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F A. Wardwell. G. G. Thompson.
WARDWELL & THOMPSON.

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The Pioneer Express.

Alaska News.

Editors of the PIONEER EXPRESS:

I am sure that the multitude of people who intend to go to the Klondyke in the spring, and who at the same time have the privilage of reading your columns, will be glad to hear just how matters stand at Skagway and Dyea just at this time. I arrived at Skagway on the 12th of November and spent two days there. I did not far out on the trail at Skagway, but I carefully listened to those who had just come in over that trail, and from what I actually saw and what I heard, I feel I am competent to give your readers an accurate idea of just how matters stand at this present time.

First then Skagway has now three docks at which ships may land their passengers and their effects. This is an important fact, for it does away with all that loss, which has in the past met the Yukoner at the very onset of his journey. There is now no more landing on the mud at low tide, to be over-flowed by the incoming water. I read in a paper only last night, that there were docks at Dyea; this not true, there is no dock at Dyea, the nearest piles that are driven being probably half a mile from where the boat must lie to unload. I beg to assure your readers however, that it is a fact that they can land on a dock at Skagway, and moreover, I shall endeavor to state only facts as they are at this present writing.

Landing at the wharf from the Al-Ki, we walked up town, and mind you, Skagway is a town. There are hundreds of houses of all kinds, large and small, of log and lumber and of every conceivable design anp device. These houses reach from high water mark to a mile or more back in the bush. The town is laid out in streets, "Broadway" being one of the principal. There may be two thousand inhabitants, and would you believe it? they have no government postoffice. A gentleman has obligingly consented to receive and distribute mail; but he charges five cents for a two cent stamp, also five cents for sending or delivering a letter. His revenue comes from this charge; and it may be that he is not too well paid, but the people feel it a hardship that it should cost them ten cents for sending or posting a letter, and five cents to receive one. Surely Uncle Sam neglects us, his children, in this manner.

The hotels of Skagway are able to accommodate a large number of transients, but if the rush in the spring is any thing like what is expected people may have to camp out, and I would advise travelers to come prepared to live in their own domiciles. Some cabins had placards up saying the cabin was for sale, and it might be a good idea for intending Yukoners to secure one of those beforehand. There are storekeepers of all kinds, even jewellers, still I found the stores were out of many things their customers asked for. and the merchants have great trouble in getting up their supplies by the boats, and they are often disappointed. The restaurants give meals for fifty cents each and the meals are fairly good, though of course somewhat roughly served.

Now as to the trail. I met a man who had just come in from Lake Bennet. He had also been over the Dyea trail, and was therefore in a position to institute a comparison. He declared that going over the Dyea trail, was but child's play to going over the Skagway. I am convinced from what I heard and saw, that at present, the Dyea trail is the better one, though even it is hard enough. I speak of course of the present condition of things. If the tramway on the Skagway is completed, then the balance will be in favor of that trail. But many people doubt if this tramway will ever be completed, and certainly, unless matters are rushed much more vigorously than at present, the tramway will be of little assistance to those who go in in the spring. There is also a wagon road, but it is of no more use than the tram, and the only means of transport at present is by the pack horse or the human back.

The trail is almost impassible for any pack train now. There are four or five feet of snow on the summit and the trail is very icy in many places. A pack train that started out just before I arrived had to cache their loads and return, being unable to get through. I met a number of persons who came in on foot and of course they had little load or none at all; and they all declare it to be a trip terrible in the amouut of suffering and hardship to be endured.

While I was at Skagway, two men came in from the White Horse rapids. They had watched an experienced hand run over five boats; then they tried to run their own outfit, with the result that they drowned one of their party and lost every bit of their outfit, and had to be assisted on their return by the Canadian police. One of these men went to work in Skagway and the other was trying to raise the means to return to his home. On Tuesday, the 16th, a party of fourteen started in a flat-bottomed sloop to go from Skagway to Dyea. The north wind drove them five miles south of Skagway, and here two of the men decided to take to the shore. The other twelve had not been found when I left Skagway on Friday morning. The two on shore suffered terribly; one climbed over the mountains and reached the town, and then a tug went out after the other. They also went ten miles down the shore looking for the others. There was a report on the Elder that a bonfire had been seen eight miles below Maine's Mission, and I hope those poor fellows may have been picked up all right. I mention these troubles that those who intend to go to the Yukon may not start thinking that they have a pic-nic ahead of them.

On Monday, the 15th, I went to Dyea; I went in a sail boat. The wind was raging, and the water was coming over the gunwale, and I wished myself ashore. After about two hours of this freezing cold and went I reached Dyea, and after an early dinner in a restaurant I started, pack on back, to go to Sheep Camp, about fifteen miles distant. The first nine miles is a pretty fair wagon road, in some places good enough for a buggy. This nine miles brought me to the head of the Canyon; here the Dyea Tram Co. has a large camp, and they have the power house up and the rafters on; by this time perhaps the roof is shingled. From the head of the Canyon to Sheep Camp is five or six miles, over the mountain trail. I had no idea that horses could be taken over such a place, but I met them scratching and scrambling alon over the steep, slippery rocks, more like goats than horses. The poor brutes suffer horrible, as their bruised and bleeding limbs testify. Poor, patient creatures, how many of their carcasses lie along the way, mute evidences of man's greedy determination to reach the land of gold.

After a tramp of about five hours I reached Sheep Camp, with my heel badly skinned by the slipping of my large heavy rubber boots. My back also ached from the unaccustomed pack I had borne so many weary miles. My load was light however, consisting of about forty pounds of blankets and other necessaries. I met one poor fellow, who asked me to help him over a bad spot. He had an ordinary cooking stove on his back, and he told me that it weighed a hundred and eighty pounds. Right here I might suggest to would-be Yukoners, that they might get themselves somewhat in training for their spring trip, if they would take their kitchen stove out two or three mornings in the week, for a constitutional, and if it did not help the health of the stove, it might help their own, and at any rate it would somewhat prepare them for the hardships of the Yukon trip.

At Sheep Camp I slept in my blankets on the ground, and Oh! was it not cold. It was fortunate that I had my blankets or I would have been in a bad fix. The people only charge fifty cents for the privilege of spreading your blankets on the floor of their houses. The house I slept in had no floor, so I took the frozen ground for it.

Next morning I started for the Pass. Some of the regular packers thought it too stormy to go on to the Pass, but others and I among them, started and after a tough wrestle with the storm king, and the struggle with the mountain climbing, we reached the Scales, just three-quarters of a mile short of the top of the Pass. No one ventured to the top that day, and I can assure you it was hard enough at the scales. The wind howled and raged, and the blinding snow suffocated one, so that it was impossible to expose the face for more than a few minutes at a time. The tracks of those only a hundred feet away, were entirely obliterated so the trail was hard to keep. I staggered along and wondered how men managed to carry a hundred or a hundred and twenty-five pounds over such a rough place in the face of such a dreadful storm.

Along the lower part of the Pass I found men drilling holes in the rocks to hold the supports for the cable, and in a nook of a rock, a blacksmith had set up his smithy and was trying to sharpen the drills, but it was working under difficulties even in the shelter of the rock. This work, like the Skagway tramway, is not at all as advanced as it ought to be, and it is very doubtful if it will be available for the spring rush. Of course a looker-on cannot tell what the company may do, but they have no v fearful odds against them in the inclemency of the weather, and it will be no easy task to get their supplies when they need them. In addition to the power house at the head of the Canyon, which I mentioned, I saw a few coils of cable along the way, and at Dyea there were trucks and wheels and pulleys, and I saw men cutting out the right of way along the trail, This was all that was visible to the passer-by. Many people on the spot expressed the opinion that the company would never finish their roads; they say they do not really mean business. It would be well then, that both these companies rushed their work so as to convince people that they were in earnest.

In the meantime it would be necessary that those who want to get over, to come expecting that they would have to get over without the help of the trams. If I were going in, I should start now, unless of course there were good reasons for not doing so. I would get my outfit up to Dyea, and leisurely get it to Sheep Camp and on fine days get it over the pass. It seems to me there will be an awful confusion on the trail when once the rush commences.

There was no inducement to remain long at the Scales, the howling storm invited to a hasty retreat to the shelter of a house as soon as possible. After a dinner at Sheep Camp, I started once more for Dyea, passing by the Sheep Camp saw mill, which is not in running order yet, though a number of men were busy about it.

I have already said there is no wharf at Dyea. Five have been projected, but in the meantime steamboats have to lie a long distance off and the stuff is lightered to the shore, where the wagons drive out to the barge and take the load up town. Passengers from small boats are carried ashore on the backs of the boatmen, but men with rubber boots wade for themselves. I was landed in water over my knees. The Elder tried to land some stuff at Dyea, but when she got there, the barge could not be got out to her for the ice, so she had to carry it back to the Skagway wharf.

After a week spent between these two towns and adjacent parts, the Elder carried me away, in the midst of a strong north wind, and I was not sorry that every mile I sped away from this cold northern region was taking me to that sweetest of all places, "Home sweet Home."

H. BEER,
Juneau, Alaska, Nov. 18th, 1897.

Key to the Klondike.

The pioneer Alaska railway is the Northern Pacific, and to that company belongs the credit in connection with the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, of having inaugurated the sale of through tickets to points in Alaska. The Northern Pacific is the first railway to issue a map of Alaska showing the inland passage from Puget Sound to Sitka, Juneau and Chilkat.

Those inteuding to go Alaska early next spring, after the snows on the Dyea and Skaguay passes are packed down and the lakes frozen, or at a later date via St. Micnaels and the mouth of the Yukon, should remember that the northern Pacific is the pioneer line; runs steam heated trains with dining cars Pullman standard snd tourist sleepers from St. Paul to Tocama, Seattle and Portland. Passengers having the option of going via Helena or Butte City; the latter the greatest silver mining camp in the world; also via Lake Pend D'Oreille, Idaho, or through the famous Coeur D'Alene mining country.

Early in November we shall issue an illustrated folder replete with Alaska and Klondike information up to date. Send Chas. S. Fee, general passenger agent, St. Paul, Minn., two cents in postage and he will forward you this map.

Notice of Time of Expiration of Redemption of Tax Sale Certificates.

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Mrs L D Rolette.....	se qr.....	6	163	51	1891	12	6	[illegible]	47 90	[illegible]	[illegible] 29
Mrs L D Rolette.....	se qr.....	6	163	51	1892	12	5	[illegible]	37 65	20 50	58 24

OFFICE OF COUNTY AUDITOR, PEMBINA COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA:

To the owners of the above described real estate, in Pembina county, North Dakota, and all others interested therein: You are hereby notified that the land herein above described, assessed in the name set opposite each several tract was sold for taxes as provided by law, and that the time of redemption from said sale allowed by law, will expire on the 18th day of February, 1898, or within ninety days after publication of this notice. In addition to the amount above stated as necessary to redeem from said sale, the cost of publicaton of this notice must be paid together with such interest as may accrue from and after this date.

In witness whereof; I have hereunto set my hand and seal, at Pembina, in said county of Pembina, this 20th day of November, 1897.

DONALD THOMSON,
Auditor of Pembina County, N. D.

Notice of Time of Expiration of Redemption of Tax Sale Certificates.

OFFICE OF COUNTY AUDITOR, PEMBINA COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA.

To the owners of the following described real estate in Pembina county, North Dakota, assessed and described as follows: Assessed in the name of J. La Moure; description, southwest quarter, section twenty-five (25), township one hundred sixty-one (161), range fifty-five (55); year tax levied, 1893; sold for taxes December 4th, 1894; amount sold for, $16.88; accrued interest $8.41; total required to redeem, $25.28; and you are hereby notified that the land herein above described, assessed in your name, was sold for taxes as provided by law, and that the time of redemption from said sale allowed by law, will expire on the 18th day of February, 1898, or within 90 days after publication of this notice. In addition to the amount above stated as necessary to redeem from said sale, the cost of publication of this notice must be paid, together with such interest as may accrue from and after this date.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, at Pembina, in said county of Pembina, this 20th day of November, 1897.

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