

# FARMS AND RAILROADS IN ALASKA

Fitz-Mac Gives a Lot of Information and, With It, Some Seasonable Advice.

**F**ARMING in Alaska—the bare idea of it!

Well, that is because you don't understand the climate of Alaska.

You wouldn't be so much astonished if your head were not crammed with false notions about the climate.

Alaska could make \$100,000,000 a year just raising red raspberries. If it could ship them by wireless telegraph and the outside world could consume such a quantity—but that story is only to suggest to your imagination how some things (including red raspberries) grow in Alaska—not everything, but only some things.

Alaska has an area, in round numbers, of 800,000 square miles.

That is equal to 384,000,000 acres. About 100,000 acres of that (mainly in the Sitka Archipelago) is good timber land—densely forested with pine, spruce, fir, hemlock and red and white cedar.

From what I have seen of the country there are, I should estimate, about 1,000,000 acres on which an industrious and thrifty population could make a frugal but comfortable living by straight farming. But in addition to this, there are probably not less than 5,000,000 acres on which stock could be sustained about as well as in Minnesota—with about the same winter care.

In almost every part of the country up there, stock can be quickly fattened, during the brief summer season—from the middle of June to the middle of September—on the amazing growth of luscious forage grasses and plants that cover the earth.

If you have got a little money laid up and are possessed by a romantic notion that you would like to go to Alaska and start a little farm, and raise berries and vegetables for market, and chickens and eggs and such truck, and grow up with the country, my cordial and friendly advice to you is—DON'T.

Your little money would be gone and your heart broken before you would probably make a success of it. There is, indeed, a chance that you might succeed—about one chance in a hundred. The berries and vegetables will grow all right in many places, after you get the ground cleared and "humanized," which takes three years, and the chickens and ducks and the cows will thrive, but there is nobody in the country to furnish a regular market for your truck. But you could, of course, sell a little of it at an astonishingly high price, occasionally, when some one chanced along who wanted it and happened to have the money in his clothes.

Don't let anyone with a romantic and unaccountable pen bamboozle you with a fairy story about a beautiful home and a profitable farm anywhere at all in Alaska. It can be done; it has been done. I have myself seen beautiful gardens up there. But don't you try it unless the pioneer spirit is so strong in you that you can't be happy anywhere else.

If you will write the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., he will send you the reports of the pioneer and cultural experiment farms at Sitka, at Kodiak, at Kodiak and way up north in the Yukon Valley. They are very interesting and they aim to tell the exact truth—do tell it, I have no doubt, but not the whole truth—can't; nobody can; life is too short. Nothing will reveal the whole rugged truth to you but going and seeing yourself. The reports of the pioneer are in your brain, then go, and God prosper your luck. But never let anybody's fairy stories beguile you into going to Alaska to grow up with the country without money in your sock to put you back home if you don't like it.

You may like it. It is a beautiful country, a most interesting country to visit, a country rich beyond words to tell in a prodigious opulence of scenery; rich also in a generous endowment of natural resources—coal, iron, gold, tin (a world of tin lately discovered up on Seward Peninsula, near Nome), copper, silver, timber (millions of acres of red and white cedar that is almost as precious as mahogany), fur-bearing game, fish (such fish—volunteers wouldn't tell the whole story of Alaska's abundance of fish), and a climate that is beautiful and invigorating everywhere and surprisingly mild in winter, for such high latitudes, and around that part swept by the warm Japan current.

The winter climate at Sitka is much warmer than that of Washington City. Water but rarely freezes at Sitka. But that is only the beguiling half of the truth. The Summers are cool—not frosty, but just delightfully cool. It is the sweetest place that I know of in all the world for people to go who want to escape from the heat.

But heat happens to be one of the things that most crops need—and most of them need a lot of it.

Wheat, oats, barley and such things will grow and mature a crop in Sitka, but you are liable to have to do your harvesting under an umbrella, and you are in luck if you don't even have to wear a cork life preserver—the rainfall is about 100 inches a year at that point; but that is about the wettest point in Alaska and there is a great deal of fog.

But don't go and get the notion into your head that folks never have any fun or fine weather at Sitka, for when the sun does shine there it just seems to fuddle the earth, and that is true of the whole coast region of Alaska.

Of course all grasses will grow to break your heart in such a cool, moist climate as that. The trouble is not in raising fodder but in curing it. Yet of course it can be preserved all right in silos.

I ought to be ashamed to say a word against the weather at Sitka, for I was there twice this Summer and the weather was out in its Sunday clothes both times—and oh, such a dream of mellowed, positive sweetness and freshness and pleasant warmth—makes me long to come to recall it. You wouldn't wonder the people up there love and extol the climate of Alaska if you saw it when it is on its good behavior; you never saw a climate better than that of Alaska.

What I say of the climate of Sitka applies fairly well to the whole Pacific Ocean coast region—but it doesn't apply to the interior at all. There the extremes of heat and cold are very great—from 75 below to 100 degrees above freezing point.

The thing to get into your head once and for all is that tables of average or extremes of temperatures are a delusion and a snare to any but scientific weather students. They tell the exact truth, of course, but a thermometer, though it may tell the exact truth, never tells more than a part of the truth. The average temperature for the whole year at Sitka, for instance, is almost exactly the same as that of the City of Washington, but you'd have to hunt around quite a spell to find climates more unlike. That of Washington is frequently intolerable, while the worst that can be said of the climate of Sitka is that it is monotonous.

Now, what I have said in the way of warning to people of small means and a romantic turn of mind who might think it "just lovely" to throw a few things into a pillow and set off to make a sweet little home on a fruit truck patch in Alaska doesn't apply at all to people of large means who might be fascinated by the idea of going into special lines of farming or stockraising up there. To all such I say, go and see. The country is full of possible chances of fortune for such, and if they don't find the chance they are looking for they will get the worth of their money in the trip.

There are not only Government experiment stations at Sitka, on the Kenai Peninsula, on Kodiak Island and in the Yukon and Copper River Valleys, but there are old mission stations of the Greek, Catholic and Protestant churches at many points where large gardens have long been cultivated and some attempt made at farming and stockraising, and the record of their experience is a valuable help to the pioneer investigator. You can get all that information by writing for the annual reports of the Alaska experimental farms to the Secretary of Agriculture at Washington. They are as interesting as a novel to those whom they would interest at all. I would only tell the average reader by going into the matter beyond the mere impressionable notion.

Way up in the Cook Inlet country I saw exceedingly thrifty gardens of potatoes, cabbages, turnips, radishes and such truck. Even way up at Nome, in latitude 65, they make very thrifty and, in a small way, profitable gardens of lettuce, radishes and the different sorts of greens.

The great farming country of Alaska, however, must be (after the Cook Inlet country) in the Yukon Valley, if anywhere. The farther away from the coast, the climate is drier, and though the Winters are very severe and long, the Summers are hot—surprisingly hot—and the Summer days are so long (24 hours at Eagle City, on the upper Yukon) that a considerable variety of crops, surprisingly well—as well as in Dakota. I have a lot of most interesting photographs of farm and garden products up there, but they cannot be reproduced well on the rapid press of a daily newspaper.

I believe stockraising may prove very successful in some parts of Alaska. In the world it certainly is the finest place in the world to fatten cattle on the native grasses, and very much of the beef now slaughtered in Nome and Valdez is taken up there in the Spring and turned out to fatten on the luscious wild grasses that cover the tundra.

The tundra is simply a northern rolling prairie, but everywhere more or less boggy.

Cattle will winter without feeding in any country where split-foot game, such as deer, moose and elk, can winter, though, of course, not being able to migrate as rapidly as can be usual snow-falls, they would be more exposed to danger, and at the best they would rapidly degenerate into spindly-legged, long-horned breeds. But there is great profit shipping feeders up there in the Spring to fatten.

Finally, the conclusions of my personal judgment on the general subject are, that Alaska can, when developed, easily produce all the meat, grains, potatoes and other vegetables necessary to sustain a population of 1,000,000 without crowding the mourners. But I feel so deeply the essential cruelty of getting people of small means, impelled by romantic notions, to rush in to the country without preparatory knowledge of pioneering difficulties, that again I earnestly beg any one con-

templating the move to send to the Department of Agriculture at Washington for the official reports, and not hold me accountable for mistakes resulting from their own romantic and headlong precipitation.

They will find from said reports that I have told herein a very mild tale, but I would rather it should be so than betray worthy people into unexpected hardships. I believe in the future of Alaska—thoroughly myself. I have seen the evidences of its general mineral wealth, and of its agricultural possibilities, and I believe the influx of mining population will soon furnish a big market at big prices for every kind of food the land can produce, but—

Well, the big market is not there now.

**Railroads in Alaska.**  
To make any kind of natural resources valuable, there must be a means to get them to market, and the swifter the means of transportation, the better and quicker the mining and the quicker the development of the country.

With its 26,000 miles of sea coast and the great Yukon River (as large as the Mississippi) penetrating the heart of the interior Alaska already enjoys unusual transportation facilities in Summer, and freight and passenger rates are very reasonable. But the distances are very long—from Seattle to the mouth of the Yukon 2900 miles, to Nome 2500, to Sitka 900, to Valdez 1600, and to Cook Inlet 1800—and the Yukon and the whole coast bordering the Behring Sea is frozen for eight months in the year. This retards the development of the country and railroads are needed. The miner needs them to get his ore down to the coast, and the farmer needs them to get his produce into the mining camps.

Alaska today, if its interior were opened by a good railroad system, could easily support a mining population (miners and their families) of 1,000,000. It would make a good market for all the garden truck and farm products that the territory can produce. Alaska can never develop as a farming country till it possesses a home market for all its produce, because there is no possibility of raising anything there cheaply enough to compete outside with the products of the Pacific Coast states.

It is the mining population which furnishes a home market and thus sustains farming in all our Rocky Mountain States. Without the mines farming would perish in all of them, and stock would be their only resource.

Alaska is a rich mineral country—as large and as rich as the biggest and richest six mining states in the Rocky Mountain group. But like them, it must have railroads in order to develop, and the Government should aid the building of railroads there as it aided in building in the Western States. That aid was wise. It has proved immensely profitable to the Nation. It will prove equally wise and equally profitable to aid Alaska in the same way.

There is a railroad system projected from Nome over Seward Peninsula, which already has a few miles—less than 30 I believe—constructed, but which is sure to be finished some time, and or not, because that peninsula is a small, compact country (area 20,000 square miles—about 15,000,000 acres) immensely rich in gold and tin, and an easy railroad country.

But the most pressing present need of a railroad is to connect the ports on Prince Williams Sound with the great Yukon Valley. The harbors of that coast never freeze and the Pacific Packing & Transportation Company has a line of bi-monthly steamships all winter, carrying the mails to all the Pacific Coast ports of Alaska clear around to Dutch Harbor on Unalaska Island. The whole of that coast is as warm in winter as the coast of Virginia and Maryland.

Cook Inlet is a great and deep arm of the sea 60 miles wide and 150 miles long, that penetrates a rich and mineral country on both shores clear to the mouth of the Sushitna River, and 500 miles would carry a railroad from the head of that inlet over very easy grades to the great Yukon Valley. It is a line of contemplation. The route has been reconnoitered by the Government and has been surveyed by an organized company called the "Alaska Central Railway," at present a feeble enterprise but of little doing—the heat it can no doubt, it is projected to start, however, not from the head of Cook Inlet, but from Resurrection Bay, a magnificent protected harbor on the south peninsula—but it will pass the head of Cook Inlet about 75 miles from its starting point.

The real thing, however, in Alaska railroads, the thing most likely to be finished first because most urgently needed, is the projected and surveyed Valdez, Copper River & Yukon Railway.

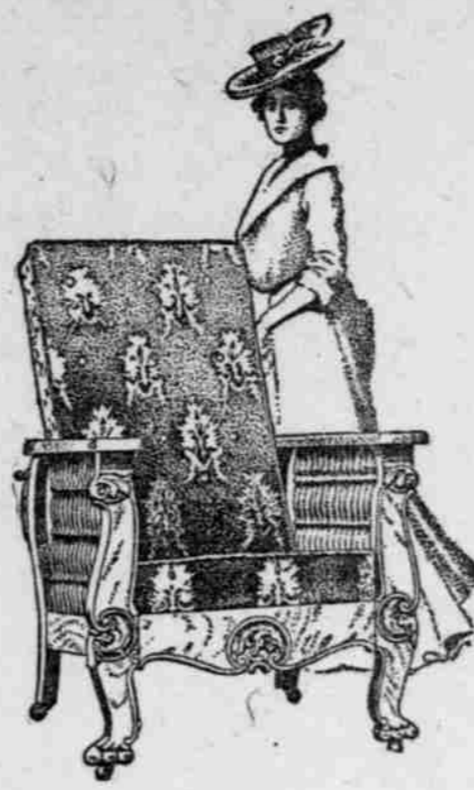
The new railroad proposes to utilize that trail, and the line will get an immense ore traffic at once from big mines in the Copper River district already opened and waiting to ship.

If the Government needs the trail it needs the railroad, and if it needs the railroad it ought to help build it.

And when it is built—this is the truth and don't you forget it—the future of Valdez is going to be just Ross, as rocky as the smile of dawn on the crystalline pinnacle of great Mount St. Elias, 150 miles away to the eastward.

Dealers hear many funny stories of customers' losses, and there are all sorts of woe-tale tales about having them stolen, "changed" on them, hoaxed, turned inside out by the wind and broken. But yesterday a visiting drummer became so interested in watching a faro game that he was unconscious of the fact that some one next to him in the crowd took his handsome silk umbrella out of his hand and substituted a cheap cotton one in its place. He says he would have sworn that his own never left his hand, but when he went to move away, he was firmly grasping the cotton one, and he poured forth his disgust in great torrents when he reached the first umbrella store. A prominent city official was carelessly handling a very handsome umbrella one day lately, when its long-lost owner happened to lay eyes on it. But Mr. Official refused to give up, even after the owner had shown him his private mark under the flap in the top. "You know," he said, "an umbrella is the only thing a man can steal in Oregon without breaking the law."

The umbrella had its origin in ancient Egypt and Nineveh, where it was first used as a protection from the sun, and was a symbol of royalty. It still has this significance in Asia. The Maharatta princes of India had a title of "Lord of the Umbrella." Among the Greeks and Romans it was used only by women, being considered too effeminate for men. It was first used as a protection from rain by the English, early in the 17th century, when the canopy was made of oiled silk or cotton gingham, and the handle was long and clumsy. The ribs were generally made of whalebone, and the stretchers of cane, but as the workmanship was very imperfect, there was never much practical use derived from them until the paragon steel frame was invented.



## MORRIS CHAIRS FOR HOLIDAY PRESENTS

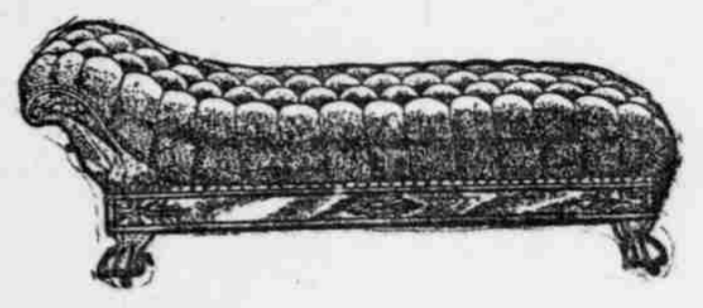
Now is the time to select a Morris Chair for some one's Christmas present. We have just got in a car of handsome new designs in golden oak, weathered oak and mahogany. You can see them on our first floor. They are all well built and finely finished, with the best quality of detachable cushions. If you don't like the cushions we can make any sort to order. You can buy a chair now and we'll keep it and deliver it in time for Christmas. Don't wait until the ones you want are gone. Come now.

AS LOW AS \$9.00

## LEATHER COUCHES

These cold, rainy days make you anticipate long, comfortable evenings at home. And how much more comfort you can look forward to if you have a restful couch in your den or living room. We have the sort you want. Big springy ones, covered with soft, pliable leather. The longer you use one, the better it is. All guaranteed steel construction, with elastic steel springs and leather covers that wear for years.

AS LOW AS \$31.00



## BEDDING DEPARTMENT

We have opened our new Bedding Department on the second floor, near the elevator. Tomorrow we shall there exhibit a very complete and valuable stock of all sorts of bedding stuffs. As usual, we offer only the very best of material at very reasonable prices. It is our aim to make this one of our most popular departments, and we shall make it so by selling goods that satisfy. We have everything for the bed.

BLANKETS, PILLOWS, COMFORTS, RUGS, BED LINENS OF ALL SORTS

## DRAPERY DEPARTMENT

In our Drapery Department on the second floor there is a profusion of beautiful hangings and drapery fabrics of all sorts. An endless assortment of dainty Lace Curtains and a gorgeous array of domestic and imported Portieres. Especially beautiful is our collection of Oriental Draperies and Table Covers, all these having been imported direct by us. We make a specialty of fine drapery work and artistic decorating and are prepared to furnish designs and estimates on all classes of this work. We carry a wide stock of window shades and make all sizes and colors to order.

A LOT OF BEAUTIFUL SOFA PILLOWS JUST THE THING FOR CHRISTMAS



## CARPETS AND RUGS

There are two things to be considered when buying Carpets and Rugs—quality and wear. And that's where we satisfy. Our Carpets are woven from the very best materials and laid in a way that insures every ounce of wear there is in them. Carpets that fit wear much longer than those that are poorly laid. That's worth remembering.

- Fine Tapestry Carpets, per yard..... 85¢ to \$1.10
- Body Brussels, new designs, per yard..... \$1.50 to \$1.65
- Axminster, extra quality, per yard..... \$1.35 to \$2.00
- Handsome Wilton Velvets, per yard..... \$1.35 to \$1.85

These prices sewed, laid and lined.

And remember—IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PAY CASH. We are always ready to extend you credit upon the easiest terms ever offered. We have the largest and most up-to-date stock of furniture and housefurnishings in the city. The variety is so great you are bound to find what you want. And when you have found it, have it sent home and pay for it at your own convenience.

YOUR CREDIT IS GOOD

# TULL & GIBBS

MORRISON AND SECOND STREETS

MAKE YOUR OWN TERMS

## UMBRELLAS IN PORTLAND

One Hundred Thousand of These Useful Articles Are Sold Here Every Year.

One hundred thousand umbrellas were sold in Portland in the past year. One hundred and fifty thousand will probably be sold the present year. To protect the population of Portland from the 50 inches of rain which falls here each season costs a goodly sum, as the prices paid for these umbrellas will easily average \$1.50. Just what becomes of this great number of umbrellas is a mystery, but that they do disappear is evidenced by the fact that the business never drags, but to the contrary increases from season to season. That absent-minded people misplace or lose them, and that many are stolen is not to be doubted, but still they disappear just like pins and needles and seemingly the demand will never be entirely satisfied.

That Portland is essentially an umbrella town is proved by the fact that it is considered the best market in this line of goods in the United States, its size taken into consideration. There are seven manufacturers here who do a big wholesale business throughout the state in addition to a large retail trade in the city. But the retail business is by no means confined to them, for the department stores count the umbrella trade as a big item and sell thousands of them each season. The jeweler do a big business in an expensive line of goods, the milliners sell not a few of high grade, while the glove stores are also prepared to furnish one with anything in this line. The haberdasher carries a fine line of men's umbrellas, and even the cigar stores and news-stands keep a stock on hand to accommodate their customers in cases of emergency.

The umbrella is a necessary item in the Portland wardrobe, and if he loses this bosom companion he immediately hires him to the nearest shop and purchases another. One dealer states that he has sold as many as three to one customer in a single day, but after the first loss, whether caused by absent-mindedness or misplaced confidence, the unfortunate one

generally buys a cheap article, "one I can afford to lose," as he generally explains.

In the regular umbrella stores the business is pretty even, the weather not having much effect on sales, but in department stores a storm will invariably bring a rush of trade in this line. A prominent Washington-street department store has often averaged as high as 500 cheap umbrellas a day when the weather was particularly bad, and in buying their stock a purchase of 500 to sell at one figure is not unusual. The cheapest article on the market here is 50¢, and "good sellers" run from \$1 to \$3. High-grade goods run away up in price, one exclusive dealer on Washington street carrying beautiful specimens at \$30 and \$50. He also has handles alone at \$50, which are of hand-carved ivory and in the finest French workmanship. Some of these are copies of the masterpieces in the Louvre and are of exquisite execution. He has sold several of them to be mounted and used for ornamental purposes in handsome homes. This manufacturer buys his high-grade goods in France, Germany and England, and when selecting ivories buys nothing but the French, as the carvings are much more graceful and more appropriate subjects than the Chinese or Japanese. This firm has a large trade in goods ranging in price from \$15 to \$35. Jewelers seldom carry anything under the \$5 mark, their prices running from this to about \$25. Their lines of goods is generally of the fancy or "dress" kind, and they often have orders to set handles with stones, genuine and otherwise.

Styles in umbrellas vary as much as in hats or other articles of clothing. The change is generally in the handle, as nothing has been found to substitute for the good silk covering. This year there is a colonial style in handles on the market, which is considered the correct thing, and some very pretty effects are produced at fairly moderate prices. Scotch fir and boxwood is used for the post, and sterling silver horseshoe nails are fastened on with silver buckles. Others have nail heads all over the post, and both are very smart. Gunmetal still finds favor as a trimming for handles, and combined with partridge wood or ebony is very effective. One new fashion in handles is an oblong loop, the end of the loop being fastened down with heavy silver bands. This style

will prove convenient, as it can easily be carried on the arm while shopping.

The pearl and ivory handles, with silver or gold trimmings, will seemingly never go out of favor, for they are selling today just as well as they were five years ago. Designs are selected to suit all sorts and conditions of mankind, from the quiet dresser, who selects a tasteful hardwood handle, to the flashy individual, who prefers something "sporty." There are many pretty colored silk covers to be had, but the percentage of sales in this line is very small.

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