

JOHN W. CLAY GIVES KIWANIS HERE INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF SEA TRIP

John Wesley Clay, Winston-Salem printer and author, delivered a most interesting talk at the North Wilkesboro Kiwanis club Friday on the subject of "The Spirit of Adventure." The

adventure account proved so interesting that requests were made for its publication as follows:

Some people consider churchmen as sissies but, you know, the Church has furnished more opportunities of adventure than any other organization I know. I saw an advertisement in a church paper "Wanted Christian cowboys to take calves to Poland." That interested me and I answered the advertisement stating that I was above 18 years of age and knew how to handle calves. After having received no reply a few weeks later I boarded a train and went to Maryland to investigate in person. I went to this particular church and went in the door marked "Cowboys Wanted." They were buying up purebred calves and collecting them for shipment to Poland. They said I was too old but after explaining my qualifications to take care of calves and offering to pay my own expenses they reconsidered, anyway a few weeks later I received a telegram to report on board a certain ship bound for Poland. That was October a year ago. When I got on board, I found we were to care for horses instead of calves. There were 8 of us cowboys and one veterinarian with 25 horses assigned to each cowboy.

These horses were in stalls on deck under a heavy overhanging roof. They were tied close together with a rail between each 4 horses. While we were still in harbor and getting acquainted with our horses, I heard some of the other cowboys talking—they were all young fellows from schools and 18 to 20 years of age—one of them, who we called Shorty, said to the other "I wonder who will have to carry Pop's hay when we get out to sea." We all soon acquired nicknames and mine was Pop, but Pop wasn't so worried, he had been across several times and knew about what to expect. Shorty had had no experience. As my horses were assigned I started to get acquainted with them and giving them names, one weighed about 1800 lbs. and I called him Big John, another a beautiful little horse, I named for my granddaughters, Helena, and another, always trying to nip and kick, I called War Horse and so on. Each one had a personality of his own and I learned each ones peculiarities and petted them and fed them sugar. We had 10 million pounds of sugar on board and I swiped a little for my horses. They responded to my kindness and learned to answer by name. The young fellows didn't know how to treat horses kindly and they had considerable trouble.

We had 50 extra halters on board which the young fellows used up while not a one of my horses broke a halter or got down. After a bit Shorty and several of his mates were so seasick they were useless. The 18 to 20 year olds were down and the 67 year old was carrying on. After 3 days and nights of work with practically no sleep we were all about down. After a while Shorty got on his feet and his conscience was hurting, so bad he

wanted to help out and tried to carry one of those 150 pound bales of hay but it was too much for him as he had no experience. He called on Pop for help and after showing him how to get under the load and hold it with two hooks on his back he was told to run with it to the other end and dump it over his head—there were 18 bales of hay to carry twice a day. With 150 pounds on your back and a rolling ship it is next to impossible to walk, the ship will roll out from under you, but, believe it or not, you can run. Shorty started out like a drunk man and after running a short distance staggered into War Horse who reached out for a bite of hay and pulled Shorty and the hay into a heap. Shorty got mad and hauled off and slapped War Horse hard on the mouth, then War Horse reached out for a hunk of Shorty and got a big bite out of his neck. The blood just spurted. You know when a man's jugular vein is cut he has only 2 minutes to tell his friends goodbye so I made a squall for the veterinarian who managed somehow to patch Shorty up but he was no good for the rest of the trip.

One night in a terrible storm I went on deck after the horses had all been tied up for the night and ran smack into a horse standing in a corridor. I couldn't figure it out, just a few minutes ago all the horses were not only tied up but a board was nailed behind them so you would actually have to saw out a piece of timber to get a horse out. I ran around to where the stalls were and found that the heavy roof had fallen and there were some 25 horses squirming and kicking under those heavy timbers. I called for help and we went to work sliding horses out from under. By sitting on a horses head and with the deck wet with water and blood a horse can easily be slid around. We got 12 or 15 badly bruised horses out but 9 were killed.

Next day it was a sad sight with the job of hoisting the horses high in the air swinging them upside and dropping them into the sea. One of my horses, Black Beauty, that everyone on board had come to know and pet was found pinned down and I yelled for extra help—several of the sailors helped lift the timbers while we slid her out. She got on her feet and we were all standing around her when suddenly the ship lurched and she fell before we could touch her and broke her neck. Several of us cried and one old sailor said it was the first time in 25 years that he had cried. The Captain had to change his course and for two days we were sailing back towards America to avoid that storm.

A few days later I heard the anchor being lowered and looked out the port hole and saw the most beautiful white hills in the bright sunlight. It thrilled me to my soul to look upon the white hills of Dover after such a frightening voyage. To some of the men it was just another white hill, and not so high, but to me, I could vision the roots of our constitution as being there. I recalled the splendor of Milton, Keats and Shakespeare.

As we later approached where the City of Danzig had been we saw old men and women teaming together to pull the plow and carts. We then saw our horses given to farmers who wept on their necks to receive these gifts from America.

We then went North to Finland to unload the sugar. When a bag burst I called some children looking on, some of them were 6 to 8 years old and actually didn't know what sugar was. I ate some and they finally caught on and ate it too. We ruseled up some cans, bags and buckets and divided up the bag. They ran off with their sugar and after a bit it looked like the whole community was coming down to get sugar. We ended up by breaking several bags, more or less accidentally. We spent 3 weeks in Finland. Our cowboy duties were over and we had nothing to do but tour. We got to within 50 miles of the Arctic circle and Lapland when some of the men could no longer stand the food and cold. We had nothing to eat but vegetables which, when all boiled together tasted bitter. They turned back but I had to go on to the Arctic Circle or bust. When I got to Lapland I was fed Reindeer steak and treated great. My host wanted to show me a herd of over 1000 reindeer and said he could call a taxi. I said what do you mean, call a taxi, when we have 18 inches of snow. He just laughed and said—Wait and see. When the "Taxi" arrived it was the largest buck reindeer you ever saw and the most beautiful animal. But I was not equipped for a ride in that temperature with no coat, no hat and tennis shoes on so my host loaned me a robe of polar bear skin, it was about 6 inches thick, soft and warm. We made a most thrilling ride of about 40 miles in about 4 1-2 hours. There were no roads, the sled just skimmed over the snow

and ice and you didn't know whether you were over land or water. I now know why Santa Claus uses reindeer.

We loaded up with pulp for paper and headed for America but the ship went aground. Some of us were taken off and landed back in New Orleans 3 months after leaving New York. Some of

the men did not get back for 11 months and under the hardship some went crazy.

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having claims against said estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at Ferguson, N. C., on or before the 18th day of September, 1948, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment.
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HENRY G. ALLEN,
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