

Aleutian Voices

VOLUME 1, NO. 1, 2014

S.S. NORTHWESTERN
SAILING SHELTERED SEAS



S.S. Northwestern beached at Eagle River,
north of Juneau, Alaska, 25 July 1933.
PSMHS Negative No. 1783-1, Ordway
photo, Williamson Collection.



As the nation’s principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation.

The Cultural Resources Programs of the National Park Service have responsibilities that include stewardship of historic buildings, museum collections, archeological sites, cultural landscapes, oral and written histories, and ethnographic resources.



Our mission is to identify, evaluate and preserve the cultural resources of the park areas and to bring an understanding of these resources to the public. Congress has mandated that we preserve these resources because they are important components of our national and personal identity.

Published by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, through the Government Printing Office with the assistance of Debra A. Mingeaud.

During World War II the remote Aleutian Islands, home to the Unangaᵶ (Aleut) people for over 8,000 years, became one of the fiercely contested battlegrounds of the Pacific. This thousand-mile-long archipelago saw the first invasion of American soil since the War of 1812, a mass internment of American civilians, a 15-month air war, and one of the deadliest battles in the Pacific Theatre.



In 1996 Congress designated the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area to interpret, educate, and inspire present and future generations about the history of the Unangaᵶ and the Aleutian Islands in the defense of the United States in World War II. In a unique arrangement, the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area and visitor center are owned and managed by the Ounalashka Corporation (the village corporation for Unalaska) and the National Park Service provides them with technical assistance. Through this cooperative partnership, the Unangaᵶ are the keepers of their history and invite the public to learn more about their past and present.

This project was funded by the National Park Service, Affiliated Areas Program in support of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area, in cooperation with the Aleutian Pribilof Heritage Group.

For information about the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area, visit www.nps.gov/aleu/ or contact:

Alaska Affiliated Areas	Ounalashka Corporation	Visitor Information
240 West 5th Ave	P.O. Box 149	(907) 581-1276
Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Unalaska, Alaska 99685	Visitor Center
(907) 644-3503		(907) 581-9944

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2014

Sailing Sheltered Seas to the Land of the Midnight Sun!

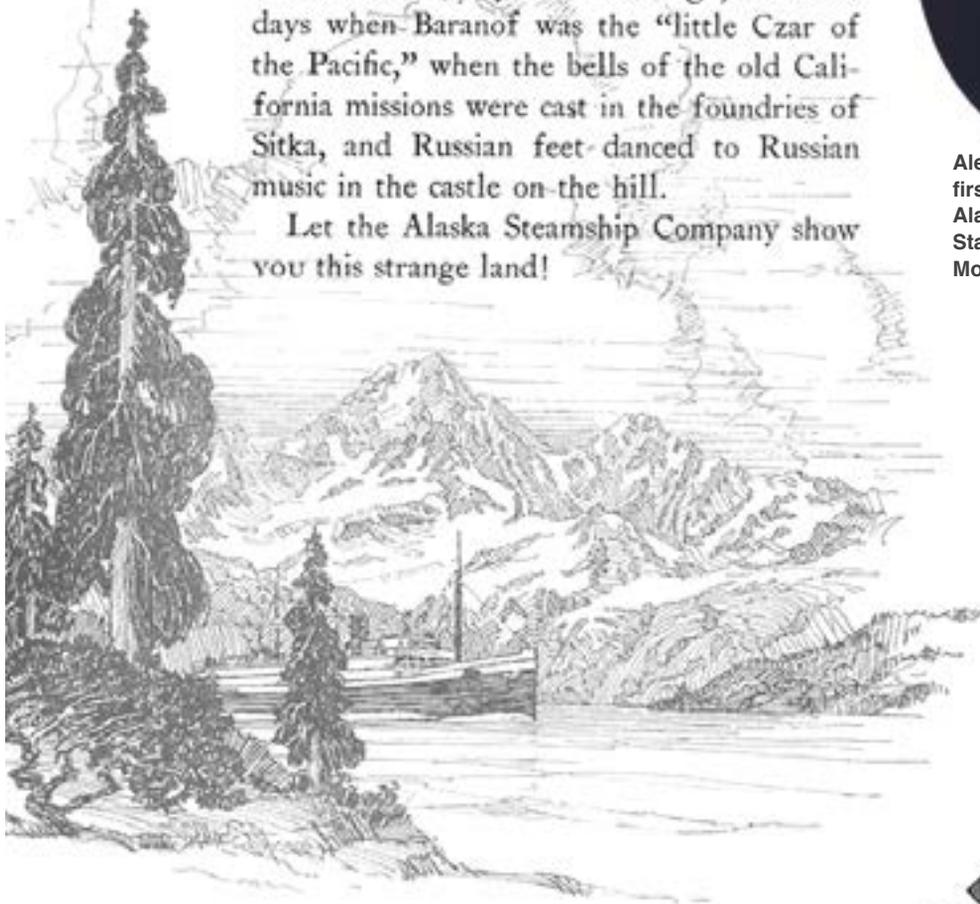
A MYSTIC COUNTRY, there is, to the north, where the will-o-the-wisps are at play—the sundogs by day and the ghost-gleam at night; northern lights, they have named the pale specters that flit here and there in the sky. And the red midnight sun doubles back on his track, when the year-tide is full, in that land where the sunlight and shadow are wed.

Newest of all the corners of the continent, last of the borders to be subdued—the scene of action for tomorrow. Yet ancient and quaint, with an old-world civilization transplanted on its shores a century and a half ago, from the days when Baranof was the “little Czar of the Pacific,” when the bells of the old California missions were cast in the foundries of Sitka, and Russian feet danced to Russian music in the castle on the hill.

Let the Alaska Steamship Company show you this strange land!



Alexandr Baranov (1818), first governor of Russian Alaska. Mikhail T. Tikhanov, State History Museum, Moscow.



“Anchors Aweigh–Happiness Lies Ahead!”



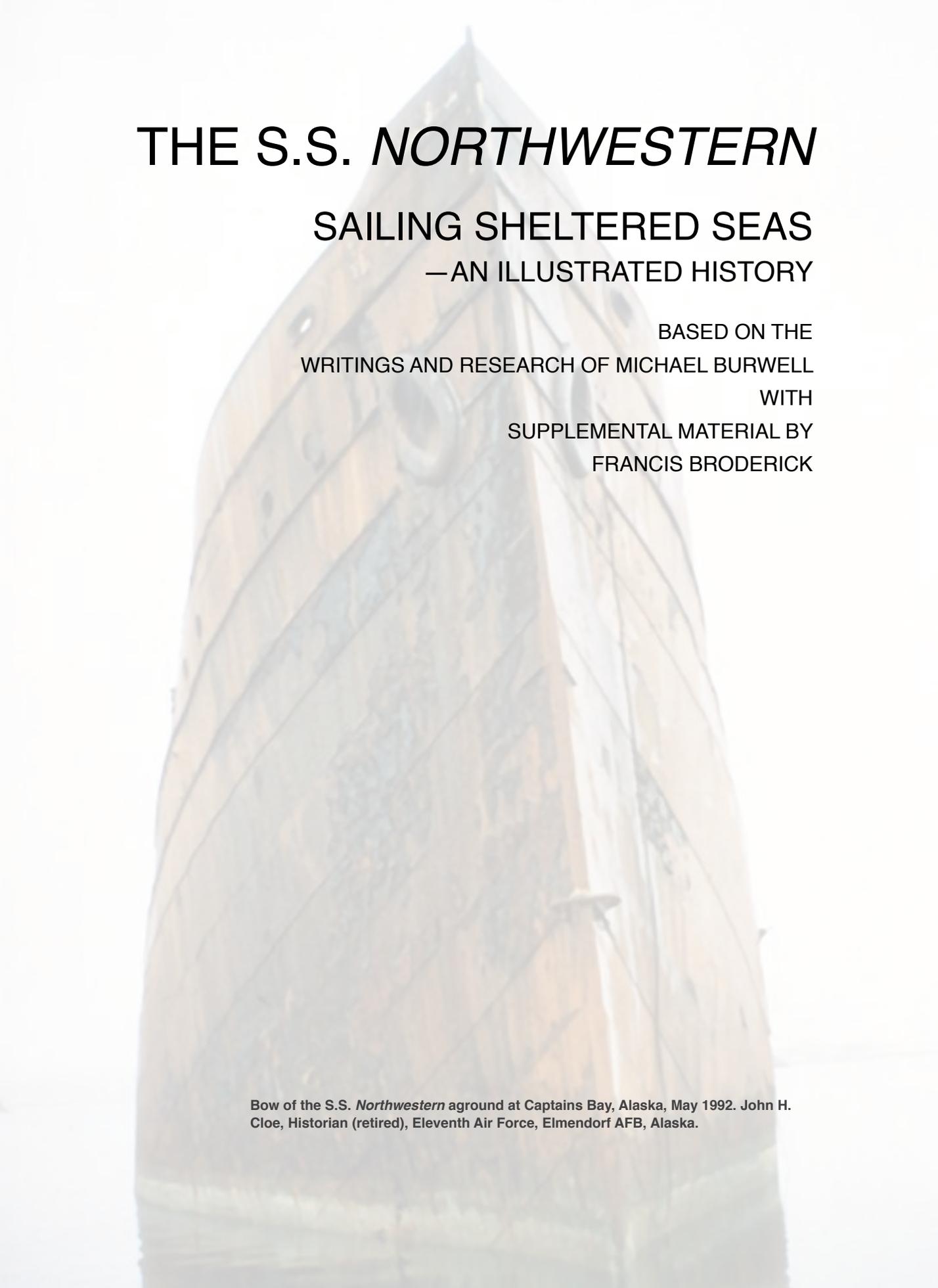
The material in this publication dealing directly with the S.S. *Northwestern* is drawn almost entirely from the research and writings of Michael Burwell, in particular from his excellent two-part history “The SS *Northwestern*: The Final Return of ‘The Ship That Always Came Back’” published in *The Sea Chest: Journal of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society*, September/December 1995. A condensed version titled “The SS ‘*Northwestern*’: The Ship That Always Came Back” may also be found in the anthology *Alaska at War 1941-1945*, edited by Fern Chandonnet, 1993.

All supplemental text is attributable to Francis Broderick.

Much thanks to the following proofreaders who graciously gave of their time and their expertise: Michael Burwell, Janis Koslowski, Rachel Mason, and Susie Wooliver. Of course, all errors are attributable to the coauthor Francis Broderick.

All images not credited are in the public domain or from Archgraphic’s archives.

Due to limited space, the acronym for Puget Sound Maritime Historic Society (PSMHS) has been used.



THE S.S. *NORTHWESTERN*

SAILING SHELTERED SEAS —AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

BASED ON THE
WRITINGS AND RESEARCH OF MICHAEL BURWELL
WITH
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL BY
FRANCIS BRODERICK

Bow of the S.S. *Northwestern* aground at Captains Bay, Alaska, May 1992. John H. Cloe, Historian (retired), Eleventh Air Force, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

IRON, STEEL, AND STEAM

The *Northwestern* is constructed on the cusp of the nineteenth century, an “ocean liner” they call the vessel in newsprint, built to work open blue water as cargo and passenger ship. She is laid down in 1889 by the Delaware River Iron Shipbuilding and Engine Works of Chester, Pennsylvania. The ship is imposing in size: 336 feet from stem to stern, 43 feet at the beam, and 24 feet deep. The hull is forged of wrought iron plates, rivets, and steel. Coal-fired steam drives the power plant, producing 2,600 horses to turn a single, four-bladed screw. The propeller is cast on a grand scale—13,760 pounds of bronze alloy, 15 feet 4 inches in diameter. It can push the big, 3,497 ton ship an average 12.8 knots per hour.



Above: Shipbuilder/industrialist John Roach, 1893. Roach’s Delaware River Iron Shipbuilding and Engine Works constructed the U.S. Navy’s first steel vessels in 1895. Known as the “ABCD” ships, these warships formed “...the nucleus of the New Navy.” Four years later, Roach would build the S.S. *Northwestern*. Image source: *Men of Business*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, NY.



The *Orizaba*. PSMHS Negative No. 10119-3.

November 23 1889, the *Northwestern* is launched. The vessel slides down the ways and strikes a tugboat. So its star-crossed service begins.

Originally christened the *Orizaba*—after the city in the Mexican state of Veracruz—the vessel was renamed the *Northwestern* in 1906. The name “*Northwestern*” will be used solely in this publication.

Below: Chester, Pennsylvania waterfront, circa 1875—a mere nine years after the cessation of the Civil War and fourteen before the construction of the S.S. *Northwestern*. Engraving by J. W. Lauderbach from an original illustration by an unattributed artist.



EARLY YEARS

War and Bananas

For her first nine years the *Northwestern* sails without mishap the warm, tropical waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Under the Ward Line flag, she ferries passengers and cargo between New York and points south—to Cuba and ports in Mexico. In 1898, she is chartered as troop ship in the Spanish-American War. In 1906, the vessel sails once again in commerce, this time to Colon, Panama as banana freighter for the Panama Railroad.



Banana freighters or “banana reefers” were refrigerated ships built to transport banana stems. The *Northwestern* as-built (see previous page) lists a “Fruit Rm” under cold storage capacity.

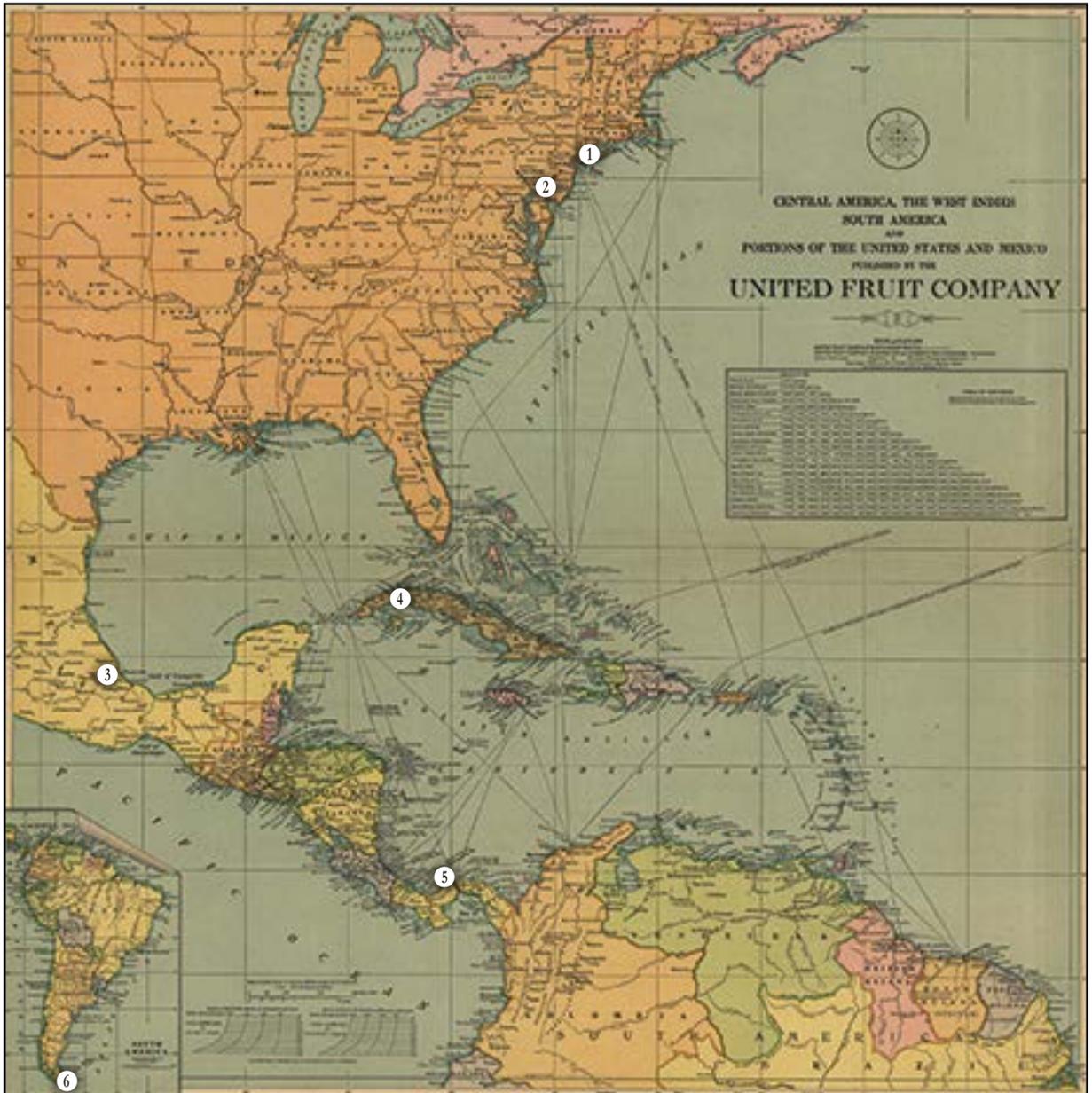


Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

“Buffalo soldier.” Of the black regiments that fought in the Spanish-American war, the 10th served with Teddy Roosevelt and the “Rough Riders.”



Troop transport fleet, Tampa Bay, Florida, before departing for Cuba, Spanish-American War, 1898. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.



Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

Shipping routes, United Fruit Company, 1909.

Places of Interest:

1. New York City
2. Chester, Pennsylvania
3. Orizaba, State of Veracruz, Mexico
4. Havana, Cuba
5. Colon, Panama
6. Cape Horn, Argentina



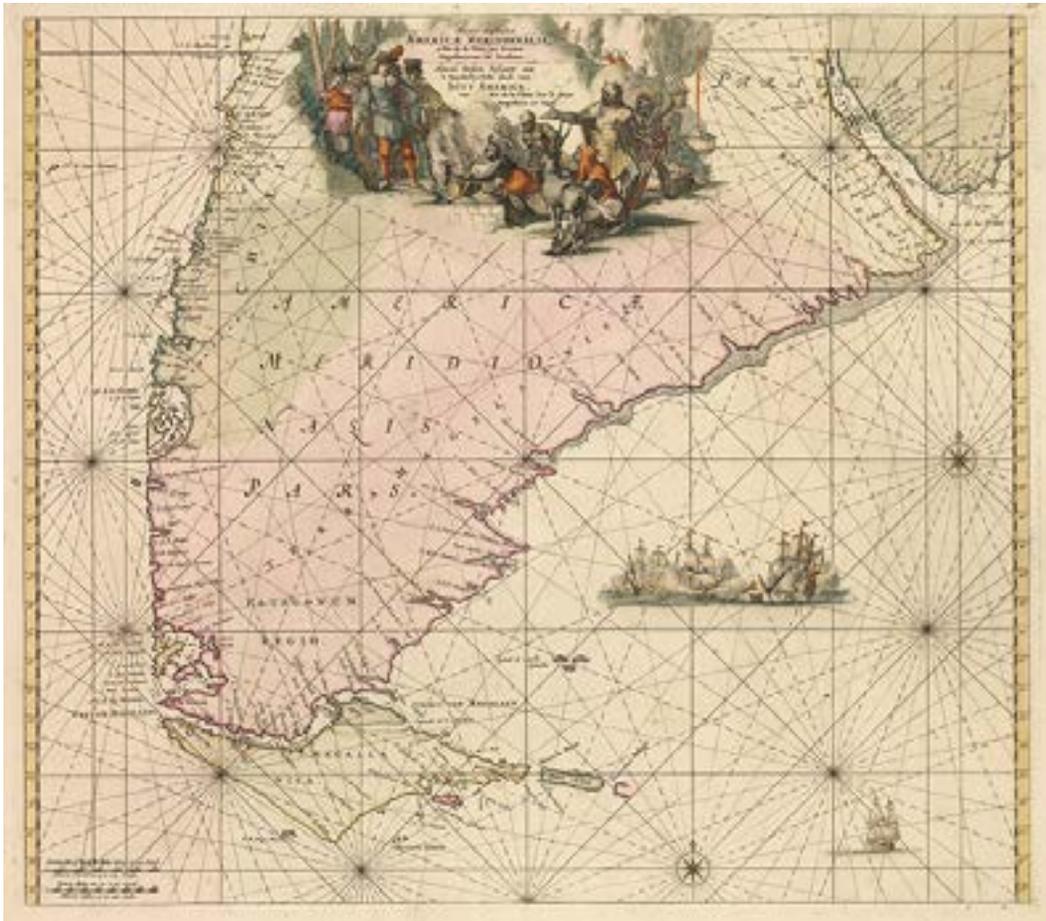
Built by John Roach in 1884, the *Seneca* (above) is chartered as troop transport in the Spanish American War. The fee: \$450.00 per day. May 1885, the *Seneca* strikes the three-masted schooner *William S. McCabe* in dense fog off Sandy Hook, New Jersey. The *McCabe* sinks in minutes.

THE HORN

March 1906, ownership of the Northwestern changes hands and the ship is brought round South America to work the cold waters of the Seattle/Alaska route. It will be eight more years before the Panama Canal will open its waterway. In the summer of 1906, the Northwestern must navigate the length of the South American coast, coming safely round Cape Horn off the tip of Argentina where the gale-whipped seas can reach heights of 65 feet and the sea bottom is littered with centuries of broken ships. It is estimated the Horn has claimed more than 1000 ships and 15,000 lives in the last 400 years.

“...hurrying upon deck, we found a large black cloud rolling on toward us from the south-west, and blackening the whole heavens. "Here comes Cape Horn!" said the chief mate; and we had hardly time to haul down and clew up, before it was upon us. In a few moments, a heavier sea was raised than I had ever seen before, and ... the little brig...plunged into it, and all the forward part of her was under water...”

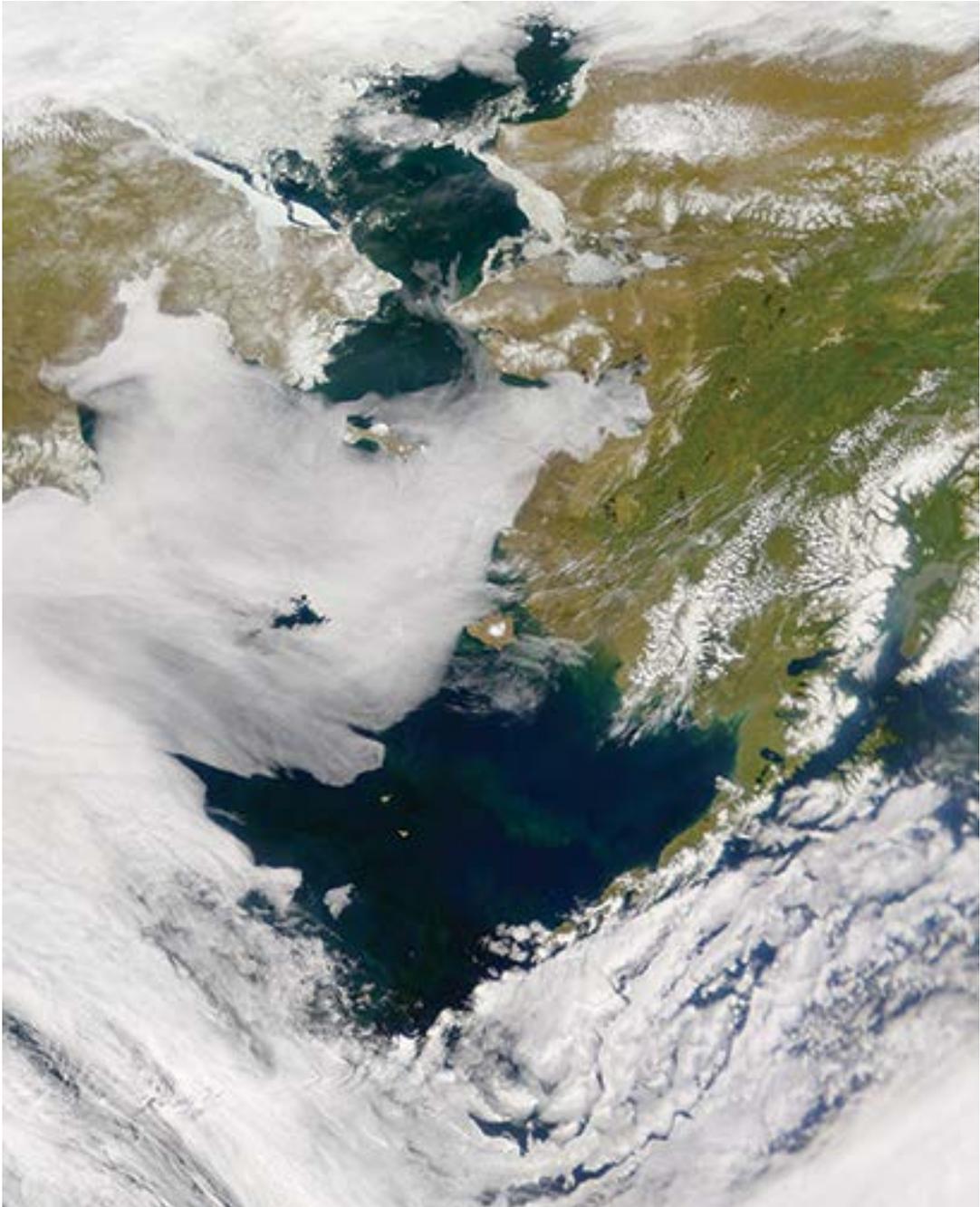
—Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast*, 1840



“Tractus australior Americæ Meridionalis, a Rio de la Plata per Fretum Magellanicum ad Toraltum (Cape Horn).” Frederik de. Wit, 1675. [Princeton Historic Maps Collection](#).

ALASKA-VACATIONWARD!

The *Northwestern* has now traded oceans and seas, charged to sail as flagship for the Alaska Steamship Company in what may be the most troubled waters on earth—the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea.



SeaWiFS Project, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center, and ORBIMAGE.

Boy! What a trip.” “Yes, and the cost is so little too!” In 1929, a round-trip “First-Class—Upper Deck/Ordinary Accommodations” ticket from Seattle, Washington to Nome, Alaska aboard a vessel of the Alaska line cost \$230. With in-room bath, the rate could rise 40% to \$322. The average wage per capita in the United States in 1929 was \$750, with agricultural workers earning as little as \$273 per annum. Passage in steerage† to Nome in 1929, one-way, was \$50, but steerage was limited only to men, and they “must furnish their own blankets.” The above list of “Minimum Passenger Fares” dates to January 1, 1929. The Great Depression in the United States began August 1929.

“Steerage” was the least expensive ticket class and offered only the most basic amenities, with limited toilet use, no privacy, and poor food.

MINIMUM PASSENGER FARES

The passenger fares shown below are the steamer fares in effect January 1, 1929, covering minimum ordinary accommodations on steamers named, from Seattle to the ports named when steamers operate to such ports. Rates include berth and meals, except that on steerage tickets, which are sold only to men, steerage passengers must furnish their own blankets.

From SEATTLE To	First-Class—Upper Deck Ordinary Accommodations		First-Class—Saloon Deck Ordinary Accommodations		Steerage Men Only	Children's Fares (See Page 11)	Distance from Seattle	
	One Way	Round Trip	One Way	Round Trip	One Way	One Way	Miles	Days
Ketchikan.....	\$54.00	\$98.00	\$38.00	\$68.00	\$17.00	\$1.00	787	2
Wrangell.....	38.00	78.00	24.50	48.00	18.50	2.75	820	2
Palisburg.....	41.00	82.00	38.00	72.00	35.50	4.00	907	3
Jones.....	46.00	87.00	41.00	82.00	31.00	6.85	1,033	3-4
Haines.....	30.00	100.00	45.00	90.00	33.50	7.20	1,127	4-5
Skagway.....	30.00	100.00	45.00	90.00	35.00	7.20	1,123	4-5
Tika.....	30.00	100.00	45.00	90.00	35.00	7.20	1,135	4-5
Cordova.....	74.00	148.00	98.00	196.00	67.00	11.00	1,899	5-6
Valdez.....	72.00	144.00	67.00	134.00	67.50	11.15	1,988	6-7
Lakelse.....	74.00	148.00	67.00	134.00	67.50	11.15	2,783	6-7
Nome.....	78.00	156.00	78.00	156.00	69.00	11.65	3,556	7
*Nome.....	\$113.00	\$226.00	\$65.00	\$130.00	\$69.00	11.00	2,900	9-12
†St. Michael.....	\$113.00	\$226.00	\$65.00	\$130.00	\$69.00	11.00	2,630	9-12

*This service during winter. Fares applicable only during open season of navigation. †Fares for any particular room furnished on request. For routes will back fares up to 10% to 40% higher than upper deck fares quoted herein. Fares for any particular room furnished on request. For additional information regarding our service to Alaska, both freight and passenger, address:

ALASKA STEAMSHIP COMPANY

Pier Two, Seattle, Washington

L. W. BAKER, General Freight and Passenger Agent

H. N. PETERSON, Assistant General Passenger Agent

J. D. NELSON, Assistant General Freight Agent

Seattle City Ticket Office, 1401 Fourth Ave., Corner Union St.

San Francisco City Ticket Office, 621 Market St.

Los Angeles City Ticket Office, 819-20 Foreman Bldg., 707 South Hill St.

WHEN YOU THINK ALASKA, THINK ALASKA STEAMSHIP COMPANY

PRINTED IN U.S.A. ALASKA STEAMSHIP COMPANY, INC.

399 PULASKI BLDG. 1011 N. CHICAGO



The Northwestern loading at Seattle for the Alaska run. PSMHS Negative No. 18783-25.

THE
Alaska Steamship Company

IS

The Big Alaska Line

OPERATING

Fifteen Steamers

Exclusively in Alaska Trade

THE FLEET

Steamers—	Gross Tonnage	Steamers—	Gross Tonnage
Alaska	3,679	Valdez	2,285
Victoria	3,502	Cordova	2,273
Northwestern	3,497	Jefferson	1,615
Seward	3,390	Santa Ana	1,059
Alameda	3,158	Dolphin	824
Mariposa	3,158	Redondo	679
Latouche	2,332	Dora	320
Juneau	2,285	Total	34,056

Steamers Operate on All Routes to All Parts of Alaska.

Buy Your Tickets and Ship Your Freight by the

Alaska Steamship Company

R. W. BAXTER, Vice-President

JOHN H. BUNCH,
G. T. and P. A.

EVERETT P. CLARK,
A. G. T. and P. A.

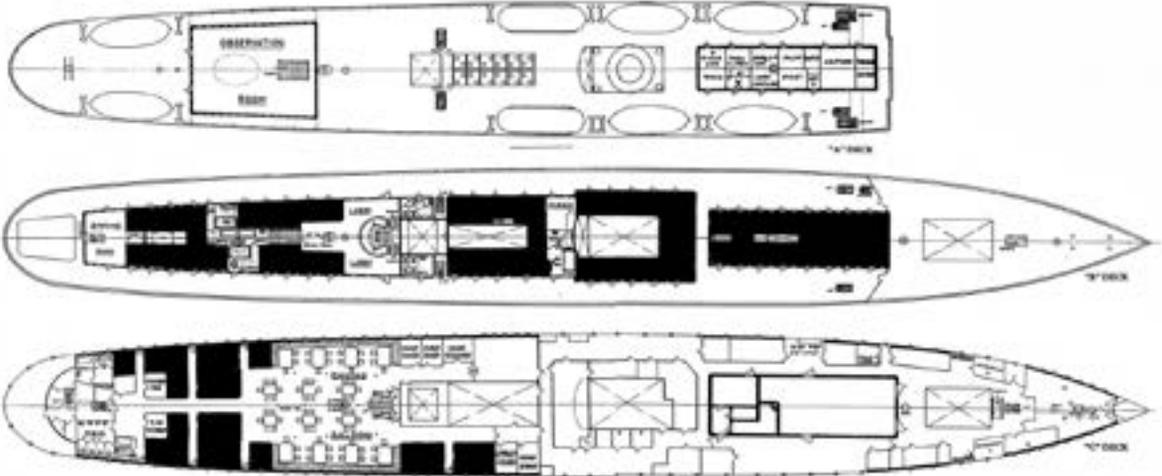
SEATTLE

THE ALASKA LINE

Stateroom Plan of the Alaska Liner

SS. "Northwestern"

Length, 342 feet; Breadth, 47 feet; Displacement, 5,477 tons; Tonnage, 5,270 tons



Images courtesy National Park Service.
Digital montage by Archgraphics.

ALASKA STEAMSHIP COMPANY
PIER 1 • SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

"...passengers danced, played cards, had a drink and dined... A great many families resulted from these voyages when boy met girl on the Northwestern ..."

—Northwestern general passenger agent Robert C. Rose

"The social hall on the S.S. 'Northwestern' invites you to take your ease!"

Aboard the *Northwestern*, first-class passengers sail in spacious accommodation with in-room piped hot water, a dining salon (#1), and saloon (#2). On the hurricane deck they may watch the Alaska scenery pass in a glass-enclosed observation room (#3) or read (with the aid of electric lamps) the *SS Northwestern Radio News*—a typewritten shipboard daily containing news and sports gathered from the airwaves.



S.S. *Northwestern* social hall. Note the Edison incandescent light bulbs mounted conspicuously in the ceiling. A mahogany Victrola stands beside the piano. In 1912 the music machine was touted as "a new luxury to Alaska travel." National Park Service.



gay deck sports



comfortable staterooms



dancing on sheltered seas

DAYS OF ECHANTMENT

What a fascinating experience to write into our book of unusual adventures! Your trip to Alaska will ever be a chapter where each day is filled with colorful moments, whether joining your congenial fellow , travelers in interesting deck games of shuffleboard, quoits, tennis, hockey, golf, or taking to your deck chair and being just plain lazy. You never grow tired of watching the unfolding scenery and you never cease to marvel at the wonders of the cathedral,aisled ocean lane that starts the minute you swing northward from Seattle.

And what happiness lies ahead as your ship points her shapely bow Alaska-vacationward! Midst showers of serpentine, there is an air of expectancy in the thrill of your departure. And there'll be no dull days, with so many new things to do and so many new and interesting shipmates to know. Everybody aboard your ship will have thrown off the cloak of routine,living in exchange for the carefree days that go to make up this most thrilling and interesting vacation. If it is change and action you wish, your days will live vividly for you... if it is relaxation and rest you seek, you will find

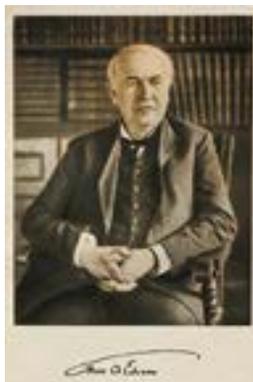
a soothing balm as you sail sheltered seas and discover new strength in the healthful salt air.

The Alaska Line ships are equipped for your comfort and enjoyment. You are sure to find every minute of your cruise crowded with hours' worth of pleasure. And after finishing your day with dancing to the ship's orchestra or at an informal gathering, such as can be conceived only aboard ship, you will make your way to your comfortable stateroom where you will find it easy to drop into restful slumber. The invigorating sea air, together with your comfortable quarters, will induce restful sleep to prepare you for another joyous and all,too,short day on The Alaska Line.

*Anchors Aweigh-
Happiness Lies
Ahead*



The John Roach brigantine S.S. *Columbia* under full sail and steam by Antonio Jacobsen, 1880.



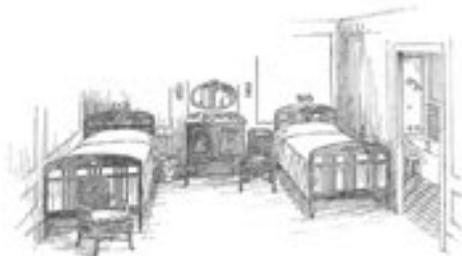
Left: Thomas Alva Edison, 1915. Fitted with Edison's incandescent electric lamps in 1880, the *S.S. Columbia* is the first commercial utilization of Edison's lighting system. July 1907, the *Columbia* and steam schooner *San Pedro* collide in dense fog near Shelter Cove, California. The *Columbia* sinks in less than nine minutes—88 passengers die, including all children aboard.

*“Then, dancing of an evening or a promenade around the deck under the stars—
cool, quiet night and sleep of peace.”*

*“Dinner is always an event at sea. You are ready for it with a zest only clean, salt
air and life in the open can give.”*



**Standard “B” deck cabin,
S.S. Northwestern**



“De Luxe” suite on Alaska Line vessel



“C” deck cabin on S.S. Aleutian

“SMOKEY”—A favorite among the forty army dogs formerly stationed at Chilkoot Barracks (see below). Smokey was later sent to Ladd Field. He made the long journey to Fairbanks in January 1941, and is an outstanding specimen of the true Alaska Husky.”



Josephine Crumrine is a young Alaska artist who lives in the territory ... In the dog portraits featured in this current series of menus (S.S. *Yukon*, 1941) Miss Crumrine has captured the spirit of the Old Alaska when the chief mode of transportation was the husky-drawn sled.”



Two views of Chilkoot Barracks (formerly Fort William H. Seward, built 1902-04 at Haines, Alaska). Chilkoot barracks is the last of 11 military posts established during the gold rush era. At the onset of WWII, it stands as the only military installation in Alaska with 11 officers and 286 enlisted men. Courtesy Elmendorf Air Force Base Office of History.

WINE LIST



WHISKIES	Bottle	Drink
Seagrams 83 Rye - - -	....	.35
Dewars White Label - - -	....	.35
Old Crow - - - - -	....	.35
Haig & Haig - - - - -	....	.35
Teachers Scotch - - - - -	....	.35
Willow Springs - - - - -	....	.35
HIGH BALLS - - - - -	....	.35
COCKTAILS		
Manhattan - - - - -	....	.35
Martini - - - - -	....	.35
Old Fashioned - - - - -	....	.35
Bacardi - - - - -	....	.35
GIN		
Tom Collins - - - - -	....	.25
Rickeys and Fizzes - - - - -	....	.25
CHAMPAGNE - - - - -	7.50	....
WINES - - - - -	1.50	.25
BRANDIES - - - - -	....	.35
RUM - - - - -	....	.35
BEER—Eastern or Western - - -	.25	....
CANADA DRY GINGERALE - - -	.25	....
LIME RICKEY - - - - -	.25	....
WHITE ROCK - - - - -	.25	....
RED RAVEN SPLITS - - - - -	.25	....
BROMO SELTZER - - - - -	.25	....
ASSORTED SODA WATERS - - -	.10	....

CIGARS + CIGARETTES + TOBACCO

PLAYING CARDS, ETC.



In 1935, Northwestern passengers can purchase for 35¢ an "Old Fashioned." Generally accepted as the first "cocktail" (called a "bittered sling" in 1806), the name "Old Fashioned" is anecdotally attributed to the Pendennis Club founded in 1881 in Louisville, Kentucky. To fashion an "Old Fashioned" in 1895, a mixologist would: "Dissolve a small lump of sugar with a little water in a whiskey-glass; add two dashes Angostura bitters, a small piece ice, a piece lemon-peel, one jigger whiskey. Mix with small bar-spoon and serve, leaving spoon in glass." Early additional ingredients included absinthe and a nutmeg garnish. (In terms of buying power, 35¢ in 1935 is roughly equivalent to \$5.50 in 2014.)

MENU



S. S. NORTHWESTERN

Captain O. C. ANDERSEN Commander.

Friday June 21, 1935

LUNCHEON

Young Green Onions Indian Relish Garden Radishes

New England Clam Chowder Beef Bouillon

Broiled Alaska King Salmon Steak Montpeller Butter

Grilled Little Pig Sausage Mashed Potatoes

Braised Short Ribs of Beef Espagnole

Baked Macaroni Parmesan

Broiled Eastern Ham

Grilled Breakfast Bacon

Eggs any Style

Chicken Liver Omelette

Boiled Rice

Beets a laienne

Cottage Fried Potatoes

Boiled Potatoes

COLD BUFFET

Potato Salad Served with Cold Meats

Roast Prime Ribs of Beef

Roast Leg of Veal

Head Cheese

Booth's Sardines

Bologna Sausage

Salmon Salad en Mayonnaise

Bread and Butter Pudding Pineapple Sauce

Green Apple Pie

Maple Cake

Loganberry Jello Whipped Cream

Preserved Strawberries

Stewed White Figs

Stewed French Prunes

American Edam or Swiss Cheese

Coffee

Black or Green Tea

Cocoa

Iced Tea

Fresh Milk

A. E. CHARLESWORTH, Chief Steward

Collagen extracted from boiled bones, connective tissues and other animal products has been consumed as food, particularly desserts, since the 1400s. The process of purifying "gelatin sheets" was time consuming, however, and the dish remained solely the dessert of Royalty and the rich through the Victorian era, where it was served in elaborate "jelly moulds." With the advent of powdered gelatin, the dessert became available to the masses. Fruit flavors were added, and recipes through the 1930s specified additional ingredients such as cabbage, celery, and green peppers. In 1934, one year before the publication of this menu, the comedian Jack Benny became the spokesperson for the product, "Jell-O." A meal served on the 1935 *Northwestern* menu above includes the choice of a gelatin dish called "Loganberry Jello Whipped Cream."

Friday

June 21, 1935

.....

Tweome 20-- Harmon Waleys, last minute decision today to ask for an attorney to explain the George Weyerhaeuser kidnaping conspiracy indictment delayed for twenty four hours what appeared to be the guilty pleas of his 19 year old wife and himself. The couple had repeatedly repudiated U S judge E E Cushman's offer of legal counsel in the three indictments against them and William Mahan, fugitive. They pleaded lack of money and insisted they wanted no legal counsel. Waley later suddenly asked for an explanation of the conspiracy indictment, indicating a possible move to contend his wife knew nothing of the kidnaping until it occurred. The Waleys were sent back to jail at Olympia for the night.

.....

Leave your films with Al at the ships bar before arrival at Juneau. They will be developed and ready for you southbound. Also beer, scenic views, candy, tobacco, magazines, and mixed drinks.

.....

Pacific coast	National League
Oakland 10, Missions 2;	Cincinnati 6,2; Brooklyn 1,7;
Portland 7; San Francisco 2;	New York 6, Pittsburgh 2;
Los Angeles 6; Seattle 5;	St Louis 3 Philadelphia 1,
Hollywood 9,1, Sacramento 2,2,	
American League	
Philadelphia 5,1; Chicago 3,2;	New York 5, Philadelphia 3,
Cleveland 8, Washington 6,	

.....

See Jimmy, the barber, for a first class haircut shave shampoo or finger wave. Shop located forward of the dining saloon, starboard

**** ORDEWAY'S PHOTO SHOP JUNEAU ****

Headquarters For Voigt Cameras, Bell Howell Movie Cameras
Agfa and Eastman Films. Scenic Views.

Los Angeles: - Three persons were killed and one critically injured when a U. S. Army Bombing Plane, faltering in its take off, crashed into a parked automobile on Crystal Springs drive, near the Griffith Park National Guard Airport, yesterday. The three victims were Dan D. Krauss, Mrs Krauss, and their two year old daughter, of Glendale. The three were killed instantly when the heavy plane struck their automobile, dragging it seventy five feet before dropping it against another car and crashing into an embankment. The seriously injured man was L. T. George Campbell, army aviator, attached to Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas. The pilot of the plane, was flying Cadet T. R. Walsh, also of Brooks Field, who was slightly injured.

Foxton, Lakes, New York: - Joe Louis isn't doing any worrying about who will be the third man in the ring Tuesday night, when the brown bomber fights Primo Carnera at Yankee Stadium. "See this," and the Detroit negro raising his right fist under the nose of Jack Blackburn, his veteran trainer, demonstrated thusly. They had just come back from a six mile jaunt at daybreak. "That's going to be my referee"

*** ** ** ** **

RADIO NEWS

The Weyerhaeuser Kidnapping • June 21, 1935



Verso of wirephoto above reads: "...George Weyerhaeuser, kidnapped boy... He had no worries when this snapshot was taken, but was proud of his cowboy outfit. " George would grow to become Chairman of the Board for the Weyerhaeuser Company.



Verso of wirephoto above reads: "Pictured is Harmon Waley who, with his wife Margaret, was arrested in Salt Lake City and according to police of that city and Department of Justice Operatives, confessed to implication in the kidnapping of George Weyerhaeuser, a 9-year-old Tacoma, Wash., boy on May 24 (1935)."

"In five days or as soon as you have the money, advertise in the Seattle P-I personal column. Say 'We are ready.' And sign it 'Percy Minnie.'"

—Egoist

Above is a quote from ransom note sent to lumberman J.P. Weyerhaeuser, signed "Egoist." The kidnappers demanded \$200,000 for the return of Weyerhaeuser's son, George. The money was delivered; the boy released unharmed. All participants in the kidnapping were arrested. During his incarceration Harmon Waley wrote to George Weyerhaeuser apologizing for his actions. Upon his release in 1963, Waley again contacted George and in an act of profound forgiveness, Weyerhaeuser obtained employment for his former kidnapper in a company plant in Oregon.

RADIO SPORTS

“The Brown Bomber”

Yankee Stadium, 26 June 1935, Joe Louis knocks out 6'6", 265-pound former World Heavyweight Champion Primo Carnera (“The Monster”) in the sixth round.



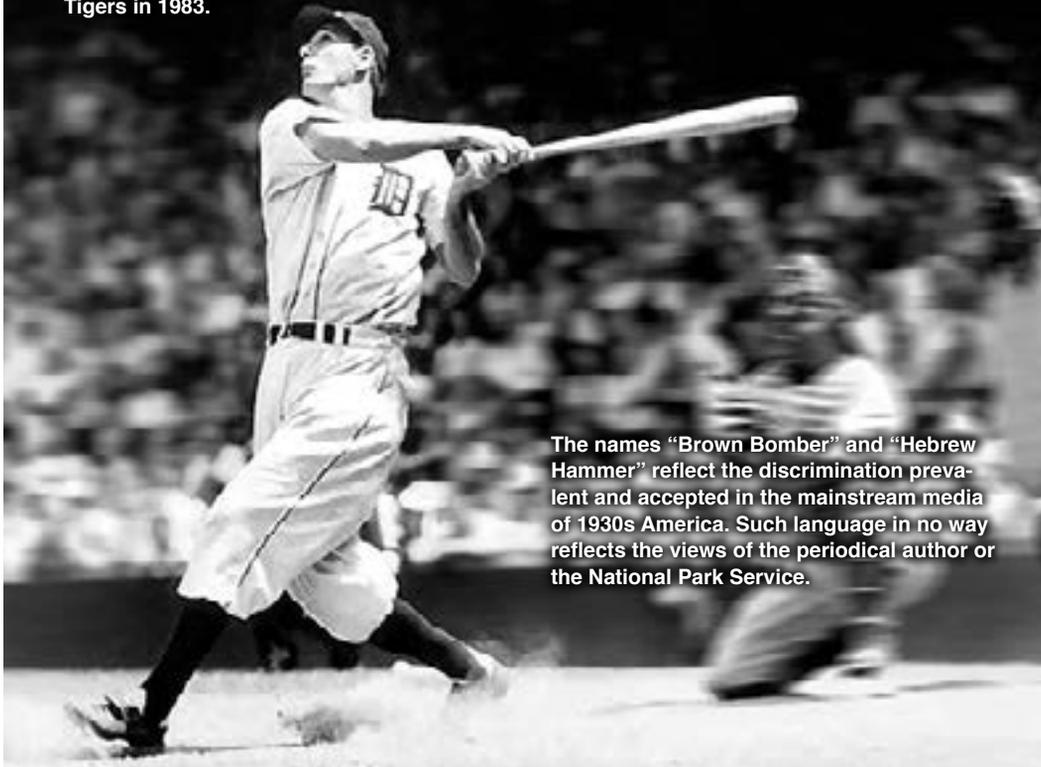
Primo Carnera.



Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, fight one, 19 June 1936. Louis falls in the twelve round to Schmeling, his first loss in 27 professional bouts. In a rematch, 22 June 1938, Louis sends Schmeling to the canvas two minutes and four seconds into the contest.

“The Hebrew Hammer”

Slugging first baseman, Henry Benjamin Greenberg leads the Detroit Tigers to their first World Series against the Chicago Cubs in 1935. Voted the American League’s most valuable player that year, Greenberg is generally recognized as the first Jewish superstar in American team sports. His No. 5 is retired by the Tigers in 1983.



The names “Brown Bomber” and “Hebrew Hammer” reflect the discrimination prevalent and accepted in the mainstream media of 1930s America. Such language in no way reflects the views of the periodical author or the National Park Service.

SOME PORTS OF CALL

ASSOCIATED LOG OF ACCIDENTS OF THE S.S. *NORTHWESTERN*
AND A FEW HISTORICAL NOTES THAT MAY INTEREST THE PUBLIC



“A Good-Natured Map of Alaska, showing the services offered by ‘The Alaska Line.’” 1934 (hereafter referenced as ‘Alaska Line 1934’ when quoted in this section) The language is left unedited to show mindset of the period. Library of Congress.

For 34 years, the S.S. *Northwestern* runs the Alaska Route as passenger and transport ship. She lays telegraph cable from Unalaska to St. Michael and Nome. In her hold, she carries copper ore from Kennecott, livestock, and railway track. The steamer ferries gold from Nome; transports mail, coal, and salmon pack. Bound to a schedule, the *Northwestern* sails, summer and winter, through bad weather and dirty seas. There are few buoys in the Alaskan waters of the early 1900s, few navigation lights. Often the vessel is lost in fog, relying upon ship’s whistle and depth soundings to find its way. In its career, the *Northwestern* runs aground 14 times. She strikes other vessels 10 times—rams docks; drops propellers, a rudder, and an anchor. Time and again, newspapers incorrectly announce the ship’s loss and salvage for scrap, but it is not until October 1940, when the *Northwestern* is far gone in years, that she is brought to shore for what is believed is the final time.

“The echoes of her whistle rocked back from the hills and you thought ‘Good old Northwestern—bringing news from the states, bringing mail, bringing a can of fresh peaches.’”

—Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 18 July 1942

SEATTLE

Gateway to Alaska and the Orient



“The deep-throated notes of the whistle sound the last warning. Down goes the gang plank. Festoons of gaily colored serpentine—good-byes and waving of hats and handkerchiefs.

“As the big steamer swings gracefully from the dock and sets her course northward, the view of Seattle’s world famous skyline spreads before our delighted eyes. This is the city Alaska actually transformed from a small settlement on the edge of wilderness to a metropolis and a world port.”

—All quoted introductory text this section (as per above) from *Sailing Sheltered Seas to the Land of the Midnight Sun!*, Alaska Steamship Company, 1931 (hereafter referenced as ASC 1931 in this section). The language is left unedited to show mindset of the period.



Alaska Steamship Company headquarters, Seattle, Washington.



Seattle, Washington skyline. Pier 2, Alaska Steamship Company.

“...the merchants of Seattle practically control the trade of Alaska, and the Yukon Territory, which is \$20,000,000 per annum and is increasing yearly... Seattle is the headquarters and base of supplies of the Puget Sound, Alaska, and Fraser River salmon fisheries, which produces salmon valued at \$15,000,000 per year.”

—Seattle City Directory, 1905



S.S. Northwestern, Seattle dock.

LOG OF ACCIDENTS

- Jan. 1910: Steamer Montara collides with Northwestern, Seattle
- Sep. 1913: Northwestern collides with H.B. Kennedy, Seattle
- Feb. 1913: Northwestern collides with Skagit Queen, Seattle
- Sep. 1915: Northwestern backs into a breasting off float, Bell Street Dock, Seattle
- Oct. 1918: Northwestern struck by the ferry West Seattle, Pier 2, Seattle
- May 1922: Northwestern crewman crushed to death in engine room accident, Seattle
- Aug. 1934: Two Northwestern crewmen burned when welding torch ignites gas fumes in oil furnace, Seattle
- May 1935: Northwestern collides with steamer Tacoma at Pier 41, Seattle

Seattle, Washington dockyard.
Pier 2, Alaska Steamship Company.



KETCHIKAN

“Ketchikan, a short two days from Seattle, is the first port of call in Alaska. It is a busy, progressive city with paved streets, up to date department stores and curio shops. There is an opportunity here for a walk to Ketchikan Creek, which flows through the center of the city and in the salmon spawning season hundreds of salmon may be seen struggling and leaping the falls on their journey to calm fresh waters.”



—ASC 1931

LOG OF ACCIDENTS

Sept. 1911: Rams *Glory of the Seas*, Ketchikan (see *When Steam Meets Sails at Ketchikan* in this publication for more details on this collision.)

Oct. 1915: Grounds, Potter Rock, south of Ketchikan (See facing page)

Feb. 1917: Smallpox discovered on board; vessel put into quarantine until all passengers vaccinated, Ketchikan

Aug. 1934: Strikes submerged object, leaving Ketchikan

Oct. 1937: While on last voyage as Alaska Steamship vessel, strikes Union Oil Dock, three fishing boats, and the oil barge *Falls of Clyde*, Ketchikan. (see *When Steam Meets Sails at Ketchikan* in this publication for more details on this collision.)



View of Ketchikan from dock. Library of Congress.

In 1919, five corporations from the conterminous United States control 53% of Alaskan salmon pack. Labor is largely imported—Chinese workers; and fishermen hired off the docks of San Francisco and Seattle. The canneries are fed primarily by stationary fish traps, not seiners (fishing boats) worked by Alaskan fishermen. The fish trap, according to Judge James Wickersham, Alaska's first delegate to Congress, "does not demand wage or food, works night and day, and catches everything that travels the fish highway." The then territory of Hawaii controls her own fisheries, but not Alaska. The salmon industry (the "Fish Trust"—the Seattle-based Alaska Packers Association) wields such influ-

ence that it prevents the transfer of Alaskan fisheries to the newly formed territory in 1912. The abolition of the fish trap becomes a political rallying cry of Native Alaskans (whose primary source of food and employment is being appropriated*); non-Native fishermen; and Alaskans in general. The end of the fish trap finally comes in 1960, one year after Alaskan statehood. So strong had the powers of the canneries been, that George Rogers, Alaskan economist, later commented that Alaska was, in terms of the corporate exploitation of fish, the "farthest north banana republic."

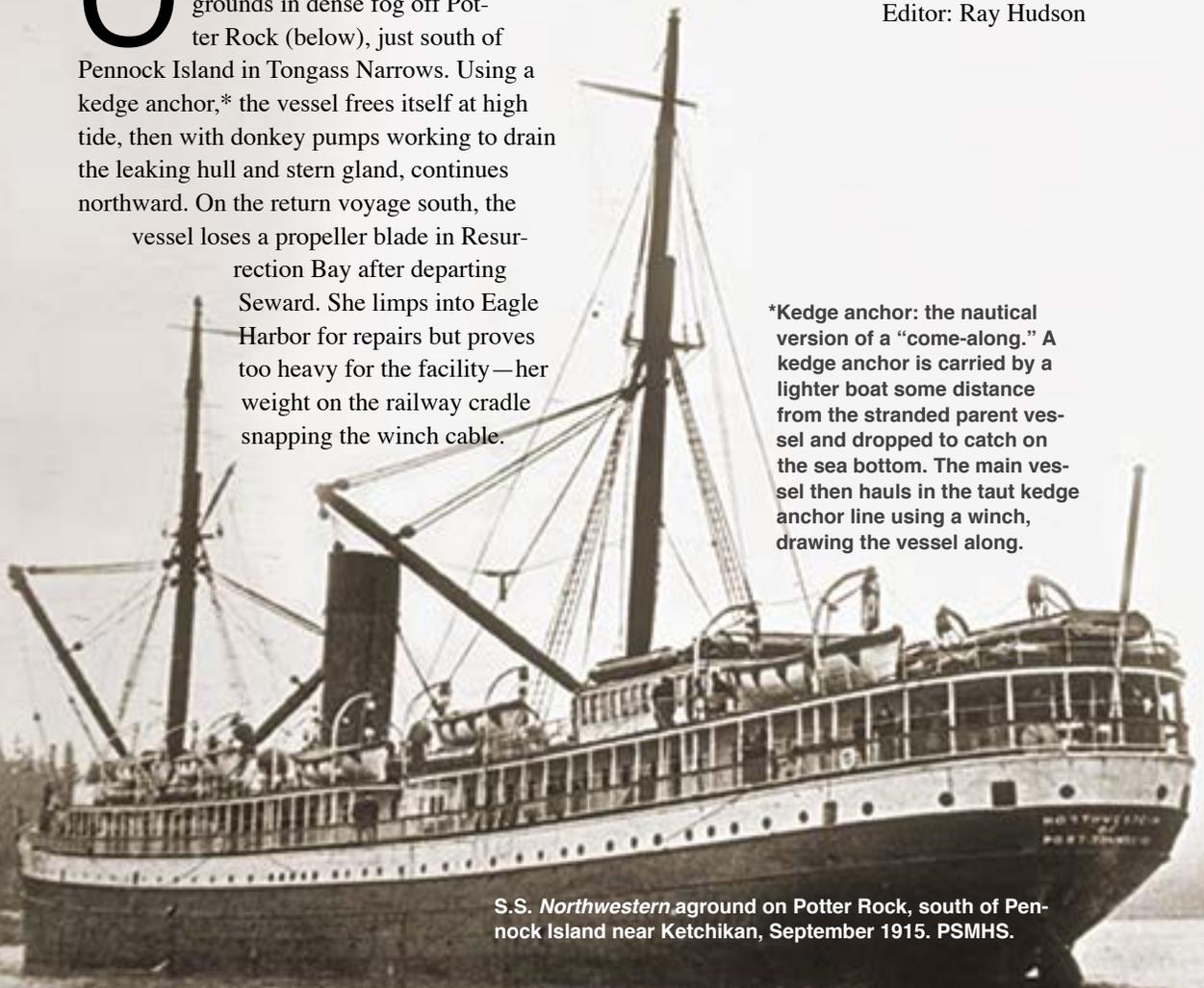
*In 1929 nearly 100% of seiners in Alaska are operated by Alaska Natives; in the Ketchikan district in 1934 the number is 8%.

"They used to say in Alaska towns that the Northwestern hit every rock in the Inland Passage—but they couldn't keep a good ship down."

October 6th, 1915 the *Northwestern* grounds in dense fog off Potter Rock (below), just south of Pennock Island in Tongass Narrows. Using a kedge anchor,* the vessel frees itself at high tide, then with donkey pumps working to drain the leaking hull and stern gland, continues northward. On the return voyage south, the vessel loses a propeller blade in Resurrection Bay after departing Seward. She limps into Eagle Harbor for repairs but proves too heavy for the facility—her weight on the railway cradle snapping the winch cable.

—Cuttlefish Five
Editor: Ray Hudson

*Kedge anchor: the nautical version of a "come-along." A kedge anchor is carried by a lighter boat some distance from the stranded parent vessel and dropped to catch on the sea bottom. The main vessel then hauls in the taut kedge anchor line using a winch, drawing the vessel along.



S.S. *Northwestern* aground on Potter Rock, south of Pennock Island near Ketchikan, September 1915. PSMHS.

WRANGELL



“Fort Wrangell: From the mouth of the Stickeen—the starting point of the expedition.” From *Alaska Days with John Muir* by S. Hall Young. [Project Gutenberg](#).

“The voyage through the inland waterway continues on to Wrangell...many times referred to as ‘Wrangell the Beautiful.’ Wrangell is one of Alaska’s oldest towns, dating from the time the United States purchased the territory and established a military post [Fort Wrangell (1866-1877)]...”

—ASC 1931



Chief Shakes' House, Wrangell, Alaska.



The *City of Seattle* at Skaguay [Skagway] wharf, circa 1900. New York Public Library.

“Shortly after leaving Wrangell the ship steams through Wrangell Narrows (below)... For two hours the steamer cautiously threads its way through this winding, twisting, nature made channel, with shores so close on either side it seems possible to toss a stone ashore. Transiting Wrangell Narrows always will be remembered as one of the many thrills of an Alaska trip.”

—ASC 1931

While steaming through Wrangell Narrows, “The Broadway of Alaska,” in dense fog, 1 June 1919, the *Northwestern* takes a violent sheer from starboard. The vessel does not answer the helm and piles ashore south of Anchor Point. The *City of Seattle* (above) takes on the *Northwestern*’s passengers and stands by, and the following day the steamer *Jefferson* pulls the stranded vessel into deeper water. Inspection reveals no damage, and the *Northwestern* and passengers continue north to Juneau, arriving the same day.



The *Northwestern*, under the command of Captain William Jensen, ashore south of Anchor Point, Wrangell Narrows, 1 June 1919. PSMHS Negative No. 1783-14, from the Williamson Collection.

SITKA

“Sitka—once the Capital of Alaska when the ‘great land’ was under Russian rule; Sitka rich in historic and scenic appeal, famous for its early-day trading with the peoples of the entire Pacific Coast, has a romantic and turbulent background difficult to imagine.

“Today it is a beautiful, peaceful little town...surmounted by majestic Mount Edgcumbe, America’s replica of Japan’s famed Mount Fujiyama. The old Russian blockhouse—The Cathedral; beautiful, totem lined, Lover’s Lane, Indian River Park [Sitka National Historical Park, Alaska’s oldest federally designated park, established 1890]—these and many other places of interest will make our stay in Sitka linger in the memory forever.”*

—ASC 1931



Russian blockhouse.

Sitka was designated a national monument in 1910 in commemoration of the 1804 Battle of Sitka fought between the Kiks.ádi Tlingits and Russians.



Mount Edgcumbe, near Sitka.





Early Russian Orthodox Church, Sitka, 1886.
Alaska State Library, William R. Norton, photographs P226-361.

In the background is a photo of a steamship docked at the former Russian wharf and warehouse at Sitka, circa 1904. Under the direction of Territorial Governor (1897-1906) John Green Brady, the Revenue Cutter *Rush* collected totems from Southeast Alaska for exhibition at the St. Louis Exposition. These poles, now largely recarved by Native artisans, form the nucleus of the totem exhibit at Sitka National Historical Park. The United States Revenue Cutter Service joined with the U.S. Coast Guard in 1915, the latter continuing the Cutter's Arctic mission to protect natural resources; suppress illegal trade; resupply remote outposts; support scientific studies; enforce the law; and participate in search and rescue. National Park Service, Sitka National Historical Park (SITK 883).



JUNEAU

“Sedate, trim and picturesque, backed by the tall peak of Mt. Juneau, this colorful and modern capital city of Alaska is nestled on beautiful Gastineau Channel of the Inside Passage. A thriving little city of over 5,000 people, Juneau owes its origin to gold. Today it ably holds the responsibility of the Territorial government on its shoulders...”

“Here is located the residence of the Governor and the seat of all legislative departments.”

—ASC 1931

January 22, 1916, the *Northwestern* docks at Juneau encased in ice. The photographers Winter and Pond and J. E. Thwaites capture the scene in a series of postcard views (see facing page). The *Northwestern's* crew sets to work chipping the vessel clean, and she continues southward the same day.



Walter Eli Clark, Governor of the District of Alaska, 1909-1912, and the first Governor of the Alaska Territory, 1912-1913.

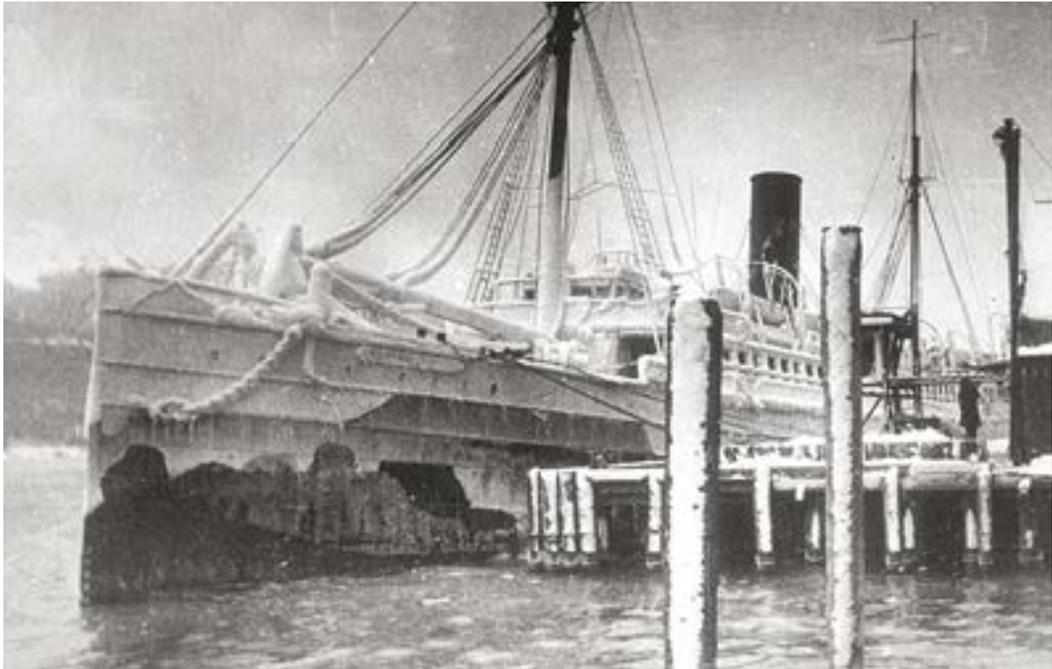
Governor Clark had argued against territorial status for Alaska in 1912, citing its small population of whites and the general lack of infrastructure (even though the population was actually greater than nine other territories when they had attained statehood). Among the notable laws signed by Clark in the territory's first legislative season in 1912 were: a mandatory eight-hour work day in many industries; women's suffrage; and the taxation of the salmon canning industry. The latter called the "case tax," levied a 7¢ per case tax on red and king, and a 1/2¢ per case tax on pink, chum, and coho salmon.



[Juneau circa 1897](#), possibly after a photograph.

“How’s this for cold...Northwestern, Juneau, Alaska, Jan. 22-1916”

—Handwritten note on postcard
author unknown



John Zug Collection, Accession Number 80-68-140, Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks.



National Park Service.

SKAGWAY

“...Skagway sprang into life and became famous overnight during the gold rush of [18]97 and ‘98. It is the transfer point into the interior of Alaska and the Canadian Yukon Territory and is the ocean terminus of the White Pass & Yukon Route rail line... As the steamer stops approximately twelve hours at Skagway, ample time is afforded to make the side trip to Lake Bennett via the White Pass & Yukon Route. In Skagway, Blanchard’s garden should be visited. Here we find flowers of many varieties growing to such enormous size as to almost defy the imagination.”

—ASC 1931



“Skagway, gateway to the Yukon country.”



Grand opening, Mascot Saloon, Skagway, 1904.
National Park Service.

“From Skagway, many a weary prospector toiled over Chilkoot Pass in ‘98 on his way to the Klondike.”





Looking north at Broadway, circa 1908-1914. National Park Service.



Moore's Wharf during the gold rush era. The pens at bottom right hold livestock. P.E. Kern, John Urban Collection; Anchorage Museum, B1964.001.18

CORDOVA

and Monopoly

Beginning 1935, the Parker Brothers market the game “Monopoly.” Players buy, trade, and develop properties/railroads/utilities, and collect “rent” from other players. The goal is to drive opponents into bankruptcy. The “Monopoly: Alaska Edition” is first published in 1998.



James Wickersham, 1910, two years before he is appointed the Alaska Territory's first (non-voting) delegate to the House of Representatives, U.S. Congress.

“Cordova—the copper center of Alaska. The air has that crisp, green freshness, so characteristic of the Territory. Cordova is the ocean terminus of the Copper River & Northwestern Railway, which extends into the interior one hundred and ninety-six miles to Kennecott’s famed mountain of copper.”

—ASC 1931

(Above quote dates 7 years before the closure of Kennecott Mine)

The great house of [corporate mogul J. P.] Morgan had, and still has, the practical control of railway building in the United States territory, just as the [Simon]Guggenheim side of the Alaska Syndicate (formed in 1906) has control of all power in respect to copper, coal, and lead and everything of a mining nature in the Pacific west. These two, in combination, have thrown out their tentacles along the coast of Alaska, have secured a monopoly of our coal, copper, and transportation, and they are in control of the three principal gateways to the interior of Alaska. They control the transportation¹ in Alaska; they control the situation with respect to railroad building in Alaska; they control the fisheries of Alaska; they control the copper of Alaska. (and copper smelters in Washington State)... If we had no (Federal) Government control in...Alaska, the people there would settle the Guggenheims and their kind in short order.”

—James Wickersham,

Hearings Before the Committee on the Territories, House of Representatives Sixty-Third Congress, First Session on Bills Wednesday, 9 July 1913, roughly one year after Alaska gains territorial status.



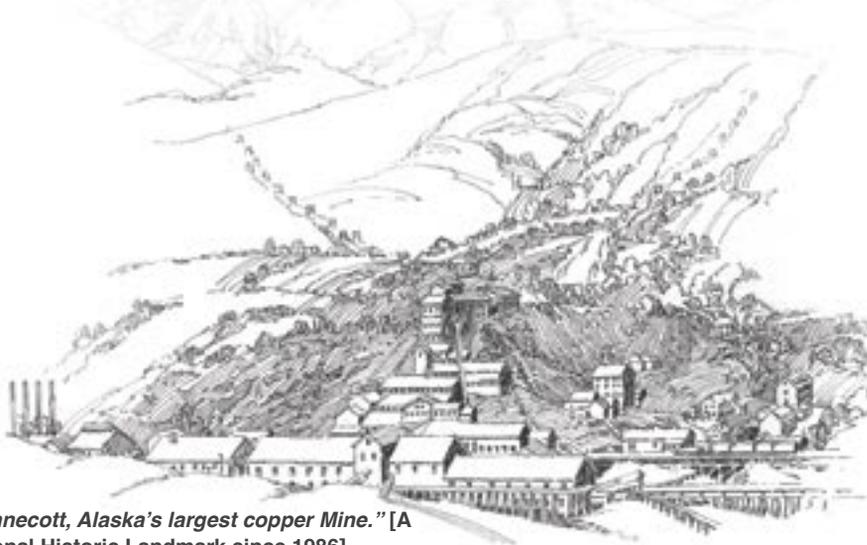
Cordova dock. National Park Service.



Sacks of Kennecott copper ore (weighing roughly 140 pounds each) on the Cordova dock. National Park Service.

The winter of 1908, the *Northwestern* transports heavy cargoes of freight and equipment to Cordova for construction of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad (CRNW). By 1909, her steerage is largely filled with laborers seeking work on the line. April 1911, the *Northwestern* docks at Cordova for “Copper Day,” celebrating completion of the 196-mile-long CRNW and the arrival of the inaugural trainload of copper ore from the mines at Kennicott—the ore bound for the smelters of Tacoma, Washington.

January 1916, the *Northwestern* alone hauls over a million dollars of gold and copper ore from Valdez and Cordova. Collectively, vessels of the Alaska Steamship Company carry 120 million pounds of ore southward in 1916—the greatest yearly volume recorded.



“Kennecott, Alaska’s largest copper Mine.” [A National Historic Landmark since 1986].



Northwestern at Cordova dock, 1923. In 1910, the vessel sails Seattle to Cordova in 4 days, 12 hours, breaking the speed record set by her fleet mate the Victoria by 6 hours. Captain H. Croskey is at the helm. Steamboat races were the norm in the early 1900s, with passengers often betting on the outcome and the fastest vessels praised in newsprint. Tinted lantern slide, Alaska State Library, ASL P198-75.

Wednesday, 29 March 1911, the last spike in the CRNW rail line is driven by Chief Engineer E. C. Hawkins and Superintendent Samuel Murchison at Kennecott. The spike (forged of copper) is withdrawn and inscribed with the words: “Native Alaska Copper” on one side; “Copper River & Northwestern Railway” on the second; and “Kennecott Mines” on the third; the fourth face is left blank. The copper spike is transferred to a safe aboard the S. S. Northwestern, along with a plaque reading “From E. C. Hawkins to S. W. Eccles, president, Copper River & Northwestern Railway.” When the S.S. Northwestern arrives in Seattle a week later with the first load of copper ore from Kennecott, she is decked out in bunting and streamers and carries a banner that reads: “First trainload of copper from Bonanza Mine (one of 5 mines in the Kennecott complex). Worth \$250,000. A million tons to follow...”

In 1916, the peak year of production, the value of ore extracted from Kennecott reaches 32.4 million dollars. By 1925, however, the end of high-grade ore is in sight, and by 1938 the Kennecott mines close. When the last train leaves on the CRNW track, 10 November of that year, it leaves behind a ghost town. In nearly 27 years of continuous operation, Kennecott produced 4,625 million tons of ore averaging 13% copper valued at roughly 207 million dollars with an estimated profit of 100 million dollars. The by-product silver accounted for another 4½ to 9 million dollars in revenues. The United States had initially sold the copper lodes at Kennecott to the Alaska Syndicate at a rate of 5 dollars an acre.

In 1912, the Alaska Railroad Commission (ARC) is charged by Congress to investigate expanding Alaska's railroads into the resource-rich interior of the state. The commission concludes that it is most economical to purchase the CRNW railroad (above) and build a spur from Chitina to Fairbanks, rather than extend the defunct line originating at Seward. The commission also finds the port of Cordova better protected than that at Seward and the location less open to naval attack. Before the report is adopted, however, Woodrow Wilson takes office as president in 1913. Wilson signs into law the Federal Trade Commission, and pushes through Congress the Clayton Antitrust Act, which holds individual officers of corporations responsible for violating the law. The latter is considered the "Magna Carta" of labor. In an atmosphere of anti-trust/anti-monopoly, the purchase of the Alaska Syndicate owned CRNW railroad is political anathema. Wilson appoints the Alaska Engineering Commission to review the earlier ARC decision. Sensitive to the political climate, the Alaska Engineering Commission recommends purchasing the Seward-Fairbanks line (see image at right), citing the long-range benefits of opening the agriculturally fertile Matanuska Valley. The tracks and trestles of the Alaska Syndicate's CRNW line, synonymous with the names Guggenheim and Morgan, were gradually dismantled and replaced by the 49.5 mile long Copper River Highway, which terminates (to the pleasure of Cordova's contemporary isolationists) at the Million Dollar Bridge.

LOG OF ACCIDENTS

- Aug. 1918: Gone ashore at Orca, near Cordova
- Feb. 1927: Crewman D. Jorgenson crushed to death and another crewman injured while unloading railroad ties; Jorgenson dies at Cordova Hospital



Of the hundred and twenty-nine bridges built on the CRNW line, the "Million Dollar Bridge," (or Miles Glacier Bridge [above]) was the most costly, with a price tag of 1.4 million. (Damaged by the 1964 earthquake and repaired in 2004-5 at a cost of 19 million, the bridge could arguably be called the "20 Million Plus Dollar Bridge.") The CRNW Railroad was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973; the Million Dollar Bridge was added to the register in 2000. National Park Service.



Alaska Railroad locomotive #1, built 1899 by "H.K. Porter & Co., Pittsburgh Pa." In this view, engine #1 may be working the narrow gauge route to Fairbanks, (formerly the Tanana Valley Railroad) that reached to within 39 miles of Chitina in the heart of gold mining country. This line would be upgraded to standard gauge as part of the Alaska Railroad joining Seward with Fairbanks (see Seward, this section). Porter and Co. primarily built small, narrow gauge locos that could be operated by one engineer if necessary. National Park Service.

VALDEZ

"[They] were panic-stricken and stampeded for terra firma."

—Nome Nugget, 23 March 1908
description of crowd reaction while waiting
dock side
for the Northwestern during a strong earth-
quake.

"Valdez offers us another very impressive side trip; an automobile ride to Keystone Canyon... For this trip we leave the steamer, transfer to automobiles for the ride over a portion of the Richardson Highway, through Keystone Canyon—so rugged and deep, so appealing, as to make description impossible. Even the perfect eye of the camera cannot truthfully tell the story."

—ASC 1931



1909, the *Northwestern* delivers to Valdez the first "[White Steamer](#)" automobile to attempt the Richardson "trail." The above steam-powered vehicle is a touring version (likely 20 hp) manufactured by the White Motor Company in Cleveland, Ohio (1900-1911). White also produced bicycles, roller skates, and sewing machines.



Motor-coaches await steamer passengers for a tour of Keystone Canyon, Richardson highway. National Park Service.

As part of the events surrounding the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle, the S.S. Northwestern is chartered by the National Editorial Association (NEA) for a Southeastern Alaska cruise—24 July to 12 August. The agenda includes visits to Native villages, glaciers, and coal mines. NEA excursionists ride the Copper River and Northwestern Railway and are vetted at a ball at Valdez held in their honor.



Livestock offloaded at Valdez.
Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, B67.1.9.

LOG OF ACCIDENTS

- May 1907: Gone ashore, Swanport near Valdez (See Grounded at Latouche and Points South, this periodical.)
- Sept. 1907: Blown away from dock by violent winds, “the next thing to a tornado”—both hawsers snapped at dock, captain forced to sail for Seward without discharging cargo, Valdez
- Feb. 1908: Experienced large earthquake while docking, Valdez. (See Earthquakes, Excursions and Icebergs, this periodical, for other seismic events affecting nautical traffic in SE Alaska.)
- Jan. 1913: Aground, Valdez
- May 1914: Snapped winch cable breaks passenger’s leg, another’s arm, and knocks down crewman, Valdez



National Editorial Association Excursion at Valdez, 1 August 1909. Mary Whalen Collection, Accession Number 75-84-2285, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

SEWARD

“Seward, named in honor of William H. Seward, whose conviction and persistence resulted in the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867, for the relatively trifling sum of \$7,200,000.00, presents a magnificent setting at the northern end of the almost land-locked Resurrection bay...

“As the steamer remains in Seward for twelve to fourteen hours, we who are seeking diversion will find hiking, golfing, fishing or the auto ride to Kenai Lake delightful pastimes.”



—ASC 1931

March 1908, Fairbanks newspapers report that the *Northwestern* has brought north 250 workers to break a miners’ strike at the Tanana gold placers.

April 1910, the *Northwestern* delivers a train crew and heavy equipment to Seward in an attempt to revitalize the new Alaska Northern Railway Company (a 51-mile stretch of track formerly owned by the Alaska Central Railroad). By 1914 the rail line, referred to simply as the Alaska Railroad, stretches to the gold fields of Fairbanks, 486 miles distant. In 1985, the federally owned railroad is purchased by the state of Alaska.

May 1917, the *Northwestern* offloads Chinese workers at Seward to ready equipment for the first canning season of the new San Juan Fishing & Cannery Company.



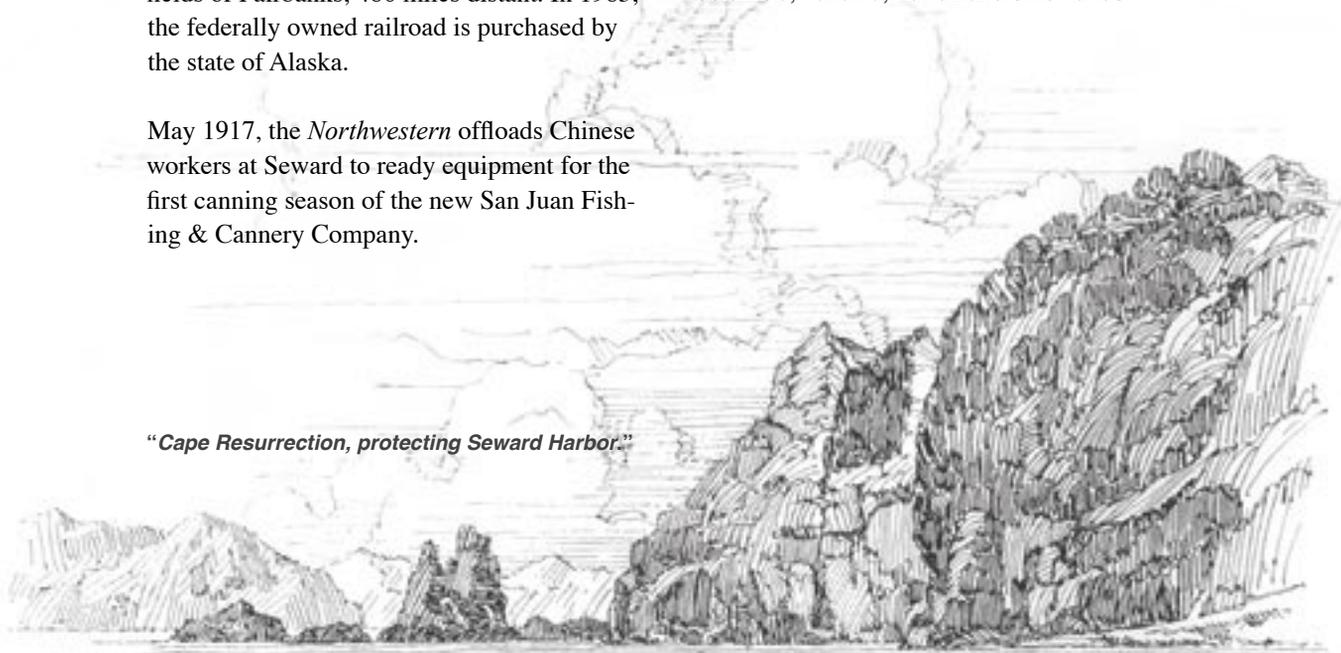
Secretary of State William Henry Seward, circa 1860-65.

Seward survives an attempt on his life 14 April 1865— part of a coordinated three-target assassination plan that includes President Abraham Lincoln. Seward suffers multiple knife wounds to his face and neck, and will carry the scars the remainder of his life. Almost two years to the day later, he brokers the purchase of Alaska.

When asked his greatest achievement, Seward replies, “The purchase of Alaska—but it will take the people a generation to find it out.”

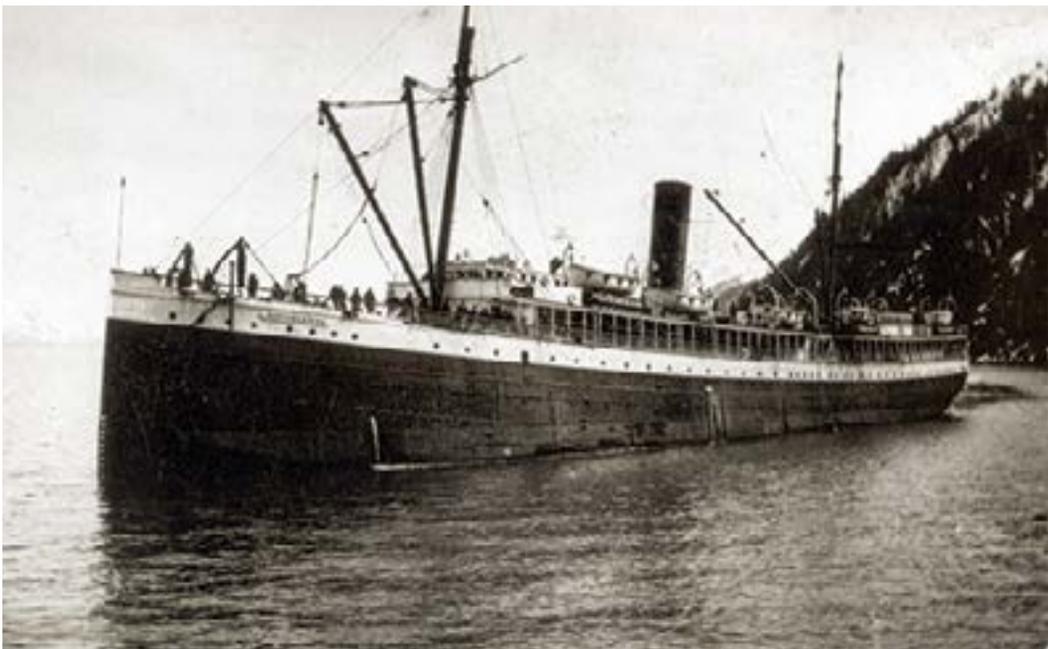
Seward also argues for the acquisition of British Columbia, Panama, Hawaii and other lands.

“Cape Resurrection, protecting Seward Harbor.”





Tinted image, Seward. Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, B88.52.38.



The S.S. *Northwestern* at Seward, 1907-09. Kodiak Historical Society, P-399-22-A.

NOME

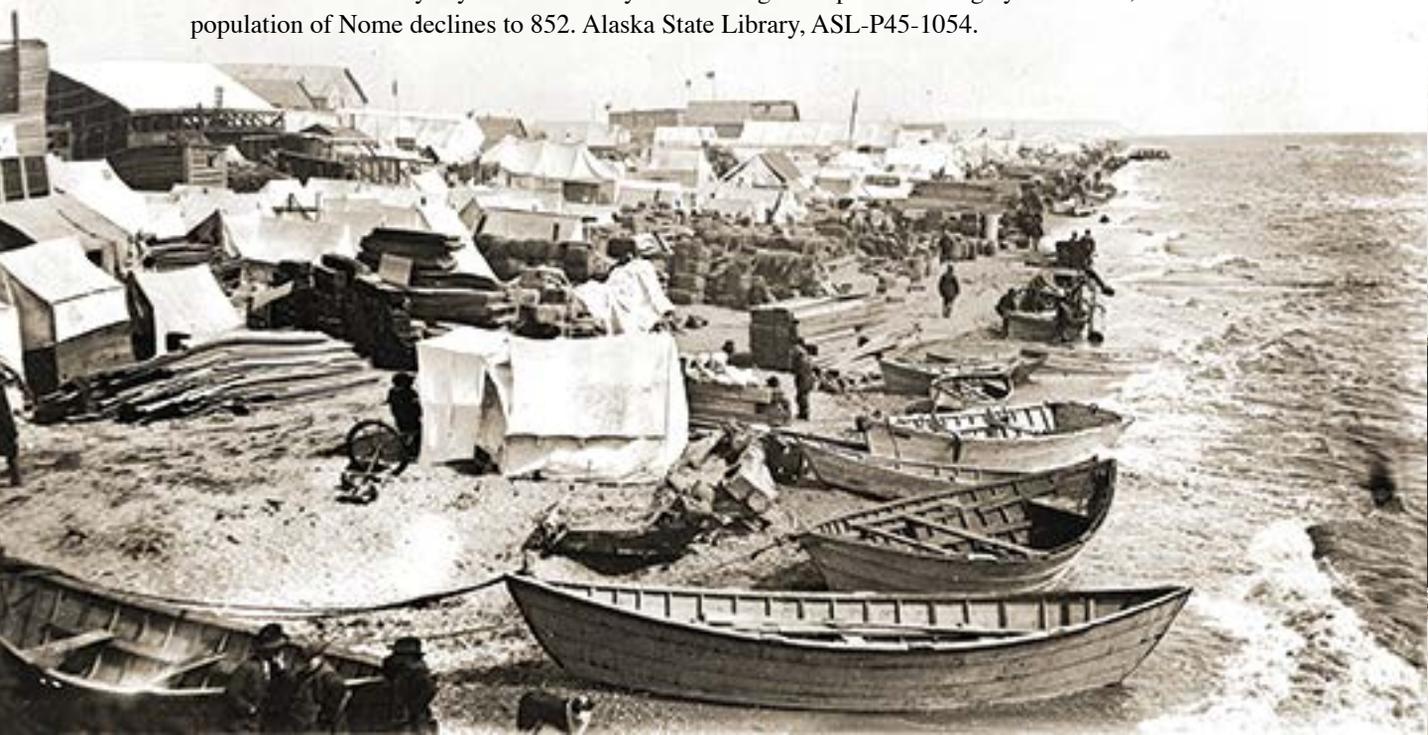
“[Alaska] was the last great gold rush. There will never be another like it. It was one of the great adventures of the American epic. It was a chapter in the great westward march of the American people in search of greater opportunity.”

— Senator Ernest Gruening, Governor of Alaska Territory, 1939-1953



Miner's cabin built of logs and sod, Nome Beach. Alfred G. Simmer Collection, Alaska State Library, ASL-P137-038.

In 1899, prospectors drawn by gold in the beach sands of Nome raise a tent city on the shore (below), reaching roughly 30 miles from Cape Nome to Cape Rodney. By 1900 the U.S. Census lists the population of Nome at 12,488, making it the largest town (incorporated as a city in 1901) in the Alaska Territory. By 1920 the easily accessible gold deposits are largely exhausted, and the population of Nome declines to 852. Alaska State Library, ASL-P45-1054.



On her inaugural voyage north on the Alaska route, the S.S. *Northwestern* sails nonstop 1,971 nautical miles Seattle to Unimak Pass (80 miles northeast of Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Chain), then northward an additional 652 nautical miles to Nome. There on 25 June 1906 she loads 750,000 dollars in placer gold. The long trip in Alaskan waters taxes her boilers, however, necessitating repair at the Moran Dock, Seattle, 5 July. On her next trip north, the *Northwestern* races the steamer *Ohio*—Nome to Seattle—and wins; then on 12 August 1907, she challenges the steamer *City of Puebla*.

“...one of the greatest steamship races in the history of the North Pacific.”

—Dawson Daily News

The *Puebla* breaks all speed records running for Nome, arriving in 61½ days and capturing the market of 500 passengers at St. Michael and Nome eager to return south for the winter. Bad weather precludes the *Northwestern* from lightering many passengers and little cargo. June 17, 1908, the *Northwestern* encounters the worst spring ice conditions in twenty years at Nome, preventing the ship from moving close enough to shore to unload (see below). The following two winters, the vessel retreats south to the Seattle-Seward run.

The S.S. *Northwestern* moored offshore Nome with citizens on ice to greet her, June 1908. Women in foreground include Mrs. Goodwin, Mrs. Reagan, Mrs. Ames, and Mrs. Sale. Courtesy Lomen Family Collection, Accession Number 72-71-2576, Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks.



The S.S. *Northwestern* at the Hefferman Dock, Seattle, circa 1909. During a major rebuilding at the dock, October 1909, 40 wrought iron hull plates are replaced—damaged by ice on spring runs to Nome. While still at Hefferman, the *Northwestern* and a neighboring ship are struck by the steamship *Montara* which had broken away from a buoy in Seattle Harbor. The Hefferman dock also suffers damage. PSMHS, Negative No. 1783-27.



WHEN STEAM MEETS SAILS

At Ketchikan

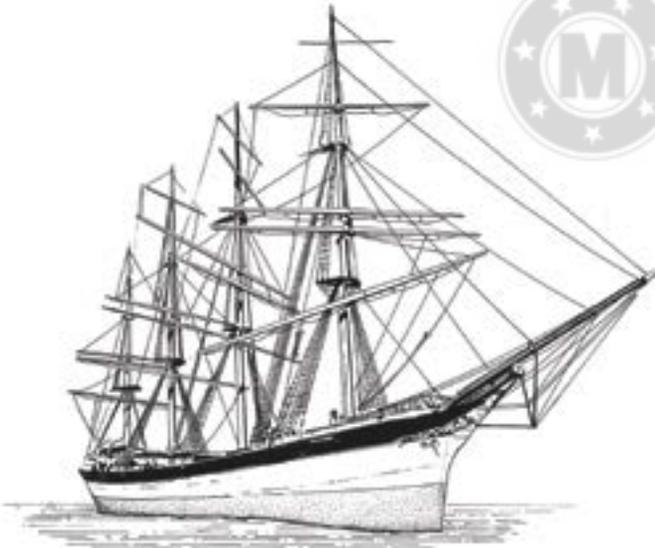


Glory of the Seas.

A failure of the *Northwestern's* engine order telegraph (right), 27 September 1911, causes the ship to lunge forward and strike the *Glory of the Seas* (above) at the Ketchikan dock. The *Glory* is a once-famed, wooden clipper ship, stripped of her sails and converted to a floating salmon cannery. It is a point of contention as to which vessel suffers most from the collision. The S.S. *Northwestern* is made of iron and steel, but the *Glory* is fashioned of great oaken frames and covered in thick wood planking. Some argue that the *Northwestern* has her stem stove in and her rivets sheared while the *Glory of the Seas* is left strong and sound as ever.



Above: Engine room order telegraph salvaged from the S.S. *Northwestern* shipwreck. Two of these devices were used to communicate desired speed and direction (forward/reverse) between the pilot on the ship's bridge and the engineers in the engine room. Photograph: Archgraphics. Object courtesy Museum of the Aleutians, Dale Dorsey Collection. This object may be viewed at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor.



The *Falls of Clyde*, an iron-hulled, four-masted ship, is laid down in Port Glasgow, Scotland in 1878 by Russell and Company. During her first six years of service, she works the India trade, then operates as an "ocean tramp" (a sailing vessel bound by no fixed schedule or ports of call) carrying general cargo. The above rendering and other detailed architectural drawings carried out under the co-sponsorship of HABS/HAER, National Park Service Maritime Initiative and the Hawaii Maritime Center, 1989.

After 21 years as a British merchantman, the *Falls of Clyde* is purchased by the U.S. company Matson Navigation to work the San Francisco/Hawaii route. August 1902, the *Hilo Tribune* notes that she carries in her hold for export "...3234 bags of Oloa sugar, 3000 bags of Hilo sugar, 5000 bags Hakalau, 11950 bags Waiakea, and 7301 bags of Pepeekeo sugar; 2 cases ribbons, 20 pkgs. household goods and 12 bags of coffee." In 1907 the *Falls* is converted to an oil tanker, her hull fitted with ten large steel fuel tanks (total 19,000 barrel capacity). In this configuration she transports, still under sail alone, kerosene to Hawaii, returning with molasses for cattle feed. In 1927 the vessel is sold to the General Petroleum Company. She is ignobly stripped of her yards, topmasts and royals, then towed to Ketchikan, Alaska. There, the vessel operates as "a floating filling station...securely moored to [General Petroleum's] dock...she goes up and down with the tides, a convenient platform for servicing fishing boats in need of fuel."* The manager of the vessel lives aboard the *Falls* with his family in the saloon and cabins. In 1963, having outlived her usefulness, she is to be sold and scuttled as breakwater at Vancouver, British Columbia. A former mate on *Falls* in 1916, Captain Fred Klebingat (and others, including Hawaiian school-children) raise the funds to have the *Falls* towed to Hawaii. The vessel is restored and opened to the public in 1968, but afterwards falls into a poor state of repair. As of 2008, the ship has been under the care of the non-profit group Friends of the *Falls of Clyde*. In 1989, the National Park Service had entered The *Falls of Clyde* into the National Register of Historic Places and declared the vessel a U.S. National Historic Landmark.

*The *Falls* has the distinction of being one of ten vessels that collides with the *Northwestern* during the steamship's tenure. The *Falls* is struck October 1937 while tied to the Ketchikan dock.



SOCIETY PLAYS where Old Hawaiian Kings held court

HAWAII

WORLD'S FASTEST SERVICE

LASSCO LINE from LOS ANGELES MATSON LINE from SAN FRANCISCO

HAWAII TOURIST BUREAU

Increased commerce between the mainland and Hawaii prompts a nascent tourism in the territory (1898-1959). The first hotel in Hawaii, the Moana (ocean) Hotel, is raised in Honolulu in 1901 and later subsequently listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Above is an early tourist advertisement for Matson and Lassco Lines serving Hawaii. Matson lists: "Sailings every Wednesday and every Saturday over smooth seas on fast de luxe liners; also popular one-class steamers."

GROUNDED AT LATOUCHE

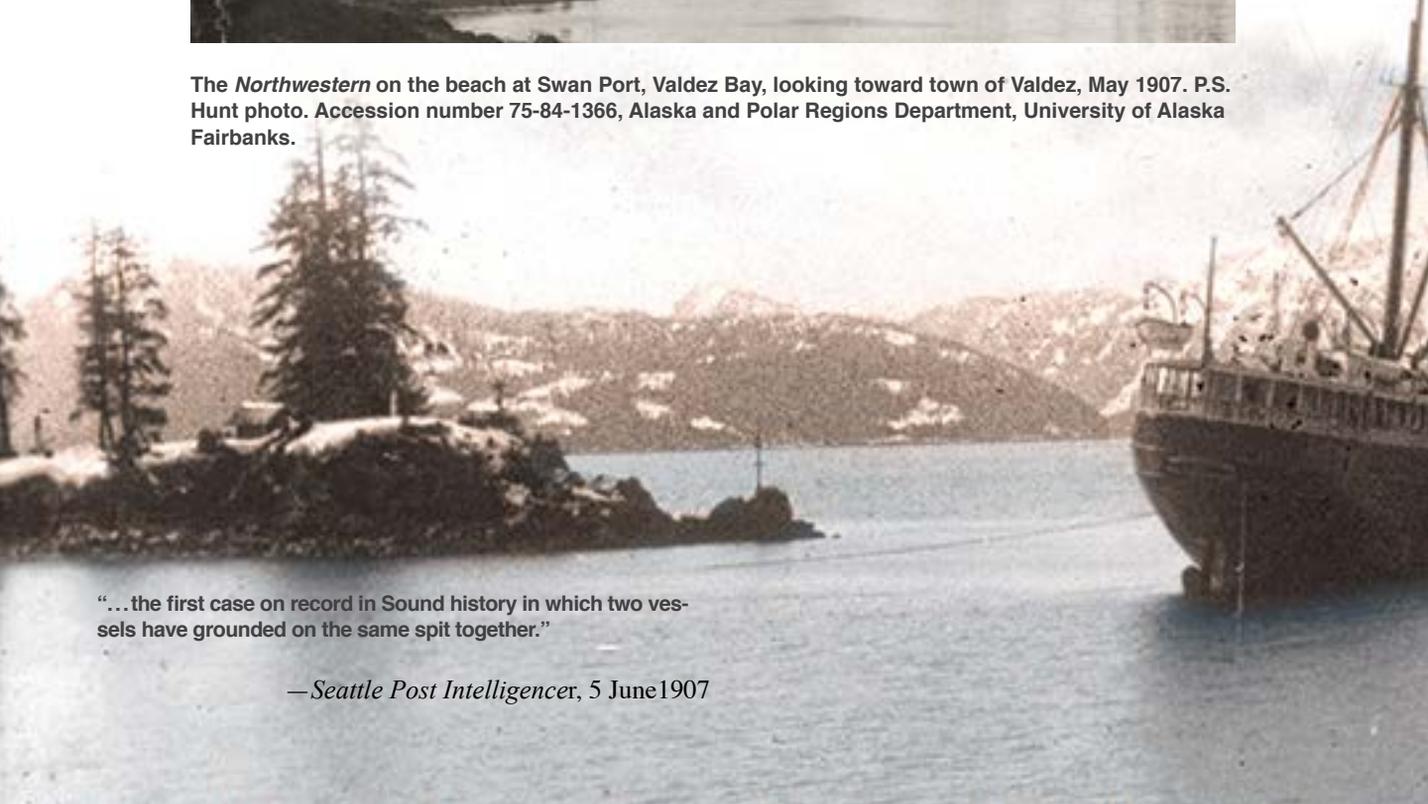
...and points South

Latouche, Alaska, 19 March 1907, a sudden squall drives the *Northwestern* onto a reef, roughly 600 feet from the Beatson's Big Bonanza Mine Wharf (Mine purchased by Kennecott Copper in 1915). The vessel's bottom is pierced and seawater floods the forward hold to a depth of 17 feet. The steamer *Portland* takes off the *Northwestern's* passengers and mail to Valdez, then returns with wrecking machinery.

By the end of April, the *Northwestern* is at Latouche Dock (inset, facing page), a false concrete bottom built over the compromised hull and the forward hold pumped dry. Refloated, the *Northwestern* leaves Latouche 25 May in convoy with the salvage tug *Salvor* for repairs at Esquimalt, British Columbia. Almost immediately the *Northwestern* begins to flood, and the *Salvor* barely reaches Port Valdez, bringing the *Northwestern* ashore at Swan Port (inset below). After further repairs, *Salvor* and *Northwestern* again head south. Nearing Victoria, British Columbia, both vessels go aground in heavy fog near the mouth of the Fraser River at Sand Head Shoal.* The *Northwestern* manages to free herself, then pulls off the *Salvor*. June 5, the *Northwestern* goes into dry dock in Victoria. An inspection of the hull reveals 18 holes. Two months and 35,000 dollars later, the repaired *Northwestern* heads for Seattle, nearly four months after grounding at Latouche.



The *Northwestern* on the beach at Swan Port, Valdez Bay, looking toward town of Valdez, May 1907. P.S. Hunt photo. Accession number 75-84-1366, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks.



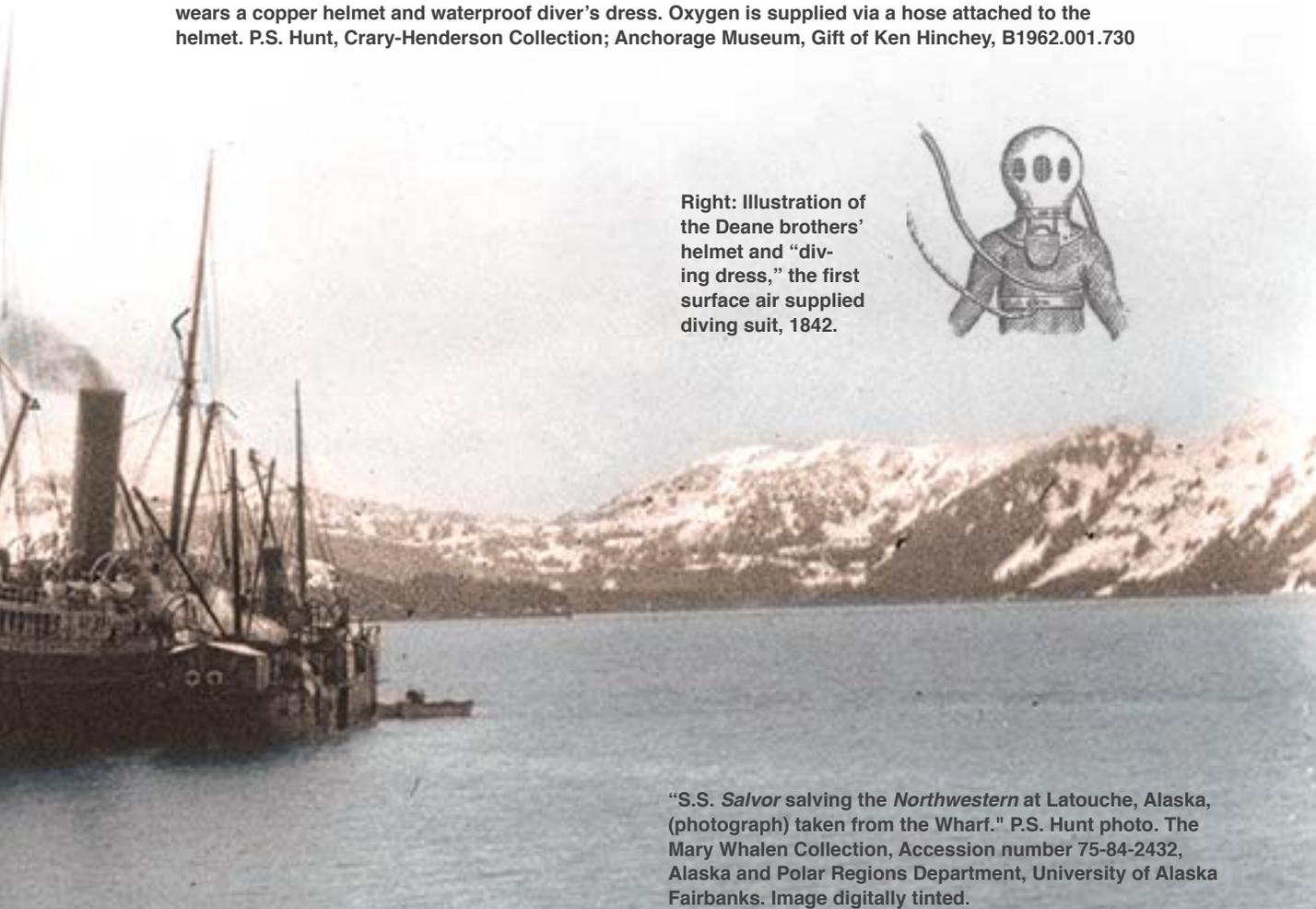
“... the first case on record in Sound history in which two vessels have grounded on the same spit together.”

—*Seattle Post Intelligencer*, 5 June 1907



“Lowering a diver from the S.S. *Salvor* to examine the *Northwestern* at Latouche, Alaska.” The diver wears a copper helmet and waterproof diver’s dress. Oxygen is supplied via a hose attached to the helmet. P.S. Hunt, Crary-Henderson Collection; Anchorage Museum, Gift of Ken Hinchey, B1962.001.730

Right: Illustration of the Deane brothers’ helmet and “diving dress,” the first surface air supplied diving suit, 1842.



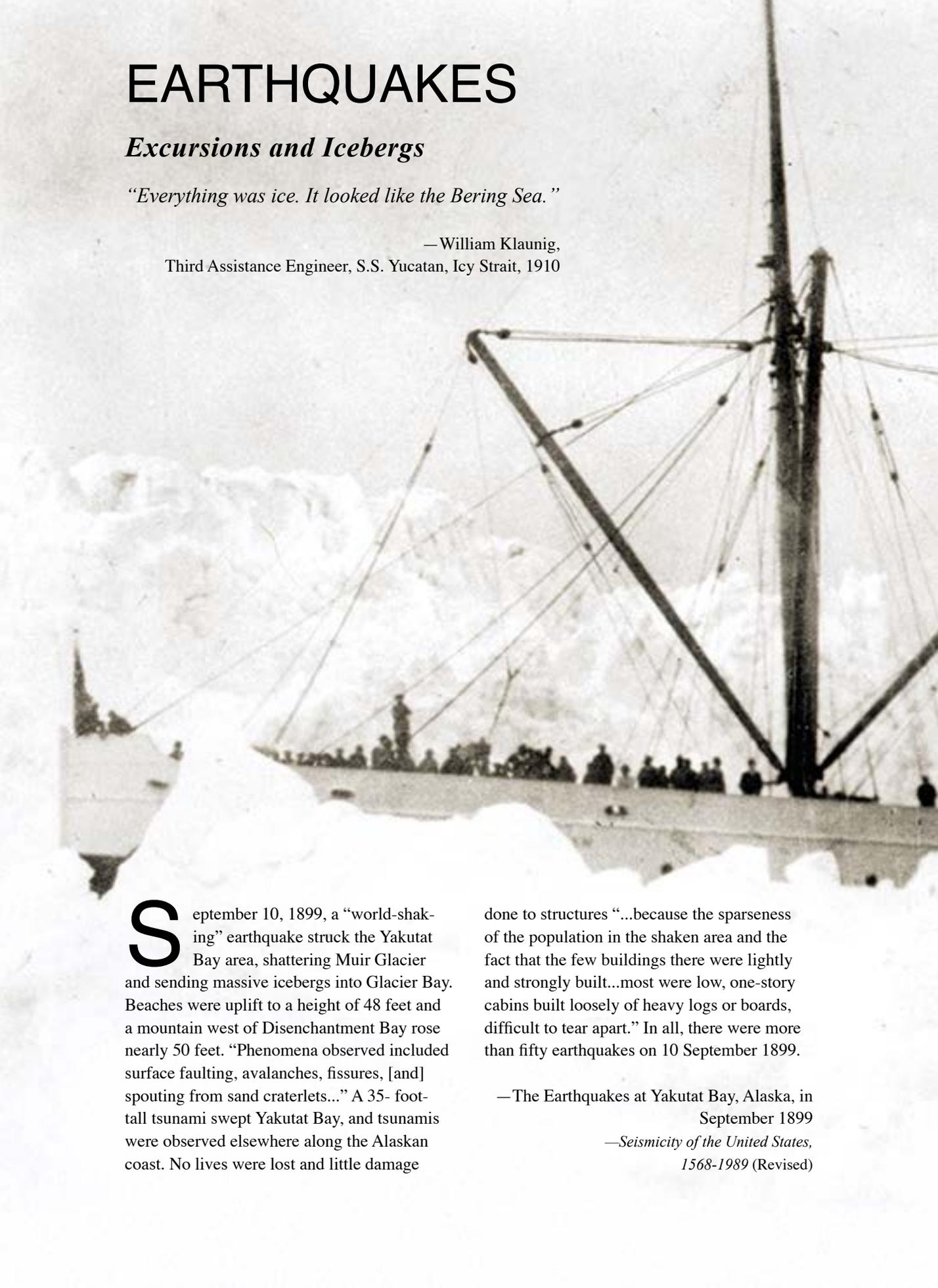
“S.S. *Salvor* salvaging the *Northwestern* at Latouche, Alaska, (photograph) taken from the Wharf.” P.S. Hunt photo. The Mary Whalen Collection, Accession number 75-84-2432, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Image digitally tinted.

EARTHQUAKES

Excursions and Icebergs

“Everything was ice. It looked like the Bering Sea.”

—William Klaunig,
Third Assistance Engineer, S.S. Yucatan, Icy Strait, 1910



September 10, 1899, a “world-shaking” earthquake struck the Yakutat Bay area, shattering Muir Glacier and sending massive icebergs into Glacier Bay. Beaches were uplift to a height of 48 feet and a mountain west of Disenchantment Bay rose nearly 50 feet. “Phenomena observed included surface faulting, avalanches, fissures, [and] spouting from sand craterlets...” A 35-foot-tall tsunami swept Yakutat Bay, and tsunamis were observed elsewhere along the Alaskan coast. No lives were lost and little damage

done to structures “...because the sparseness of the population in the shaken area and the fact that the few buildings there were lightly and strongly built...most were low, one-story cabins built loosely of heavy logs or boards, difficult to tear apart.” In all, there were more than fifty earthquakes on 10 September 1899.

—The Earthquakes at Yakutat Bay, Alaska, in
September 1899

—*Seismicity of the United States,
1568-1989 (Revised)*

Below is a photo of the *Northwestern* safely navigating Icy Strait (the northern entrance to Alaska's Inside Passage), circa 1910. The large ice masses are the result of the great earthquake of 1899 when the ice fields of Glacier Bay fractured during a 8.0-magnitude tectonic event. The floating icebergs caused great hazard to steamer traffic on the Inside Passage and nearly sank the Alaska Steamship Company steamer (and sister ship of the *Northwestern/Orizaba*) *Yucatan* in Icy Strait. National Park Service.



"Group on upper deck (Taken on Prince Williams [sic] Sound." Perkins' excursionists, 1909. Back row, third from left: G. W. Perkins, "Hyas Tyee," ("important/big ruler/leader" in Chinook jargon as described in [photo album](#)). Back row, fifth from left: Captain W.P.S. Porter.

The Yucatan

In 1909, George W. Perkins, of Riverdale-on-Hudson, New York—associate of J. Pierpont Morgan and Simon Guggenheim—charts the S.S. *Yucatan* of the Alaska Steamship Company to bring 18 members of his family to Alaska to view the Guggenheim holdings. They are joined by eastern financiers and pro-development District of Alaska Governor Wilford Bacon Hoggatt. For the excursion, Perkins has converted the *Yucatan* from common carrier to private yacht at a cost of 200,000 dollars. Suites are carpeted in rich green; mission brass bedsteads are draped with silk curtains to block drafts; and furnishings covered in fine upholstery. Valets' accommodations are placed well forward of the main suites, but the staff are easily summoned by the push of an electric button. A modern cold

storage plant is installed for the voyage, and two launches placed aboard for exploring the inland waters.

February 16, 1910, the *Yucatan* (in far more mundane commerce) is en route to the mining camp at Gypsum, Alaska) when she strikes a submerged iceberg in Icy Strait. Captain W.P.S. Porter steams for shore to beach his sinking vessel in Mud Bay, then evacuates passengers and crew before the aft of the *Yucatan* settles to the bottom in shallow water. The vessel is eventually salvaged and repaired at a cost of 170,000 dollars, but its new life is short-lived...scrapped at Osaka, Japan in 1930.

Gypsum is the mineral used in the manufacture of plaster of Paris and wall plaster.

NEGLIGENCE NEAR JUNEAU

July 25, 1933, 2:38 a.m., the S.S. *Northwestern* strikes at full speed a reef off Sentinel Island in Lynn Canal twenty-five miles north of Juneau. The vessel is beached on the sandy bottom of Eagle River to prevent sinking, and 180 passengers are put in lifeboats and lowered over the side. At low tide, salvage crews hurry to staunch hull leaks with concrete. After it is apparent the ship will remain upright, passengers are reboarded and at the return rush of high tide, the ship is floated. The *Northwestern* turns south for the five-day trip to Seattle—to dry dock and repairs to-

taling \$65,000. On the evening of the accident the sky was clear, suffused with Alaska's long summer light. The Sentinel Island lighthouse beacon was lit, and the lighthouse keeper had repeatedly warned the *Northwestern* with his fog horn. In a much-publicized trial after the incident, both ship master and second officer receive license suspensions. On 13 October 1933, *The Alaska Weekly* reports "Wreck of *Northwestern* Blamed to Negligence."





PSMHS, Ordway photo, Williamson Collection, Negative No. 1783-1.



**STEAMSHIP
NORTHWESTERN
SENDS OUT
SOS**

... --- ...

Captain C. A. Glasscock.
S.S. *Northwestern*

STEAMSHIP NORTHWESTERN SENDS OUT S O S FROM ALASKAN WATERS

Seattle, Wash., Nov. 6:--Her rudder gone and battered by stormy waters in the Gulf of Alaska, the passenger liner Northwestern, bound from Seattle to Alaskan ports, was broadcasting SOS calls early today. Fifty passengers and a crew of eighty men are aboard the vessel. The Coast Guard cutter Hecla was reported steaming to the assistance of the Northwestern. The point where the Northwestern is in distress was given as two miles south of Cape Spencer near Cross Sound, one of the wildest spots on the Alaskan coast with no habitation for many miles in either direction. The Northwestern, which is commanded by Capt. C. A. Glascock, is a ship of 3,094 gross tons, 335 feet long and 43 feet beam. The Northwestern, in an earlier accident, went aground and partially sunk on the rocks off Cape Mudge, British Columbia, in December, 1927.
PHOTO SHOWS----Capt. C. A. Glascock, captain of the SS Northwestern disabled in the GULF of ALASKA.

ABOVE: Verso of Captain Glascock wire-photo portrait (at left) describing (#1 above) November 6th, 1930 incident where the *Northwestern* drops stern post and rudder in heavy seas in the Gulf of Alaska, two miles south of Cape Spencer. Captain Glascock signals an SOS and a flotilla of five "gas boats" tow the rudderless vessel to safety in Dundas Bay. The *Northwestern* waits out a hurricane in Fanshaw Bay with the tugs *Creole* and *Douglas*, then is towed south to Seattle.

"...all the expensive Christmas goods floating around in her hold ruined by seawater..."

—S.S. Northwestern radioman,
Cape Mudge grounding, 11 December 1927

In an earlier accident, the Northwestern, under the command of Captain John "Jock" Livingston, goes ashore in heavy snowfall and a southeastern gale, five miles south of Cape Mudge, British Columbia, 11 December 1927. The wind broaches the vessel broadside to the beach, and the passengers fear it will capsize. Lifeboats could not be lowered, and downed radio landlines render the vessel's wireless useless. The halibut boat Explorer, disoriented in the storm as well, hears the ringing of the Northwestern's bell. The Explorer's Captain Magnus Hansen pilots his fishing boat through the breaker's at the Northwestern's stern and comes to the lee of the stranded vessel. One hundred and eighteen passengers and their baggage are transferred to the Explorer's "dark and fragrant fish hold," then taken to the Tye Club's* summer resort hotel, Willowaw, at Campbell River. There they are treated to a big dance and the following day board the steamer Alameda for the return to Seattle. The Northwestern, believed to be a total loss, also returned to Seattle for \$152,000 in repairs, 55 days in dry dock, then back to work on the Alaska Route. And the seawater-soaked gifts...they were reported auctioned off.



"Mrs. T.B. Randall of Vancouver, B.C. being presented with diamond button by Wallace H. McMillan, president of the Tye Club of B.C. Mrs. Randall is 'Tye Man' and new record holder 1941. Catch 66½ lbs on August 7th 1941."

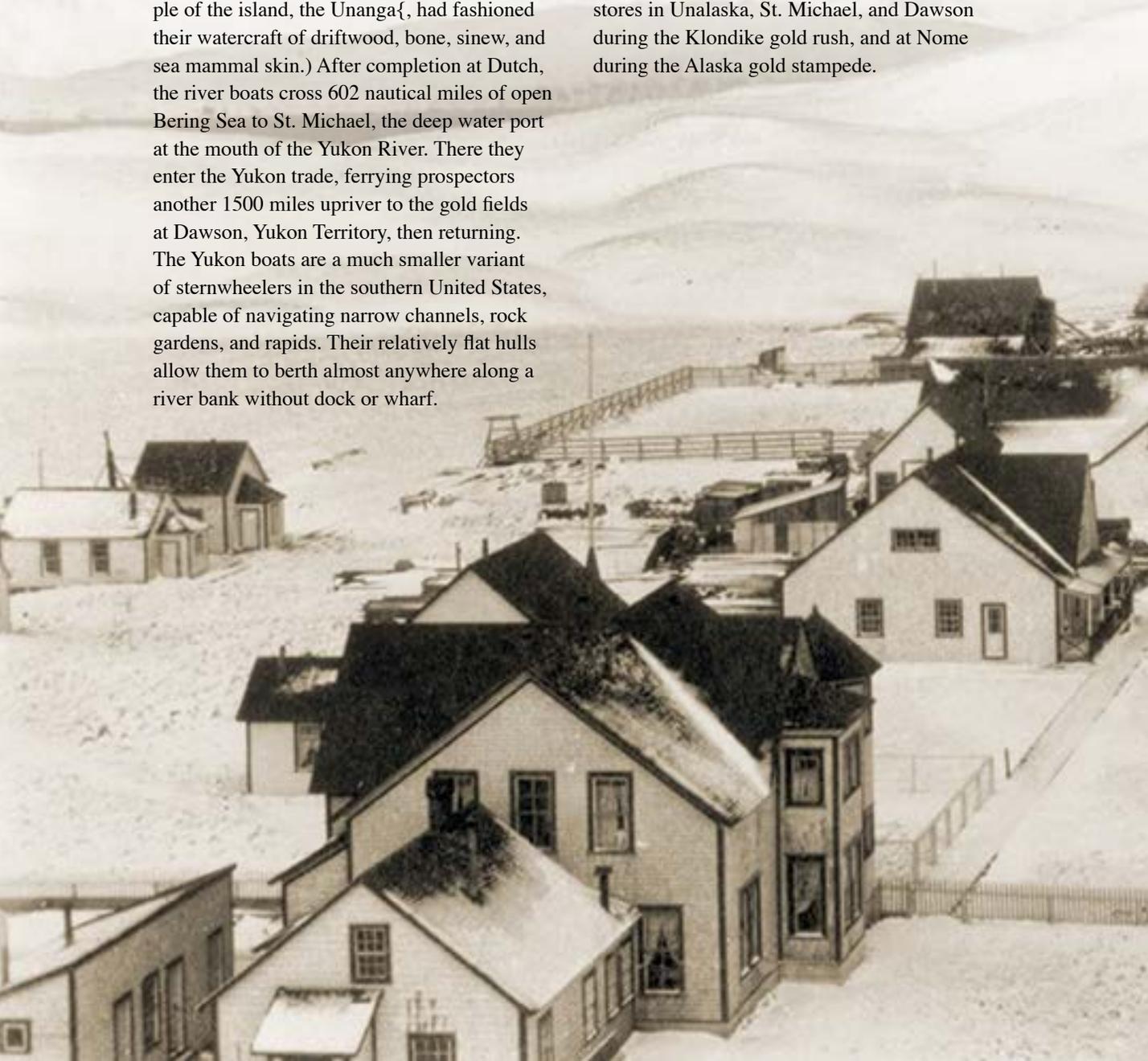
"The Tye Club of British Columbia began in 1924 with a group of anglers who returned to Campbell River each year in pursuit of the 'Tye'(or chief)—a Chinook salmon, 30 pounds or larger." <http://www.tyearchub.org/>

OLD DUTCH HARBOR

Gateway to the Gold Fields

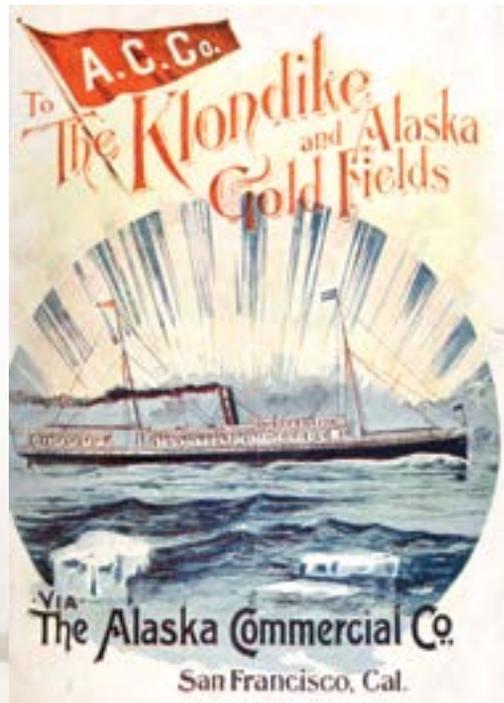
Five disassembled sternwheelers are shipped from the lower-forty eight states by transport steamer to Dutch Harbor, Amaknak Island, 1898. There on the beach front the river boats are reassembled—the *Arnold*, *Herman*, *John C. Barr*, *John Cudahy*, *Klondyke*, *Leon*, and *Linda*. It is no small irony that the vessels are constructed on Amaknak—a naturally treeless island, devoid of any timbers for shipbuilding. (The first people of the island, the Unanga, had fashioned their watercraft of driftwood, bone, sinew, and sea mammal skin.) After completion at Dutch, the river boats cross 602 nautical miles of open Bering Sea to St. Michael, the deep water port at the mouth of the Yukon River. There they enter the Yukon trade, ferrying prospectors another 1500 miles upriver to the gold fields at Dawson, Yukon Territory, then returning. The Yukon boats are a much smaller variant of sternwheelers in the southern United States, capable of navigating narrow channels, rock gardens, and rapids. Their relatively flat hulls allow them to berth almost anywhere along a river bank without dock or wharf.

Warehouses, trading posts, goods and ships—the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC) purchases all assets of the Russian American Company upon acquisition of Alaska, and like the Russians before them, the ACC monopolizes commerce in remote Alaskan villages and towns. In a land short of hard currency, barter remains the form of exchange—gold, fish, sea mammal skins, and terrestrial furs—traded for ACC merchandise and trinkets. ACC sites stores in Unalaska, St. Michael, and Dawson during the Klondike gold rush, and at Nome during the Alaska gold stampede.





Sternwheeler *Yukoner* "lining" Five Fingers Rapids, Yukon River.



Alaska Commercial Company advertising guide-book, 1898.



Sternwheelers in various stages of completion line the Dutch Harbor beach, 1898. Alaska Commercial Company Store is in the middle, to the left of the scaffolding. Museum of the Aleutians.

DUTCH HARBOR

On the Cusp of War



August 21, 1940, the *Northwestern* is overhauled at the Lake Union Dry dock, Seattle. September 3rd, she sails north to the Aleutian Chain under her own steam for the final time. Onboard are one Marine officer and 15 enlisted men of the Advance Marine Detachment; 4800 barrels of fuel oil; and 1500 tons freight—including four month's supply of provisions and cold storage.

1. Dutch Harbor dock/S.S. Northwestern
2. Naval Air Station
3. Fort Mears Army Base
4. City of Unalaska

Dutch Harbor

Unalaska Bay

Looking NNW at Amaknak Island, ca. 1942.
Museum of the Aleutians.

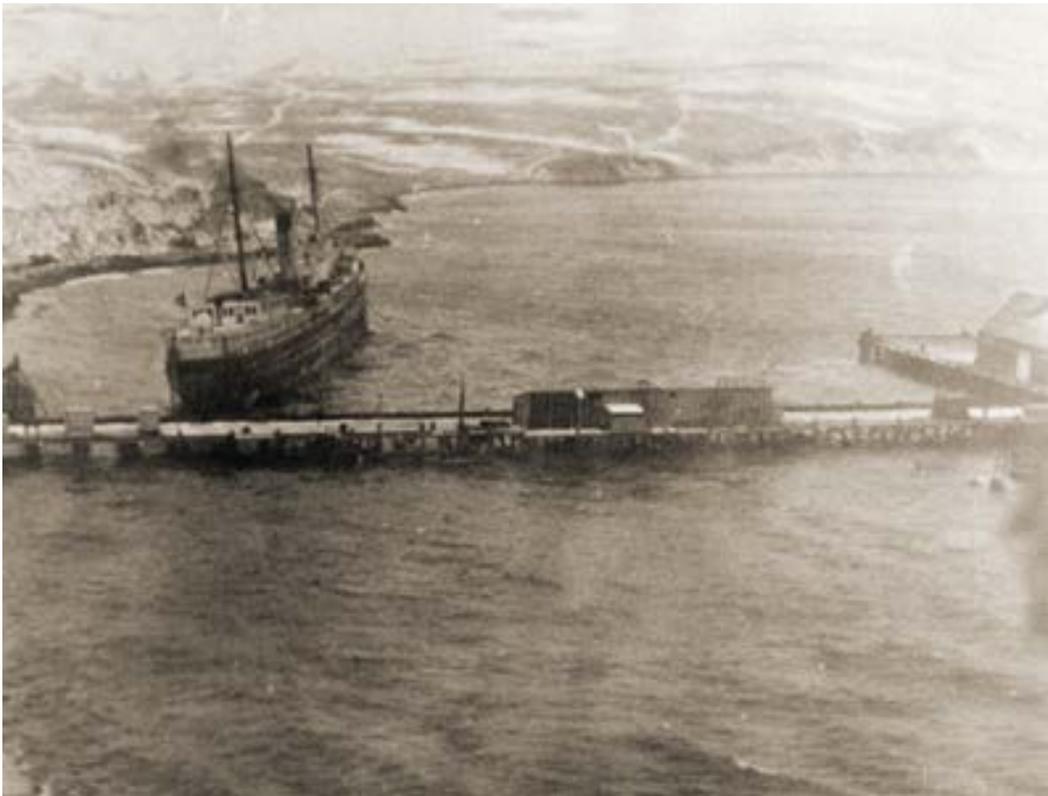
The ship ties up at the Dutch Harbor dock, Amaknak Island, in service to the construction combine Siems-Drake-Puget Sound Company—civilian contractors charged with construction of the nascent Naval Operating Base on Amaknak Island. Here the aged ocean liner is to spend the last of her years as a floating hotel, mess hall, and powerplant.

THE LAST STORM

“...it took me back to my sailing ship days, when we didn’t have any machines to help us. In those days, it was just men against the wind and sea.”

— Captain Robert Kamdron, S.S. *Northwestern*, December 1940

Twice storms force the *Northwestern* to abandon her mooring and ride out bad weather anchored in Dutch Harbor. In a severe December storm, 90-mile-per-hour winds and heavy swells drive the ship pounding against the Dutch Harbor dock. Captain Robert Kamdron has the vessel towed a few hundred yards into open water, then drops four 5-ton anchors. But the anchors drag in the gale, and the *Northwestern* is slowly carried shoreward. Kamdron adjusts the tension on each anchor line, bringing the *Northwestern* parallel to shore and grounding her safely west of the Dutch Harbor pier.



S.S. *Northwestern* at Dutch Harbor Dock during winter storm. Museum of the Aleutians.

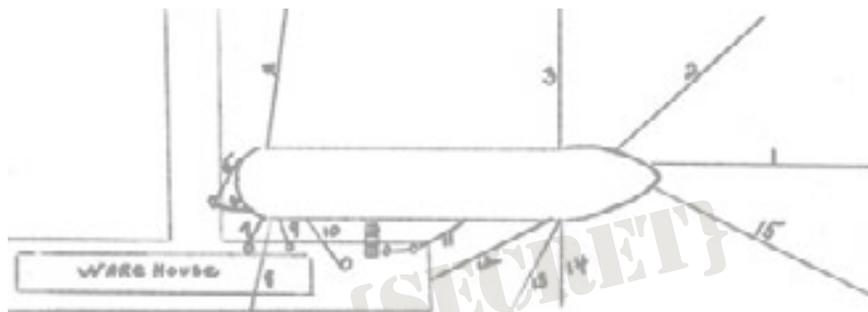
“...it appeared evident that the ship would break away from its mooring.”

— A. W. Cockrell

1940/ANC/jrs
(309)

From: The Commanding Officer
To : The Major General Commandant
Via : The Commandant, 13th Naval District
Subject: Beaching of the S.S. NORTHWESTERN.

1. For several days we were aware of a severe storm to the west and southwest. Indications wore that it would pass to the south of Dutch Harbor but that this locality would be in the edge as the storm passed and receive high northeast winds. Therefore, additional precautions were taken for the safety of the ship and personnel.
2. At this time the S.S. Northwestern was moored to the Dutch Harbor dock as follows:



1. 90 fathoms 1 7/8" anchor chain to 5 ton crankshaft anchor.
 2. 1 1/2" cable to deadman on beach.
 3. 1 1/2" cable to deadman on beach.
 4. 1 1/2" cable to deadman on beach.
 5. Double 1" wire cables to reinforced dock pilings.
 6. Double 1" wire cables to reinforced dock pilings.
 7. Five 6" Manila lines to reinforced mooring bit.
 8. 1 7/8" anchor chain secured in series to pilings under dock.
 9. Five 6" manila lines to reinforced mooring bit.
 10. Five 6" manila lines to reinforced mooring bit.
 11. Three 6" manila lines to two mooring bits.
 12. One 8" manila line to cable and chain secured to dock.
 13. 1 1/2" cable; 35 fathoms secured to 4200 lb. patented anchor.
 14. 1 1/2" cable, 40 fathoms attached to 15 fathoms of chain secured to 4500 lb. wood-stock anchor.
 15. 105 fathoms 1 7/8" anchor chain to 4500 lb. steel stock anchor.
- NOTE: Two additional 1 3/8" cables had been ordered to be run from forward part of ship, one on each side, to anchors on opposite side of dock approach.

3. About 2:00 a.m. on Friday, December 13, 1940 heavy north northeast winds started. During the day the intensity of the wind increased. Some of the gusts reached hurricane proportions. The evening weather map indicated no change in condition. However, the surge of the sea continued to build up due to continued heavy northerly winds. About 10:00 p.m. the strain began to tell on the ship; the mooring bits located on the starboard promenade deck aft (#10) gave 1 1/2 inches but held in that position due to one of the mooring lines snapping; the forward mooring bits in the windless room aft (#9) also gave about one inch and the plate holding the chock bulged slightly. However, all other lines and bits appeared in good condition.

4. About 1:00 a.m., the forward inside spring line (#11) due to non-holding by the starboard anchors (#13 and 14), was put to too much strain and pulled the bits out of their casting. At this time the undersigned issued orders to assemble the personnel in the mess room so that all hands could be informed of the condition and be prepared to abandon the ship if necessary. This assembly was executed in a quiet orderly manner by having the officers and senior non-commissioned officers awake the remainder. Each person made a small roll of blankets and one change of clothing (Marines included their rifles). Life boats were lowered to a ready position and five days food supply was stacked handy for transfer ashore.

5. Due to the contour of the beach where the ship would ground and to the flatness of the ship's bottom no real danger was felt or was anticipated although it appeared evident that the ship would break away from its mooring.

6. From 1:00 a.m. until the final hold to the dock gave way, about 3:00 a.m. one line after another broke. About 2:00 a.m. the outer forward spring line (#12) snapped. With the bow anchors falling to hold the bow soon moved into shallow water and grounded. This caused additional surging of the after part of the ship. It was not long after this that all lines aft started breaking under the strain. About 2:30 a.m. the chock through which the anchor chain (#8) led to the dock broke into several pieces. This permitted the chain to eat its way through the side plates and stanchions a distance of about five feet until the anchor chain made a straight line from its mooring bits on the ship to the dock. These mooring bits could not take the strain and were broken off, however, before they could be pulled through the side of the ship the anchor chain parted and the ship, about 3:00 a.m., drifted onto the beach.

7. The actual beaching was so gentle that those assembled in the mess room did not distinguish it from the surges and noises that had been in progress for the past several hours. When it was realized that the ship had actually beached the mental relief was very noticeable. The men were returned to their rooms for a much needed rest.

8. During the day an attempt was made to take in the slack in the after

mooring cable (#4). This cable was secured to the capstan in the anchor windlass room aft. A surge caught the line when taut and pulled the capstan out by the roots in a manner similar to that of extracting a tooth.

9. Due to a reported possible shifting of the wind direction to the northwest and to the concrete evidence that the ship's structure could not stand up under the strains of being secured to the beach the undersigned decided to abandon ship. It was felt that the best plan would be to have the maximum number of personnel off the ship and thus avoid a possible last minute attempt to abandon ship in case the ship did start to break up. A line was worked to the beach and there handled by a group of Siems Drake Puget Sound contractor party under charge of Mr. Leonard Clark, the General Superintendent. This line was secured to the power drum of a bull-dozer on the beach and through a sheave on the ship. One of the life boats of the S.S. Northwestern was secured to this line. The running end on the ship was handled by man power.

10. This rigging was completed by 3:40 p.m. and the first boat load of 22 Marines (truck and tractor drivers, searchlight operators, cooks, etc) and one commissioned officer was ferried ashore. The last boat load was completed at 6:50 p.m. After dark, about 4:20 p.m., illumination was furnished by truck lights, one of the anti-aircraft searchlights and a flood light rigged on the beach. In this manner 129 persons with a few personal articles and clothing each were transferred ashore. Six civilians, the mate, purser and four engineers, volunteered to remain aboard so as to maintain the cold storage plant. As it was felt that the ship was in no immediate danger these men were permitted to remain. However, a watch was established on the beach so that an immediate rescue could be effected in case of necessity.

11. The transfer ashore was greatly assisted by the use of two SCR-195 radio sets, one on the ship and one on the beach. By means of these voice radios, the signals for handling the lines were executed in a quiet manner. The entire transfer was completed with such ease that it reminded me of the handling of ships through the Panama Canal.

12. The personnel moved ashore were quartered in the 95% completed marine barracks.

13. Work of removing food, personal effects, and other property, in order named, was resumed Sunday morning. Due to another threatened shift of the wind to the northwest, this work was continued until 11:30 p.m., at which time all personal effects and about three weeks of food supply had been transferred ashore. The transfer of the food supply was considered imperative as no local food supply was available. The manager of the Northern Commercial Company informed me that with the additional 135 persons from the S.S. NORTHWESTERN there would be only food enough to last for ten days. This shortage of food in Unalaska was due to the non-arrival of the S.S. CORDOVA.

14. The storm, however, continued from the north and northeast, so work was resumed Monday morning of the removal of supplies. This work was completed about 4:00 p.m. Monday afternoon. The main amount of cold storage supplies were left on the ship as no cold storage facilities are available ashore. The material for cold storage plant for the marine barracks was on the S.S. CORDOVA which arrived Tuesday evening after having been hove-to for five days off the entrance of Unalaska Bay.

15. Too high praise cannot be given to the officers and men of the Noy contract party and to the junior officers and enlisted men of this detachment for their conduct during the long tedious hours spent in a driving rain, sleet and snow storm which reached velocities of over eight knots.

/a/ A. W. COCKRELL

Copies to: CG, FMF
CO, Alaska Sector
CO, Marine Defense Force
File

As if afraid the willful ship will take to water again, workmen labor to fix her to shore. A cavity is scooped out of the beach. The *Northwestern* is dragged inside, then a gravel berm raised to her seaward side.

Some say the ship is “anchored in solid cement”; some that her hold is filled “with concrete ballast to keep her from being dashed to pieces.” Whatever the measures taken, the Dutch Harbor dock will not be her final berth.



Siems Drake workers accessing beached *Northwestern* via gangplank. In background, center, earth-movers excavate the footprint of the Naval Air Station Powerhouse. Museum of the Aleutians.

Special thanks to “[Researcher @ Large](#),” for providing an online digital account of the grounding of the *Northwestern*. Original file: National Archives.



Civilian workers accessing beached *Northwestern* via gangplank. Museum of the Aleutians.



Civilian workers, *Northwestern* mess hall. Note that fine dining furniture has been replaced with rough wooden tables and benches. The vessel could house 280 personnel. Museum of the Aleutians.

A SHORELINE STRUCTURE

1: S.S. *Northwestern*. (Note modifications made to superstructure to retrofit vessel as floating barracks and powerhouse. Original upperworks have been enclosed and portholes covered with shutters.) 2: Dutch Harbor dock. 3: Navy Barracks. 4: Molly Garfield House. (Alaska Commercial Company building dating to the historic old town of Dutch Harbor. Structure razed during expansion of Naval Air Station.) 5: Powerhouse. 6: Wooden plank fuel tank farm. Image taken 23 March 1942, roughly three months before the Japanese attack on Dutch Harbor. Museum of the Aleutians.



“Old” Dutch Harbor, circa early 1940s, prior to Naval Air Station construction.



Alaska Commercial
Company Store



PEARL



ZENJI ABE

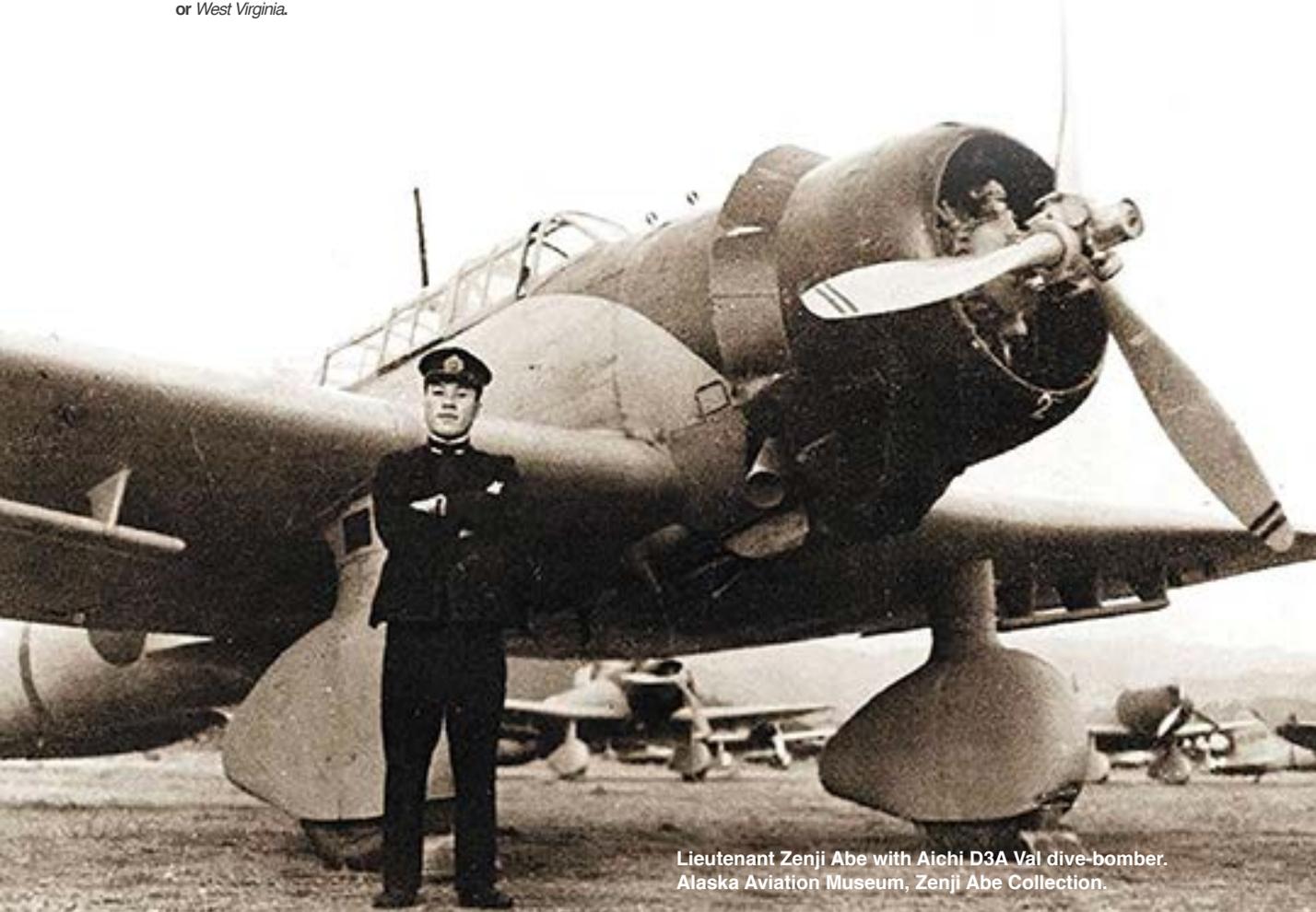
“The defeated should not talk about the battle. I can only say that I fought as I was trained in those times.”

—Japanese proverb quoted by Lieutenant Zenji Abe
May 2001, *World War II* magazine

June 4, 1942, Lieutenant Zenji Abe circles Amaknak Island, searching for a break in the 6000 foot ceiling that blankets Dutch Harbor. Abe is 26 years old, born in the Great Depression of the early 1900s in a mountain village on Honshu Island, Japan. His father, Kumakichi, a sake brewer, is a good man, but unskilled in business. The family is poor. At the age of twelve, Abe attends Bocho Military School, his instructors general officers of the Japanese Army. At age seventeen, he enters the Imperial Naval Academy (only one of forty applicants accepted). For four years Abe studies the art of war, the finer points of language, mathematics, physics, and history. His lifestyle is spartan, his ideology that of the Samurai—allegiance above all else to emperor and country.

June 4, 5:55 p.m., Lieutenant Abe dives through a hole in the cloud cover over Dutch Harbor. Behind him, the remainder of his wing, eight Japanese Val bombers, follow. Nearly six months to the day earlier, 7 December 1941, Abe had commanded a squadron of dive-bombers in the devastating Pearl Harbor attack, his target the *Arizona*. This day his aircraft seek out ships in Dutch Harbor.

NPS Oral History Interview #373, 1 December 2001. Other interviews cite Abe's target (whether primary or secondary) as the *Raleigh* or *West Virginia*.



Lieutenant Zenji Abe with Aichi D3A Val dive-bomber.
Alaska Aviation Museum, Zenji Abe Collection.

“That was the day [the Japanese] got the Northwestern, a hotel ship tied to the dock. Some of us were aboard having lunch. It was beautiful big pork chops, and I never got to eat one! We bailed off the ship and took cover where we could...”

—Walter R. Strong, Siems-Drake civilian worker



Errant bomb strike, dock.
Museum of the Aleutians.



Inset, top: The “issue” warehouse ablaze (#2); firetrucks (#1) with uncoiled hoses. Inset, bottom U.S. Navy firetrucks. Museum of the Aleutians. Top image digitally enhanced.

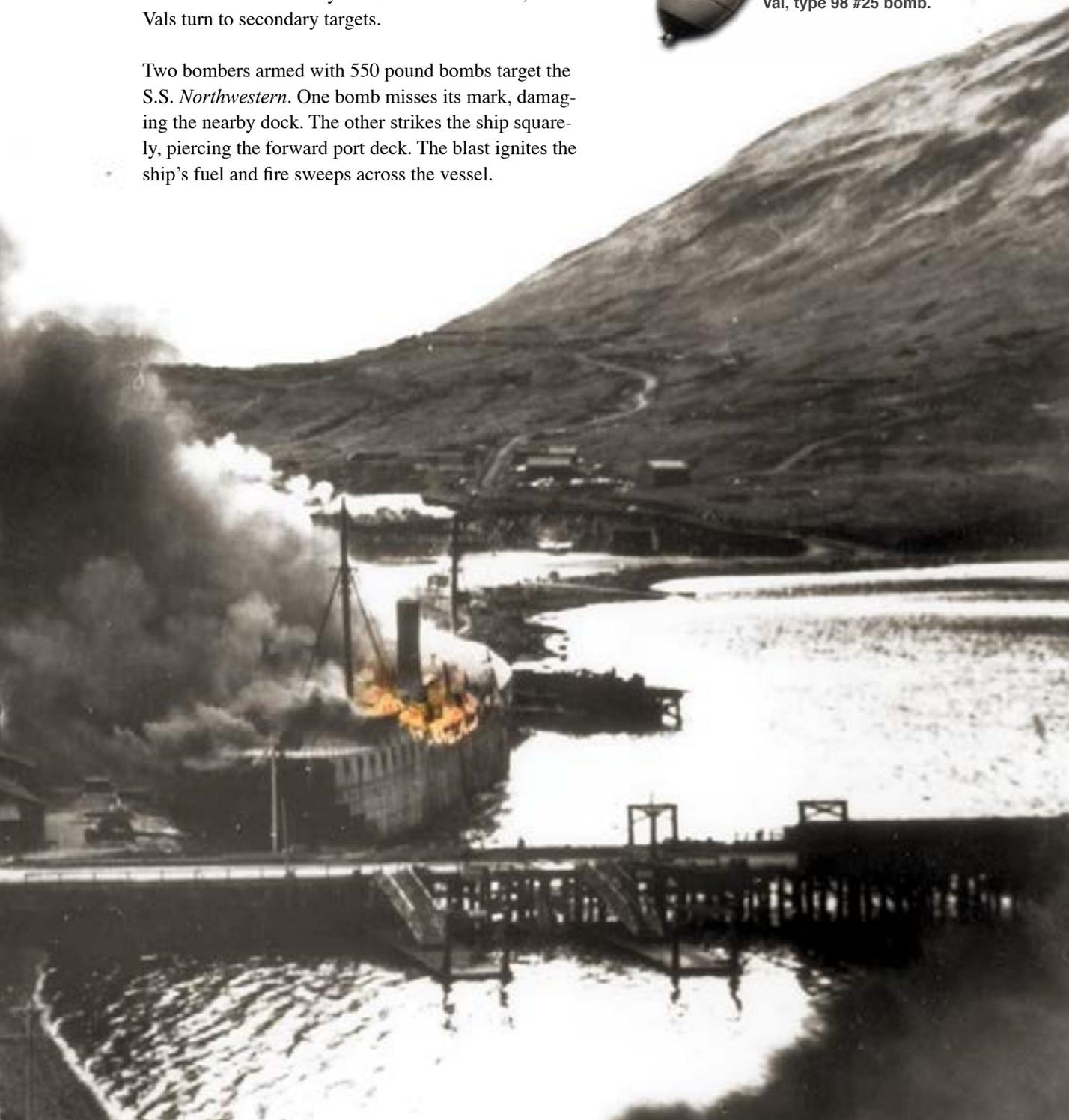
Background: Stoked by the wind, flames from the burning *Northwestern* jump to the “issue” warehouse, holding spare parts and hardware. The warehouse burns to the ground. U.S. Navy photograph, National Archives. Image digitally enhanced.

The seaplane tender U.S.S. *Gillis* and transport *President Fillmore* respond to the diving Vals with intense anti-aircraft [AA] fire. The crew of the *President Fillmore* has transferred a shipment of 37mm AA guns from its hold onto the deck and sends skyward such a heavy volume of fire that the vessel is reported to be ablaze. The crew fights with the knowledge that a single bomb or well placed round could ignite the ship's cargo of explosives and disintegrate the vessel. Driven off by the *Gillis* and *Fillmore*, the Vals turn to secondary targets.

Two bombers armed with 550 pound bombs target the S.S. *Northwestern*. One bomb misses its mark, damaging the nearby dock. The other strikes the ship squarely, piercing the forward port deck. The blast ignites the ship's fuel and fire sweeps across the vessel.



Val, type 98 #25 bomb.



VAL

TWO-SEAT, SHIPBORNE
JAPANESE DIVE-BOMBER

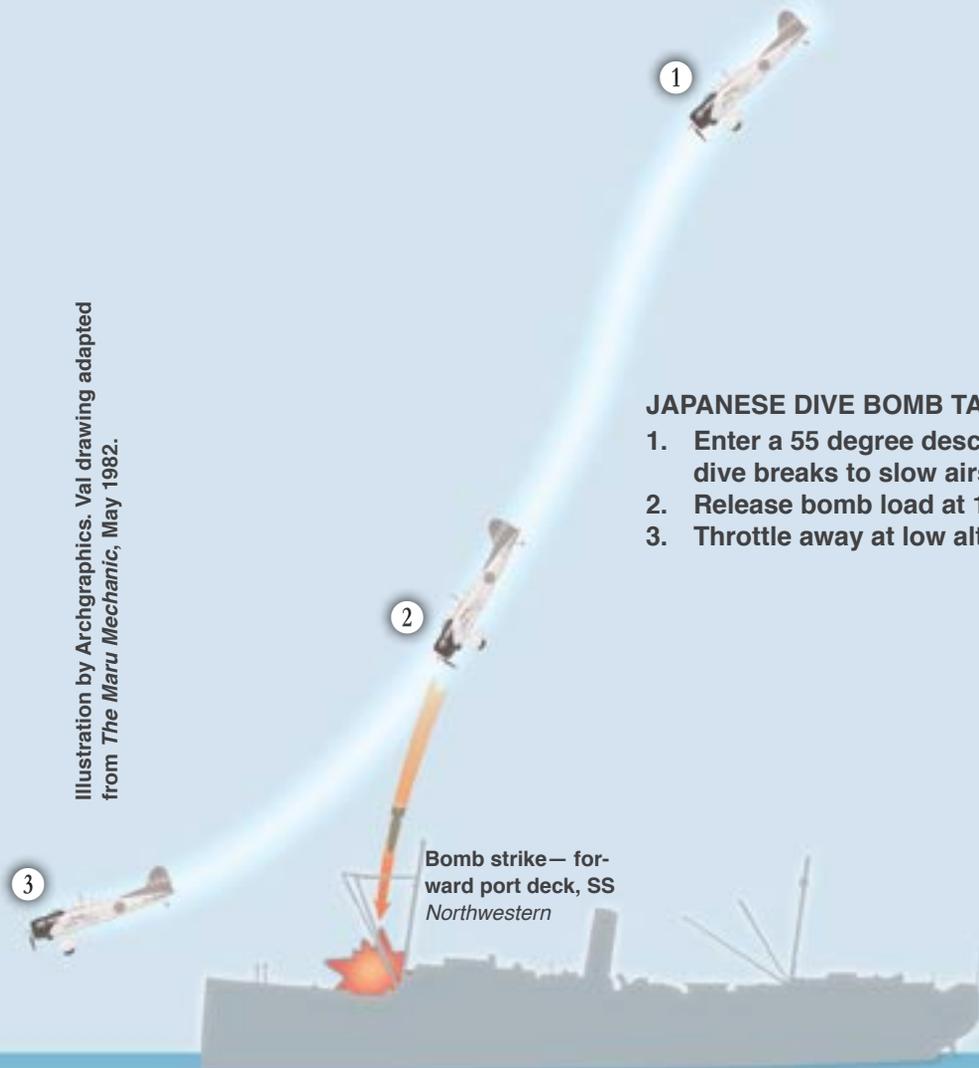


From upwards of 12,000 feet in altitude, the Val bomber pilot selects his target. Stick pressed forward, he noses his aircraft into a 55-degree angle of descent, then opens dive brakes to check dive-speed at 250 mph. The plane plummets earthward, the pilot adjusting ailerons and rudder to correct for wind drift and target movement. Eye pressed to the bomb-sight telescope, the pilot waits, burning a small lifetime in the 40-second descent towards earth. At 1500 feet, he fingers a switch and the bomb is loosed from its belly crutch. The 550 pound missile swings down and forward from the fuselage, clearing the spinning airplane propeller and falling towards target. In less than three seconds the bomb will strike and detonate. The pilot pulls back on the control stick and climbs, the blood drawn down from his brain, his consciousness wavering as gravity fights to drag plane and man down to earth.

Illustration by Archgraphics. Val drawing adapted from *The Maru Mechanic*, May 1982.

JAPANESE DIVE BOMB TACTICS

1. Enter a 55 degree descent and lower dive breaks to slow airspeed to 250 mph
2. Release bomb load at 1,000 – 2,500 feet
3. Throttle away at low altitude



Bomb strike— forward port deck, SS Northwestern

JAPANESE MILITARY AIRCRAFT

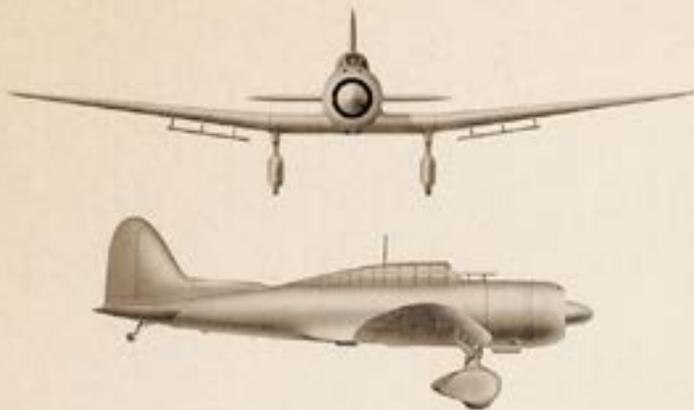
ONI 232 - RESTRICTED - Division of Naval Intelligence - Identification and Characteristics Section

ONI 232 RESTRICTED

JAPANESE MILITARY AIRCRAFT

DIVISION OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE - IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS SECTION - JUNE 1943

VAL 



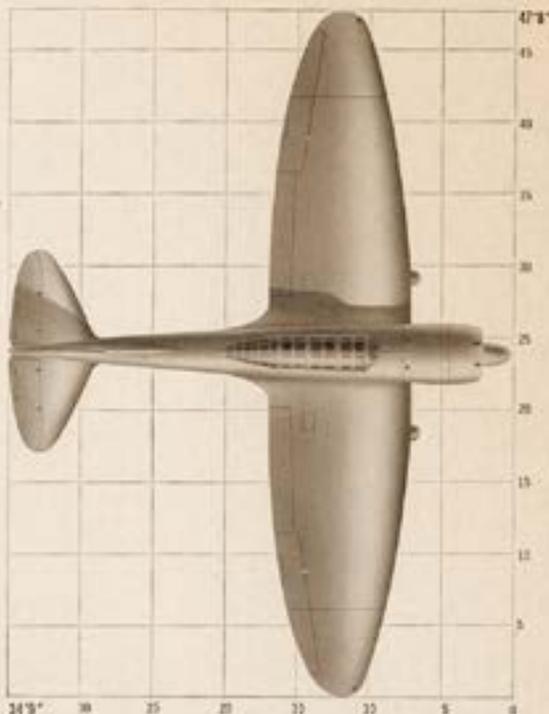
TYPE 90, MARK 2, NAVY, DIVE BOMBER

MANUFACTURER—AICHI

Although sturdily built, Val is slow, vulnerable, low in maneuverability and must be provided with adequate fighter cover to carry out its mission. For lack of protection, entire flights of these dive bombers have been wiped out.

The following description of an attack by a formation of Vals is taken from a report on Pearl Harbor. "The attack commenced at approximately 12,000' with pushover to approximately 50-55 degree dive-angle; div: speed considered 'slow'; release altitude estimated at 1200'; pull-out effected at 600-700'; retirement at high speed, zigzagging as an evasive maneuver, strafing water-borne targets."

CREW 2



RESTRICTED
In reply refer to
Initials and No.
OP-16-P-2
F1-5/EF37
Serial No. 244231

For three days, the S.S. *Northwestern* burns furiously at her landing, the intense heat fusing machinery and melting paint off the twisted steel hull (see #1 facing page, bottom). Fire crews flood the engine room to save the ship's boilers and battle to bring the blaze under control. Within a week of the attack, workers refire the *Northwestern's* boilers, and its 200-kilowatt generators are once again producing heat, steam, and electricity for the Naval Operating Base. "Tokyo Rose," the Japanese propagandist, broadcasts to the men of Amaknak, "that the Japanese bombers destroyed a warship at the Dutch Harbor pier," but scarred and fire-blackened, the aged steamship survived the attack.

"[The Japanese] set the Northwestern on fire and it burned, killing one million rats."

—Sergeant Robert M. Proffitt



Warehouse remains #2, and intact wooden fuel storage tanks #3. Museum of the Aleutians.



Below: S.S. *Northwestern* (#1); warehouse (#2); wood plank fuel tanks (#3), partially draped with camouflage netting. National Archives.

“[Serious material casualties included]...the burning of the Northwestern upperworks and interior, and the burning of the issue warehouse. Efficient fire fighting supervised by Major G. P. Groves, U.S.M.C. and Fire Chief Harold Joe Davis (Siems-Drake) prevented the spreading of fire from the warehouse to the wooden oil tanks.”

— W. N. Updegraff, Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station, Dutch Harbor



Remains of bomb-damaged *Northwestern*, looking from stern to bow. Museum of the Aleutians.

Below: Civilian workers and firefighters feed fire hoses into the still smoldering shell of the *Northwestern*. Pump on makeshift platform to left. Museum of the Aleutians.





Twisted wreckage of the S.S. *Northwestern* upperworks. Museum of the Aleutians.

No more Pearl Harbors and no more Hiroshimas should be the watchword for those who believe in peace.

—Lieutenant Zenji Abe



Flying from the carrier *Junyo** during the Battle of the Philippine Sea, 19 June 1944, Abe is forced down on the island of Rota near Guam. Abe secrets himself in a cave for 14 months until the end of the war, then is held 15 months as a POW. For roughly 2 years, 5 months, his wife thinks him dead. Alaska Aviation Museum, Zenji Abe Collection.

*This is the same carrier which launched Val dive bombers against the military installations at Dutch Harbor and the Northwestern. She will be captured by U.S. forces at war's end.

N.A.S.* POWERHOUSE

Naval Air Station: 1943-1985

Upon completion of the reinforced concrete Powerhouse (see below) in September 1942, the S.S. *Northwestern* is relieved of her power generating duties.



“Transmitter No. 2 Generator Rm.: Explosion Chambr (Chamber) Powerhouse.” December 3, 1943. National Park Service.



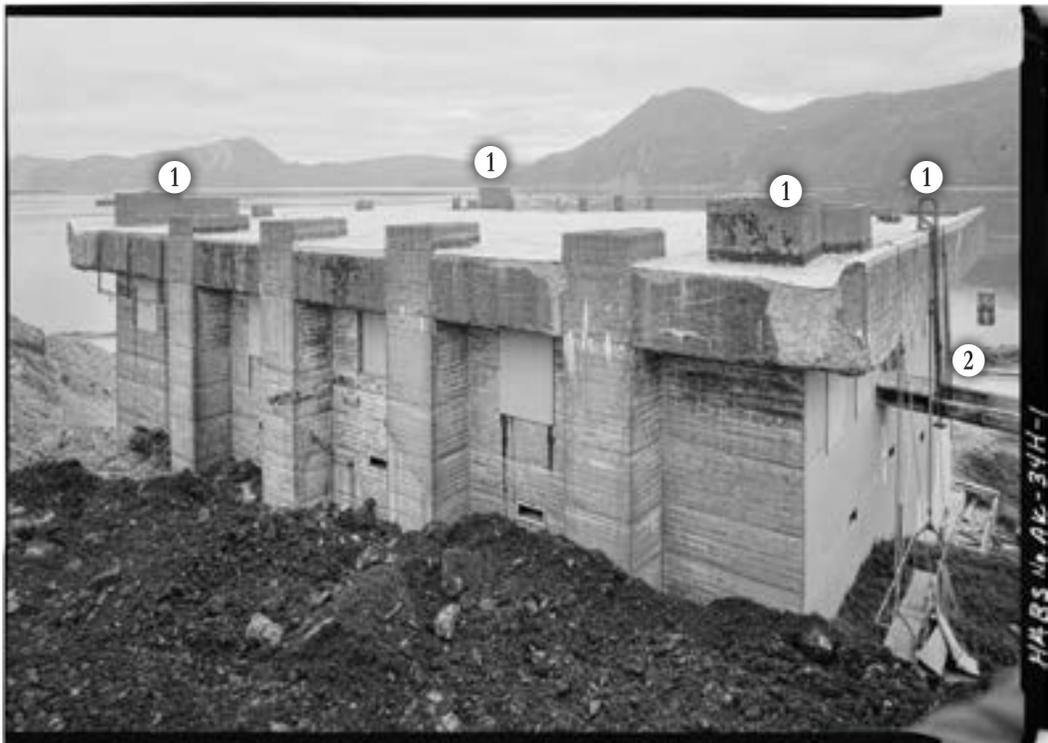
Oblique view, looking northwest, NAS Powerhouse, 22 September 1942. Note sandbagged, concrete gun emplacements (#1) atop roof and wooden bridge (#2). National Park Service.

“The Powerhouse...generated electricity for the Naval Operating Base. This massive concrete structure rises to a height of almost fifty-five feet. Designed to withstand the impact of a direct hit from a 500-pound bomb, the convex roof is over six feet thick and is fortified with four machine-gun emplacements. The walls are five feet thick. Inertia pads on the first floor supported the turbine generators, protecting them from vibrations occurring outside their own mechanical system. In 1943 the space between the roof and the burster slab was converted into offices. Inaccessible from the floor below, the offices are reached by means of a wooden bridge, crossing from the hill south of the structure. Abandoned following decommission of the Naval Base in 1947, the building is currently being restored to its original function to serve the city of Unalaska.”

—Historic American Building Survey,
Dutch Harbor Project, NPS,
Department of the Interior, 1985.



“Two 750 kw Westinghouse Turbine-Generator Sets/Ready for Trial Run.” August 30, 1942. National Park Service.



Oblique view looking southeast, NAS Powerhouse. Remnant gun emplacements (#1); wooden bridge remains (#2). HABS 1985, Jet Lowe, National Park Service.

June 28, 1959

Mrs. Laura Lewellyn
512 Ridgeway
Little Rock, Arkansas

[VOID]

Dear Mrs. Lewellyn

Thank you for your letter of June 15th in which you made inquiry about our old steamship NORTHWESTERN.

After checking a number of logical sources for information concerning the final disposition of the NORTHWESTERN, I checked with the morgue of the Seattle Times and learned that in 1943 the NORTHWESTERN was loaded with scrap, towed to Seattle where it arrived early in 1944 when the vessel itself was scraped. So her return to sea was short-lived.

Sorry we couldn't get this along to you sooner but hope that it will fill your purpose.

Sincerely,
ALASKA STEAMSHIP COMPANY

S.G. Hayman
Manager, Service Department

[VOID]



IN PLAIN SIGHT



Bow of Northwestern rising 50 feet above shallow waters of Port Levashef, head of Captains Bay, May 1992. Over time, the ship's hull filled with rain water, settling the stern on the ocean floor. John H. Cloe, Historian (retired), Eleventh Air Force, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

Official documents report that in 1944 the S.S. *Northwestern*, determined obsolete, is towed south to Seattle with a load of scrap metal welded to her hull. According to the morgue of the *Seattle Times*, ship and cargo are torched apart that same year, yielding 2,700 tons of salvage. Despite contradictory evidence forwarded by local residents, these official records—backed by both the U.S. Navy and the Alaska Steamship Company—are regarded as fact until 1986. That year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers positively identifies the shipwreck in Captains Bay as the flagship S.S. *Northwestern*, (her name still faintly visible on the bow) and the issue is put to rest.

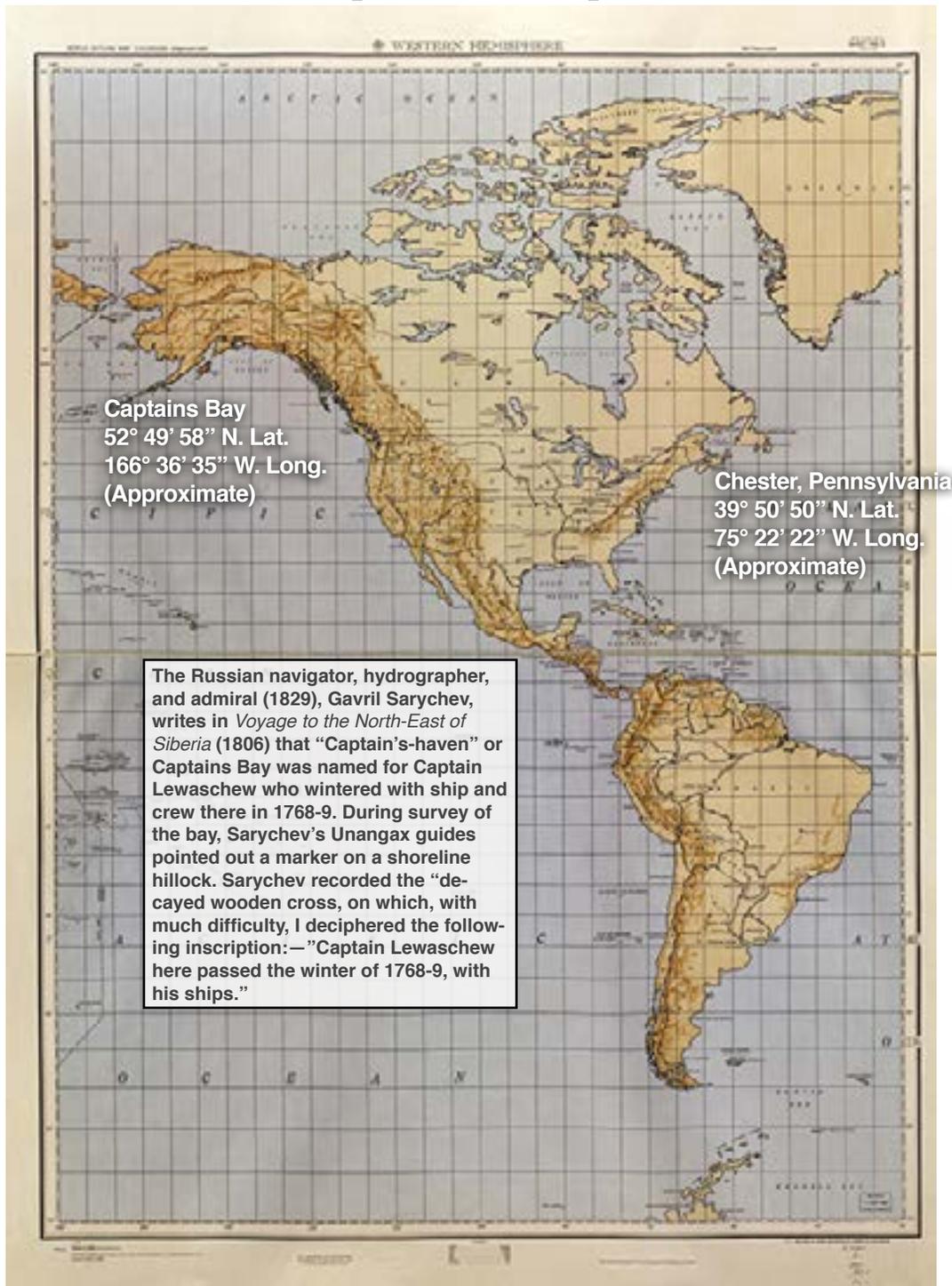
For over 40 years, the *Northwestern* remained hidden in plain sight, foundered among a group of small islands at the mouth of Captains Bay. Today, the bow is still clearly visible rising above the water line as if frozen in the act of slipping beneath the surface.



Northwestern in Captains Bay awaiting tug for ocean tow to Seattle circa mid-1940s. Two attempts were made to transport the vessel south for salvage; both failed. This may also be the location where the *Northwestern* was brought to shore to be viewed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 1944. Lieutenant George Skarbo, USNR, naval pilot at Dutch Harbor, was charged with directing the tugs during the operation. Skarbo recalls that “with the gentlest of handling, so as not to shake loose any of her tired old plates and sink her in deep water,” the [Northwestern] was guided to a spot “...it was decided President Roosevelt could obtain the best view from a car.” Deteriorating weather cancelled FDR’s private viewing. Historian Michael Burwell posits the *Northwestern* was towed by Navy tugs to her final grounding in Captains Bay in 1945.

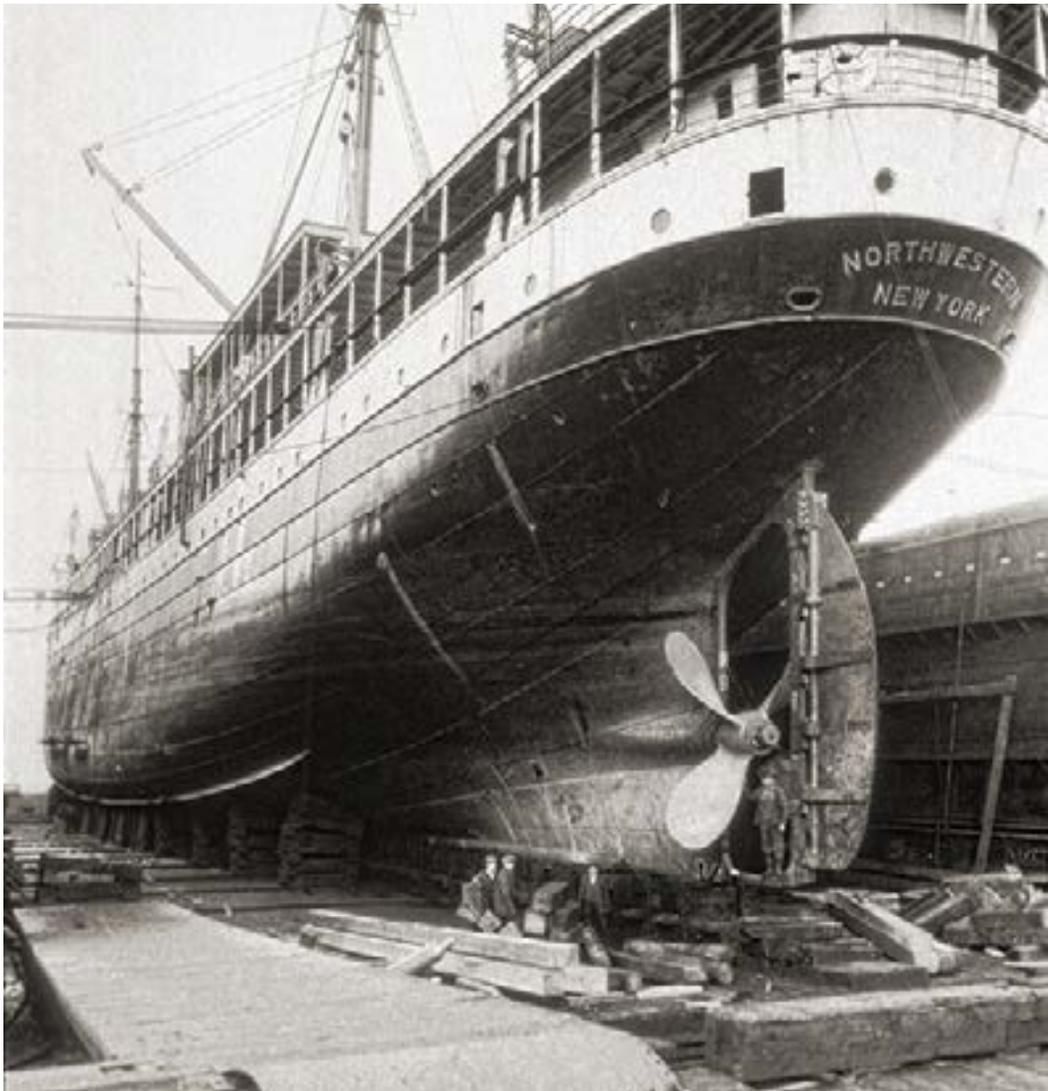
LAT. AND LONG.

Construction and Shipwreck Seas Apart



March 1991, the City of Unalaska is permitted by the State of Alaska to remove the *Northwestern's* propeller from the shipwreck. April 1992, Magone Marine Services excavates the screw from dense marine silt using high pressure water hoses and suction. Once exposed, divers place an explosive charge that blows the propeller from its shaft. The salvaged prop now stands prominently on display at the Unalaska Memorial Park.

The S.S. *Northwestern*, with only a single screw (rather than dual propellers) and a small rudder, was particularly difficult to maneuver according to Alaska historian Bob DeArmond. This may partially explain her propensity to strike other vessels and docks when tying off at crowded wharfs.



Stern view of S.S. *Northwestern*, drydock, Todd's Shipyard, Tacoma. PSMHS. No Negative #,

1. Dutch Harbor dock
2. Beached S.S. *Northwestern*, 1943
3. Fort Mears Army Base
4. Fort Schwatka Army Base
5. City of Unalaska

Unalaska Bay

AMAKNAK
ISLAND

4

Dutch Harbor

Illiuluk Bay

2

1

3

5

Detail: "Aerial Photographic Map of Amaknak Island by Naval Air Station Photo Lab, Dutch Harbor, Alaska, 24 February 1943."

1. Delta Western Fuel Dock (Dutch Harbor dock)
2. Current S.S. *Northwestern* shipwreck site
3. Unalaska Memorial Park (current location of S.S. *Northwestern* propeller)
4. Aleutian WWII National Historic Area/Fort Schwatka
5. Aleutian WWII Visitor Center

AMAKNAK
ISLAND

Illiuluk Bay

UNALASKA
ISLAND

Captains Bay

The S.S. *Northwestern* is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

BE AWARE: Boarding the shipwreck, or collecting artifacts, is strictly forbidden. Road access to Captains Bay crosses private property. Please respect the rights of property owners.



Mike Burwell recently retired to New Mexico after 30 years in Alaska writing environmental impact statements for the Feds, doing maritime and shipwreck research, and teaching poetry at the University of Alaska Anchorage. A chapbook of his poems *North and West* was published by Heaven Bone Press in 1989 and his full-length poetry collection *Cartography of Water* was published by North Shore Press in 2007. He founded the literary journal *Cirque* in 2009. He continues to dabble in Alaska shipwreck matters.



Above: circa 1933 matted image of S.S. *Northwestern* signed by crew—Ship's Master: Mac Donald. Facing page: verso of above signed by passengers. Both images from the collection of Michael Burwell.

Highway
Alaska Cruise
5-1933

Mary At Lambhead
 Mrs. Mrs. A. S. Adams
 Frank Spencer
 Mrs. Mrs. S. C. Allen
 Mrs. Mrs. C. H. Platt
 Miss Cassima Platt
 Martha G. Biggerstaff
 Lillian Hill
 Alice M. Brown
 Julia M. Fitts
 Logan Fitts
 Cora M. Sumner
 Alvina Staples
 Mary Currie
 Margaret C. Ward
 Bertha E. R. Swosaker
 Mervine V. Ball
 Mary M. Jamieson
 Imo Gale Wilkuff
 Iva Sumner
 Miss Linda M. White
 Pearl F. Harrie
 Miss Ethel Hempel
 Miss Wilhelmine Dimmlich
 Miss S. A. Dimmlich
 Mrs. H. K. Lamborne

David E. Townsend
 Alice E. Miller
 J. P. Talmoner
 Mr. Mrs. Tom R. Berk
 Mrs. Frederick S. Freed
 J. E. Jamison
 Mrs. J. L. Hammell
 E. W. Dombing
 J. W. Baldwin
 M. B. Clarke
 Emma Cloth
 Adelaide Muen
 Mrs. Benck
 Solveig Johanson
 Mrs. Edw. J. J. J. J.
 John H. Beck
 Flora E. Ward
 Mrs. S. W. Sperill
 Mrs. A. L. Beckland
 Mabel Reynolds
 Mrs. H. M. F. Nelson
 Mrs. Lilla French
 Mrs. O. W. Owens
 Nina Anderson
 Mrs. M. E. Nell

Louisa Joyler
 Mrs. J. B. B. B.
 Mrs. E. R. Baker
 Martha Curden
 Grace Curden
 Nellie C. Burkett
 Edith M. Porter
 Mayd Colman

Qutrude Hanlon
 Lucille Hanlon
 Eleanor Nordblad
 W. W. Nordblad
 Mrs. A. W. Nordblad
 Mrs. Ben Wilson
 Mr. Ben Wilson

THE 7 HORSEMEN

Anna J. Jamison
 Ellen G. Becklan
 Mrs. Y. P. P.
 Ed. H. G. Joy
 Paul Nell

ALASKA



THE ALASKA LINE
ALASKA STEAMSHIP
COMPANY
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Illustration by Glenn Sheckels from *Sailing Sheltered Seas*,
Alaska Steamship Company, 1931.