

Itinerary February, 1903

On the afternoon of February first, in company with a Noatak native, I left Kotzebue for the Noatak School, about seventy five miles from Cape Blossom. We crossed Hotham Inlet and camped about ten miles up from the mouth of the river at the cabin of a native.

Feb. 2- About ten miles from our camping place, the trail crossed a portage for about fifteen miles, leaving the river with its first big bend on the left. We then followed the river for about five miles and left it for another portage on the right of the river continuing until we found the little hunting cabin of a native, our camping place for the night. We could follow the course of the river with our eyes on account of the timber that lined the banks of the stream. The timber does not extend back far from the river banks, except in sheltered ravines in the hills on either both sides of the valley. Back from the river the timber is small and scrubby. That along the river banks ranges from six inches to two feet.

Feb. 3- Followed the river, well timbered on both banks, until about noon, when we approached the site of the school building. During the morning we passed one of the great gathering places of natives in years past, when the natives from Pt. Hope, Kivalena, Kotzebue and other points of the surrounding country were accustomed to gather for their

annual festival of dancing and trading. Though the temperature had been registering 20 to 50 below for many days, we found big stretches of the river honey combed with air holes, making travel difficult. Quantities of dead salmon were floating around in these air holes. This is the spawning ground of the salmon that come up the river annually,

The school is on one of the high bluffs on the river bend, in a thick grove of fir, with a good beach at the bottom of the bluff. The country around is well stocked with game and the river teeming with fish ~~whatysarandastener~~. Compared with the barren coast regions these well timbered river spots are very pleasant.

Feb. 4-5-6-7- Remained at the school going over building accounts, plans for work etc. A village site is plotted on the high ground surrounding the school and the natives are getting ready to build comfortable, sanitary cabins. Beyond the school about twenty miles the timber runs out and the hills are bare except for the moss which the natives say covers the hills.

Feb. 8- Left for Kivalena which is about west from the Noatak village. We crossed a low divide late in the afternoon and sighted the sea coast in the distance. We hoped to reach the coast but left the stream we were following to make a short cut and the darkness coming down suddenly it was impossible to make out our course. On reaching some scrub willows long after dark we camped.

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Feb. 9-Left camp early and reached the coast about an hour later and Kivalena about ten o'clock. Otpelle came in from the reindeer camp late in the evening and reported that one of the men had broken his leg. He brought two deer and returned to camp by moonlight.

Feb. 10-The wind was fair for going around Cape Thompson and I decided to go to Pt. Hope at once rather than run the risk of the usual delay in getting around that stormy point. We camped at a small igloo occupied by a Portuguese and his native family, just south of the Cape.

Feb. 11- Passed around C. Thompson and reached the reindeer camp about twenty miles south of Pt. Hope. The herders were busy lassoing and hair marking the deer in order to get an accurate count of the deer recently moved from Kivalena to this place. Spent the day at the camp and went on to Pt. Hope with Electoona next day.

Feb. 12-13- Spent at Pt. Hope.

Feb. 14- Returned

Feb. 14- Returned to the reindeer camp in the evening, prepared to leave from the reindeer camp for Icy Cape the following morning.

Feb. 15- A heavy storm from the north set in during the night making travelling impossible, either through the Kukpu kukpuk canyon or around the coast.. The storm quieted down during the afternoon of the sixteenth.

Feb. 17- Left camp with Niglik, Electoona's apprentice, three sleds and four deer. en route to Icy Cape. Nikautilik, another of Electoona's apprentices, and Neovohok, were on a hunting expedition to the interior with two sleds and three deer, and accompanied us for a day and a half. Pootweela, an Icy Cape native, stranded at Pt. Hope and cared for by the herders, also accompanied us.

Feb. We crossed country until about noon, when we struck the Kukpuk R. and followed it until evening. From the time we left camp until evening there was not a sign of fuel. At our camping place a few scrub willow willows were scattered about. The tent was pitched on the bank of the stream and well walled with snow.

Feb. 18- Left camp early and continued on up the canyon. The country gradually became more open and the hills less high. We struck the left fork of the river about noon. The hunters left us at this point to cross to the head of the Kivalena R. We travelled until evening and camped.

Feb. 19-

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Feb. 19- We left camp early with fine weather but about two hours later the air was filled with fine snow driven by a south wind. It was often impossible to see the sled ahead. Fortunately the wind was behind us and we had the river to follow. We finally reached a point where the stream turned to the west and we were to cross to the coast. With the wind behind us and no landmarks to be seen we struck out across the white country keeping the wind behind us and running the risk of striking the coast at some point where we could descend the bluffs. The coast was reached about dark and we camped.

Feb. 20- Reached the Lisburne coal mine about noon. A good shelter and plenty of fuel were welcome.

Feb. 21-Sunday-

Feb. 21-Sunday- Finished drying out and got our outfit in shape for the balance of the journey.

Feb. 21- Camped about ten miles south of C. Beaufort. Made a snow house.

Feb. 23- Passed C. Beaufort and camped about fifteen miles beyond in a snow house. The natives are quite expert in making a snow house. A good snow bank is found, the snow soft enough to cut out nicely. The size of the house is marked out and cut with a saw. The snow inside these bounds is cut into large cakes with the saw and when removed are stood around the cavity for walls. Other cakes are placed on top, each being trimmed to fit with a knife. The result is a shelter wind proof and warm. With a small stove inside they are very comfortable.

Feb. 24- Reached an abandoned igloo late in the afternoon.

Feb. 25-

Feb. 25- Reached Pt. Lay

Feb. 26- Passed the Barrow mail carriers, Ahlook and Powyu Powyuna on their way to Pt. Hope with mail. Camped at the mouth of the Ootekok R.

Feb. 27- Arrived at the reindeer camp about noon. The herd is about ten miles south of Icy Cape, on the back side of the lagoon. They occupy two igloos. Part of the apprentices live with Ahlook and part with Shoudla. One of the apprentices, Oveuktuk, sprained his ankle while breaking a sled deer last spring and will probably have a stiff ankle.

In the evening went on into Icy Cape with Shoudla. The natives of this settlement were unusually successful in whaling last year and have more flour than usual as a result. The natives of the settlement had 162 sacks. The reindeer camp from trading, mail carrying, et c. 94 sks. The natives are all anxious to get deer.

Feb. 28- Sunday.

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