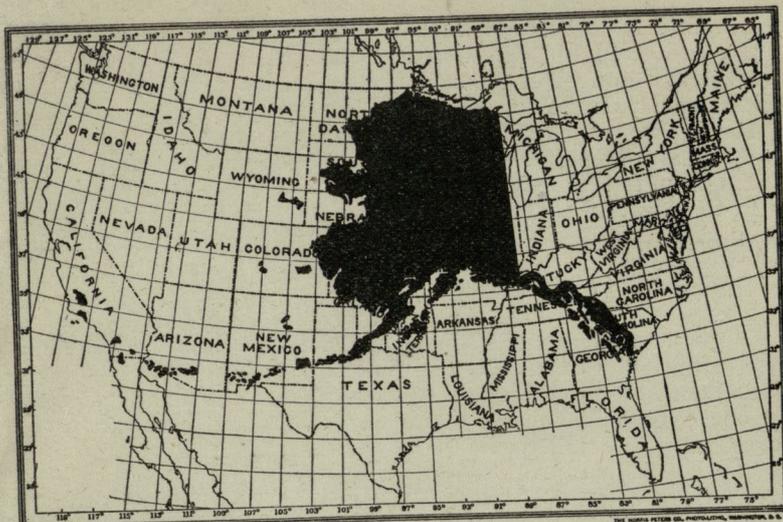


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Courtesy of *The Popular Science Monthly*

THE SIZE OF ALASKA AS COMPARED WITH THE UNITED STATES

WHAT MISSIONARIES HAVE DONE FOR ALASKA

BY SHELDON JACKSON, D.D., LL.D., WASHINGTON, D. C.

For Twenty-five Years a Missionary in Alaska

With the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States there came from that unknown frozen North to the Christian heart of America a wail as despairing and piteous as was ever wafted from the jungles of Darkest Africa. In answer to that cry I was permitted to visit Alaska with Mrs. A. R. McFarland, the first American missionary. We landed at Fort Wrangell on the 10th of August, 1877, and established the first Presbyterian mission. Mrs. McFarland was left in charge while I returned to the States to appeal to the churches and raised the funds for her support.

The following year (1878) the Rev. John G. Brady, the present governor of Alaska, and Miss Fannie Kellogg were sent to Sitka, and Rev. S. Hall Young, D.D., present general missionary for the Presbytery of the Yukon, was sent to Wrangell. A little later Rev. Eugene S. Willard, Rev. Alonzo E. Austin, Rev. J. Loomis Gould, Dr. W. H. Corlies, Rev. J. W. McFarland, and Rev. L. F. Jones, with their families, were added to the mission forces. Since then there has been a constant succession of godly men and women establishing in Southern Alaska stations at Skagway, Haines, Hoonah, Juneau, Douglass, Killisnoo, Sitka, Wrangell, Saxman, Jackson, and Klawack.

When the missionaries arrived in Alaska there were among the aboriginal population five principal families:

The Eskimos extended across the American Continent from Labrador to Bering Strait and from Bering Strait south to the Aleutian

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Islands, and from Unimak Pass along the North Pacific coast almost to the base of Mount St. Elias in Southeastern Alaska, so that the three great ocean sides of the territory are occupied by Eskimo or Innuït population. They are a seafaring people.

Passing from the coast into the interior, we find the beginning of the Athabaskan family, extending across the continent from Central Alaska down to Minnesota.

In the Aleutian Islands are the Aleuts, a people almost exterminated by Russian civilization. It is one of the interesting facts of history that when our American Revolution was just beginning the Aleut Revolution was just coming to a close. Ours lasted eight years, theirs for fifty years. For half a century the native people of the Aleutian group fought the power of Russia, and only succumbed after almost the entire population had been annihilated.

In Southeastern Alaska are the ten tribes of the Thlingets, speaking one common language. Missionary work and civilization commenced among them later in 1877.

The Hydah are in Prince of Wales Island.

The Aleuts having been under Russian civilization for a century, have been brought into the Russian Greek Church, and they are all baptized members of that Church. But the Eskimo, Athabascans, Phlingets, and Hydah were heathen at the commencement of the American occupation. The destruction of infants, the killing of the sick and aged, the torture to death for witchcraft, polygamy, and slavery were all more or less prevalent among one or more of these families, and remnants of this heathenism continue down to the present time. The success of the Presbyterian mission in Southeastern Alaska among the natives was so great as to attract the attention of the entire Christian world. Stimulated by this success, the other great missionary societies commenced preparations to also open missions at Fort Wrangell and Sitka, side by side with the Presbyterians.

The Division of Territory

The establishment of these several missions among so few people (one thousand five hundred) would have been a waste of men and money, and the introduction of the diversities that exist among us would constitute a real hindrance to mission work. To prevent this a convention was called at the Methodist Book Rooms in January, 1880, of the various missionary societies, and an equitable division of the field was allotted to the different denominations. The Presbyterians being already established in Southeastern Alaska, that field was assigned to them. Since 1877 they have spent \$750,000 in their efforts to elevate, civilize, and Christianize the natives—a clear evidence of the energy and zeal that they have put into the work. The fruitage in part is seven native churches with over 1,000 native communicants and a second generation started in Christian citizenship. There has been a continuous religious revival in that section for three years. Eighteen months ago an old chief, who raised a rebellion in

1877, and who has been conspicuous in his opposition to the mission work, gave his heart to Christ, and is throwing the same fire into his evangelistic work for the benefit of his relatives as he did into his persecution of Christian natives.

The Baptists selected their field six hundred and twenty-two miles west of the Presbyterians, on Wood Island, Kodiak, and adjacent islands, Kenai Peninsula, and the regions bordering on Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. Their first mission was erected on Wood Island, in the harbor of Kodiak, where they have a church and prosperous orphanage.

Six hundred and twenty-two miles west of the Baptists is Unalaska, the center of the Methodist field, where they have established a good, strong, efficient work, built out of the waifs



OLD LOG CABIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, JUNEAU, ALASKA

who had been discarded by the Russian-Greek Church. The Methodist field extends the whole length of the Aleutian Islands, and at Unalaska they have an orphanage named the Jesse Lee Home.

The Moravians went eight hundred and forty miles to the northeast of Unalaska, and selected the valley of the Kuskekwin and Nushagak rivers, where they have secured a large following. In some of their villages they have evening vespers every night. When bedtime comes the church-bell rings, and the entire population, except the little ones, go to church, and a young man who has been taught a little English reads a passage in the Bible, explains it in the native tongue, leads them in prayer in their own tongue, and they go home and go to bed. Where can you find a better record in the most favored place in the United States?

On the Delta and in the valley of the great Yukon the Roman Catholics have a number of missions. Their principal station and leading schools are at Holy Cross Mission, four hundred and ten miles from the mouth of the river. In the same Yukon Valley are the principal missions of the Alaskan natives of the Episcopal Church, the best equipped of which are at Anvik, four hundred and fifty-seven miles from the mouth of the river; St. James Mission, eight hundred and ninety-seven miles, and Fort Yukon, one thousand three hundred and fifty-three miles. The Church of England has maintained missions for nearly sixty or seventy years on the Canadian side of the boundary line.

One hundred and fifty miles north of Anvik is the successful mission of the Swedish Evangelical Union Mission Church at Unalaklik, and a few miles farther west, on Golofnin Bay, their second mission. They have a third station in Southeast Alaska, at Gakutat.

Two hundred miles west of Golofnin is located at Teller Reindeer

Station, Port Clarence, an orphanage of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North America. The orphanage at Teller, Golofnin, and Unalaklik largely grew out of the epidemic of 1900, when so many Eskimos died and the missionaries took charge of the orphan children.

One hundred miles west of Teller, at Cape Prince of Wales, on Bering Strait, facing Asia, is the mission of the American Missionary Association (Congregational). At this point they have built up a good, strong church from unpromising Eskimo elements.

Two hundred miles northeast of the Congregationalists, on the shore of the Arctic Ocean, is the "Friends" Mission at Kotzebue. The Friends also have missions at Douglass and Kaake, in Southeast Alaska. Two hundred miles northwest of the Friends is an Episcopal mission at Point Hope.

Three hundred and fifty miles north of the Arctic Circle is a Presbyterian mission at Point Barrow, being second most northern mission station on earth—Upernavak, Greenland, being twenty miles further north. At Point Barrow is a Presbyterian missionary and wife, and a government teacher and wife.

Two hundred and fifty miles south of Bering Strait, and within forty miles of the main coast of Asia, is Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, a mission station of the Presbyterian Church. Point Barrow, Point Hope, and Gambell have practically but one mail and one communication a year with the outside world.

Some Results of the Work

What are the results of these missions? From five to ten thousand of the native population through these various organizations have been brought more or less under Gospel influences. Three or four thousand can be classed among those that we call "communicants," and many thousands of the children are in school. In addition to the mission schools, the United States government has twenty-eight public schools, of which probably twenty are exclusively for the natives.

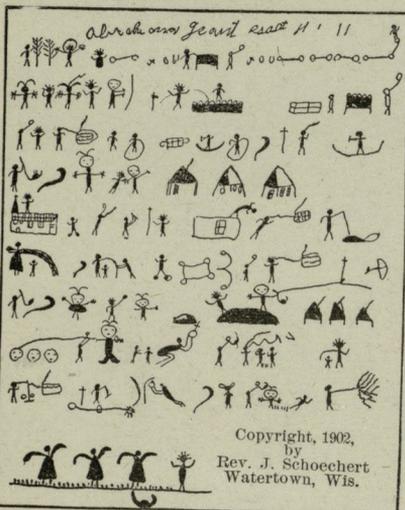
If you ask the average miner the result of missionary work, he will tell you that there are no results whatever from these twenty-five years' work of the churches in Alaska. He does not stop to think that he is in that country as the result of that work. During the past few years many thousands of white men have gone from all parts of this country to the Alaska gold-mines. Some of them have penetrated hundreds of miles north of the Arctic Circle, and have found that if they treat the natives fairly that they can go anywhere in safety. If the miner is starving, the native will divide with him his last bit of fish. Why is it that the white man can go everywhere? It was not always thus. The miner will tell you that it is because the people are so docile; but his knowledge of Alaskan history is very slight. As late as 1877 Sitka was a fortified town, guarded by a detachment of United States troops, and every night before sundown the guard was turned out to search and see that no native was inside the stockade. The gates were barred and locked until sunrise the next morning. The miner does not remember that at St. Michael



AN ESKIMO GIRL AT COOKING-SCHOOL

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was another Russian post with stockade, and that as late as 1870 the traders did not consider themselves safe from the native population in traveling. When the United States sent a scientific expedition to Point Barrow under the charge of an army officer they had mounted cannon trained on the native village. Only twelve years ago (1890) it was proposed to establish a mission at Bering Strait, and place two men there, two thousand miles from any policeman, or any court or other protection. People said that the revenue-cutter would not be



Courtesy of *The Christian Herald*

CHAPTER IV, VERSES 1-11, OF THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, IN ALASKA
ESKIMO HIEROGLYPHICS

out of sight before they would both be massacred. No whaler for ten years had dared drop anchor at that point over night, altho some of them had large crews armed with Winchester rifles. But the Congregational Church placed two men there, and they were left without any protection for twelve months, except the protection of God, and the mission has made it safe for whaler or miner. One of those young men has just resigned after thirteen years' service because the six children that have been born there needed better educational facilities than they could have in that part of the country. Another young man and wife and mother-in-law and children have gone to take the vacated place. Now a miner can drop in and spend the night or a dozen nights in perfect safety in that place, because missions have been established there for ten or fifteen years. Yet these very miners whose lives have been spared will tell you that missions are a complete failure in Alaska. They will point to a group of natives, dirty and ragged, with unkempt children, and say: "Do you think you can do anything with those dirty brats?"

A gentleman coming down from the mines five years ago called at the Methodist mission school at Unalaska, and saw an Aleut girl, her father being dead and her mother an ignorant, dissolute, drinking woman. The gentleman said he wished he could take the child to Chicago. He did so, and put her in the best public school in the city. There were 1,200 children in that school of our best American citizenship, and that girl stood side by side with these children for five years, passing from the third to the eighth grade, and finally took the gold medal at the head of that school. A competitor of that poor Aleut

girl was the daughter of the President of Chicago's Board of Education. And yet we are told that we can not do anything with them.

Many remember young Edward Marsden, a pure-blooded native of Alaska, who, a few years ago, came from the Sitka mission school to the East for an education. He went to Marietta for his college course, and afterward in Cincinnati he took a course in law and one in theology at the same time. He had a master mind that seemed to grasp whatever it undertook. To-day, in southeastern Alaska, with his little steam-launch *The Marietta*, the Rev. Edward Marsden is preaching to



RESIDENCE OF REV. W. T. LAPP, AT CAPE PRINCE OF WALES

his people in eighteen different places, carrying the Gospel into all that region of Alaska, a master workman of whom no church need be ashamed. And yet you are told that "You can not do anything with those dirty brats!"

Another girl was taken from Sitka to New Jersey, and is now a young woman who will stand as the equal of the better class of our American womanhood in her intellectuality. She would be admitted to any Browning Club in Boston. For the last ten years she has been in Alaska teaching among her own people. She is named Frances Willard, for that noble woman. She has taken the Thlinget language, and reduced it scientifically to a written language for the first time, and her "Thlinget Grammar and Vocabulary" is ready for the publisher. And yet "You can not do anything with those dirty brats!"

Two of the native young men who came out of the Sitka school went to a salmon cannery and saved their wages, bought merchandise, and started a store with \$200. A trader in the neighborhood wanted

them to go into partnership with him, but they declined. Then he tried to undersell them, and put his prices down below cost; but the friends of those boys stood by them, and when their stock was used up their friends bought goods from the white trader at a reduced price and turned them over to the boys. They might have kept it up to this time if the trader had not found out how they were getting ahead of him, and learned also that he could not "freeze out those brats." They have amassed \$1,000, bought machinery for a steam sawmill, and are doing a large business in making boxes for the salmon canneries and in supplying white men with lumber.

Other boys have learned carpentry at the Sitka school, and at least one hundred and fifty of the "brats" that have gone out from the Presbyterian mission are making their own living and are respected citizens of the United States in that country.

If the churches in the different denominations had done more work, there would have been more of these scholars. It is a question of environment and not of heredity in Alaska: they have the intellect; they only need the chance to become honest, able citizens. That is what we are pleading of the churches and the government to give us—more facilities—that the remnant of this people, so rapidly passing away, may be brought into Christian citizenship.