

*(My notes) as they appear in the original
for June 1910 -*

THE DISCOVERY OF THE NORTH POLE

by
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(Dictated by Mrs. Elsa Barker, at 151 West 123rd Street, New York City,
to Miss Lillian E. Kiel, March 21, 1910.)

It was ten o'clock in the morning of Washington's Birthday, February 22nd, that I finally got away from the ship and started on my journey toward the Pole. This was one day earlier than I had left the ship three years before on the same errand. I had with me two of the younger Eskimos, Ar-co and Kud-lock-too, two sledges and (blank) dogs. The weather was thick, the air was filled with a light snow and the temperature was 31° below zero.

It was merely by accident and not by design that I began this journey on Washington's Birthday. I had planned to leave the ship on the Saturday before, but the start of my relay parties had been delayed by violent winds and by Marvin's lateness in coming in from Cape Bryant. At one time I might have considered it a good omen that I chanced to start on a great national holiday, but I had learned not to be too much exalted by propitious signs nor depressed by seemingly bad omens. Captain Bartlett had left the Roosevelt for Cape Columbia one week before, on Monday, February 15th. His was the advance division, comprising himself and three Eskimos - Poo-ad-loo-nah, Oo-que-ah, and In-u-ghi-to, with three sledges and eighteen dogs. His start was four days earlier than in 1906. His loads from the ship were light, consisting of miscellaneous items of equipment and reserve articles, such as extra stoves, wicks, and two or three kinds of canned food, for our use at Cape Columbia on our return from the Northern journey. His sledges were to be brought up to the usual weight by taking on pemmican at Cape Belknap, the first of our caches along the route. On the day Bartlett left the ship it was not very cold.

only about (blank) degrees below zero, but there was a strong wind, and noon twilight was still so brief that, starting in the early morning, he was obliged to use a lantern in order to follow the trail northward along the ice-foot. The next day, Tuesday, the wind still blew violently, threatening a blizzard, but after several hours of delay Doctor Goodsell finally started with the second division, including himself and three Eskimos - Pan-ik-pah (~~In-u-ghi-to-crossed out~~) and the two other men before named, In-u-ghi-to _____ three sledges and eighteen dogs.

On Wednesday the wind was so violent that it seemed inadvisable to start the third party along the trail. My original program, which was thus deranged, had been that one or more divisions (there were seven in all) was to get away on successive days, and that I was to bring up the rear on Saturday. Borup had left with his division on Thursday, and McMillan and Henson with theirs on Friday. I had expected Marvin to return from Cape Bryant on Monday or Tuesday at the latest, but he did not get in until (blank). His division left the ship on Sunday.

When I finally got away on the 22nd, there were in the field for the northern work seven members of the expedition, nineteen Eskimos, one hundred and forty dogs, and twenty-eight sledges -- twenty-three in commission, and five cached in various places.

These divisions, including my own, all followed the regular trail to Cape Columbia, which had been kept open during the fall and winter by the hunting parties and and supply trains* which have been described in previous chapters. This trail followed the ice-foot along the coast the greater part of the way, only taking to the land oc-

asionally to cut off a point of a peninsular and thus shorten the route.

Considering my late start and the brief noon twilight, which was shortened still more by falling snow, I made no attempt the first day to go beyond Cape Richardson. I occupied one of the Igloos which had been left there by the winter hunting parties.

This first march and night in camp were distinctly disagreeable. The first march and first night in the field are always disagreeable in this northern work - usually more so than any that follow.

It is impossible to keep from perspiring during the first march, principally because the dogs are fresh and more or less running is necessary to keep in advance of them or even to follow them, and ones blood is not yet cooled down to a comfortable field temperature, as it is after days of exposure to intense cold. Then there is always some little detail about the clothing which does not fit just right.

In camp, too, everything is different from what one has been accustomed to on the ship. In an Igloo, a tall man like myself cannot always stand upright, and the sleeping platform seems narrow, cramped and crowded after the freedom and solitude of a bunk. That first night I could not lie at full length. My clothes were wet with ^{and} snow/perspiration; my fingers and toes were cold because in the press of other demands I had not taken proper care of them.

The first night on the trail even an old stager like myself is not in danger of sleeping too heavily. We were all wide awake and ready to start at the first disappearance of twilight in the East.

After a hearty breakfast of (blank) and tea we were off. The morning was clear, calm and bitter cold, with the temperature in the

minus 50's.