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Return home

Shungnak, Alaska,
Sept. 16, 1915.

Walter Shields,
Supt. Native Schools,
Nome, Alaska.

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Dear Sir,

know the news.

I will write a few lines to let you

Hearing that some of the native were ill up the river, I left Shungnak Aug 16, with Mrs. Sickler the baby, a native boy and Riley Jim for Kella. The sick boy had died before we reached the camp and the natives were returning from the funeral. There was a woman who was having trouble with her lungs and we left her some medicine. The next day we visited several camps but found the natives in good health. We camped above the mouth of the Moneeluk. The next morning we visited the Per River village, where we found several people who were sick and we left them medicines. We camped that night below the mouth of Selby Lake. Riley Jim and I went to visit a hunting camp where there was a man who had been taken ill with a pain in the small of his back I sent him down to get medicine from Mrs. Sickler and Jim and I spent the night with the hunters at the Salmon hole. Jim shot a bear several times but we lost it. We looked for the bear all day and then brought Mrs Sickler up to the camp. I spent one day fishing and one day bear hunting. I saw two bear but did not get a shot. Then we returned to Shungnak in two days visiting the various camps. The sick woman died shortly after our reaching Kella. We had a very enjoyable time and the natives were very glad to see us. It was a pretty short vacation. The gardens have kept me very busy.

We harvested from the school garden 15 sacks of potatoes of which 10 were of large size. We also had 10 gunnies of turnips, a couple of

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of hundred pounds of trimmed cabbage heads, a hundred pounds of carrots and parsnips, besides rhubarb, parsley, lettuce etc. Mrs Richles has pickled 8 gallons of beets and made 8 gallons of the finest currant jelly besides blueberry and cranberries jams and jellies. So we are in no danger of starving this winter. I found many raspberries growing up the river and I brought several hundred plants back and will try to grow them. Prof Georgeson sent me enough Currant and raspberry bushes for a start. He also sent me some Horse radish which is growing fine. He sent us some potatoes but we are growing them under glass in 140 yds hothouse.

The native gardens are turning out well. Yukon Charley had 18 sacks, and a number of natives will have over half a ton.

I have bought and caught about 300 salmon and am engaged in cooking them and putting them in the garden. I want to get the natives to raise enough to ship to Kiana and Kotzebue and they cannot do this until they learn to make large gardens away from the village. While the slops and docks make the ground productive near the houses, the ground away from the village is barren until fertilized. I have bought many new seeds from Ferry and Burpee and hope to have the best garden in Alaska next year.

I have lined the roof of the school with the new lumber. Did all the work myself.

The Natives have made a fair catch of fish this year, and have done well in hunting. The health of the natives is not good. At present they all have the annual colds that are brought up from Kotzebue.

We have a Friends' missionary here, Miss Stratton. She has not started anything yet and I hope she will not get the natives crazy this winter. From my experiences with Mrs Myers, and the native testimonies concerning others who were able to raise dead men to

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life, and turn black men into white men, I have great fear and respect for these female Friends missionaries. I would prefer them to assist the English suffragettes or Carrie Nation, rather than to have them aid me in village work. I am indeed thankful for each day that we are left in peace. I am quite sure that if they knew how much influence Riley Jim and Yukon Charley have in this village, that they would not waste their time on the trading families who spend their summers at Kotzebue and still cling to the Friends faith. Well I am glad for the "Show down". I want to see how I stand. I suppose she was sent up here out of revenge for Samms loosing his job through his own fault.

I was very glad to get all the garden tools. We shall make great use of them next year. The potato hooks came in very handy this fall for harvesting the potato crop; the boys thought that they were great.

Yukon Charley has done very well mining. He has cleaned up upwards of 40 oz. of gold dust and has employed several men.

I shall start school as soon as the natives return which will be after the first ice or about the first of October. I am very busy I have so many things to get in shape before winter.

Our baby is well and I am willing to bet that she can talk better Eskimo than your twins. With best regards I remain

Respectfully

And M. Siehler