

LIFE IS DESCRIBED —

## Highlands Couple Preparing To Return To Alaskan Jobs

By MRS. LILLIAN HIRT  
(W.C.C. Publicist)

**CULLOWHEE** — Even with summer still upon us, many people are making plans for the return to school.

John and Wilma Gordon, of Highlands, are making plans, too, but with a significant difference. The end of August will find them with their two children on the way back to Hooper Bay, Alaska, right on the Bering Sea, where they have taught for the past two years.

Both are graduates of Western College—John in the class of 1954 and his wife in the class of 1953. They are back at home in Highlands now, while John works toward the master's degree at Western Carolina, with emphasis in education administration.

**Only Caucasians**

The Gordons are the only Caucasians in a village of 435 population, the others being 100 per cent Eskimo. The language barrier has been a difficulty, because the natives speak largely Eskimo language, and the Gordons teach in English. The government specified that the children be taught in English to help them understand that as citizens of the United States they are entitled to the rights of citizenship. This program was in effect even while Alaska was a territory.

**Adventure Story**

An account of a normal week's activity at their school is like a dramatic adventure story. Mrs. Gordon teaches the primary grades, and her husband teaches the fourth through eighth grades, with 135 pupils enrolled in the eight grades. This is one of the largest of the government schools exclusively for the natives in Alaska.

When Mr. Gordon began his college career, he had no idea that one day he would be a teacher, doctor, engineer, janitor, ham operator, and a dozen

other things—but he's all of these in Alaska.

**Operates Clinic**

The government provides medical supplies and instructions for using them; and with that equipment and some basic knowledge, Mr. Gordon operates a medical clinic in his school. When he comes up against something he can't handle, he has a doctor near at hand by way of the short wave radio, and gets instructions from him. If a case is really serious, the next plane will take a patient out to a hospital, or perhaps an unscheduled plane will be sent immediately.

**Delivers Babies**

In addition to giving shots, setting broken bones, treating wounds, Mr. Gordon has aided in the delivery of 25 babies during the past two years. But when his own wife gave birth last February, he sent her out to a government hospital on the last plane available before the "freeze-up".

**Beauty Of Ice**

An air view of the village of Hooper Bay shows plenty of ice sheets and lakes and the Bering Sea, but not any roads or railroads at all. The nearest rail or highway is 700 miles distant—which to most people seem an eternity away. The Gordons, while facing the reality of their situation, do not feel any extreme sense of isolation. First off, they both like to read and have plenty of good reading materials on hand. Both enjoy good music, and that's where their investment in a hi-fi set pays dividends. And probably most important, both are dedicated to the work they are doing, and derive much satisfaction from it.

**Ships And Planes**

But how do you exist, particularly with children, in a village where not even a tree grows, and where there is no livestock other than the ever-necessary dog teams? Well, once

a year the steamship, The North Star, arrives from Seattle, loaded with fuel and the basic commodities to supply a year's needs. Also, there are the bush pilots who fly in sometimes as often as once a week with mail and other things that have been ordered from the cities.

Imagine ordering groceries in January, having them delivered in June, and making-do for an entire year! Of course, several bushels of apples and oranges can be stored easily, which will help take care of some dietary needs. Fresh vegetables, can be obtained almost any time, but it is dreadfully expensive to have them brought in by plane, so the Gordons use canned foods mostly. One luxury they do indulge, though, is fresh eggs, which, of course, are flown in.

Little every-day comforts such as we take entirely for granted become large in the eyes of this courageous couple. Heating is entirely adequate, they explained, because oil can be stored in large supply for heating the home and the school.

**No Running Water**

Sanitation, however, is very poor by our standards. There is no running water or plumbing of any kind, and ice is stored in huge drums during the winter for summer use. Electricity is supplied by a generator furnished by the government, with Mr. Gordon himself acting as maintenance man. In 1956 there was a break-down in the system, and no professional engineer could get to the village because of the weather; so the village was without electricity for two months!

**Use Catalog**

Clothing problems are handled easily. Sears-Roebuck catalog keeps the family supplied with the latest fashions, and Mrs. Gordon is adept with a needle. She has a sewing machine for her own use, and also

used it to teach the native girls to sew.

All year long, the family looks forward to Christmas, which is observed there in much the same way as in the States. Less elaborately, of course. Mr. Gordon says that packages mailed in early October will reach them in time for Christmas, and again the mail order catalog is handy. They order their family gifts in August, to be sure of receiving them in time for the holiday.

**Christmas Party**

The school always has a Christmas party and a religious program, because Christianity was brought to the village many years ago. There is not much exchanging of gifts, simply because there is nothing to exchange. The American Red Cross sends in a package for each school child, but no one has anything different to give to anyone else.

In telling the ways of the village, Mr. Gordon said the people exist on fish, seal meat, ducks, and salmon berries, which they can pick on the tundras during the summer. The natives also eat whale meat and some blubber, but blubber is used mostly as a preservative for the fish, duck, and berries. They engage in hunting and trapping and sell the skins of seal, fox, and mink at the trading post in the cities.

**Most Get Out**

Unless a young person is able to get out to Mount Edgecumbe for more training, according to Mr. Gordon, he has no future other than to hunt and trap as his father does. At present, the best educated person in the village finishes only the eighth grade of the local school. However, several of the girls have gone on to school at Mount Edgecumbe to study practical nursing, and one young man has even graduated from high school in that same town. Mr. Gordon describes him as a fine young man, and he hopes to take further training and come back to the native village and teach his own people.

The Gordons' children are Nancy, four, and Sabrina, six months. While their parents teach they are in the care of a native girl, who considers it an honor to be chosen for the work.

Mr. Gordon is the son of Mr.



ELECTED TO OFFICES BY MACON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

These are the officers elected by Macon Baptists during their annual meeting here last Thursday and Friday. They are (L. to R) the Rev. Robert R. Standley, chairman of the executive promotions committee, Mrs. John Campbell, reelected clerk, Mrs. Arvel Parker, reelected treasurer, and Fred Corbin, reelected historian. A picture of the new moderator and vice-moderator, the Rev. Clyde Rhinehart and J. C. Jacobs, may be seen on Page 1. (Staff Photo)

SEASON EXTENDED —

## Mountain Trout Fishermen To Get Extra Month's Fun

Tar Heel mountain trout fishermen will get an extra month of fishing this year — with restrictions.

The Wildlife Resources Commission has extended the season on certain designated streams in 20 counties to September 30, instead of August 31. The creel limit during September will be reduced from 10 to five daily.

Following are the counties, streams and sections of streams and sections of streams affected by the amended regulation:

- Alleghany County — Little River, from Whitehead Bridge downstream; Brush Creek from Route 21 bridge downstream; Glade Creek from Route 21 bridge
- Ashe County — New River, north fork, from Maxwell to Sharp's mill dam.
- Burke County — Linville River from first bridge to second bridge below Lake James.
- Caldwell County — Yadkin River from Finley P. O. to Buffalo Creek.
- McDowell County — Armstrongs Creek from Roses Creek to Catawba River.
- Mitchell County — Cane Creek from Clarrissa to Toe River.
- Rutherford, Henderson Counties — Rocky Broad River from Buncombe County line to Lake Lure.
- Yancey County — Cane River from Upper Falls to Bowlers Creek.
- Buncombe County — Ivy River

from Barnardsville Dam to Hwy. 19 & 23.

Cherokee County — Valley River from Andrews to Hiwassee Lake.

Graham County — Big Santeeah Creek from Refuge line to Santeeah Lake; Big Snowbird Creek from Little Snowbird Creek to Santeeah Lake.

Haywood County — Jonathan Creek from Maggie P. O. to Pigeon River; W. Fork Pigeon River from Lake Logan Dam to Woodrow.

Henderson County — Green River from Polk County line to Lake Summit; South Mills River from Refuge line to N. Mills River; North Mills River from Refuge line to S. Mills River.

Jackson County — Scott Creek from Dark Ridge Creek to Tuckaseegee River; Chatooga River from Boundary at Govt. land to South Carolina line.

Macon County — Cullasaja River from Cullasaja Falls to Little Tennessee River.

Swain, Macon, Clay Counties — Nantahala River from Refuge line to Fontana Lake.

Transylvania County — Davidson River from Refuge line to Eusta Water intake; French Broad River from the Forks to Brevard; Horsepasture River from Sapphire lake to S. C. line; North Fork, French Broad River from

## Will Sponsor Junior Garden Club Locally

At its monthly meeting Monday of last week, the Franklin Garden club voted to sponsor a Junior Garden Club, of which Mrs. B. L. McGlamery will be chairman.

Mrs. McGlamery plans to hold an organizational meeting soon and will announce meeting dates and requirements for membership.

On the program for the meeting Mrs. Gilmer Jones served as moderator for a discussion of the flower show. The panel was made up of Miss Adelaide Brewer, Mrs. John Bulgin, and Mrs. W. E. Furr, clerks who served the judges at the flower show.

Mrs. S. Winkleblack discussed improvements in the horticulture section for the coming year.

The meeting was held at the home of Mrs. B. B. Scott, with Mrs. A. R. Higdon, Miss Gladys Sellars, and Mrs. Zeb Conley as co-hostesses.

Balsam Grove to French Broad River; Toxaway River from Route 64 to S. C. line; Whitewater River from Route 107 to S. C. line.

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