

A FORTY-NINER'S
Experience
IN THE
KLONDIKE.



HOW TO GET THERE.

WHEN TO START.

GENERAL INFORMATION.



By JOHN G. WILLIAMS.



PRICE 25 CENTS.



COPYRIGHT.
JOHN G. WILLIAMS.
BOSTON, 1897.



JOHN G. WILLIAMS.

A FORTY-NINER'S EXPERIENCE

IN THE

KLONDIKE.

How to Get There. When to Start.
General Information.

By JOHN G. WILLIAMS.

Copyright.
JOHN G. WILLIAMS.

BOSTON:

1897.

From the estate of Charles L. Carpenter, 87

G945

W6734

PINKHAM PRESS

Tremont Temple,

Boston.

NOV 11 1940

447748

Gift.

ATTENTION
RECEIVED
LIBRARY

A FORTY-NINER'S EXPERIENCE

—IN THE—

KLONDIKE.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

There is an old and well-demonstrated adage which warns us to "beware of the man of one book." In other words, he who, by constant study of a single subject has become thoroughly conversant therewith in all its bearings, may be confidently regarded as an authority whose views are not to be lightly controverted by the possessors of limited and superficial stocks of similar knowledge. And it is no less true and apparent that when personal observation and experience form the basis of a man's recorded recommendations regarding the easiest and most practical means of acquiring wealth under unusual conditions and in unfamiliar fields, his words should receive careful consideration, especially when they are written solely for the guidance, instruction and physical welfare of enterprising and adventurous spirits, as is the case in the following pages.

That gifted philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, has said: "The pulpit and the press have many common-places denouncing the thirst for wealth; but if men should take these moralists at their word, and leave off aiming to be rich the moralists would rush to rekindle at all hazards this love of power in the people, lest civilization should be undone." I, who am now seventy-three years of age, was among the thousands whose glowing hopes hurried them to the Pacific coast during the excitement of '49, and I know how vain it is to counsel voluntary submission to poverty, or satisfaction with a mere competence, when the prospect looms invitingly of ample fortunes to be acquired at comparatively small cost and brief, even if arduous expenditure of energy. Certain it is that the many years' experience which I gained in the placer mines of California, Australia and British Columbia, did not suffice to eradicate the "gold fever" from my veins, and to its recurrence may be attributed my recent visit, with a party, to the new El Dorado in the region of perennial ice and snow and the compilation of the salient facts regarding it which are here presented. The journey was made as far as St. Michael on Norton sound, north of the Yukon river, and about one hundred and forty miles east of its principal mouth; but on account of the lateness of the season it was seen to be impossible to complete the construction of a steamboat in which to ascend the river before it became closed to navigation by ice, and it was, therefore, thought advisable to return home for the winter, and perhaps start again for the north in the spring. Meanwhile, all who are contemplating a pilgrimage to the land of gold, whether tyros or old stagers, will find that the informa-

tion gathered on this journey of prospection (personally and from conversations with old and expert miners, fresh from Dawson City and other places on the Yukon) may be profitably turned to account in making essential preparations for the start, insuring speed, comfort and safety en route, and promoting private interests when each would-be miner shall have arrived at his destination.

One thing, however, must be said at the outset. It is useless for any man to start for Alaska with the idea that all that is necessary is to "get there," in order to jump into a rich claim at almost any point and begin to pick up gold at once. That is a delusion which will cost him sore disappointment and many vain regrets. Nevertheless, I verily believe that Alaska and the British possessions in that region contain more gold in their placer claims than any other country yet discovered. That which has been taken out already is but a "drop in the bucket" compared with what will be found in the near future; and I feel sure that this winter's output, when washed out next spring, will prove the truth of what I say. Incredible as it may appear, it is nevertheless a fact that many of the claims to be worked this winter are valued at from one hundred thousand to five millions of dollars, a valuation never before known in any mining country in the world; and yet the fountain-head has not been reached. But I propose to state in this little book where this greatest of all bonanzas is likely to be found. I have gone so far myself as to request an old Klondike miner, in whose company I came down from St. Michael, to secure for me a claim in a specified locality, the nature of whose surroundings he described to me. Many are

looking for this fountain-head afar off, little dreaming it may be within sight of their cabin doors.

But before I go further into details of what my experience has taught me, I will advance some of my theories, which have substantial backing. These are, as to how gold bearing fissures are formed and filled; how placer mines are formed; how and when fissure veins shed their gold, and why gold is found by the miner in certain places. In short, I propose to show how to trace the fine particles of gold that are found on the banks and bars of rivers to the source whence they came. There are many miners, as well as mining experts, who believe that the gold of Alaska and the British northwest was brought down from the country above by glaciers and deposited where it is now found. I will endeavor to show that such is not the case, simply by the reports I have heard from old workers in the mines, and the character of the gold taken out; also why fine gold is found in one creek, coarse gold in another, and two or three kinds in yet another. And let me say right here that not every one who digs gold out of the placers is a miner, any more than a man who digs a hill of potatoes is a farmer. A true placer miner is one who can trace gold from the fine river dust to the place of its origin; who can locate a claim on a creek or stream where the richest spots are most likely to be found, entirely by the surface indications, or trace a "pay streak" under ground by the different colored stains which are always found where gold exists. I shall explain all these signs further on, and also give a chart to better guide the gold hunter, on which will be marked the supposed gold deposits. I will now explain

HOW FISSURE-VEINS ARE FORMED.

Many mineralogists and others believe that the formation in a gold-mining country must necessarily be of a peculiar kind, different from any other metallurgical formation; but my experience tells me that it makes no difference what the formation is, as it has nothing whatever to do with the fissures, or their filling with the mineralized water which later on becomes solidified and is then designated quartz-lode, or gold-bearing lode. In my opinion fissures may be formed in many ways; and there are different kinds, of which some may be produced by collateral pressure, shrinkage of the earth, or by earthquakes or other internal disturbances that rend the earth to depths of from a few hundred to many thousand feet. This large break is called a true fissure, and there are many small breaks running in all directions, erroneously called feeders. Another kind is formed where the earth settles and creates great rifts, wide at their depths, but tapering, wedge-shaped, toward the surface, which, in some instances, they reach. These also have small, erratic breaks, many of which are connected with the main lode. As I have said, these small rents are improperly termed feeders, for they do not feed the mother lode, but are filled with mineralized water, at the same time, from the bowels of the earth. The fissures herein last described are considered the best, as they are mostly of unfathomable depth and more lasting. The others will eventually "pinch out." Now that we have the fissures and mis-called feeders formed, it is only a question of time as to their filling with the precious water, which is forced into them from the earth's interior much as molten metal is run into a mould.

HOW THE VEINS ARE FILLED.

We know that deep down in the earth chemical changes are going on unceasingly, and the component particles of matter are constantly disintegrating and amalgamating, aided by electrical forces. Finally, gases are generated in nature's unseen laboratory, charged with the impalpable parts of numerous minerals, and this is forced into all fissures or openings in the vicinity, thoroughly impregnating their contents. Gold appears to me to be an unnatural product, so to speak, or rather, it is in the nature of brass, and it may yet be discovered that some of the baser metals enter largely into its composition. The mineralized water of which I have spoken continues to flow out of the surface openings and fill all smaller rents in the vicinity. Some of them will carry gold, some will not, according to the weight of metal and force of propulsion. Much of the gold settles down in the main lode. After a time, the forces behind these waters lose energy, the result being less activity in the vein matter, thus affording the minerals and metals to gravitate, each to its own. The vein matter also thickens and adheres to the walls, causing the gold to take the form of a tree, with branches spreading out in all directions. You will sometimes find "blotches" scattered around, each seemingly independent of others, yet they are connected with each other by threads imperceptible to the naked eye. These rich spots lie along the lode at intervals of from a few to some hundred rods. Much iron, as well as other metals, is found in gold-bearing fissures, but each gravitates to its kind during the process of con- gelation.

This theory of the formation and filling of gold veins is original with me, and will hold good until found untenable.

PLACER MINES.

Let us now suppose that the contents of the veins have solidified to a degree of hardness much greater than that of the ordinary rock of the country. In a tropical climate there will be much rain and heat, which, in combination, will wear away the softer stone around the fissures, while the quartz, being of a flinty nature, will be more enduring, and stand up many feet, like walls. Thus exposed to the ravages of the elements, it will soon fall to pieces, and the baser metallic substances it contains, such as iron, antimony, sulphur and arsenic, will cause the quartz to rot, thus liberating the gold, which falls to the ground. Some of it may become completely detached, and some will remain embedded in the quartz, to be released, in larger or smaller quantities, after being washed long distances down the hillsides. It is often the case that some samples will not become completely freed from portions of the mother-lode for many years, particularly if the quartz is very hard; again, it may be soon released from a quickly crumbling environment, and appear in a very rough state, yet with nothing to indicate whether it left the mother-lode one year or a thousand years ago. Hence we often find smooth and washed gold, also rough and very little worn gold, in the same claim. A placer claim has begun to be such the moment the first nugget, or particle of gold, is dropped in the ground. Placer gold is that which is taken from the ground and not from the lode. The gold

mines continue to shed their gold as fast as the country rock is worn away, and the elements act on the exposed parts of the quartz ledge; and this natural gold milling process will go on until the veins are completely exhausted, and the gold they contained is scattered over a wide area. Some of it lodges in the beds and along the banks of streams lying between the mother-lodes and the more important rivers; while the fine particles, which have been worn and chipped off from larger samples, have been alternately moving and resting during journeys of probably hundreds of miles and possibly thousands of years. This finer gold will lodge where the water runs slowest, yet great quantities of it steadily find their way to the ocean. Gold being so very heavy soon works itself deep into holes, sand, soft earth, etc., where it remains until some force ejects it, when its march is continued until again arrested. This process goes on until the metal is completely abraded, or is delivered from some place of imprisonment by the miner.

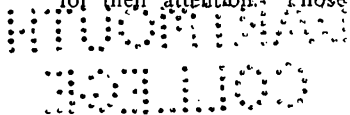
It is often the case that rivers change their course and form new channels and banks. The old beds eventually become covered up, many feet in depth, and, finally, vegetation springs up, and all traces of the old river is lost until the continual wear of winds and water washes away part of the accumulated rubbish that has so long hid traces of the old river bed, but it is frequently the case that the pent-up water still remaining in the old river beds with other local underground streams, will force these waters into some already overfilled beds, and they will burst through the walls that has held them captive so long, and thus liberated will soon cut a new channel to the nearest river

below them. After this channel is made, it becomes a regular creek, and fine gold that has been held there so long with much larger and coarser gold will be washed out and lodged on the bars and banks of the new creek as above described, much of the coarse gold still remaining where it has become embedded in the old river bed, the force of water not being strong enough to move it, and yet there might be other breaks of much larger size and stronger currents of water flow out, consequently larger nuggets of gold would be washed out, while in both streams there would be much fine flour gold which had been worn off the coarse gold, it being easily moved and floated out continually until reaching the large rivers, where it will lodge again on the banks and bars, and be usually found with black sand, which appears to accompany gold in its flight to the ocean.

Admitting the above to be the case, we could not expect to find much coarse gold in the river beds that was formed after the filling of the old river beds, hence the old river beds must still retain their original deposits of coarse, as well as much fine gold. To my mind, after what I have heard about Alaska, old river beds do now exist on both sides of the boundary line of the Northwest Territory, which accounts for fine gold in one creek and coarse and rough in another, coarse and smooth in others—rough and smooth side by side. The smooth is from old river beds, while the rough has been shed from some local lode that has been washed down from surrounding hills and has worked down to the pay streak before the freezing up process began. Such deposits are of recent

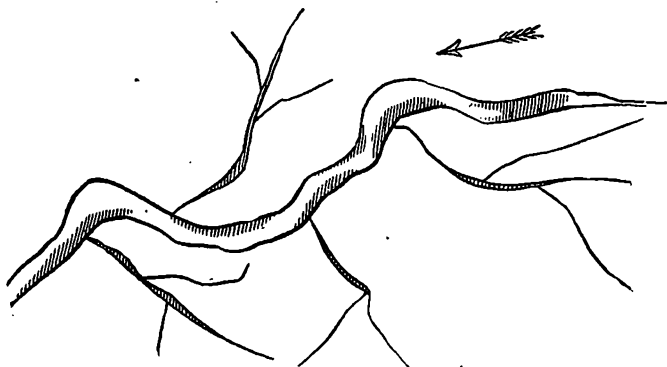
UNIVERSITY
OF
MICHIGAN

date, and would not only be very rough, but contain much quartz. I understand that all those conditions exist in the Klondike mining region, if the gulches and creeks are as rich as said to be. Say all the way from one hundred thousand to four and five millions to the claim, of five hundred feet, what may we expect the old river beds to yield when opened with the greatest part of their coarse gold still retained in their beds? There was never before found on earth a placer claim to pan out one quarter that amount. I predict that Alaska and the British Northwest will prove to be the richest mining country ever yet discovered, and the difference between Alaska and other gold countries, is, that Alaska is frozen up the year round, while the others are not. The visions that are cast before me now places me on an elevated spot of land, and I look back over past ages. Some, perhaps two or three millions of years, to the time when that country was a tropical climate, and then pause a moment. What do I see? I see fertile fields covered with verdure and trees of every description, and roaming over those fields I behold the mammoth elephant, and many other animals, whose habits are in the tropics, who had fed and fatted on their own native heath for thousands of years, undisturbed by the hands of man, and the air is filled with the music from the throats of thousands of gayly plumed birds. Over the hills I behold winroes of quartz rock, and the ground is strewn with fragments of gold lying around in apparent plenty, not a human hand there to claim it, streams that appear to be filled with the precious metal. Beasts of the field, birds of the air pass it by unheeded, as it has no charm for their attention. Those rich deposits have been



held there for generations waiting for the cunning hand of man to bring them to light of day. How have they been held? Let us see. - Once there was a time when the air was filled with fire and smoke. Mountains trembled, tottered, and sank out of sight, while others rose from the plains of that once fair and beautiful land, but now, alas, what desolation. Let us draw the veil of charity over this drear chaos for a million of years. Then what do we behold? We find a much changed country. Hills and valleys have taken the place of those once fair plains, but yet filled with life and animation, animals are here as before, and the music of the song bird is still heard in the air, the many fine rivers have disappeared, while others have taken their places, the contour of the country has changed, but hark, what do we hear? A rumbling as of many chariot wheels at a distance; the wild beasts of the field rush madly around in wild despair and gather themselves into herds, as all animals do when frightened, while birds of the air sink silently to the ground. We pause here with abated breath, the sun is now at meridian height, and yet it sinks rapidly to the south, quickly disappears, and all is darkness. A little later on the same sun rises in the opposite direction, and the face of the earth has been swept as by wind and wave. Ice from the Poles has been swept over the earth, and we find ourselves transplanted from the tropical zone to the frigid. This planet of ours has changed its poles. What a change has taken place. All is frozen up. We find the animals stiff and stark, the voice of the song bird is silent. The miner finds at this late day the ground frozen from surface to bedrock the most of the year, and only thaws four or five feet

during the summer. The miner occasionally unearths some yet remaining remnants of the once mighty race of animals whose history can only be read in the rocks of the ages that are past, and the gold that was deposited in the streams has been held right there, where it was frozen up, for perhaps a million of years more or less. The miner, or whoever he may be that gets a shaft down first to the bedrock of some of those old river beds will be the lucky one. Such is my faith in regard to the immense quantity of gold in that country, yet to be taken out by the hand of man, that I have requested an old miner whom I met on his way out and will return in March over the land route, to stake me a claim on one of those old riverbeds and I to pay all charges. Right here will be found a diagram of a creek. The dark spots marked on the creek indicate where the rich deposits ought to be, if any gold ever was in that creek.



A GOLD BEARING CREEK AND GULCHES.

I will make a few remarks here about how gold behaves after leaving the mother lode. It must be borne in mind that water and specific gravity has all to do with making placer mines. After the gold has once been liberated from the mother lode, it will begin its march downward and continue on its down hill route whenever an opportunity is offered. That is to say, whenever the elements begin to play upon it, it will work itself into eddies that are found below bends, or on the inside of an elbow that forms on streams, that are called bars. Where much gravel and pebbles have settled, there gold will also. If there is anything to hold it, it will remain, and if not, owing to its superior gravity over other material, it will eventually work itself out, and pass on again. If on its way it finds a crevice, which is often found running across streams, it will slip in and work itself deep down, where it cannot be easily removed. Other pieces will follow, until a pocket containing many thousands of dollars, if not removed by water, will remain for the miner to remove, but if not found by him, it remains until the rock decays, or is crushed by the ever-changing sands, pebbles, etc., and becomes apparently a solid rock. I have found places like that both in slate and rotten granite. In fact, gold will be found in all places where there is anything to hold it, if it ever passed that way; therefore look where it would be likely to settle and be held. When sinking your shaft try your dirt often with the wash pan. When down to bedrock, if soft and rotten, or rough with some clay, gold will be found, if ever, there. If the bedrock is hard and smooth, none will be found, as there is nothing to hold it. Again if no gold has been found at the bottom

of your shaft and gold has been found elsewhere on the creek, you may conclude that the lead passes through your claim. Your duty, then, is to ascertain what color stain is to be found in the immediate locality where gold has been found in said creek, and then look for that stain in your shaft; when found, follow it, as it will lead you to the gold deposit, if there is any in your claim. No matter how rich the claim above or below yours may be, if there is nothing in your claim to hold the gold, you will not find any; but what has passed through your claim will be found in the one below, if anything is there to hold it. Now I think that I have made it plain enough to the dullest minds how and where to stake a claim in order to get a good one by observing the surface indications. The difference in mining in the Northwest from other countries is that the Northwest freezes solid to bedrock in most places, and remains so the year round, and in order to work the claim, miners have to work there in winter, and to sink a shaft a fire has to be built on the ground where said shaft must be sunk. One day's work thaws one foot in depth, the dirt thrown up and another fire built. This is repeated day and night until bedrock is reached, or until pay dirt is found, which may be from five inches to five feet from bedrock up, and it will go per running foot across the claim from five dollars to several thousand. The pay streak may be from five to eighty feet in width, covering the entire bed of the creek. When pay dirt is found the miner has again to start his fire and thaw ahead, as was done in sinking the shaft. If it is thirty to forty feet to bedrock, as it often is, it will take from twenty-five to thirty days to sink a shaft, at a cost of from \$300 to

\$600, providing you hire your work done. It will cost parties doing their own work much less. There are many other claims that are less expensive sinking shafts, on account of wood being near by. The pay dirt taken out in winter and piled up on the dump in the spring when it begins to thaw, is washed out in sluice boxes. Now I think, from what I've said, that a tenderfoot can sink his shaft and make it a success.

The reason that this rich country has not been known before to the world at large, is that the miners who worked the banks and bars of the large rivers could not prospect the creeks and gulches on account of their being so frozen up, and those not frozen had too much water in them.

I myself have been aware of the richness of that country for the last forty years. At that time I was well up toward the head waters of the Fraser River. The gold that I then found on the banks of that river was fine float gold, such as the old miners have been getting on the Klondike, Yukon, Stewart and other large streams in the Northwest Territory.

My experience there taught me that there must be a fountain head somewhere above, from whence this gold came, and I tried three different times, on foot and alone, to get up there, where I knew that greatest of bonanzas must be, but failed to get there. Two years later miners did get to what is called Williams Creek, and I've been told by men who have been there that two men alone panned out \$60,000 in one day. That place is now known as the "Caribou," and has yielded millions of dollars, and is now paying well. All the signs that I then had to go by was the fine gold on the river banks. Again about six years ago I

wanted to stake three men with \$1,000 each to go to Alaska and prospect for gold, with the agreement that they share equally with me if they found gold, but for reasons then apparent they did not go. However, I now have in the hands of A. E. Seymore and others, not belonging to the Haverhill Mining Company, nearly \$1,000, for which they are to share with me part of their finds, which is equivalent to a three-quarter interest.

Men going out there should be in the very best of health, able and willing to work, unless they have money to hire their work done, and that would be expensive, as wages at present are \$15 per day, and may continue to be, since this mineral belt is so extensive and the richness of its mines cannot be duplicated on earth. It is called by old miners the poor man's country, as they know no other place where they can make a grub stake quicker.

Mr. Cryder, who was my room-mate from St. Michael to Seattle, told me that it was time all this talk about Alaska being a hard country to get around in was stopped, as he found it quite as easy as other mining countries, and he thought it was done to keep people out. The same dodge used to be played in California and Montana, until the lucky ones got their pile. Now you will have to draw largely on reports in the daily papers from time to time, as the conditions that exist may change rapidly in the near future. As it is now a panorama that is just unfolding, I knowing the possibilities of gold countries, nothing that might be revealed in richness would surprise me. The reader will understand how difficult it is at this early date to give any farther advice on this important subject. I

would like it understood that I have no axe to grind in writing this book, other than to give my experiences to those wishing to go out there to better their conditions by mining in Alaska, the experiences that have cost me thousands of dollars and many years of hardships incidental to a miner's life. And right here I will protest emphatically against those who are not miners, but capitalists, buying up all claims of any known value, thereby compelling others who perhaps pay their last dollar to get out there, to pay them large sums in order to get a rich claim, when there is ample opportunity for said capitalists to invest their money outside of Alaska mines, and I believe it should be the policy of both our government, as well as the Dominion, to give the common people, who are the masses and the real supporters of our government, an equal show with the capitalist, if not the preference.

NOW ABOUT OUTFITTING.

I will give the names of a few firms at Seattle. One of the largest dry goods firms there is known as the Red Front, No. 615 Second avenue. This firm carries the largest supply of miners' outfits that is to be found in Seattle. They know what every man requires in this line, and will supply them as low if not lower than any other firm in town. The Haverhill Company got most of their outfits there, and was perfectly satisfied with price and quality, and this firm will recommend you to hardware firms where you will do equally as well. As to groceries, etc., I would recommend you to Lauch, Augustine & Co., Nos. 815-817 First avenue. They are the largest wholesale and retail grocers in Seattle. I

would advise all who go out there and buy miners' outfits, to purchase all except rubber goods and sleeping bags, at Seattle, Vancouver or Victoria. The locality will depend upon which route you take. I will say that our sleeping bags were too small. They should be made large enough to move your limbs freely in, and these articles can be bought here for half price.

ABOUT MINING COMPANIES.

I would say don't form any until after you arrive there, for very likely the most of you are strangers to each other, and not knowing the conditions or nature of the work to be done, it's natural to suppose that you could not or would not agree upon any plans that you might make for future operations. But band yourselves together if you will for mutual protection, and to assist each other getting into the country, and when in there you will know better the work that lies before you. Then if you think a company would be advisable, you can form one, as you are all better acquainted with each other, and more apt to agree.

As regards the cost of getting out there, I think that \$500 will be ample, providing you are able and willing to work for others at \$10 and \$15 per day, and boarding yourself at a cost of from \$3 to \$4 per week. Out of the \$500 you will pay, perhaps, \$300 or less for passage out, and \$150 or less for outfitting, groceries, etc., leaving \$50, which you might find handy before you get work or stake a claim.

It may be possible that by spring the routes may be so much improved that one may get in there for a much less sum. I consider my figures to be the extreme limit.

I have heard that the ice in the Yukon River does not break up before June, and I think all parties going from Boston ought to ascertain whether it is so or not. If that be the case, they would have to remain at St. Michael's some time before getting up the river.

There are many people who have an idea that St. Michael's is a fine place, perhaps a little city, but such is not the case. It's a very poor place to live in, especially in the winter, since there is no water fit to drink and no houses, except those that are built by the company, who own the river boats, which connect with the ocean steamers, also owned by the same company. They will neither shelter the passengers nor freight up the river for any one but those who come in their boats from Seattle or Victoria, and purchase their supplies from them. Others, who have no boats to take them up the river on their arrival at St. Michael's, often have to remain on land in tents, until boats can be built for them, and the ground is usually frozen eighteen inches below the surface, consequently the ground is always damp. Another disadvantage is, there is no wood to be had, and only hard coal to burn, which is brought there for the steamers' use. Again, St. Michael's is about forty miles from the mouth of the Yukon River. I was informed that parties who tried to get up to the mouth of the Yukon River, who started as late as July 1, were detained several days by floating ice in the Behring Sea, through which they had to pass. Now if some of those companies would build their headquarters, say some one or two hundred miles up the Yukon from its outlet, where there is plenty of wood and water, it would be a blessing to all who go up that river, or to those who wish to re-

main there any length of time, where they will find safety and comfort. From there they could go to Dawson City with dogs and sleds by land. I have lately met a man who informs me that he has a valuable tract of land on the Yukon, near its outlet, that would be well adapted for a station, and I should judge from his conversation that he would make the most liberal terms with any one who might wish to investigate. If any reader desires to interview the gentleman I will give his address.

I find that some one has been using my name in a dispatch purporting to come from Seattle, saying that I think the Phillips' Rock Island excursion route is the best one going to Seattle. I gave no one permission to send a dispatch of that kind. It is something that I know nothing about. At no time during my journey to St. Michael's was I prepared to make a report. Had I continued on to our journey's end, then, as per agreement with one of the Boston Herald's staff, which was made a few hours previous to starting, I should then make a regular report. Since arriving home I have decided to give my experiences with the Phillips' Rock Island excursion. From Boston to Seattle, 3,000 miles, I paid \$74. From Seattle to Dawson City, 4,700 miles, I paid \$300 for passage and \$232 for supplies, and ten cents per pound freight. We only reached St. Michael's, a distance of 3,000 miles, and on my return trip to Seattle, on the steamer Humboldt, paid \$100. From Seattle to Boston on the Canadian Pacific Railroad, \$70. Now you will see that I paid the full fare all the way, receiving no free passes. Neither have I received anything from any railroad or company for writing this booklet, but am simply writing it for the benefit of peo-

ple who wish to go to those gold fields to better their conditions. I give them my experience on both routes. On the Rock Island route, from Boston and Seattle, if I mistake not, we were to be transported across the continent without change, or were to be switched off in the same car, to another train. Nevertheless, we changed three times. I was sick from the second day out with a severe cold, on account of the porter leaving the windows open and blinds closed, and so arranged that I could not shut them, not knowing how. This cold did not leave me until after I left St. Michael's, on my return. It was said that we had a guide on board, for what purpose I know not, since I received no attention from him, and but little from others, yet was almost sick enough to die. It did appear that every man was for himself and the devil for the hind one. We were delayed on the plains, in a very desolate place, on account of a washout. We tried to get some coffee at a little place called a hotel, the only place that coffee could be got, and I was told by those who got it that they had to pay fifty cents a cup. On account of the delay we could not make close connections. We changed trains at one place late at night. It was very dark, and no lights around the depot, and no one to direct us to our car. The result was that myself and others of our party wandered around in the dark with our grips and bundles for twenty minutes or more before finding our car, which was down the track quite a distance. We found our car more by chance than otherwise. We found local travel that got on at that station comfortably seated, while some of the through passengers had to stand up or find seats in other cars. A limited few of our party seemed to be

avored by the gods, all the way through to St. Michael's. The stewards and porters on this route, as well as other routes, were conspicuous by their absence when wanted, unless often and well tipped. After several minor-delays, for which no one in particular was responsible, we arrived at Seattle, I more dead than alive, although I did manage to keep in sight of our party, which was led by Mr. Lockwood, until I saw them disappear in a doorway. On my arriving, I found it to be Hotel Butler, where I, with a part of the company, booked at \$1.50 per day, without board, although we were previously told it would be but seventy-five cents. The balance of our company found comfortable quarters at \$1 per week without board. But it must be remembered that this Hotel Butler is a first-class house, with elegant appointments, while the other was a good, every-day man's hotel called the Klondike, on First avenue. Hotel Stevens is another good house, also on First avenue, where you can obtain good beds at fifty cents per night. After a week's stay in Seattle we started for Dawson City, on the good steamer Humboldt, but I will not here digress to give our experiences, as another's pen, more able than mine, has already given a graphic description of that eventful trip with ex-Mayor Woods, and will undoubtedly be copied in some of our Eastern papers, written by Dr. Posey, of Oakland, Cal., who was a victim with myself and others on that boat. As I thought I had been over nearly all the Southern routes, I would return to Boston by the Canadian Pacific Railroad, which follows the banks of the Fraser River several hundred miles, thereby taking me through some of the old towns located on that river that I knew so well

forty years ago. Now I will tell you something about that route. I truly do believe, after what I've seen of it, that it's the best one to take, especially in the summer time, if one wishes to mix pleasure with business. The scenery on all those Northern routes is something sublime, grand and beautiful. The Canadian Pacific has one feature which other roads do not, that is, a monster glacier, whose crystal deposits measure eight hundred feet. I was more than surprised to see so much farming land, with no hands to till it. It's a mystery to me why so many Canadians immigrate to the United States, searching for farms, when they have so much rich and beautiful land in their own domain. All along that apparently well-built road are scattered only a few squatters, with occasionally a small hamlet, who seem dead to all conditions of civilized life, with few exceptions, and their homes are conspicuous by lack of paint and signs of thrift. They have taken up little lots of land and built small houses amidst thick forests of trees, that cover the ground, and only clear away land as they burn the wood. Hence, you see, their cleared farms are not very large. The only place that I saw that looked like push and enterprise was Winnipeg. About all the rest, take them as a whole, are much worse than any on our side of the line in the shape of settlements, and you will find some pretty hard-looking towns on this side, Leadville being one of them, but with a little more thrift and activity. The Canadian Pacific Railroad has its faults, as well as others, as some of their porters think they own the road, and forget that they are dependent upon the travelling public for their positions. They may be polite in conversation, but that don't make your bed.

Now those are things that corporations can't see, and know not of. I believe it is the intention of every railroad company wishing to serve the public to give just as good accommodations as circumstances and conditions will allow. I find on the Canadian Pacific Railroad cars double sashes to keep the dust out, which I fail to notice on others. We were eight days going out from Boston to Seattle, by Phillips' Rock Island route, a distance of 3,000 miles, two days behind schedule, on account of washouts. From Seattle to Montreal Junction, nearly 3,000 miles, over the Canadian Pacific Railroad, six days, forty minutes behind time. From there to Boston, fifty minutes behind schedule time. We had plenty of heat and dust going out, but nice and cool and no dust coming home, but always glad when the end was reached on either route. I find not much difference in either route, but favor the Canadian Pacific Railroad a little, as far as alludes to these two trips. What two more trips might reveal is hard to say. Conditions might be changed, hence results. I have given you my experience on those roads; now you will have to use your own judgment. You are liable to get there safe and sound by either, barring unforeseen accidents, which might cause delays.

When you arrive at Seattle, Vancouver or Victoria, B. C., would advise you to take the overland route, unless going direct to Dawson City, or the new-discovered mines at Manonook Creek, that lies about eight hundred miles up the Yukon, above St. Michael's. Dawson City is about 1,700 miles above St. Michael's.

There has been a great deal of prejudice and jealousy existing between the Americans and Canadians brought about by the discovery of gold in large amounts in the

Northwest Territories which lay side by side, and miners must be aware that they are too near together to be neighbors, hence they must be either friends or enemies, and my advice is to lay aside all past grievances, if any, as the American may find his best claim on English soil, and the Englishman vice versa.

I will copy a few of Canada's new mining laws affecting the Klondike region. Claims must be recorded within three days after location thereof, if within ten miles of the commissioner's office. An extra day is allowed for every additional ten miles. The entry fee is \$15 for the first year, and \$100 for each subsequent year.

A royalty of ten per cent on the gold mined is imposed upon each claim yielding \$500 a week and ten per cent on the excess over that amount a week.

No person can receive a grant of more than one mining claim, but he can hold any number of claims by purchase, or unite with others to work claims in common. A claim shall be deemed abandoned if it shall have remained unworked for three successive working days without reasonable cause.

Creek and river claims are 500 feet long and extend in width from base to base of the hill or beach, on each side, but a discoverer is entitled to 150 additional feet.

Bench claims and dry diggings are 100 feet square.

No person under eighteen years of age can hold a mining claim.

There has not yet been any such arbitrary laws passed on the American side that I know of. All laws in American mining camps have been by a majority of the miners, and, if just and equitable, they are recognized by the state and nation.

I will give you the Copper River route, 1,579 miles.

From Seattle to mouth of Copper River, 1,150 miles. This being the one I would take and prospect, the tributaries leading to that river. It has been rumored that a large party is going in there next spring for the express purpose of subduing the Indians or killing them off, and open that known rich mining region, where the Indians value lead more than gold, as they have been bringing it out and trading it for lead.

SOME FACTS WORTH KNOWING.

I was told by an old sea captain, who has been engaged in the government service for thirty odd years around St. Michael and the Yukon, that the river boats now in operation require twenty-five days to reach Dawson City from St. Michael's, and boats can only run daytime, on account of shifting bars in the river. Boats that can make ten knots an hour really only gain five miles an hour, as she has a strong current of five or six knots against her, and they can only run about fourteen hours per day. That is making about seventeen or eighteen hundred miles in twenty-five days, and it took the steamer Humboldt, which is the fastest boat that they have ever had on that line, eleven days to make the trip from Seattle to St. Michael's. According to that, it takes thirty-seven days from Seattle to Dawson City and five days from Boston to Seattle, therefore making the whole trip, not allowing for accident or delays, forty-two days.

In closing this I would say that all who contemplate going to the Klondike gold fields ought to have one of these booklets, as it may guide them to a fortune. Had I possessed one in '49, when in California, I would have been a rich man the first month, since I found rich

claims but did not know their value until too late. This book will help to make a man a miner before he leaves home, and if directions are followed, will lead him to a fortune, if in a gold-bearing country. I think six months' supplies enough to start in with; when you get located, and some place to put them, you can get more, as no doubt they will be much easier got by that time.

I expected some information from Vancouver and Victoria in regard to the outputs and improvements on the routes in the spring. I also paid for a number of photos for this book, but they have not yet arrived; and there is such a demand for my ideas of these new gold fields that I cannot wait to gather more matter, so will submit this to you.

Respectfully,

J. G. WILLIAMS.

(Copyright, 1897.)

