

Reindeer Station

St Lawrence Bay

Siberia

July 17 '97

My Dear Ones at Home,

We left St. Lawrence Id evening before last after being there 24 hrs and beached here last evening. We came ? were ashore at St. Lawrence Id only about 2 hrs the day we reached there. Mrs. Jawbol is very kind and generous hearted. He gave Mrs. S? one of his reindeer fawn skin coats and gave us a package for Thanksgiving and another "not to be opened 'till Christmas". When we got on board again that evening we found the Captain and 2<sup>nd</sup> mate drunk and the ship swarming with natives and all work suspended as there was no one capable of giving orders. Mr. Wood told Robert that there had been another row and he felt very much ashamed of the whole crew.

The "Bear" had steamed out of that place just the day before bound for the Arctic region, Mr. Gambol said: also said Dr. Jackson had started up the Yukon on a boat so much crowded that he had only some blankets on the floor for a bed. Well, after some anxiety on the part of some we got away from St. L. Id. It is a bad place to anchor and there have been some wrecks near there, Mr. Wood told us that this captain lost his ship near that place one trip because he was drunk. We were very thankful that the weather was so pleasant. Mr. Wood was not drunk and neither was the 1<sup>st</sup> mate and I think they took turns on deck that night. Mr. Gambol came over about our bedtime and took Alice home with him and the natives all left the ship then. I felt perfectly safe but Carrie wanted Robert to sleep in our room so he did. We can't lock our door but pile valises up against it if the men have been drinking but I don't feel that there is any danger ~~at all~~. The Siberian natives came on board again last evening but we did not come to the place to ? anchor till this morning. Mr. Kelly's ? came on board and told us that he expects the "Bear" this evening on ? and they think we will be transferred to her and this vessel will take a ton of deer across to Alaska. We will be very glad to change. We have been on shore in Siberia nearly all day today helping on the house which is going up. ? is a beautiful green sheltered place and has been warm and bright today. We girls drove nails. The natives are fine workers, Mr. Kelly has lots of freight as he has to trade for reindeer. We had salmon trout for dinner and domestic reindeer steak for supper. There is a large valley here with a nice fresh water stream. It is sheltered by the mountains but there are no trees. We gathered lots of flowers and I put some to press. If you see Chas Staken you can tell him there is a white headed boy amongst these Black Siberians and I think there may be one at Kotzebue.

After dinner we started to go ashore again on a big raft of lumber with 8 or 10 canoes "hitched" to it. When about halfway between the boat and shore the raft came in two parts. We were rescued by one of the canoes and were none the worse for the experience. Robert, Carrie, Mr.

Anderson, Alic and I were all on the raft. I took a picture of the canoes as they started with the raft from the ship. Also took one of the ship as we left it. The canoes are made of walrus skin and their clothing both here and at St. Lawrence is reindeer fur. They also use hairseal skin for trousers. Very nice and soft, nearly the color of leaves. They have very nice raincoats made of walrus and whole dried ?. They are transparent and very light. Their boots are nearly all hairseal skin. Hairseal is the same as sealion, such as are on the Cliff Rocks at San Francisco. These people and the St. Lawrence Id. People are all "well to do" but these a little more thrifty and bright and not such beggars. This is not a native valley here but they have flocked in there just now on ? account, There are no live reindeer here. I visited one of their camps and they offered me a rare price of ? raw meat to eat but I declined. They were eating it as a luxury. A woman asked me for a needle and I had none but gave her a pin. This she took eagerly but when she saw it was only a pin made a great exclamation and they all laughed as if it was a great joke I had played. We seem to be great curios to them. I suppose they have never yet heard the gospel and I wonder when they ever will as the ? is very vigilant in keeping out missionaries. They are very lovable people. A few of them say a few words in English so they can trade very well but not enough to talk much.

After the first five canoeloads came one last one of them went up and down the deck picking up fog horn fish lines and whatever else was loose gesticulating "steal" i.e. the other canoe loads expected were ?. ? generally concluded that he was the thief himself probably. I think they had great fun, horses watching the sailors hurry everything down into the cabin and this may have been his purpose. They are likely to peep in at our windows at any time under any circumstances which makes us slightly uneasy at times. The sun sets about 10 o'clock. They have no regular time to sleep in summer time, are likely to be up at night and sleep in day time. In this they are like all these northern natives we are told.

Tuesday morning

July 20 noon

We are just leaving Mr. Kellys station in St. Lawrence Bay Siberia having been here 3 ½ days. Same natives are on board going part way to their homes. Sunday?, we sung with the violin and guitar which Alice plays. We kept in our room but had a good native audience at the windows. In the afternoon Alice, Mr. Anderson and I went ashore and gathered wild flowers. I have several ? to press and will send you some later. I painted some yesterday, yellow poppies, little blue forget me nots which I gathered. I was surprised to find them, the poppies are lighter in shade than ?. The men worked all day Sunday but the sailor boys were on strike. Mr. Wood presented me with a pair of skin boots, gentle nice ones, also gave Mr. ? a pair. The Bear has not been seen. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> officers had a fight yesterday on deck. No one hurt seriously. "The devil's kingdom is full of strife". We have a little Siberian ? on board now. He affords us considerable amusement by his antics.

July 21 evening. We have just reached Port ? where there are several whaling vessels anchored. The Bear is here and the Captain and Robert have gone over to see if she will take us to

Kotzebue and thus save their schooner the trip. I developed 6 negatives today, also took one of the Bear and other ships here. Also finished reading "The Wrestler of Philippe- A Tale of the Early Christians" by Fannie E. Newbury and enjoyed it very much. Robert has returned and Capt. Tuttle of the Bear is going with this whaling fleet to Pt. Barrow and will stop at Kotzebue returning in Aug. It would be 90 miles out of the ? for him to go into Kotzebue now, so we will remain on Volant. These whalers are waiting for the steamer "Jeanie" to bring coal. She is expected anytime and we hope there is mail on her for us as she left San F. July 1<sup>st</sup> we suppose.

July 24. We are just leaving Port Clarence. The Jeanie came this morning and brought some letters, one from Father, one from Harriet Green, Prof. Imelda and Edith Tebbetts, Ella Reader, Sarah Baldwin, and Mary Brown. We are so thankful and glad to hear the good news from ? and...

We were here all day yesterday having gone into the Teller reindeer Station and unloaded freight the day before. There was a heavy wind yesterday but it is clear and pleasant this morning and we are glad to go on our way but very thankful we were detained yesterday so we got our ma. How marvelous all things work out. There is one letter "not to be opened until Thanksgiving" which is a great curiosity arouser. I notice it was mailed on Jesse's birthday and apparently has 2 or 3 different handwriting on it and have to surmise the rest. We will answer these letters and send mail on Bear from Kotzebue. What we left at St. Lawrence will also go on Bear so you will get them all at once. Perhaps about the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. I wonder if you are feeling uneasy about us as I know you cannot hear from us. I have a letter from a little pupil in Douglas from which I infer that there has been no school since I left as yet I suppose I will have to divide my ? letters here after if Father & Mother go to El Modena. We ? to find out if the freight from Douglas had come to St. Michael and is on the Bear. But hope ? and will be put off at Kotzebue when the Bear comes in there.

Aug 1<sup>st</sup>, '97. We are now camped on the beach at Kotzebue Sound near Cape B having arrived July 27, the 49<sup>th</sup> day after leaving San Francisco. I sent you a letter in the returning ? thinking it might possibly reach you before the mail which we send on Bear. We almost ? on the shoals the evening before and there was great excitement for a few minutes. The crew seemed much impressed by the narrow escape and all their quarrels were forgotten. Even Mr. Wood and his steward were on speaking terms when we left the ship. The ship anchored about ? 2/2 miles from the beach here and waited about five or six hours for the natives to come on board. Their rendezvous is about 11 miles ? the ?. The ship's foal took one load and the ? ashore and everything else was loaded in four large walrus skin canoes. It was pleasant warm, calm and light. We got things in shape and covered with canvas and made our beds ? the ? about ?. Alice came ashore with us and slept with me. The Captain and 2<sup>nd</sup> mate and Mr. Anderson came over the next morning and told us goodbye [sic] and the Capt. Offered to let us have anything we needed but we could think of nothing. The ? pulled out and the natives crowded around us, strong stalwart harvest people very friend-hearted and they welcome us gladly. They want to ? all the time and it is hard to refuse them but we cant use so much of their stuff. We have trade of flour, soap, salt crackers (medium ?) & kerosene and wish we had more flour, salt & kerosene to trade. We have fine large reindeer skins and we ? already made for Cassie and two

pair of ? for Robert and some sinew for sewing skins and dried salmon as well as fresh. We give them two crackers for a while dried salmon. These we will keep for ? ? use on to trade back to them next spring. Their food now ? of greens, wild rhubarb, seal grease and salmon and salmon eggs. Apparently there will be quantities of berries later on. They seem to all want us to go up the ? river with them in about a month from now but we are not decided as yet. I think it will be very necessary for us to keep this station at Cape Blossom if we are successful in the future and we were told by Mrs. Brevig at Fort Clarence that the Catholics are planning to come here. There is plenty of driftwood here for the ? but we wish we had brought more lumber and some coal for cold weather as it takes so much of Robert's time to get the wood. We keep very comfortable in our tent and do not need to keep a fire all the time.

We got our things under shelter just in time as a big rain came up. We have opened most of the boxes and find everything in very good condition thus far. Nothing was broken in my trunk except our little vial and a little vase and a bottle of oil for painting. The bottom of my glass pitcher was cracked in the big box. We unpacked the big box and made it lighter before coming off the boat. The unsweetened cream (3 cases) is called 99 cream and is not very good. I did not know that brand was sent in. Next year be sure and have Highland Brand or St. Charles sent. The ? are very nice. One can of fruit was leaking a little and we used it. The dried fruit will have to be all looked over and heated as the worms are in it some. There is an abundance to keep us supplied all the year. I think we have seen four schooners and in the Sound since our arrival. The Bear seemed to be following one of them up and came in quite close but no one came ashore. One think she has gone on the Arctic now. The third day after landing was warm and bright and we set out with three native men, three children and three dogs to visit the rendezvous. We had a lunch sack of medium bread etc. and the shot gun. After about an hour's walk down the beach we came to a canoe belonging to one of the men. This we launched and all got in. The native fastened a long walrus skin rope to the harness on the dogs and fastened it to the canoe and we were towed, the natives taking turns driving the dogs. After about six hours of this kind of traveling we reached a camp near the rendezvous and all got out and here they were drying large quantities of salmon and eggs on frames. Their dogs were tied up and howling like wolves. The man's wife came out and took our dogs in charge.

We ate some boiled salmon with them and gave them some of our medium bread. Then we waked to the rendezvous. It is a beautiful open green ? with a clear freshwater lake just ? of the level plain. Here we were met by a native Mr. Rock who talks some English and is a Christian. He lives on the Selowik and preaches and the Swedes send him supplies. Mr. Johnson who was here last year seems to have ? with him and has left him his dogs. These dogs almost ate us up in their joy to see us because we are whites. One of them followed us home in spite of our remonstrance. There are several hundred tents here and it makes a beautiful picture, looks like a big camp meeting. The natives all crowd around us to greet up and smiled broadly. We went into Mr. Rock's tent and met his wife and baby. He says he preaches to them on Sundays. They are collected here from ? Cape Prince of Wales Port Clarence etc. to dance, feast, and give presents. Some have been here about two or three weeks and will be here a month longer. Some are still coming.

A little distance on ? the beach are the underground houses and there are several families living there all winter. That is where we will fix a house if we do not go up the river. We wish some one could stay here and some one go up the river but of course we cannot divide our forces. Hope someone will come so this can be done next year. The natives invited us to stay all night with them and sleep in their tents but we did not wish to encounter the vermin so we started back home over the hills as this would make it much nearer. It was about 7 o'clock. In about an hour we gave up walking over the hills and took the beach. The tundra was too soft and made walking very hard while the beach was very good. Robert thinks we walked 10 miles. We reached our camp 15 min of four A.M. and found everything alright. We rested many times and were very glad we had some lunch with us. But I will never try the walk again unless it is necessary and would not this time if we had known how it would prove. We saw The Bear about 3 miles out that night but no one came in ? (How I wish you could be with us especially Jess & Irena and I ? sure Irena would be well here).

If you come next year be sure to bring plenty of lumber for a small house and some coal. Also a good pair of field glasses. I got a good pair in San F. but the Captain borrowed them when he was having so much trouble to identify the landmarks coming in here and he got them broken. I was very sorry as we need them often but I expect the Lord will send us some more. We have so many many blessings and are so thankful for them.

The natives are so kind and try every way to please us. They beg nothing but medium bread or scraps from our meals. One boy talks a little English and stays around us most of the time never seems to tire of asking us names of things and telling us the ? ? for they call themselves ?. They dress almost altogether in the wild reindeer skins and we will do the same. They have a great many fox skins but we have bought none yet. The schooners pay them all they are worth I think. They give a 50 lb sack of flour for one deer skin and we have paid the same. Their canoes are very large and light and four of them will take all our goods up the river if we think ? to go. It is very hard to refuse them.

Aug 5<sup>th</sup> Since I wrote the above we have moved and are now camped near the rendezvous. Four canoes came Wednesday evening and announced their intention to move us. Mr. Rock was leader of the party and he had understood us to ask him to get someone to move us when we were down to visit him. We had been undecided as to whether it was best to move again if we should go up the river in a month. We had done a big washing that day as we had had but little done since leaving home and were very tired. But the arrival of the canoes and the eagerness of the natives to get us down to the rendezvous we could scarcely resist. So we pulled up our stakes and let them load us all in. There were 11 dogs, 17 men and boys and four canoes and they very soon had everything in and their dogs hitched up and towed us to this place. We left about 6:30 P.M. and reached here 11:30. They helped to put up the tent again and after getting things under shelter we went to sleep as the day was dawning about 1 o'clock.

There had been about two hours of twilight but little darker than a cloudy day. This time seems to be their favorite time of the twentyfour [sic] hours for working, trading, dancing, etc. We paid them 50 lbs flour to each canoe, They have been so crowded around us ever since that we

can scarcely do anything. We send them away when we want to go to sleep and some are always back before we are up. There is not much driftwood here and it looks as if we would ? to go up the river but we think of trying to buy some coal of the Bear. We have visited their underground houses and some of them are quite comfortable. Robert thinks he could make us a very comfortable one with what lumber etc. we have and the question of fuel is the only thing that would keep us from remaining here for the winter as it is most desirable for the first station we think. These people want to trade all the time. We buy their salmon, four for one cake of soap of four for one block of matches or two crackers each. The Lord is with us and we feel His presence. We are all well and have good appetites. Carrie and I take turns cooking.

Aug 10. The natives are drinking badly today and Robert has had to guard the tent door with a club. Some are still sober and try to help us look after the drunken ones. A little girl came for medicine today. She is afflicted with great ?. A man in the same condition was here a day or two ago.

I've had a good meeting last Sunday but a shaman tried to disturb it. The Lord got the victory and the devil fled.

These natives smile a great deal at us and very sweetly and have many good qualities.

I've prayed for driftwood and it came in large quantities a day or two ago. We are no longer in doubt about staying here this winter now.

Robert commenced the winter house. The natives all went to work to help, some of them working spades of ?. We gave them a dinner of brown sugar syrup and hard bread. They want to help us at everything we do.

The house is to be tree ? underground as down to the frozen ground and covered with sod lined with the lumber we brought, 8 x 12 x 7, I believe. Our meeting Sunday was in the open air with some canoes over us for shelter from the rain. I think we had an audience of about 500. I think the natives have had a good deal of conversation as to what is best for us to do this winter, finally decided they could not get us up the river as their river canoes are small and full.

I think the Lord has made it very plain for us to stay here this winter but my heart yearns for these fine Koovak people.

The ice had been out of here only about two weeks when we arrived we think as Mr. Rock had came across a part of the Sound on his dog sled two weeks before.

Aug 13. Two white men called on us today. One is Mr. Nelson from his schooner Aetna and is in charge of a whaling station at Port Hope and has come in here to trade. The other is a prospector Mr. Boyd, a foreigner and is on his way up the ? River on a prospecting tour, will winter there and prospect next summer.

Aug 17. We have concluded to send our mail by Mr. Nelson as the Bear has not yet ?. He will put it on the Bear if he sees her and if not will send it down by the first whaling vessel. We had a hard wind storm yesterday but it is warm and bright today. The Lord is our Rock and our High Tower and our Sun and our Shield. I hope you will send some mail to St. Michael also to Pt. Hope as there are possible chances to get mail from both places. Send a letter to each place as...and we may possibly get one or the other before winter is over as natives came over from Port Hope and Mr. Rock thinks he will make a trip down into the region of St. Michael this winter. They say winter is the best time to travel and some of the ? say they are coming down on sleds and we may leave some of our provisions here and take a trip up north then later but we are not sure.

Yours lovingly

Anna