

Macon County Man Writes From Near Arctic Circle

The following very interesting letter has been received by The Press from R. E. Berry, who is located at Central, Alaska, 50 miles from the Arctic Circle:

Central, Alaska,
February 9, 1939.

Editor Franklin Press:

Having been born and reared in Macon county, I always look forward to receiving The Press. I thoroughly enjoy reading your independent editorials which cover such a variety of questions, both of domestic and national importance. As they are of an independent nature they give both sides of the question.

I have been in Alaska for about three years, and have been employed by the C. J. Berry Gold Mining company, of California practically all of that time. I find the gold mining business very interesting.

There are two types of mining—quartz and placer. Quartz is where the gold is still in the rock (quartz) state and therefore has to be crushed and separated by different processes. On the other hand, due to the action of glaciers which moved along the valleys possibly thousands of years ago, and literally crushed the gold out of the quartz and deposited it along the valley floor, we have placer gold.

A prospector would pan these streams and know how much the gold bearing gravel was worth per square yard. If it was worth enough he would install either a hydraulic plant or a dragline. In late years, with the higher price of gold, they are using still another method—the dredge.

Hydraulic plants cost about five to ten thousand dollars. Draglines (which are somewhat like a steam shovel) cost about fifty thousand dollars. Dredges cost from one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand dollars. In rare cases they may cost three-fourths of a million dollars, like the mammoth Goodnews Bay platinum dredge.

Gold Rush Days Are Gone

Gone are the days when a bum could become a millionaire almost overnight. Rich strikes now are almost a thing of the past. Therefore, the business is changing more to expensive draglines and dredges. I might add that where they took out millions of the yellow metal by hydraulic methods in the old days, they are dredging the same ground today and taking out more millions. In the old days they mined only the richest and highest grade ground, and they paid exorbitant prices for supplies, wages, etc.

The following prices will give you an idea of what they paid during the gold rush days compared with the prices of today: Flour, 100 lbs., \$85 to \$100, (today's price is \$10); tobacco, \$5 per lb., (today's price is \$1); eggs, \$1 each, (today's price is 60 cents per dozen.)

The smallest coin used here at that time was 25 cents, therefore if you bought a five cent pencil, cigar or anything priced at a nickel you paid 25 cents, and were glad to get it even at that price.

A Lucky Swede

A true story known throughout the Klondikes (Canada) and Alaska, concerns a Swede we shall call Mr. Samson. A couple of gamblers made Mr. Samson drunk and sold him a mining claim they owned for \$800. When he sobered up he tried to sell it back to them for almost any price. He then tried almost everyone else, but since everyone thought it was worthless he had no takers. At last he said, "Well I tank I go up and sink a shaft on my claim." So Mr. Samson did, and when he reached bedrock he began to shovel out gold. After working out his claim he took out only two million dollars worth of gold. I'll bet the gamblers left the country.

Scores of creeks have each produced from a few thousand to thirty million dollars worth of gold. The richest was the Eldorado in the Klondikes (Canada). I would like to mention at this time that the Klondikes in Canada has been the world's richest and biggest placer district. The Nome and Fairbanks districts in Alaska have also produced hundreds of millions of the yellow metal. Dawson, (Klondikes, Canada), Nome and Fairbanks during the gold rush days each had populations of forty thousand. Today each has a population of only two thousand.

Beautiful Display of Lights

As Alaska is so far north, we have the midnight sun in summer and beautiful displays of northern lights in winter. Imagine a giant curtain with all the vivid colors of the rainbow stretched across the heavens. They are continually moving as if a gentle breeze was blowing against them.

Great Temperature Variation

Most people in the Southern states invariably think of Alaska as a place of snow and ice, but this is not the case. We have some real hot days in summer and tremendously cold days in winter. We are able to see the sun 24 hours a day during June and part of July. During part of December and January we cannot see the sun at all as it does not rise above the southern horizon. Of course it is light for three or four hours during the day. As it is dark all day during December above the Arctic Circle they close the schools until it begins to lighten up again.

The temperature varies from 100 degrees above in summer to 72 degrees (record) below in winter. The coldest we have had this winter has been 52 below. Last year the coldest was 60 below zero.

Since we have such cold winters, rivers and lakes freeze to a great depth. In fact they use the rivers and lakes for hauling and freighting instead of the highways.

Important Alaska Industries

Some other important Alaska industries are coal, copper and platinum mining. Her biggest industry is fishing, with an annual value of thirty million dollars. Gold, which ranks second, has a value of 26 million dollars.

Alaska's purchase from Russia in 1867 by Secretary of State Seward for seven and one-half million dollars and was called by many at that time "Seward's Folly." Since that time she has proven to be one of Uncle Sam's best investments. She has produced almost one-half billion dollars worth of gold alone in addition to almost one-half billion dollars worth of other products. Journalistically speaking, the gold rush days' papers have had colorful careers. During the Klondike stampede a couple of newspaper men from the states brought a printing press into the district. They had to haul it over dangerous snow covered passes and across frozen rivers and lakes for hundreds of miles at thousands of dollars of expense. After reaching Dawson and installing it they began to turn out a paper of only two or four pages, selling for 25 cents. They paid for the press and the freighting cost after one year of operation.

Alaska is much larger than the combined area of all the southern states. Her population is only sixty thousand (1930 census) with about one-half this total being natives (Indians and Eskimos).

I would like to correct an error which appeared in a recent issue of The Press. Central is about 140 miles northeast of Fairbanks and 50 miles south of the Arctic Circle.

In closing, as I look out the window and see the thermometer which reads 50 below zero, I think of "Sunny Dixie."

Very truly yours,
R. E. Berry.

Every Farm Family To Get Publication

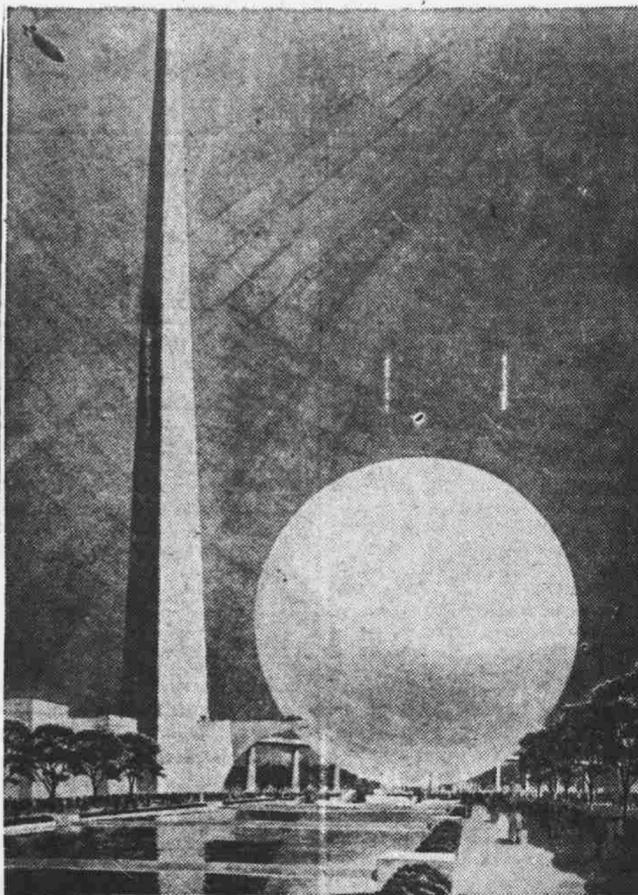
Each person on the farm needs three bushels of wheat, two bushels of corn, 1.8 bushels of Irish potatoes, two bushels of sweet potatoes, 85 pounds of pork and lard, 30 dozen eggs, four gallons of sorghum, and quantities of about 15 other foods to maintain health throughout a year.

This information is contained in a new publication prepared by E. W. Gaither, analyst of the State college extension service, and now being distributed to every farm family in North Carolina. It is designed to aid the farm family in planning its food and feed requirements, and crop rotations.

Dr. I. O. Schaub, director of the extension service, is having the pamphlet distributed through the county farm and home agents, but he announced that copies are also available upon request to the Agricultural Editor at State college, Raleigh, for Extension Circular No. 235, "Facing Farm Facts."

In addition to tables listing the

Key Buildings of the New York World's Fair



Artist's sketch of the 200-foot Perisphere within which visitors to the New York World's Fair of 1939 will view, from a revolving platform suspended in mid-air, a dramatization of the World of Tomorrow. Clusters of fountains will screen the piers supporting the Sphere so that the great ball will appear to be poised on jets of water. The 700-foot triangular Trylon at the left—a unique architectural form—will serve as a Fair beacon and broadcasting tower.

food requirements for one person, there are tables showing how much feed is required for one hen, one dairy cow, one beef animal, one hog, one sheep and one horse or mule. The circular also contains a garden calendar, showing what, when and how to plant dozens of vegetables adapted to this section, and a crop rotation table which

lists the general crops, and other crops which follow best to conserve and enrich the soil.

Dr. Schaub said, "It is not possible to predict definitely in advance what price farm products will bring. Those depending upon money received from the sale of farm products with which to purchase food for the family and feed

for the livestock often find themselves without the necessary funds. The farmer who produces his living largely from the farm and who conserves the fertility of the soil usually lives well every year and in the end has more cash as a result of his labors."

RELIEF

A new plan of distributing food to relief families by issuing them stamps good for commodities in grocery stores will be tried as an experiment in a limited number of cities.

AAA

During the past crop year, the agricultural adjustment administration program was applied to 282,629,000 acres, or almost 65 per cent of the total crop land of the United States.

HOME TALENT

State College's annual farm and home week, to be held July 31-August 4, will feature more farmers and farm women on the program, announces John W. Goodman, assistant extension director.

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THE RECORD... Facts That Concern You

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ing industry stands ready to cooperate fully with all law enforcement authorities. The brewers can enforce no laws... but they do insist that retail beer outlets should give no offense to anyone.

Would you like a booklet that describes the brewers' program of direct action? Address: United Brewers Industrial Foundation, 19 East 40th St., New York, N. Y.

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