

OVER ALASKA'S ICY TRAIL TO THE KLONDIKE.

Uncle Sam's Only Pack Train Prepared for Cold Duty.

A Band of Men That Has Figured in Indian War History and Left Tracks on the Vast Plains of the Middle West—Every Member a Character Hardened by Years of Arduous Duty—Ship Lucile to Sail With Advance Detachment of Klondike Relief Expedition At Once.

The departure of the ship Lucile with the government pack train aboard, bound for Alaska to relieve want in the Klondike, has been delayed, and she will not get away until tonight or tomorrow, or possibly until next Tuesday. Meanwhile the packers are roaming idly about the city in parties of four to eight, everywhere distinguishable by their stalwart frames and rough-and-ready appearance. Probably no finer collection of men, physically, was ever before in this city than these twenty-two packers, constituting the only pack train in the United States army. They form a class apart—a selected band which has hung together for a score of years or more, and has figured prominently in the Indian war history of the country during that time. Within this circle of men who have devoted the best years of their lives to arduous government service, are organized football and tug-of-war teams and a small string band. Each of these whose within whose has attained a celebrity in its line which reflects credit on the train and justifies the pride with which the men say: "We are the packers of the United States army." Every man of them is a character whose personal history would make a story more intense with life and interest than the most fascinating fiction.

The Days of Cody.
In their reminiscences are echoes of the days of "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Several of the packers, indeed, were intimate associates of plains celebrities, and one crossed the ocean with Buffalo Bill and took part in the open-air show which created such a sensation in the cities of Europe. The story is replete with tales that thrill—hairbreadth escapades by field and flood, clever subterfuge in warfare and mad dashes through hostile territory. Reckless, devil-may-care fellows they seem, taking the buffets of fortune as they come, and rocking little to what field they may be called, so that three meals a day are handed out with regularity.
In all the years of service together a sort of companionship has grown up between the mulester and the beasts which do his heaviest so uncomplainingly. Every animal is known to the packers as a familiar friend, and its tricks of temper are familiar. There are among the 110 mules in the train many beasts which have a history almost as interesting as that of the man who straps him to the backs. Men and mules have been identified so long that it would seem almost impossible to consider one without the other.
Fit to have control of such a body of men are Lieut. Guy H. Preston and Lieut. Ryan. Both have won soldiers' laurels on the field of battle.

Preston's Heroism at Wounded Knee.
The assignment to Lieut. Guy H. Preston of the charge of the pack trains of the United States army, recalls the young officer's heroism at the Wounded Knee fight, when he rode eighteen miles through a country infested with hostile Indians, carrying dispatches. An account of the thrilling dash across country appeared in Harper's Weekly of January 5 over the signature of Frederic Remington, the famous artist and author, as follows:
"He was with the Seventh cavalry because he was in command of some of Taylor's Indian scouts. The fight had simmered down to a desperate close, and had encountered at the outset a desultory skirmish up the ravine, where surviving Indians had sheltered under the 'cut-banks,' and were doing damage to the troops.
"The commanding officer desired to send a dispatch to Gen. Brooks at the agency, acquainting him with the details of the engagement and the crippled condition of his force. After hastily preparing the message, the colonel looked hesitatingly about him at the officers standing near, and his gaze fell on the scout officer. He asked him if he supposed he could get the dispatch to Gen. Brooks, and the young officer said, 'I could try, sir.'
"The country was full of Indians, and the news of the unknown-for engagement was traveling all over the Sioux country as fast as ponies could run, so it was exceedingly problematical as to whether he could get over the intervening eighteen miles alive.
"The colonel gave him the message, and directed him to take the fastest and best horse on the line, and go quickly. At the picket lines he called for the best horse there, and the soldiers gathered about to canvass the subject. There was the big bay celebrated for long-distance running. He was stripped of all surplus accoutrements. Then the lieutenant called the soldiers who were about to come to him, and there, seated his suitcase, warning them of its danger, and asking for one volunteer. A soldier named Feilman stepped out. He was told to strip himself and horse, which he quickly did. While this momentary wait was in progress, Preston saw Capt. Harrington lying there wounded, and running over, wrote a short telegram to his troops, and shaking his good arm, bade him good-by.
"The lieutenant and Feilman mounted and galloped out of the dangerous point, while up the ravine the last scattering shots of a celebrated affair came to their ears. The soldier had a rifle and Preston a six-shooter. He skirted the bank, aware of dead, wounded and dying people where the front of the Fast-Horse road, which made it only fifteen miles to the agency. There they met Captain Harrington, with his comrades, who asked the lieutenant where he was going. He told him, but the scout entreated him for a look, and he did not do that—the Indians at the agency, including Short Bull's band, had just covered in from the Bad Lands, would hear of the fight from despatching Indian scouts before the lieutenant's horse could get there, if they had not already heard. He assured the officer that they would all come skimming down the Fast-Horse road to participate in the fight on his cut-off any small bodies of troops, and told him he would run into them and be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt. He insisted that Preston go up the creek and take the Fast-Horse road, which he did, thereby escaping what we now know was certain death.

"The two soldiers then started on the dead run—good horses, a crisp day, and a known road. It was a ride for life. Preston put the dispatch in the breast pocket of his blouse, telling Feilman, if he was spotted, to take the paper and go on.
"Twice at high points on the Fast-Horse road, where they shortly after attacked the Indians saw the two straining troops, and took 'across lots' after them; but they soon discovered that the soldiers had the lead, the inside track and the best horses; still, they gave them a good race for a long distance.
"Any one who has ever ridden will know that eighteen miles is a very long road at the top pace, and the lieutenant but that was some distance from the soldiers' camp. The horses were 'weaving' badly and staggering. The risk was made by taking the gallop up straight inclines, fast trot if steep, and the dead run (to spur if down hill, no matter how steep or gentle, thereby making all the heavy gains in time by the down-hill work.
"The hills outside of the soldier pickets were full of mounted Indians, but with a final spurt, the two brave men went through and reached the general's tent. Here Feilman fell from his horse in a dead faint, but the first news of the Wounded Knee came in.
"Such things as taking mules to the Arctic regions are soldiering. Between Ringold and the Klondike, an officer hesitates between spending his money for Esquimaux furs or India-silk pajamas.

Mooney, Chief Packman.
Thomas Mooney, chief packman of the United States army and in immediate command of the train, is a big, handsome fellow, over 6 feet high and over 200 pounds in weight. He is an ideal leader of such a company, and is an immense favorite with the men. As assistants to Mooney and George Knight, W. W. Witt, James McFarland and James Sweeney, titled "packmasters," in charge of a division.
Mooney, the leader, was born in St. Louis and spent his youth amid surroundings which developed the wandering instincts of his nature. He was early accustomed to leadership, and at the age of 15, having acquired a local reputation as a dead shot, he went to Leadville, Col., and worked for some time as a miner. Finally he took a position as engineer for the United States government at Cheyenne, Wyo., and in 1884 joined the pack train. In 1885 he was with the train as it followed the handi: Cronimo over Arizona, New and Old Mexico. At the conclusion of this campaign he was sent to Camp Carlin, Wyo., the military supply depot for the armies of the West, to instruct recruits in the pack service. In 1886, when the Sioux pack train was sent to Pine Ridge agency with the soldiers.
He was in the forced march of Col. Guy V. Henry's force of troops of the Ninth cavalry, which drove Big Foot and his band of Sioux from the Bad Lands. The troops and pack train set out from Pine Ridge agency at 4 o'clock on Christmas eve, traveling about the middle of the night. When they halted at 10 o'clock the next morning, they had made sixty-eight miles. Four days later, December 25, occurred the battle of

Wounded Knee. After the battle Thomas Mooney was put in charge of the mule train and ordered to deliver goods and animals at the agency as soon as possible. With a light guard the pack mules and wagons sailed forth in the darkness for a journey of forty-five miles. In the morning, about the break of day, hostile Indians fell upon the train from three different directions. Quickly drawing up the wagons in a circle, and driving the mules into this reinforced position, a defense was made until reinforcements arrived. One was killed. Mooney was next put into the field service at Jackson Hole, Wyo., where in 1886 troops were dispatched to prevent the Banrockes from breaking the state game laws. In May, 1897, Col. Thomas Moore, then chief

packer of the United States army, died, and Thomas Mooney immediately was assigned his duties.
A Great Traveler.
Packmaster George Knight, son of an English sea captain, ran away to sea at 13 years of age. At the age of 17 years he was apprenticed to a United States schoolship and visited ports in America, Europe and Africa. In 1855 he went West, and after working for some time as a cow-puncher joined the government pack train. In 1862 he was assigned to G troop, of the Third cavalry, and with them he participated in the Garza campaign. Packers Dillon and Baxter were sent south a year later to assist the train in this campaign. When he again reported at Camp Carlin, Knight was made an accountant of the cargo under Packmaster Delaney.
An Easy Litter.
Packmaster James Sweeney is the inventor of a mule litter, or double reeve, for the transportation of wounded men, which will probably be used on the journey to Dawson. Two poles are roped to the saddles of two mules. Cross-pieces are bound on by rope or rawhide thongs, and

from the grass with which Mexicans and Spaniards pad their saddles. The plan of stuffing these bags with light sticks to be parallel with the ribs of the pack animal was originated by Thomas Moore, the first chief packer of the United States army. It affords far greater protection to an animal's back than the old shapeless Mexican aparejo. A crupper about eight inches wide holds the aparejo from slipping forward. No breast straps are required, even in the roughest country, because the government pack mules are so selected that the packs will not slip backward. Nine pounds of grain daily, besides grass forage, is the marching ration apportioned to each pack animal. As a small mule will require as much feed as a large one, and as the latter has been found to be more capable, the large ones are most in demand. An average load is 300 pounds, though on special tests 500 pounds have been carried.

REINDEER DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN.
Dr. Jackson Experiences Unexpected Hardships in Norway.
Copyrighted, 1898, by the Associated Press. LONDON, Feb. 12.—The correspondent of the Associated Press at Alten, Norway, reports that the expedition, headed by the Rev. Sheldon Jackson and Lieut. D. B. Devore, military secretary of the United States secretary of war, has met with great difficulties. William A. Kjellmann, superintendent of the government reindeer herd in Alaska, who started ahead of Messrs. Jackson and Devore, has scoured the country with six assistants, sledging

I am in destitute circumstances. Anything in the shape of an outfit or the means to obtain such will be gratefully received. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am, yours sincerely,
ONE OF THE UNFORTUNATES.
SEE Treen's ad. page 12. Special sale of Shoes. Notice bargains in their windows.

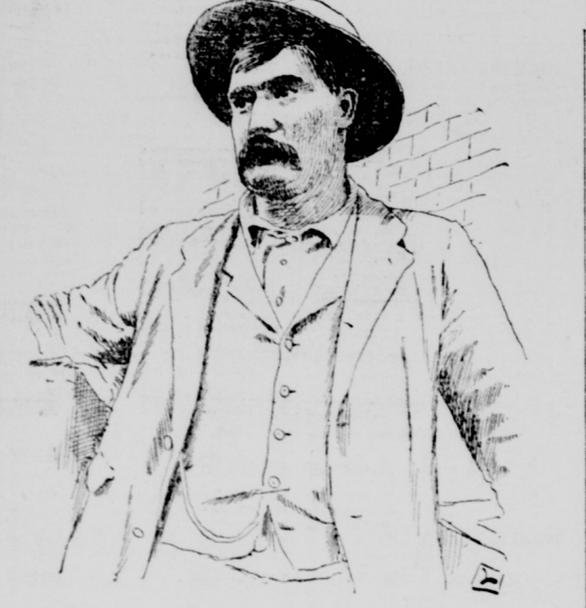
HAD A ROUGH VOYAGE.
Signal Arrives From the North, but Brings No Klondikers—Encountered a Heavy Sea.
Steam schooner Signal, four days overdue from Dyea and Skagway, arrived at 2:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon, bringing eleven passengers. None was from the interior. Seven were men who have been wintering at Skagway for several months and who came down to purchase supplies before returning.
The Signal sailed from Skagway February 4. Some hours after leaving that port the wind veered round to the south-east and commenced to blow violently, causing the sea to run very high. The wind continued to blow until the Sound was reached.
On the afternoon of February 5, while off Juneau, the Signal passed the steamer Clara Nevada on her way to Dyea and Skagway. She was making good time and appeared to be doing nicely.
No news of importance concerning the situation at Skagway other than what has been already chronicled, was brought down by the Signal.

LOADING GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES ON THE SHIP LUCILE.
A mattress on this spring bed makes a comfortable litter. The litter was designed for Chief Mattis, who, wounded in the attack of Indians on the settlers of Jackson Hole, July 25, 1885, was conveyed in Sweeney's charge over a range of mountains 13 miles to an encampment of the hospital corps.
Packmaster W. W. Witt started his career at 12 years of age as a jockey, and for several years followed the race courses. When Oklahoma was thrown open to settlement he made a good sum leasing his race horses to men who intended to spurt over the line and secure desirable locations in the new territory. He was present also at the opening of the Sac and Fox reservation. When but 15 years old he won the medal at an interstate live bird shoot. His odd moments before joining the packers were put in as a cow-puncher.
The Blacksmith.
Packmaster William Dittman is the blacksmith of the pack train. Charcoal, a forge, an anvil, blacksmith's tools and extra shoes will be taken with the train to Dawson. The forge is capable of being taken down and packed in small space. It weighs 200 pounds, and is a load for one mule. It was invented by one of the packers. Dittman carries scars on his head latered by the revolution in Costa Rica, Central America, in 1885.
Among the other men who have had his

3,000 miles through forests in the Arctic night. Trained reindeer are scarce, and he had to pick up lots of three or four, which were eventually concentrated into six herds, aggregating 500.
It was difficult to persuade the Laplanders to leave their homes, but fifty drivers were finally secured. Mr. Jackson said the travel necessary to collect the reindeer was more dangerous than traveling in the Chilkoot pass.
SEE Treen's ad. page 12. Special sale of Shoes. Notice bargains in their windows.

From a Corona Passenger.
To the Public: I would like to know if the merchants who were generously inclined at the time of the Corona's mishap are going to help the sufferers? There may not be many who need it, but there are a few of us who lost their all and would be thankful for such aid as you see fit to render. I have been waiting patiently, in hopes something would be done.

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CHIEF PACKER TOM PRESCOTT.

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