On the left bank approaching these rapids may be seen a shaft sunk by a government party in search of oil, which they struck at a considerable depth, but were obliged to suspend the work owing to the large escape of gas.

(To be continued.)

#### WHY WE USE THE RIGHT HAND

##### There is a Scientific Reason Which Some Boxers Understand.

Every pugilist upon entering the ring takes special pains to protect the region of the heart. All athletes understand that the most vulnerable part of the body is undoubtedly the heart. A hard blow, well delivered on the left breast, will easily kill—or at any rate stun—even a very strong man. Hence, from an early period men have used the right hand to fight with and have employed the left arm chiefly to cover the heart and to parry a blow aimed at that specially vulnerable region. When weapons of offense and defense superseded the fist it was the right hand that grasped the spear and sword, while the left held over the heart the shield or buckler.

From this simple origin, then, the whole vast difference in civilized life takes its beginning. At first no doubt the superiority of the right hand was only felt in the manner of fighting. But that alone gave it prominence and paved the way for its supremacy elsewhere.—Chicago Chronicle.

##### Why This Difference?

Through the press the American people learn with surprise that no medals have been given to those who participated in the naval fight at Santiago, though the Dewey medal has been given to every officer and man who fought in Manila bay. That the men appreciate their medals was shown by an incident that happened the other day in Baltimore. Three sailors who served on the cutter McCulloch in the battle of Manila bay were at Baltimore attached to the Algonquin. Each was possessed of the handsome bronze medal voted by congress to those who took part in that memorable battle. One of the sailors was walking along the street, when a stranger was attracted by his medal and stopped to look at it with admiration.

"I will give you a hundred dollars for it," he said.

The answer was a surprising one, given by the fist straight from the shoulder. A policeman rushed to the scene. But when the sailor told his story the Bobby turned upon the damaged stranger with anger as deep as the sailor's and ordered him to leave at once or he'd be locked up.—Seattle P.-L.

##### Coincidences.

Fuddy—There is something peculiar about Titcomb.

Duddy—Never saw anything good about him.

Fuddy—I mean it is funny how things turn out with him. He says he has on three different occasions made up his mind to move just as his landlord had made up his mind to bone him for rent. Titcomb thinks such coincidences are wonderful.—Boston Transcript.

##### 4,000,000 Women Wage Earners.

There are said to be 4,000,000 women wage-earners in America. 250,000 are teachers, besides 35,000 music teachers. There are 10,000 artists, 2725 authors, 1145 clergymen, 888 newspaper women, 279 detectives, 208 lawyers and 40 chemists. Two Cincinnati women make \$15,000 a year out of a restaurant; and the woman manager of a California insurance company receives a salary of \$10,000.

##### How They Managed It.

"And so you have finally succeeded in getting your husband to take the gold cure? I thought he always claimed that he could quit drinking whenever he wanted to?"

"Yes he did. We have just convinced him that he ought to take something to make him want to."—Chicago Times-Herald.

##### His Honesty Proved.

Stokeleigh—When I loaned you that \$10 a year ago you remarked that you couldn't pay me for a month or two, and you haven't paid me yet.

Brokeleigh—Well, you can see for yourself that I'm no liar.—New York World.

The Nugget Express has established an office at 28 below upper, Dominion. Orders for expressage on the creeks or to the outside may be left at any branch office or given to messengers.

New Rex ham and bacon at Mohr & Wilkens'.