Unalaska, Alaska, July 23,1914.

Dear Folks:

I am sorry to have had to delay in continuing my news letters but circumstances have, up to this time, prevented my doing so. I believe I promised to tell you about the wreck of the ship PARAMITA. It is this:- The Paramita was a full rigged ship, about 300 feet long, chartered by the Pacific Coast Cannery Company to transport machinery and supplies, together with some 150 men to establish a new salmon canning factory at Naknek, a port near the head of Bristol Bay, on the Alaskan Penilsula. She left San Francisco and stood across for Unimak Pass, which is the shortest route to her destination. When approaching land she encountered heavy fog and stormy weather, which forced her out of her course so that she was carried to the westward opposite Akutan Pass. This pass is narrow, filled with submerged rocks, the locati of which is not accurately charted; and thorugh it runs a furious tidal current both on the ebb and on the flood tide.

The Captain of the Paramita, desiring to save time decided to sail through Akutan Pass rather than beat back some 30 miles or more and go through Unimak Pass. The ship stood into the pass, but on account of the strong ebb tide was unable to make headway and was forced to ancho After the anchor was dropped, the vessel swung to the tide and struck her stern against a submerged rock,carrying away her rudder and punching several holes in the hull. The pumps were manned and it was found that the water coming into the vessel could be controlled, so that she did not fill. Meanwhile a jury (temporary) rudder was rigged and when the tide served, that is, was running into the pass, a second attempt was made to get through and this attempt was successful. However the straining of the vessel in the seaway in making the passage opened up the leaks to such an extent that the pumps could no longer keep ahaed of the water and the vessel began to fill Captain Petersen was forced to the last resort of saving his vessel, which was to beach her at the most suitable and convenient place until the damage could be repaired. Consequently the Paramita was run on the beach at the head of Lost Harbor, an indentation in the western side of Akun Island,which lies between Unimak and

and Akutan Passes.

At this time the Revenue Cutter UNALGA was cruising in Unimak Pass and the Revenue Cutter TAHOMA was about 200 miles away to the eastward and steaming for the same pass. Not having a wireless apparatus on board the Paramita was unable to communicate with either of these vessels and to get assistance it was necessary to send a message to Unalaska,45 miles away. A pulling boat with five men was sent to the Akutan whaling station 20 miles away taking several hours to make the trip. From there the message was carried to the Dutch Harbor wireless station by a steam whaler.

The call for assistance was sent out and received both on the Unalga and on the Tahoma. The Fleet Commander who was on board the Tahoma issued orders for both cutters to go to the assistance of the Paramita. The Unalga being nearer to the wreck than the Tahoma went at once and made a preliminary examination of the vessel. That evening the Tahoma fell in with the Unalga at Akun Cove and Captain Hamlet of the Unalga reported the details of the situation to the Fleet Commander. As result the Unalga returned to stand by the wreck and the Tahoma continued to Unalaska where divers were to be obtained from the U.S.S.BUFFALO, to assist in the examination of the damage to the under water body of the Paramita. As soon as these preparations were made the Tahoma returned to Lost Harbor. On arriving at the wreck the Tahoma found the Unalga trying to empty the water from the holds of the Paramita with her steam wrecking pump. In this work the Tahoma joined but even these two powerful pumps failed to gain on the leaks. Unfortunately, at this time a series of gales interferred with the work,making it necessary for the cutters to leave the wreck and seek shelter

No continuous work could be done but the divers were able to make an examination of the damage during the luuus in the gale. They reported that the damage done by striking the rock could be easily repaired but the the real cause of the present leaks was a lot of holes that had been forced through the hull forward, by the vessel forging ahead over her anchor and then working in the seaway until the fluke of the anchor had smashed in the hull planks putting the hull in such condition that it could not be repaired under the conditions that existed. Therefore the work of trying to save the ship was given up and there only remained the work of stripping her of all movable articles. This work was done by the crew of the vessel.

When the captain beached his vessel he directed the first mate to drop the anchor . The mate dropped the anchor too soon and the vessel, not having lost her headway,forged over it. When the vessel did bring up on the beach she was directly over the anchor and when the tide went out she settled on it, forcing a hole through the planking. This same thing was repeated every tide and while the vessel was rising and falling in the seaway during the gales I have mentioned until the bottom was torn all to pieces and the damage beyond repair, causing the vessel to be a total loss.

While the wrecking work was going on the cannery crew, some 150 menhad been set ashore in tents and other improvised shelters. They soon became dissatisfied,complaining of their treatment and of the food given them, which, this long delay being unforeseen,was inadequate, and there resulted a serious condition of discontent,even verging on rioting and mutiny. In fact there were several fights among them and several men were dangerously wounded. The sailors, who were quartered on board the Paramita, also began to give trouble, and being well supplied with a villiancus grade of whiskey and other alcholic liquors,in great quantities, they began fighting among themselves. The Revenue Cutter Service was called upon to quell this trouble. First all the liquors were seized, and there was collected about 75 gallons of it. Guards were established on the ship and on the beach until the weather permitted the taking on board the cannery people and the crew of the Paramita. The Tahoma then brought the ship crew tomDutch Harbor to await transportation to the States and the cannery crew was taken by the Unalga to Naknek. About two weeks later the ship crew was sent back to Seattle on the Dora at Government expense as is provided for all destitute mariners.

As a result of poor judgement and a mistake in seamanship the Paramita is a total loss to her owners and a greater portion of the cargo was also lost, besides the loss to the cannery due to its inability to operate during the short canning season.

UNALASKA

I have been trying for some time to get some reliable information about this place but have been unable to learn anything definite so far

It was ~~fou~~ colonized near the end of the 17th. century by the Russians, who found here a settlement of Aleute Indians. The Russians established a trading post, the concession being granted to the Russian-American Trading Company, who held it until the transfer of the Territory to the United States in 1867. This company bought, for almost nothing, all the valuable furs produced by the Indians. All the money issued by the company returned to its coffers in return for provisions and other commodities,of inferior quality, at an enormous profit to the company, it making about 300 per cent on all goods sold.

The successor of this company, the Alaska Commercial Company, who took over this trading post,together with all the others then on American territory,treated and still treat the natives very much in the same way, though of course the law has gradually forced them to temper this treatment somewhat. For instance they now charge only 15¢ apound for sugar and 20¢ for a 10¢ can of milk, everything else being priced accobding to the same schedule. This same company were the first holders of the seal skin concession,which granted tothem the exclusive right to take seal skins from the Pribloff (Seal Islands). This concession then brought to the government a yearly rental of 200.000.00 dollars and a tax of 2 dollars for every skin taken.

When the Russians first came to this place,they found about 800 Aleutes. Now there are but a mere handful of full-blood natives and it is very doubtful if they are really full-bloods. There are about 250 that are classed as natives and these are cross-breeds with nearly every nation on earth. There are 18 white residents,not including the Revenue Cutter Service people and the Naval Wireless Station crew at Dutch Harbor. Six of the white men are squaw-men, that is men married to Aleute women.

There are about 60 houses,mostly one story shacks,occupied by the natives and breeds. The Alaska Commercial Company has a boarding house, a store a laundry and several warehouses, all substantial buildings, the boarding house,store and laundry having two stories and the warehouses two or three.

The mamager of the company Lewis Strauss, a Jew to the backbone, lives

at the boarding house as does the Fleet Commander and the Fleet Engineer.

This house is also used at a hotel for transients who are passing through or stopping here for limited periods. The store carries a various line of goods,very much like a country store in an isolated community in the states, as these people are cut of from communication with the States for six months of the year. In the store is the postoffice. Strauss being the postmaster. Over the laundry is the dance hall,in which the natives and the cutter sailors hold their dances.

Here also is one of the first churches founded in all Alaska, the Greek Catholic Church. It is quite a large building,painted white, surmounted by two bulbous domes, strictly Russian. Near the church is the residence of the Russian priest.

At the extreme southeastern end of the village is located the Jesse Lee Home, a Methodist Mission. The inmates of this Home are the orphaned childred of natives from this and the surrounding islands, illegitimates, and a few paid scholars, reaning from one to twenty-one years of age. The missionary in charge is a Methodist minister, who is assisted by his wife and two woman missionaries.

The permanent Federal officials here are a Deputy U.S.Marshal, Mr W.B.Hastings,(with whom I board) and a Deputy Collector of Customs, Mr Nicholas Bolshanin,who is a native born Alaskan of Russian parentage.

There are three other stores in the village and one at Dutch Harbor, where groveries and other commodities are sold. Each of these stores has a collection of furs,baskets and curios which they sell to tourists., and they all have pool tables which are much patronized by the sailors.

The village is located on a narrow strip of land on one side of which is Ililiuk Bay and on the other an unnamed creek. It is about ¾ of a mile in length and varies in breadth from about 100 feet to an eigth of a mile.

The bay is bounded on both sides by mountains nearly 2000 feet high and back of the town are several ranges of high hills gradually ascending to mountains,rugged and snow capped even in this month. The hill sides and mountain slopes are covered with thick grass, and flowers of all colors and descriptions, the most prominent being the wind flowers, cow-slips and violets, which abound in great beds. Just beyond the village, nestling in the hollows of the hills is quite a large lake,which collects the waters

from the varying water

from the various water sheds. This lake is drained by the creek I have mentioned.

Within a radius of six miles are a mumber of fine fishing streams filled with trout of various kinds, salmon,brook,mountain, rainbow and Dolly Varden, varying in size from 6 inches to 18 inches in length and weighing six to eight pounds. The streams are very beautiful,being mostly mountain torrents,which rush down the steep sides,through deep canyons in falls and cascades. One almost forgets to fish in absorbing the beauty of the scenery. The fish are found in the deep still pools,at the foot of the various falls, in the bends and eddies of the streams. It is most facinating and one soon forgets all else in the enjoyment and splashes along through the water wat to the waist,particularly if he hooks a big one ,for he then has his work cut out for him and such a small thing as a wetting worries him not at all.

So long till next time.

Yours.
Buck