

# Selma Man's Son Writes From Alaska

Mr. and Mrs. Freeman Broadwell Get Letter From Their Son, John Broadwell—Tells of Many Experiences In Alaska.

Kotzebue, Alaska  
October 28, 1942

This will be a more or less complete story of my trip since leaving Nome. We travelled from Kotzebue with Seig Wein to Barrow and now are back in Kotzebue again.

I saw the greatest display of Northern light I have ever seen, last night. The moon was shining brightly but these lights were so vivid that the moonlight made little difference. At times all the colors of the rainbow were to be seen and the streaks of lights danced vividly back and forth with a swirling motion or a straight line or a side thrust or in fact any type of direction you can mention. The streaks appeared to be just out of reach above your head and at times I could hear them swish.

We left Nome Oct. 17 for Kotzebue on this trip. Kotzebue had already assumed its winter covering although there was no snow on the ground in Nome at the time. Otto Nelson, the foreman at Kotzebue, was instrumental in providing us with a lot of diversified entertainment. We went into the home of one of the better class Eskimo families where they were doing some skin sewing for Otto. It was quite interesting. The house has only one fairly large room and in this house the father and mother occupied the only double bed. A married son and his pregnant wife slept on a blanket thrown in one corner of the room. A married daughter and her husband apparently used a single cot to sleep on in the other corner. The stove was located in the other corner. Three smaller children apparently slept in the bed with papa and mama. Maybe you are wondering how I know so much about their sleeping places; the answer is that we went in at night and they were all lounging in their "spots" because they didn't have any chairs on which to sit. The entrance to the house was through a cache in which about eight dogs reside.

This same night we also visited the home of a white family. They had run a fox farm on the Noatak River about fifty miles from Kotzebue but the low selling price of fox furs had forced them out of business. The lady has some very rare and interesting curios from this section. She has a wall picture about 2 feet by 3 feet, made by Agiapuk, the Eskimo artist. She also has a clear jade necklace and bracelet made from Kobuck River jade. Incidentally, I have flown over this solid mountain of jade on the Kobuck on my way to Shungnak. The mountain appears green.

We also visited the hospital and heard the Doctor (Bauer from N. Y. City) tell about his various professional experiences. Then we were invited to the school teacher's home for ice cream and cake. In making these rounds I had consumed a glass of native blueberry wine, a cup of coffee and a piece of apple pie, the ice cream and cake and a cup of cocoa; some mixture, eh!

The next night in Kotzebue the natives staged an Eskimo dance, and they really did get into their dancing stride. It was similar to those in Nome, but somehow these dancers seemed to put more into their dances. A couple of men did some dances which required them to bark as a seal and that was somewhat awe-inspiring. Some of the dances had eight or ten men and an equal number of women, in addition to six drummers and six or eight chanters.

We took a one-day trip to Shungnak and spent about two hours on the ground up there. I made a few movie shots which you can compare with those I made up there this summer. I didn't take any boat rides this time and I didn't go fishing, but apparently fishing is still good up there since some of the natives were still engaged in it.

We also had a one-day trip to Candler and went into their reindeer storage cellar where they keep the dressed deer frozen for years, if necessary. It is a hole dug into a hill and the walls and roofs and floor are solid frozen all year long. The dredges were still running although they had to break a lot of ice in the ponds.

We left Kotzebue on October 22 and arrived in Barrow the same day. The trip on a clear day like that is quite uneventful at this time of year since

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any wild life that might be running around blends into the snow and cannot be seen from our cruising heights (5000 to 6000 feet). We did spot a couple large herd of reindeer and a few caribou.

The weather was nice when we arrived in Barrow and we fully intended to leave early the next morning, but first one thing and then another conspired to keep us grounded until Monday, and although I had a sense of duty impelling me to return to Nome, I still am glad that I could stay four days in Barrow. The ten or twelve white people who live there are hospitable and it is well that they are, because a traveler is dependent on them for food and shelter. The nurse at the hospital has a cabin with an igloo for a bedroom and she very courteously gave us her cabin and moved over to the hospital while we were there. She is a most interesting person since she has been in Alaska for 20 years and has been on travel duty the greater part of the time. She has been called "The angel of the North." The stories she tells are hair-raising and yet she has a sense of humor that makes them sound very commonplace. If I were to repeat half the stories she and others told in Barrow, I would probably end up with a book-length manuscript. She told how they build ice houses or snow block houses when a howling blizzard catches them on the trail at 40 below zero. She says her dog will dig her from under any snow drift if she does not arise in the morning when it is time to go. Her territory extends from Point Lay to Demarcation on the Canadian boundary and she is supposed to cover it once in the summer and once in the winter but since she is the only one there (nurse) she can't get away at all now.

The Presbyterian minister and his wife had us over for several meals which we enjoyed very much. On Friday night we had dinner with them and saw him perform an Eskimo marriage. It wasn't unlike a white marriage except that nobody kissed the bride, but they did wish them happiness and all that. After the wedding friends and young people, including most of the white population, gathered in the school house to play games. The games were mostly school-like, "tag" and "skip", etc. They went home about 10:30 after having a good time.

On Saturday Chan and I rented a dog team and went out towards Point Barrow on official business, but didn't quite get there. We did get to where the natives were cutting their winter supply of ice. They cut it at this time of the year before it gets too thick to handle. It was about ten inches thick at that time. I made some movies on that trip but the light was pretty dim, so they might not be too good. I took some pictures of two polar bear cubs in a wire pen. They were the same ones as I took last summer when I was there.

On Saturday night the white people gather at the school for ping pong and dancing. We had lots of fun and everybody dances except Miss Keaton, the nurse. The reason being that she froze two toes off her foot at one time.

On Sunday we all went to church service. The church was packed. They all wear their parkas during church, so they have very little if any fire in the one little stove. The minister delivered a very interesting sermon which he had written down on paper. After he had finished speaking, his first assistant translated his sermon to Eskimo, repeating the entire sermon. They sing in both Eskimo and English, but most in English. The Eskimos of Barrow are quite re-

ligious, but when the job needed the men to work on Sunday, enough were available to keep things going.

One thing I enjoyed, because it was unusual, was being able to go into one of the sod igloos which Banks had rebuilt. It is a bit ironical that a man from North Carolina should be engaged in building sod igloos at Point Barrow. The house has such a narrow doorway that I could barely squeeze through with my raccoon coat, and the head room inside just wasn't there. A very small stove with very little fire is all that is required to keep the place warm. The furnishings are frugal but a very pungent odor of walrus, seal, dog, etc., assails your nostrils when you enter therein.

We left Barrow on Monday and stopped at Wainwright and Point Lay. We spent the night at Point Lay, and I feel safe in saying, saw a native village which would be just like villages were hundreds of years ago, if the school house weren't there. The Wilsons, who taught there last year, had left and a native from King Island is the teacher there now. He treated us very nicely, providing us with good food and sleeping places in the school house. The village is on the edge of the ocean with a lagoon in behind. Most of the houses are sod igloos except three or four. Most of the natives were out fishing through the ice on the rivers. One interesting thing we saw was a newly made walrus hide boat which used whale bones for ribs and sinew for holding it together.

We arrived in Kotzebue day before yesterday and now this day is too far gone to travel back to Nome. We couldn't have safely crossed the mountains into Nome yesterday or today.

Maybe I had better tell you that all my travel has been on official business and that it wasn't merely a pleasure cruise, although I have avoided any reference to my work.

## Rations For Other Than Private Dwellings

In view of the seriousness of the fuel oil supply situation, Washington has just issued by telegraph the instructions quoted below which pertain to the issuance of rations for other than private dwellings.

"Please notify local Boards that they must find equipment of applicants on Form 1101 convertible unless satisfactory proof of non-convertibility is provided. Since the answers to the questions on Form 1101 are normally insufficient to warrant a determination as to convertibility, the Boards will have to find them convertible and issue a ration only until the earliest date conversion can be completed, not for more than heating periods 1 and 2. Experience has shown that, generally, applicants will require rations for periods 1 and 2 to enable them to complete conversion. Where this is the case, rations should be tailored by the elimination of periods 3, 4 and 5 coupons and applicants informed that no further ration will be issued until non-convertibility is proved. Evidence as to non-convertibility submitted by applicants for further rations, should be reviewed by local Board Technical Advisors, recruited from the list forwarded to each Board, and the issuance of further rations made sub-

ject to their recommendation. Where rations have already been issued for the full year, compliance with Amendment No. 7 necessitates the notification of applicants that rations will be recalled unless non-convertibility is proved. The same Technical Committee should review evidence of non-convertibility and make recommendations to the Board as to cases where rations should be recalled. The Fuel Oil supply situation is now so critical that above instructions must be issued and acted on without delay."

## Marine Corps Will Take Boys At 17

Raleigh, Dec. 12.—Seventeen-year-olds may now enlist in the U. S. Marine Corps, it was announced by state headquarters of the Marine Corps Recruiting Service today.

Following President Roosevelt's order of a week ago, freezing enlistment of men 18 to 38 years of age, the Marine Corps also froze enlistments of 17-year-olds.

But now the ban on the 17-year-old boys has been lifted, and these boys can apply for enlistment at Raleigh, Charlotte, Asheville, Winston-Salem or Greensboro.

Peggy: "I'm divorcing Charlie. You don't know what I've gone through, living with him."

Anne: "Well, everybody says it was all he had."

Latest product to come from industry is a new "plastic glass," 20 or 30 times harder than other clear plastics.

A pound of scrap will stop a Jap.

Smith: "Those auto engineers are certainly geniuses at making driving easier."

Jones: "How's that?"  
Smith: "1940, no running boards; 1941, no gear shift; 1942, no car."

Wife: "John, I'm writing a paper on calendar reform for our Club. Do you know which Pope gave us our present calendar?"  
Husband: "Pope? Good heavens! I thought it came from our grocer."

A pound of scrap might save a boy.

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