

GOLD ON COOK INLET

Early Prospecting

On January 24, 1848, an American carpenter and millwright named James W. Marshall discovered gold on the South Fork of the American River in California. This touched off a search for gold in many parts of the West, including Alaska. The first place in Alaska where there was an active search for gold by a trained prospector, so far as history discloses, was on Cook Inlet. It began there in 1849 with the arrival from Russia of a mining engineer named Peter Doroshin. The historian, Frank A. Golder,^{1/} tells of Doroshin's work this way:

"He reached Cook Inlet late that year (1849) but not too late to wash out a few pans of sand and find a few colors. He took up the work in 1850 and commenced prospecting in earnest on the Kenai Peninsula near the mouth of the Kaknu River. He had all told twelve men to assist him and the number of working days for that season were not more than forty-nine; so that under the circumstances he could not have been expected to accomplish a great deal. He reported that everywhere he dug he found colors. He returned in 1851 with the intention of going up the Kaknu and two other streams for the purpose of tracing the deposits to their source. Although he put in sixty-six days in his investigations he could not reach the mountains where he hoped to locate the mineral veins. In his report he states that the

1. Frank Alfred Golder was born in Russia on August 11, 1877, and came to the United States with his family in 1880. He studied both in this country and in Europe and received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1909. He then taught history at Washington State College, where he became interested in the history of Alaska under the Russians. In 1914-15 and in 1917 Golder worked for the Carnegie Institution of Washington investigating Russian archives. This led to the publication of "Guide to Materials for American History in Russian Archives" in two volumes. After that work he taught history at Stanford University until his death on January 7, 1929. Other books include "Russian Expansion on the Pacific - 1641-1850," "Bering's Voyages," and "John Paul Jones in Russia." He was also the author of many magazine articles.

farther up he went the larger were the grains of gold, but nowhere was it in paying quantities. He should have liked to continue his researches for another year or two had the company been willing." 1/

"The company" was the Russian-American Company, and it was unwilling to have Doroshin spend more time on gold prospecting. In 1852 he went to work on developing a coal property at Port Graham on Cook Inlet. Two years later he returned to Russia.

The next prospecting trip on Kenai Peninsula of which a report has been found was made by U. S. soldiers in 1869, the summer the Army established Fort Kenay at the mouth of the Kaknu River, a stream now known as the Kenai. In a letter dated at Fort Kenay on October 3, 1869, addressed to the newspaper at Sitka, Ivan Petroff ^{2/} of Battery F, 2nd U. S. Artillery, wrote that on August 16 he and two other soldiers, with fifteen day's rations, had started up the river in a three-hole bidarka.

"At noon on the 19th we found the channel blocked by rocks. We took five day's rations and started on foot. On the 22nd we commenced prospecting in a large basin. From six pans of dirt we took an estimated \$1.50 in gold. The bar from which this was taken is from 75 to 80 miles from the mouth of the Kenay River." 3/

1. Golder, Frank A., "Mining in Alaska Before 1867," Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. VII, No. 3, July, 1916, pp. 233-4.
2. "Ivan Petroff occupied a secure place in Alaskan historiography. He wrote a major part of Hubert Howe Bancroft's classic History of Alaska, and was the author of the much-used Report on the Population, Industries and Resources of Alaska, which accompanied the 1880 census report, and contributed a number of articles on the northern territory to newspapers and magazines. These endeavors won him the status of an authority and helped to enlighten the American public," wrote Richard A. Pierce, associate professor of Russian history at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, and a specialist in Russian eastward expansion, in an article titled "New Light on Ivan Petroff, Historian of Alaska," in Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 1, January, 1968, p. 1.
3. "Alaska Times," Sitka, Vol. II, No. 27, October 30, 1869.

Dirt that ran 25¢ to the pan was almost bound to attract other prospectors, but good pay continued elusive. Vladimir Stafieff, an Alaska Commercial Company employee at Fort Kenay, in a letter written on June 1, 1870, mentioned that "our gold-digging soldiers came back without having found anything." ^{1/}

A persistent early-day American prospector who worked in several area of Alaska was a man named George Holt who is reputed to have been the first white man to cross Chilkoot Pass to the headwaters of the Yukon River. That trail-blazing exploit apparently took place in 1875. ^{2/} and the following year Holt, having recrossed the pass, journeyed from Sitka to Kenai. ^{3/} These entries appear in the Station Log for the Alaska Commercial Company's Kenai station in the late summer of 1876: ^{4/}

"August 25, 1876 - Today two bydarkas with five men started for the Skelal Mountain, a distance of 70 or 80 miles up the Kenay River to prospect for gold."

"August 30, 1876 - At 5 p.m. the party that left here on the 25th returned, having me the party which left here some two months ago. They found gold in several places in the Kenay River but not enough to pay."

"September 9, 1876 - Holt and Clark, the two miners who went up the river about three months ago arrived here today."

Later that same year Major Montgomery P. Berry, the U. S. Collector of Customs at Sitka, who had perhaps grubstaked Holt and his partner, Clark, received a letter from Holt which he gave to the Sitka newspaper. The

^{31/} Letter to Stephan Mikhaylovich, Sitka. Translated by Miss Moira Dunbar. "Alaska Sportsman," Vol. XXXI, No. 2, February, 1965, page 2. Original letter in Alaska Historical Library, Juneau.

^{32/} Brooks, Alfred Hulse, "Blazing Alaska's Trails," ed. Burton L. Fryxell, University of Alaska and Arctic Institute of North America, 1953, p. 322.

^{33/} Berry, Montgomery P., Collector of Customs, Sitka, letter to Holt, May 15, 1876, Letter No. 487 in letter press copies of correspondence of the Collector, Alaska Historical Library, Juneau.

⁴⁰ "Alaska Commercial Company Records: 1868-1911," (manuscript), at University of Alaska Library, College, Alaska; Kenai Station Logs, dates indicated.

news story said:

"Major Berry, Collector of Customs, has received a letter from G. Holt, an old California miner. Dated at Kenai on Sept. 10, 1876: 'I came down the river last night. Shirpser & Co. schooner leaves today for Kodiak. I have put in the summer faithfully and have found nothing that would pay over \$2 a day. I will go up the Suchitna River in the spring and should I not succeed, then I am done prospecting for gold in Alaska.'" 1/

The two prospectors did not, however, wait until spring to start out anew; the log of the Kenai Station contains this entry:

"September 14, 1876 - Hold (sic) & Clark, the two men who have been prospecting the Kenay and Skilat Rivers for gold started today for Souchitna River."

Apparently Holt did not "succeed" on the Susitna; a year or so later he went to work for the Alaska Commercial Company as a station agent. He was serving in that capacity at the Knik station, at the head of Knik Arm, on December 18, 1885, when he was shot and killed by an Indian customer, apparently after an argument over a plug of tobacco. 2/

During the decade or such a matter that followed George Holt's 1876 prospecting trip to the Susitna, there was little news of gold prospecting around Cook Inlet or elsewhere in Alaska. This was not, apparently, so much because there was no prospecting as because of the lack of a newspaper anywhere in Alaska to report such happenings: during approximately sixteen of Alaska's first eighteen years under the American flag, there was no newspaper published within its boundaries. It was only after "The Alaskan" was founded at Sitka in November, 1885, that word of Alaska prospecting ventures again appeared in print.

1. "The Sitka Post," Vol. I, No. 5, December 20, 1876.
2. Holt's death is related in the Station Log, Tyonek Station of the Alaska Commercial Company, entry for December 26, 1885, and in "The Alaskan," Sitka, Vol. I, No. 37, July 17, 1886, p. 1.

In 1886 the Kodiak correspondent of "The Alaskan" reported:

"On the 14th of April a party of six prospectors arrived here on the schooner Elsie Iverson, enroute to Cook's Inlet. Bad weather and ice in the Inlet detailed them here until the 1st of May and they have probably not yet been able to ascend the Kenai River, their objective point. Among them are Bill Moore and Cooper, well known in Southeastern Alaska; a Mr. McCord from British Columbia, and some Montana miners. Cooper was on the Inlet in 1883 and claims to have found paying placers." 1/

Later that same year the same correspondent reported that "All our prospectors on Cook's Inlet and in the Alaska Peninsula and Bristol Bay region have been unsuccessful this year." 2/

On May 7, 1887, "The Alaskan" said that J. W. Cooper and a party of about twenty others would spend the summer on Cook Inlet "prospecting for gold, coal, and minerals generally." 3/

This expedition was apparently no more successful than earlier ones had been. On September 8, 1887, "The Alaskan's" Kodiak correspondent wrote:

"Considerable prospecting has been done in this section during the summer, but as far as known, without success. C. P. Shell and a partner, who formerly mined on the Stewart River, have explored the Sushetno River, Cook's Inlet, in vain, and washed out about a dollar's worth of dust in Beluga Creek where the murdered man, Holt, first found gold. A prospecting party under the leadership of Cooper have met with failure.

"The schooner Spencer F. Baird has made an extensive trading and prospecting cruise in this section. The men on board of her express more confidence in Cook's Inlet as a mineral country than any other region they saw." 4/

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1. "The Alaskan," Sitka, Vol. I, No. 37, July 17, 1886, p. 1.
 2. "Letter from Kodiak," October 1, 1886, in "The Alaskan," Sitka, Vol. II, No. 1, November 6, 1886, p. 4.
 3. "The Alaskan," Sitka, Vol. II, No. 27, May 7, 1887, p. 4.
 4. Ibid., Vol. II, No. 47, October 15, 1887, p. 1.

Pay Discovered on Turnagain Arm

It seems to have taken the prospectors a good many years to work their way around from the Kenai River and its drainage to the north or Turnagain Army side of the Kenai Peninsula where gold was eventually found in paying quantities. Fred H. Moffit of the U. S. Geological Survey was able to gather this information about 1904:

"It is said that gold was found near Hope about the year 1888 by a man named King, and that the first claim was soon afterward located on Resurrection Creek, 2 miles above Hope, by Charles Miller. . . Gold was found near by, on Bear Creek, in 1894, by George Beady, F. R. Walcott, and ---- Riley. This stream is said to have been worked by the Russians, but if this be true such operations must have taken place later than the time of Doroshin, for he expressly states that the streams prospected by him were tributary to what is now known as Kenai River.

"Gold was found on Palmer Creek by George Palmer in 1894. These discoveries naturally led to prospecting on neighboring streams, and in the following year (1895) the first stakes were driven on Mills Creek by S. J. Mills, whose name it bears. Mr. Mills at the same time staked ground at the forks of Sixmile Creek (also named by him), which has been worked with profit to the present time, but the ground on Mills Creek was regarded with so little favor by Mills's partner, for whom it was staked, was so far from supplies, and so difficult to reach, that no attempt was made to work it, nor was the claim recorded. Some time during the following month (July, 1895) coarse gold was found on Mills Creek by Robert Michaelson and John Renner, old Yukon miners, who had been prospecting for quartz ledges in the mountains east of Canyon Creek without success and were returning to Hope. These two men, together with three others -- Albert Brown, W. W. Price, and H. C. Pierce -- staked ground on Mills Creek, July 29, and formed a company known as the Polly Mining Company. Their claims included all the stream between the mouth and Juneau Creek, and have since proved to be among the most valuable properties in the Turnagain field.

"In July, 1895, an assembly of miners from streams in the Sixmile drainage basin formed the Sunrise mining district and elected a local recorder. This recording precinct was distinct from the older Turnagain Arm district, which included the Resurrection Creek drainage system and, later, the creeks north of the arm. The two precincts were afterwards united, and recently, much against the desires and convenience of those most interested, the books of the recorder were removed to Seward, where they now are. Other discoveries of gold were made in the Sunrise district during the same year (1895), notably that on Lynx Creek by Fred Smith and

and W. P. Powers. North of the arm the first gold was found (in 1895) by F. J. Perry and Christopher Spillum, on California Creek.

"The discoveries on Mills and Canyon creeks brought about during the following season (1896) the first considerable rush of prospectors to this field. Several thousand men, some state the number as high as 3,000, are said to have landed at Tyonok en route for Turnagain Arm and Sushitna River, while a considerable number crossed by way of Portage Glacier from Prince William Sound. This was the bannery year on Canyon Creek, 327 men being engaged in mining its gravels during the summer. Crow Creek, tributary to Glacier Creek, was also staked about this time, but did not produce any gold till two years later. A second rush into the Turnagain Arm field took place in 1898. This was partly an overflow from the Yukon stampede and was not entirely due to the successes on Resurrection and Sixmile Creeks.

"A majority of the men who first entered the field (1894-95), as well as a few of those who took part in the stampedes of 1896 and 1898, were experienced miners. Many of them had spent years in southeastern Alaska or the Yukon country and nearly all had mined in the placer fields of the West. On the other hand, most of the later comers were inexperienced in any kind of mining and many were scarcely able to take care of themselves. Thousands of dollars worth of useless machinery and supplies are said to have been landed at Tyonok for transfer to the arm, only to be abandoned or given away. Several expeditions spent months in hauling cumbersome and unsuitable outfits through an unknown wilderness to localities which none of their members had ever visited and possibly never had heard of till they reached Alaska. Expensive hydraulic plants were established for the treatment of gravels that had never been prospected. It is doubtful if there is any other part of Alaska where time and money have been wasted in a more enthusiastically ignorant manner or concerning which stockholders in mining companies have been more utterly misled than some places on the Kenai Peninsula. The field did not justify the presence of any such numbers as came, and disappointment was the only result possible for most of them. Such conditions could produce a feeling of distrust in the minds of those who had money to invest in mining enterprises, and hinder, in a serious way, the development of a field, many parts of which have since been worked with profit, and which without doubt still contains valuable gold deposits." ^{1/}

Placer gold production for the Kenai Peninsula has been reported as \$50,000 in 1895, \$120,000 in 1896, \$175,000 in 1897, \$150,000 in each 1898 and 1899, and \$135,000 in 1900, a total of \$780,000 for the six years that closed the 19th century. ^{2/}

1. "Gold Fields of the Turnagain Arm Region," by Fred H. Moffit, in Bulletin No. 277, U. S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C., 1906, pp. 8 & 9.
2. "Past Placer Gold Production from Alaska," Phillip S. Smith, U. S. Geological Survey, Bulletin 857-B, Washington, D.C., 1933, table op. p. 96.

The Rush to Turnagain Arm

Two principal routes were used by the stampeders who headed for the gold diggings on Turnagain Arm in the years 1895 - 1898. One was by way of Passage Canal, a branch of Prince William Sound, where the port of Whittier is today. From the head of the canal the miners climbed over the mountains and a glacier to reach tidewater again at the head of Turnagain Arm, then traveled along the shores of the arm to reach Sixmile Creek and Resurrection Creek on its south side or Glacier Creek on the north shore. It was never an easy route and at times it was a hazardous one. It was also useless for the transporting of any quantity of goods. It could, however, be used early in the spring and late in the fall when Cook Inlet was ice-bound, and many of the steamboat captains preferred it -- by putting the stampeders ashore at Passage Canal they were able to avoid the strong tides and the sand bars of Cook Inlet.

The other route traversed the length of Cook Inlet and a portion of Turnagain Arm, one of the two northern branches of the inlet. The larger ocean-going vessels, both steam and sail, which used this route did so by transferring their cargos and passengers to smaller local boats for the final stage of the journey, up Turnagain Arm, but many small steamers, sloops and schooners were able to proceed directly to the mouths of Sixmile Creek and Resurrection Creek, the two principal gold-bearing streams on Kenai Peninsula. When there was a transfer of passengers and cargo, it was usually made near Tyonek or at Fire Island, but sometimes as far south as the Forelands or even near Homer Spit.

The gold rush to Turnagain Arm generated by far the greatest marine traffic Cook Inlet had ever seen, but it is difficult today to judge its full extent. There was no Customs Office anywhere on the inlet then, and no record has been discovered that shows either the arrivals and departures of individual

vessels in the trade or the total tonnage of shipping involved in it. What information is available on the marine traffic is in bits and fragments and found largely in the columns of newspapers published at Sitka and Juneau -- each approximately 600 miles from the center of the activity -- the only newspapers then being published in Alaska. At best, these bits give an indication of the traffic rather than the whole picture of it.

The following Cook Inlet news items appeared in "The Alaskan," published at Sitka, on the dates indicated:

"The schooner Crystal, Captain Larson, from Tacoma and bound for Cook Inlet, arrived at Sitka last Saturday. In addition to Captain Larson there are four other hopeful gold-seekers aboard." (Saturday, June 6, 1895)

"J. A. Becker has received a letter from his brother, Ryland Becker, who went to Cook Inlet in the schooner Helen last spring. Ryland has found little gold." (Saturday, August 3, 1895)

"Five schooners are in port at the mouth of Resurrection Creek, a place called by some 'Resurrection City'." (Undated letter from a miner at Turnagain Arm, published Saturday, August 10, 1895)

"From Kodiak: The schooner Alice brought three small bear cubs to Kodiak from Cook Inlet." (Saturday, August 17, 1895)

"The Marion, a barkentine from below, was at Wood Island on the 1st of the month, having come down from Cook Inlet bringing a cargo of coal. It returned to the inlet on the 9th, taking Mr. Creason and Mr. Archer, storekeepers for the Alaska Commercial Company, from Kodiak. This is the ship advertised to be at Sitka between the 25th of June and the 1st of July to take miners to the Westward, but getting no encouragement, abandoned the design. Toward the close of the season she will take a cargo of freight and passengers and sail below. (Saturday, August 17, 1895.)

"The schooner Ellida arrived at Sitka yesterday. She left Turnagain Arm on July 12, reached Kodiak July 27, and on the 28th started for the Sound but encountered a heavy storm and after battling it eight days, changed her course for Sitka. Several months ago this schooner left here loaded with prospectors for the Inlet, all of whom are returning as fast as possible, disgusted with that section." (Saturday, August 17, 1895.)

"Kodiak, August 20: Schooners have been coming down from Cook's Inlet occasionally. A few miners arrive on every vessel. They do not bring any good mining news from that camp." (Saturday, August 31, 1895)

"The schooner Alice, A. Fillmore, master, arrived here on Thursday, four days out of Kodiak, and is alongside Otto Nelson's wharf discharging Cook Inlet coal." (Saturday, September 21, 1895.)

"The Alice, Captain Fillmore, is a vessel of 8 tons, eight months old, built at Vashon Island, Washington. Capt. Fillmore reports all well on Cook Inlet, and excellent prospects. Gold is everywhere plentiful, but a man must be able to 'put his shoulder to the wheel' figuratively, and literally to the boulders and rocks." (Saturday, September 28, 1895.)

During the same year, 1895, the weekly newspaper published at Juneau,

"The Alaska Searchlight," carried these Cook Inlet news items:

"The schooner North returned to Juneau yesterday morning from Cook Inlet, bringing down a number of prospectors who have concluded the Turnagain Arm area has nothing for them. The North sailed from the Arm on July 2." (Saturday, July 27, 1895.)

"The schooner Crystal returned to Seattle from Cook Inlet on July 17." (Saturday, August 3, 1895.)

"About 3 a.m. on September 19 the sloop Helga Carolina arrived from Turnagain Arm, from which she sailed September 2. She carried 13 passengers. When she sailed, the Helen of Sitka was the only vessel left there. The Elwood, looked for on September 1, had not yet arrived." (Saturday, September 21, 1895.)

"B. C. Pilscher, formerly of Juneau, has been picked up at Yakutat by the steamer Dora. Pilscher was a passenger on the schooner Crystal which was wrecked sixteen miles from Yakutat on September 27. Pilscher left Juneau on May 17 for Cook Inlet aboard the steamer Chehalis. The steamer was under charter to George Beede of Seattle and made two trips to Cook Inlet." (Saturday, November 2, 1895.)

Marine News, Year 1896

In 1896 "The Alaskan" at Sitka carried the following news items, on the dates indicated, concerning Cook Inlet shipping:

"Deputy Collector of Customs Joseph C. Lane, at Kodiak, has recommended that a Customs House be established at Tyonek on Cook Inlet and an inspector be placed on the inlet." (Saturday, January 11, 1896.)

"On April 24 and May 8 the Alaska Commercial Company steamer Bertha, Captain J. M. Hays, will sail from Sitka for Cook Inlet, landing passengers at Tyoonock. Fares are \$25 for cabin passengers and \$15 for steerage passengers. Freight from Sitka to Tyoonock is \$10 per ton." (Saturday, February 15, 1896.)

"The steamer Lakme called at Sitka on April 9 and the steamer Utopia on April 10, both bound for Cook Inlet." (Saturday, April 11, 1896.)

"The Bertha sailed for Tyonek and Kodiak last Saturday with 28 cabin and 92 steerage passengers." (Saturday, May 2, 1896.)

"From 'Tacoma Weekly Union' (no date): 'The brigantine Blakely has started north with a full load of freight and 100 men for Turnagain Arm. It was necessary for the Blakely to get a special permit to go direct to Cook Inlet and this was obtained from Deputy Collector Drum.'" (Saturday, May 2, 1896)

"From Special Correspondent, Kodiak: 'Two schooners put into Kodiak on April 25 with a large number of miners and prospectors for Cook Inlet.'" (Saturday, May 9, 1896)

"Western Notes (reported by the Purser of the Bertha):

"When the Bertha left Sitka on April 25 for Tyonek via Kodiak she had aboard 120 passengers. Kodiak was reached on the 1st and Tyonek on the 4th.

"The schooner Albion from San Francisco for Turnagain Arm passed Tyonek on the morning of the 3rd, having aboard about 130 miners.

"On the Bertha's return trip, she stopped at Coal Bay, at which port several vessels had already arrived. On the 28th of April the George W. Prescott touched there with miners.

"On May 1, the steam schooner Loyal reached Six-Mile Creek and discharged freight and passengers. It is reported that the Utopia is high and dry at Resurrection Creek and unlikely to get off until the spring tide at the end of May." (Saturday, May 30, 1896.)

"The Dora came in Thursday with about 70 passengers returning from Cook Inlet. The reason for the exodus is principally the crowded state of affairs there." (Saturday, July 4, 1896.)

"The steamer Excelsior, under charter to the Alaska Commercial Co., arrived at Sitka last Tuesday from Cook Inlet with 116 miners and prospectors aboard. The small steamer L. J. Perry carried passengers from Resurrection Creek to the anchorage at Fire Island, taking one load from Resurrection Creek and another from Six-Mile Creek." (Saturday, September 26, 1896.)

"On April 16, six men left Nanaimo on the schooner Boss for Cook Inlet, Alaska. They sailed to Resurrection Creek where the schooner was left high and dry by the outgoing tide. They prospected, found nothing, and have sailed back to Nanaimo." (From "The Nanaimo Free Press" [no date], Saturday, October 10, 1896.)

"A total of 246 miners and prospectors have returned from Cook Inlet on the steamer Excelsior." (Saturday, October 17, 1896.)

During the same year, 1896, "The Alaska Searchlight," at Juneau carried these news items having to do with Cook Inlet, on the dates indicated:

"The schooner Bryant sailed from Seattle on April 2 bound for Cook Inlet." (Saturday, August 8, 1896.)

"The schooner Loyal arrived at Juneau from Cook Inlet on August 6." (Saturday, August 6, 1896.)

"The schooner Loyal sailed for Cook Inlet on August 12 with a full load of merchandise." (Saturday, August 15, 1896.)

"The British schooner Boss, returning from Westward, touched at Mary Island last Thursday and reported the death of a sailor who was knocked overboard by the boom in the Gulf of Alaska and was not found." (Saturday, August 22, 1896.) [In 1896 there was a United States Customs House at Mary Island, a short distance south of Ketchikan.]

"These vessels were reported at or near Anchor Point, Cook Inlet, last spring, waiting for the ice to go out so they could get up to Turnagain Arm:

"Steamer Lakme, with 225 passengers; steamer Utopia.

"Schooners Stella Erland, W. J. Bryant, Ella Johnson and Marie, all of which left Coal Bay on May 1, bound up the inlet.

The steamer L. J. Perry was at Turnagain Arm in July and carried passengers from there to Tyonek where they boarded the barkentine Marion for Sitka." (Saturday, August 29, 1896.)

Gold Rush Memories of Della Murray Banks

In the spring of 1896, Mrs. Della Murray Banks accompanied her husband, Austin Banks, to Cook Inlet on a gold-seeking expedition. In later years she wrote an article on her experiences at Cook Inlet and elsewhere in Alaska. The article was published as a four-part serial in "The Alaska Sportsman." Most of the Cook Inlet material appeared in the October, 1945, issue (Vol.XI, No.10), from which these extracts are taken:

"The old Homer, the Homer I knew in 1896, was one log house, two tumbledown shacks, and the galley of some ill-fated ship, clustered haphazardly at the outer end of the long spit which justs out from the bluff into the bay." (p.10)

"Homer didn't have a name on the first day of April, 1896. In making application for a post office we had to have a name. With the rest, I voted for the name 'Homer' in honor of Homer Pennock, the mining promoter and manager of the Alaska Gold Mining Company, with which we were associated." (p.10)

"We came north on the Excelsior, which Pennock had chartered." (p.11)

"A coal mine was being worked at McNeill Canyon." (p. 37)

"Most of the 75 men who came north on the Excelsior with us returned south on the same ship a week later." (p.37)

"Before the middle of May, the Lakme and Utopia arrived with 400 men headed for Turnagain Arm. The captain of the Utopia was ill with appendicitis. One of the men on the Lakme was 'Soapy' Smith, who went back south on the same boat and later went to Skagway." (p.38)

"The L. J. Perry took a crowd for the Arm, and small dories, built on the spit, each took away its little group. . . The L. J. Perry, with Austin Lathrop as purser and part owner, was, I imagine, the basis of one of Alaska's home-grown fortunes. The little steam schooner seemed to wander rather aimlessly up and down the Inlet, always welcome and 'Cap' always obliging and friendly." (p.39)

"Pennock went south early in May on the Dora. The General Canby, a tugboat he had bought, arrived about the same time. She had been remodeled to carry both freight and passengers, although little could be said for the accommodations." (p.39)

"The Canby took a crew of men up to Anchor Point, about 25 miles up the Inlet, where houses were to be built and placer-mining operations started along the beach sands. Another crew went to Snug Harbor, across the Inlet, while a third went up to Resurrection Creek in Turnagain Arm." (p.40)

"The Canby came down from Anchor Point and I learned that she was going up to Hope, the new town on Resurrection Creek." (p.40)

A Third Route to Turnagain Arm

Neither route to the Turnagain Arm gold camps was wholly satisfactory. The all-water route via Cook Inlet was closed by ice during the winter and presented navigational hazards at other times. The overland crossing from Passage Canal required a climb of at least 1,000 feet, the traverse of some five miles of glacier and, in winter, was also hazardous if not impassable because of the depth of snow.

At an early date the miners and prospectors began to mark out a third route, one that could be used the year around and that avoided some of the difficulties of the other two. Thus, in September, 1898, Lieut. H. G. Learnerd, a member of an Army exploring expedition, found that "according to the latest reports at Sunrise City, a pack trail has been cut from that place to the foot of Lake Kenai, and from the head of Lake Kenai a wagon road has been ^{con} instructed to the head of Resurrection Bay." ^{1/}

Barges or boats were used on the lake to connect the road and the pack trail and this overland route was pretty much the one used by the Alaska Central Railroad when it came to the Kenai Peninsula after the turn of the century.

The Portage Bay route was still much used, however, and Learnerd, after crossing the glacier, reported that "at Quartz Creek on Turnagain" (now known as Ingram Creek) he found about 200 miners who had also crossed the glacier, "all abound for Sunrise City." ^{2/}

That same year another Army man, Lieut. J. C. Castner, 4th Infantry, reported that he and his party, starting from the present site of Whittier,

1. "Learnerd, Lieut. H. G., 14th Infantry, USA, "A Trip from Portage Bay to Turnagain Arm and Up the Sushitna," in "Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska," Washington, D. C., 1900, p. 664.
2. Ibid., p. 649.

"crossed five miles of glacier to the head of Turnagain Arm." Castner and his men visited what he called "Quartz Camp." This was evidently the same place visited earlier in the year by Learnerd earlier in the year, at the mouth of what was then called Quartz Creek. Castner wrote that Quartz Camp "consisted of about 400 miners" and also reported that "at Sunrise on Sixmile Creek I found many houses and stores. The population is estimated at 800." ^{1/}

Despite its utility for year-round travel, this third route to Turnagain Arm, via Resurrection Bay and Kenai Lake, would have been an expensive one for transportation any quantity of freight and it was probably little used for that purpose until the building of the Alaska Central Railroad. The all-water route via Cook Inlet continued for many years to be the most economical means of getting freight ships to Turnagain Arm and to all other points around the inlet and in much of its hinterland.

1. Castner, Lieut. J. C., 4th Infantry, U.S. Army, "A Story of Hardship and Suffering," in "Compilation of Narratives of Exploration in Alaska," Washington, D.C., 1900, p. 687.