

## 59ers Determined to Carve Out Homesteads in Wilds of Alaska

Editor's note: Earlier this year, approximately three dozen Detroit residents left in a caravan to travel to Alaska where they planned to start a new life as homesteaders. The group, known as the 59ers, arrived at Anchorage on Good Friday, March 27, and most of them since have gone up the Susitna river from Anchorage to pick out homestead sites. Martin Heerwald, UPI Seattle bureau manager, flew to the remote region to get on-the-scene interviews.

**By MARTIN HEERWALD**  
 UPI Correspondent  
 Talkeetna, Alaska—(UPI)—Detroit's 59ers, some of them temporarily stranded across the frozen Susitna river and others waiting to cross, remain determined to carve a living out of the Alaskan wilderness.

This reporter and United Press Movietone cameraman Parris Emery flew into this tiny community of about 100 population to get a first hand report on how the 59ers are progressing with their plans to homestead the virgin land nearly 4,500 miles from home.

At the time of this dispatch, the two dozen 59ers who decided to make the Susitna Valley their home are frustrated by the big river which is just beginning to break up, making it unsafe to cross by foot, impossible to cross by boat. About another dozen of the original group of 37 decided to stay on the Kenai Peninsula, south of Anchorage.

**Much Enthusiasm**  
 Fourteen of the group here crossed the quarter-mile wide Susitna with three house trailers about a week ago when the ice was strong enough to support the trailers and the bulldozer which pulled them. The fourth and fifth trailers started to sink through the ice as the next day's thawing began to make the ice mushy, but the modern-day pioneers managed to save the trailers with the help of townspeople.

If anyone in the group was thinking about giving up the whole idea and returning to Detroit, the feelings didn't show. Enthusiasm expressed for Alaska matched the brightness of a cloudless day with the temperatures in the 50s and

Mount McKinley, tallest in the nation at 20,300 feet, towering snow white above other peaks about 60 miles to the north.

**Alaska 'Just Great'**  
 "We haven't become discouraged yet," said Mrs. Eleanor Rubino, who with her husband, Nicholas, gave up good jobs to come here. They have a son, Nick Jr., 10, who thinks everything about Alaska "is just great."

"It's been hard, believe me," Mrs. Rubino said, "but we'll manage somehow. We might have to live in tents for a while, because now we can't move our trailer across until the river freezes again next fall. And we probably will have to melt snow to do our laundry and face a lot of problems we haven't even dreamed of yet. But you can't beat the Alaskan people. We've never known anyone as friendly and helpful."

What about schooling for the Rubino's son, when the family is settled across the river?

**School By Mail**  
 "I'm told Alaska offers a wonderful correspondence course," Mrs. Rubino said, "and Nickie will get along all right. In fact he's looking forward to school by mail."

The 59ers have been so concerned with getting everyone together across the river, to the east from here, and making plans for summer that they haven't made definite winter plans. The temperature in the region, on the cold side of the moist curtain which protects the coastal areas, may dip as low as 50 degrees below zero.

"One thing is sure," said Bob Watkins, a bachelor who has grown a full beard and mustache since arriving in Alaska. "We'll have to stick together and help each other or we won't survive. But we plan to stay together, and I think we will."

**More Land in Susitna**  
 Watkins explained that most of the 59ers decided on the Susitna Valley, although the

original plan called for homesteading the Kenai Peninsula, because land in sizeable, farmable quantities is less

available on the Kenai. Asked if they had any advice to give others planning to homestead Watkins replied: "Tell them to travel as lightly as possible. We found we carried much too much food and equipment with us. We just as easily could have bought our food, even our

house trailers, right in Anchorage. We would have been money ahead if we had brought virtually nothing but ourselves. One family even brought its 24-inch TV and hi-fi sets. Frankly, we didn't know as much as we should have about Alaska. We made a lot of mistakes.

## Policeman Braves Wrath of Parents

Duncan, Okla. — (UPI) — Policeman John Dudley braced the wrath of angry parents Wednesday and moved a household so a couple of women can visit over their backyard fence.

Dudley said the women, who were too embarrassed to give their names, called him when a pair of bluejays dived

bombed them as they walked between their houses. One of the women was scratched on the forehead.

Dudley found a nest between the two houses and moved it — egg and all — to a backyard tree while the jays protested loudly. "They fought me all the way," Dudley said.

Eleven U.S. Navy Vessels were donated to the Free China navy last Feb. 26. They included three rocket-launchers, five small-size landing craft and three infantry landing craft.

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More than four million Africans are crowded into the Belgian colony of Ruanda-Urundi, a slice of Africa only slightly larger than the state of Maine.

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## U.S. May Have More To Fear in Fallout From Nuclear Tests

Washington — (UPI) — New evidence before Congress indicates the United States may have more to fear than any other major country from radioactive fallout produced by nuclear explosions.

Fallout mainly from Soviet nuclear tests promises within a few months to double the amount of radioactive Strontium 90 in a belt centered on 40 degrees north latitude, which passes through the middle of the United States.

The evidence was placed before the joint congressional subcommittee on radiation by the Atomic Energy Commission during hearings on the fallout problem. The information was accompanied by charts showing that:

— In 1957-58 radioactivity from Russian tests for the first time exceeded the combined total for the United States and Britain. Nearly three-fourths of the Soviet total was spewed into the stratosphere during tests last October.

— The rate of testing by all nations during the two years exceeded by 75 per cent the annual maximum recommended to the subcommittee by a panel of scientists in 1957.

— The Northern Hemisphere

is four to five times more radioactive than the Southern Hemisphere. All of the Soviet test fallout and two-thirds of the U.S. radioactivity from Eniwetok falls in the Northern Hemisphere.

Even with the big increase, the Atomic Energy Commission does not think the radioactivity created so far will have "statistically significant" effects that would be apparent from observations to the average man.

Fifty to 100 additional cases of cancer per year — a possibility — would constitute individual tragedies but would be lost statistically among the average of 700,000 cancer patients under treatment in the United States.

The north latitude localization of stratospheric fallout, previously thought to be uniform over the world, was described as the most important of the several disclosures before the subcommittee.

Dr. Lester Machta of the U.S. Weather Bureau said this means that fallout danger in the affected area is two and one-half times greater than would be the case if the distribution were uniform around the globe.

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