

Journal of History of Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

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Photograph by Lincoln A. Dexter



Gosnold Monument
On Cuttyhunk

A New Look at *The Tempest*,
Shakespeare and Cuttyhunk

Prospero's Hen

by JOSEPH L. ELDREDGE

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By ARTHUR R. RAILTON

CONCLUSION

A Running Account Of Matters & Things

by HENRY BAYLIES

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Letters

Clyde MacKenzie's article in the February 1999 *Intelligencer* brought a large number of responses from readers. We cannot run all the letters, but we will summarize a few.

Duncan MacDonald provided an interesting fact about James Naismith, the inventor of basketball. (He was a Scot, like her, hence her interest.) In the summer of 1891 (the year he invented the game), he attended the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute on East Chop, a summer school for teachers. He was seeking help in his search for an indoor game that would keep his Springfield YMCA men active during the winter. He discussed his wish with others at the Institute without results. But, Duncan hints, he must have found inspiration. A few months later, he came up with the game we now know as basketball. It must have been the Island air!

Sara Kurth wrote to correct the caption on page 117 which dated the photo of the Tisbury cheerleaders as "late 1940s." Her sister-in-law, Pam Kurth, is in the picture and, Sara wrote, "she's not that old! It should read 1950s." Sara also enclosed a copy of a page from the Edgartown Directory of 1901, listing the "Three B's Basket Ball Team, captained by Charlotte Hillman and Bertha Silva." Twelve other women (girls?) are named as "Members." Does anyone know more about the "Three B's"? Could the Island's first basketball team have been a girls' team in 1901?

A number of persons thought Clyde had not devoted enough space to the girls' high-school teams. He agrees, but says he included all the information he could find.

Among the letters thanking Clyde for the article was one from Harry Butman who wrote: "well researched, written with affection and it chronicles a period which ought not to be forgotten."

John Osborn called the article a "gem of Vineyard history."

Our thanks to all who wrote or called.

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Editor: Arthur R. Railton

Founding Editor: Gale Huntington (1959--1977)

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Memberships are solicited. Applications should be sent to P. O. Box 827, Edgartown, MA, 02539. Telephone: 508 627 4441. Fax: 508 627 4436. Authors' queries and manuscripts for the journal should be addressed there also.

Articles in *The Intelligencer* do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society or its officers. Every effort is made to confirm dates, names and events in published articles, but we cannot guarantee total accuracy.

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Martha's Vineyard Historical Society was founded in 1922 as Dukes County Historical Society. The name was changed in August 1996. A non-profit institution supported by members' dues, contributions, fund-raising events and bequests, its purpose is to preserve and publish the history of Dukes County.

The Society maintains the Thomas Cooke House, circa 1740, open from mid-June to mid-October. Open all year are the Francis Foster Gallery, the Capt. Francis Pease House and the Gale Huntington Library of History, as are the Gay Head Lighthouse exhibit and Carriage Shed containing many Vineyard artifacts.

You are invited to join (see inside front cover for dues schedule). Send applications to the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society, Box 827, Edgartown, MA 02539. Membership brings you this journal four times a year.

A New Look at *The Tempest*, Shakespeare and Cuttyhunk

Prospero's Hen

by JOSEPH L. ELDREDGE

THE FIRST TIME *The Tempest* was linked to the Vineyard and Cuttyhunk was in 1902 when Rev. Edward Everett Hale discovered similarities between phrases and word patterns in two journals kept on Bartholomew Gosnold's 1602 voyage and certain lines in the Shakespeare drama. He described his findings in a talk to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester. His interesting revelations seemed to create no waves.

Twenty years later, Marshall Shepard, soon to be the first president of the new Dukes County Historical Society, came upon Hale's findings. In a talk to the Daughters of the American Revolution in Edgartown, he outlined what he called the "Gosnold-Shakespeare Theory." His talk was mentioned in the Vineyard Gazette, where it was read by Edna Coffin of Edgartown, then a student at Radcliffe College.

She wrote to Shepard requesting more information, stating that she hoped to write a paper on the subject. In his response, Shepard suggested, "It might be interesting to recall the relationship existing between the Gosnold and the Bacon families, for if Shakespeare was in reality Bacon, no effort of the imagination is needed to picture Gosnold relating his New World experiences to his distinguished kinsman and author of *The Tempest*. It would be well to examine Dr. Hale's discovery in the light of the evidence of the Baconian theory."

Miss Coffin's paper, "Martha's Vineyard, the Setting for Shakespeare's Play, *The Tempest*," was praised by her professor as "touched with the wand of fancy; the possibilities are interesting – the probabilities strong." Emboldened, she sent a copy to Prof. George Lyman Kittredge of Harvard, the eminent Shakespearean authority, asking for his opinion. The learned professor responded: "A very good joke. I should imagine that it might be a piece of newspaper humor." The "joke" lay fallow until 1940 when Shepard, now President of the new Society, published *Our Enchanted Island*, quoting lines in *The Tempest* that were very similar to those in Gosnold's journal, written by Brereton and Archer.

Today, there is renewed interest in Shakespeare. It is time for another look at the connection our islands have to *The Tempest*. This time, however, Bacon, like Marlowe and Derby, are forgotten, replaced by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, now said to be the real Shakespeare.

IN HIS LIBRETTO for Albert Eisenstadt's fine photographic essay, *Martha's Vineyard*,¹ Henry Hough ruminated on the identity of Prospero's island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Alfred Eisenstadt and Henry Beetle Hough, *Martha's Vineyard*, Viking Press, 1970.

JOSEPH LIPPINCOTT ELDREDGE is a professional architect, having designed many familiar buildings on the Island. By avocation, he is an actor, an editor, a publisher, an architectural critic, book reviewer and author. It is unnecessary to add that he is a dedicated Oxfordian.

Hough, famed editor of the *Vineyard Gazette*, recalled Winthrop Packard's suggestion that the pinkletinks could have been Ariel and the heath hen, Caliban. Some readers with vivid memories will understand. To prove it to yourself, find a half-dozen naturalist passages describing Prospero's island in the play, take them with you out on any wild Island meadow and read them aloud (with or without heath hens!).

It was Edward Everett Hale² (said Mr. Hough) who thought Shakespeare must have met sailors and gentlemen adventurers just back from Gosnold's voyage in 1602 to hear of "mussels -- pig-nuts -- and scamels." Hough also included Packard's description of his own experience in the spring of 1912 on the Vineyard Plain:

Goblins cackled in weird laughter, whining and whimpering among the scrub oaks clad in brown, wearing black horns that stuck stiffly above their heads and with bags of bad dreams about their necks. Two of these bags, orange colored and round as oranges, hung about the neck of each creature, and now they danced in unholy glee before one another, now they sailed into the air on their broomsticks, and always mingled their strange actions with strange cries.

As a person who read almost everything, Henry Hough certainly read the book, *Bartholomew Gosnold: Discoverer and Planter*, by his friend and fellow Vineyarder, Warner Gookin, published in cooperation with what was then Duke's County Historical Society.³ In the early 1950s, Reverend Gookin, a retired clergyman, spent his last years in Oak Bluffs doing extensive research on Bartholomew Gosnold, whom he wanted to rescue from obscurity.⁴

To those knowledgeable in Island history, the name Gosnold will be familiar. Others, who may have wondered why the island of Cuttyhunk is part of the Town of Gosnold, will find in Gookin's book welcome revelations, intrigue and enchanting speculation. Gosnold's youth in his family seat at Otley Hall in Suffolk, England, was filled with stories of the great



Otley Hall, home of Bartholomew Gosnold, had been in his family since 1450.

voyages of discovery by men like Giovanni Verrazano and Sir Humphrey Gilbert. He read the writings of the Reverend Richard Hakluyt,⁵ who was known to his family. Gosnold was connected through his mother to Sir Francis Bacon and on his father's side to Bartholomew Gilbert, Gosnold's co-captain in the "discovery" of Martha's Vineyard.

Bartholomew married into a family with even more impressive connections, an essential ingredient for success in the totalitarian time of Queen Elizabeth. Martha, his mother-in-law, for whom his first child was named, was a cousin of Sir Thomas Smythe, founder of the East India Company and a leader of the Virginia Company. Smythe was at the time England's foremost world trader. Bartholomew's bride, Mary Golding, was related in two separate generations to the de Veres, the 16th and 17th Earls of Oxford. Gosnold and Henry Wriothesley (pronounced "Risley"), the 3rd Earl of Southampton, were at Cambridge University at the same time. This enigmatic young man financed Gosnold's 1602 voyage in the ship *Concord*.

Warner Gookin's treatise acquaints us with Gosnold and his extended family and with the climate of discovery surrounding him. Two of the voyage's gentlemen adventurers, Gabriel Archer and John Brereton, kept detailed journals of

⁵ Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616), a leading English geographer and publisher, was a promoter of English colonization of North America and a member of the London Virginia Company.

² Rev. Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909), Unitarian minister in Boston, most remembered for his short novel, *The Man Without a Country*, 1863.

³ Warner F. Gookin and Philip L. Barbour, *Bartholomew Gosnold: Discoverer and Planter*, Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1963. After Gookin's death in 1953, Barbour put Gookin's work into publishable form under the sponsorship of the Society.

⁴ Gookin was the Society Historian for a number of years, including while researching the Gosnold manuscript. On his death, Henry Hough took over the position.

the voyage. They relate that Gosnold and Gilbert were seeking a place called "Norumbega," the broad sound, harbor and river that Verrazano had sailed into and named eighty years earlier. By recorded latitude, Norumbega was where Newport is today. Gosnold, sailing down the east coast from the north, got only as far as our islands and Buzzard's Bay.

Vineyard historian Gookin took on the task of clearing up misconceptions about this 1602 Gosnold voyage. One such misconception was that the island Gosnold named "Martha's Vineyard" was what we now call "Nomans." A sailor himself, Gookin deciphered the landlubberly readings of these contemporary accounts and by careful induction was able to lead us day by day, league by league, after Gosnold's landfall on the upper arm of the Cape. Going ashore in today's Barnstable harbor, Gosnold and others climbed Shootflying Hill from where they saw Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds. While these men were hiking, those on board ship were fishing, taking a "great store of Cod-fish, for which we . . . called it Cape Cod," Archer wrote.

Researcher Gookin tracked their route out around the end of the Cape, around Nantucket and back up through Muskeget Channel. They anchored off Chappaquiddick, again sending a party ashore and again the others "tooke great store of Cod, as before at Cape Cod, but much better."⁶ It was on that day, May 22nd, 1602, Gosnold christened our Island, "Martha's Vineyard." The next day, they sailed past East and West Chops to Lambert's Cove, where they again went ashore and, in Gookin's words, for two days "ambled and gambolled, after the manner of sailors ashore," and meeting, as Archer recorded, "thirteene Savages . . . [who] brought Tobacco, Deere skins and some sodden fish."

From there they headed southwest, passing Menemsha Bight and Gay Head, which they called "Dover Cliffs." Then on to Cuttyhunk where, on a small island in a fresh-water pond, they established a base from which to explore.⁷

⁶ Fortunately, he had used up the cod name, otherwise he might have decided to name the Vineyard, "Isle of Cod."

⁷ For a slightly different analysis of the voyage see *The English New England Voyages 1602-1608*, edited by David B. Quinn and Alison M. Quinn, The Hakluyt Society, London 1983. Also maps published in the *Intelligencer*, February 1984.



Island on which Gosnold built his trading post is marked by a monument (right).

Thanks to narrators Brereton and Archer we get a good picture of the flora, fauna and topography of "these fragile outposts." Even more challenging is the guarded but polite reception they were given by the locals. It is unfortunate (yet a blessing for the world of letters) that Gosnold took little interest in the language or subtle economy of their hosts.

The original plan had been to leave Gosnold and his party of gentlemen adventurers to start a colony. Gilbert was to return to England for more supplies. But after it was learned that Gilbert had already stinted on the original provisions, all hands decided to return to England with him. Gookin's opinion of Gilbert based on this suggests that Gosnold had made a wise decision. However, had Gosnold learned more of the native economy, as did the Pilgrims at Plymouth a few years later, he might have tried to stick it out. Of course *The Tempest's* pungent lines might then have been enriched by reports of some other island.⁸

After less than a month on Cuttyhunk (with some potting about in Buzzard's Bay), the small band left for England, leaving behind two Dukes County names: "Martha" and "Elizabeth." Gookin assures us that the first was the name of Gosnold's infant daughter, who died one year later in 1603; the second was the name of his sister Elizabeth, who married a distant relative of Anne Boleyn. Queen Elizabeth herself might

⁸ And Plymouth Rock would be just another boulder. America's founders would have been entrepreneurs not Pilgrims and we may not have had a Thanksgiving dinner to celebrate.

have been the one honored, but being already the nominal owner of all "Virginia," it may not have been flattering to add a tiny string of islands to her necklace.

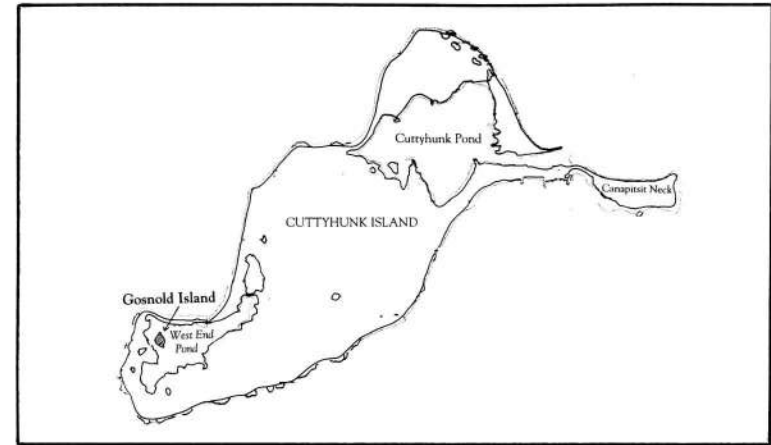
Back to Henry Beetle Hough. His image of sailors recounting their adventures in London (or Portsmouth) taverns was not far off. By this time, the Third Earl of Southampton was in the Tower awaiting execution. Sir Walter Raleigh, who with some reason, thought he owned the New World, tried to confiscate Gosnold's cargo of cedar and sassafras.⁹ Experts, including Gookin, are not sure just what rights Raleigh had to this cargo. But the Queen's interest took precedence and her friend, the Earl of Oxford, was the most likely person at court to deal with Raleigh. The Earl and Gosnold may even have met in the elegant rooms of Otley Hall, which today is an Oxfordian study center. In any event, the remarkable accounts of the voyage would not have been lost on a courtier, poet and adventurer, such as Oxford, whose plays and poems (properly understood) are a splendid rotogravure of the personalities and events of the late sixteenth century.

In addition to lending his own ship *Edward Bonaventure* to exploration, Oxford had already financed a voyage to America, dropping three thousand pounds (they were "ducats" in *Merchant of Venice*) in a venture that brought back only iron pyrites (fool's gold). He also fitted out and manned his ship as part of England's defense against the Spanish Armada. Because of his noble hobby of writing plays, Oxford would have picked up on the division of labor present on such voyages: the ship's crew were not expected to cut and stack the cedar and sassafras. They were mariners, not laborers. The cargo was the responsibility of the gentlemen adventurers. In *The Tempest*, it is Prince Ferdinand who dutifully stacks logs to prove his love for the lovely Miranda. Brereton and Archer both tell us of the clear water, wild fruits and tall cedars, all of which found their way into the lines of the play. At one point, Ariel speaks of flying east to the "Bermoothes."¹⁰

This brings us to the question of who wrote *The Temp-*

⁹ Raleigh was already importing sassafras (a valuable medicinal ingredient) from other places and Gosnold's cargo would have flooded the market, destroying his monopolistic pricing.

¹⁰ Bermuda.



Cuttyhunk with the island named for Bartholomew Gosnold in pond at lower left.

pest: Shakespeare or Oxford? A dwindling number of Elizabethan "scholars," hard put to defend authorship by an otherwise obscure person from Stratford-on-Avon, tried unsuccessfully to make a last stand in disproving the possibility of Oxford's nomination to "bardship." They cling to a published report of a shipwreck on Bermuda in 1610, six years after Oxford's death. This was the scene of the play, they argue. How could Oxford have been its author? In their zeal, they overlook several accounts of wrecks on Bermuda before 1600 and especially one of Henry May in 1593. In this earlier adventure, which involved Oxford's own ship, one of the sites on the map was already named Mount Oxford. The 1609 wreck on Bermuda, holy and necessary as it may be to the Stratfordian heresy, has no special meaning in the context of *The Tempest*. Anyone who had talked with Gosnold or his chroniclers would have known that Prospero's island was well to the westward, as is Cuttyhunk.

While the man on the street may or may not be aware that there is a serious controversy about the identity of the person responsible for the Shakespeare canon, few realize that the overwhelming evidence against Stratford and for Oxford can no longer be ignored. Nor have they begun to comprehend the new insights into the social, political, economic, military, scientific, religious, theatrical and, of course, literary history of Elizabethan life.

The Polish scholar, Jan Kott, in his brilliant analysis of *The Tempest*, sees Prospero as a Gallilean (or Leonardian) magus. Near the end of his days, he brings all his characters, kings, villains, heroes, lovers, heroines and buffoons, to an idyllic island. After putting them (for just one more time) through their paces, he takes them all away, leaving a challenging portrait of mankind, his audience: Ariel as the freed human spirit, and Caliban as that other and less attractive part.

One does not need to know who wrote the play to get this message. But the more we learn about the 17th Earl of Oxford, the clearer it is that he was the only one in his time that could (and would) have skewered us with this merry metaphor.

Shake-speare, for that was the way this pen name first saw the printed page, was also at the end of his days. Oxford died in 1604, shortly after Gosnold returned. *The Tempest* was his last full play. It is quite possible that had Gosnold remained through the winter on Cuttyhunk, there would have been no tempest, on the stage or among the literati.

Oxford, in real life a true Renaissance man, speaks through Prospero. As a descendant of the oldest Earldom in England, dating back to William the Conqueror, he was hereditary Lord High Chamberlain. He had at least two groups of actors performing his own and other plays and led a group of scholars devoted to the improvement, not of the English language, but of language itself.

He received a no-strings stipend of one thousand pounds a year from Elizabeth's secret service fund. Scholars believe that this was to support his writing of the "King" plays. His wise Queen knew that her nation needed a shot in the arm to stand up to the territorial and religious ambitions of Spain. The Henry IV shenanigans with Falstaff and other low life around Boar's Head Tavern really did happen.

Oxford married the daughter of William Cecil, the royal advisor most all scholars agree was the model for Polonius. Oxford's father died when he was twelve; his mother remarried in unseemly haste (such that the funeral meats would serve for the wedding cakes). The 16th Earl was buried, like MacBeth's victim King Duncan, in Earl's Colne, the Oxford family chapel. Names

such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern show up in accounts of Swedish royal visits to Castle Hedingham, the Oxford family seat. Oxford visited the cities on the Continent where many of his plays take place. His version of the story of *Romeo and Juliet* is the only one (of many) that has the layout of the town of Verona correct. His son-in-law was one of the "pair of noble brethren" who published the *First Folio* in 1623.

There is not space here to do justice to the whole story, nor do I wish to convert the inconvertible (of whom there are millions). The film, *Shakespeare In Love*, has unwittingly begun to unravel the literary DNA of authorship by giving us a young, romantic poet who suspiciously could barely write his name. He could have been the Earl, but certainly not the standard android of the Stratfordim. The film is filled with indications that either Hollywood has joined the cover-up or is secretly trying to get out of the Stratfordian closet.

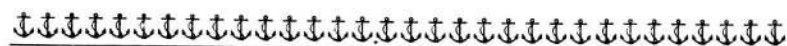
At this point it may help to discuss briefly the Tudor Heir Theory. Based on inspired conjecture fed by available facts, with input from the plays and sonnets, the connection of Elizabeth, Oxford and Southampton becomes filial. The Queen's biographers have begun to grant to her some "normal" romantic behavior. In 1573 she went into seclusion to deliver a "changeling" child who was soon packed off along with a team of Tudor retainers to the Southampton family seat to become the Third Earl thereof. Throughout his life, Oxford acted at least *in loco parentis* toward this young Earl of Southampton, Henry Wriothesley, the "WH" of the sonnets. She protected these two special males in her life until she died, one year before Oxford. For reasons of state, matters of succession and national security, the true parentage of Southampton was not officially recognized. But the plays and sonnets, once their authorship is understood, are hard to ignore. The "changeling child" in *Midsummer Night's Dream* survived his probable father, Oxford, and his royal mother, Elizabeth, to become a star at the court of James I. Like his father, he had his own group of actors to carry on a great tradition. During the winter of Oxford's death, James commanded eight of his plays to be performed *in memoriam*. There is no recorded public recognition of the passing of a grain merchant from Stratford-on-Avon.

Oxford fathered three daughters and three sons: a Henry, an Edward, and of course "WH," Henry Wriothlesley, Bartholomew Gosnold's friend. The Tudor Heir concept, now the subject of intense research, is not essential to tie *The Tempest* to Cuttyhunk and the Vineyard, but it does make the connection more challenging.

It is becoming increasingly painful for those who still believe in (and who have become so economically dependent upon) the Stratfordian of whom there is no more than a page and a half of verifiable facts, none of which has anything to do with writing plays or sonnets. But it was not a problem for Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Freud, Bismark, de Gaulle, Disraeli, Charlie Chaplin, John Buchan, Galsworthy, Whittier, Emerson, Henry James as well as two of three Supreme Court justices who were asked, in a mock trial, to rule on the authorship. All are on record in the rejection of Mr. Shagsper of Stratford.

In exploiting their midden of half-facts about that other person, the anti-Oxfordians are outraged at any suggestion that the Bard had to be a nobleman. They would prefer their hero to be a politically correct "common man." The Shake-speare canon is about love, war, revenge, greed and folly, but above all it is about cause and effect, about responsibility. When our founding fathers and mothers came to the New World, they brought along the King James, Geneva, and Douai versions of the Bible -- as well as the works of Shakespeare. Our Constitution, laws and high court decisions are laced with quotations and borrowed phrases. Notes in Oxford's hand in his own Bible, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, have been found to have an uncanny correlation with biblical references in the plays and poems. When it came time for "common men" to govern themselves in a "brave new world," our uncommon hero was right at hand.

Perhaps we can leave it here, reserving many happy hours of armchair exploration of Queen Bess's boys, all her explorers and poets, if only to erase four hundred years of mendacity and disinformation. Wouldn't we all like to know more about the real adventurers who "discovered" these enchanted islands -- and about an imaginative and appropriately irreverent poet that knew them when?



Shipwrecked 525 Miles from North Pole With Captain Coffin of Edgartown

By ARTHUR R. RAILTON

CONCLUSION

IT WASN'T what Russell Porter wanted. He wanted the expedition commander, Anthony Fiala, to allow him to continue on the trek and join the dash to the Pole in the spring. It wasn't what Jimmie Dean, the cabin boy, wanted. Like Porter, he dreamed of being a discoverer of the North Pole. And it certainly wasn't what Captain Edwin Coffin of Edgartown wanted. But he had no desire to go to the Pole. He had other reasons.

It was what Fiala wanted. And as the commander of the Ziegler Polar Expedition, he got what he wanted. Coffin had doubts about why Porter and Dean had been sent back to Cape Flora. Fiala's party had started for Teplitz Bay nearly a month earlier with seven men, but they had covered only 18 miles, being forced to stay at Cape Point. The shifting ice floes on De Bruyns Sound made it impossible for them to get to Hooker Island, their next land mass on the way to Teplitz Bay. After nearly three weeks at Cape Point, their food supply was running low. Fiala sent two sledges back to Flora for provisions.

Fiala also had decided his party was too large, requiring the sledges to carry too much weight. So it was agreed that Porter and Dean would drop out and return to Cape Flora for the winter. It was another instance of Fiala's indecisiveness. He had not wanted them on the trek in the first place, but had given in to their pleadings. But Coffin, always suspicious of motives, thought Fiala had sent the men back for other reasons:

[Fiala says] his reasons for sending back two men are that the party was too large with his resources to accomplish the journey. I think there are others.

Coffin thought Porter, whom he had grown to dislike, had been sent back to check up on what he did through the winter. So Francis Long, the Weather Observer, told Porter later:

Long told me the other day that [the Captain] had been grossly slurring and criticising me . . . He thinks the Captain is under the impression that I [Porter] am here to spy on him and his actions. . . personally, I care not a fig how

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is Editor of this journal.

he conducts himself or his crew. . . He was heretofore been a little king on his own ships. . . absolute in authority, and cannot, or will not, adapt himself to present conditions. [Porter, p. 82.]¹

Captain Coffin, master of the ill-fated steamer *America*,² was always suspicious of motives. Unable to accept the obvious, he sought insidious reasons for what others did, watching them constantly. Porter, a perceptive and well-educated man, was annoyed by Coffin's invasion of his privacy:

Across from my corner lies the Captain's [berth]. He is in an upper bunk, the curtain drawn nearly closed, but near his [head] he has hung a towel which he can so drop in connection with the sliding curtain that an admirable peephole may be constructed through which he can see, unobserved, everything going on. How often have I laid here in my bag in the small hours of the morning, listening to the heavy breathing of the sleepers. . . the night lamp, dimly bringing out the different objects around the room; and thinking myself [finally] able to open or close an eyelid without the whole house knowing it, when a slight movement of the curtain opposite would attract my attention, the peep hole would change its shape slowly in the dim light and a faint sound of mutterings or hoarse whispers would reach my ears. This would last some ten minutes or so, then the peep hole would close with a violent agitation of the towel, the mutterings would reach their climax and suddenly cease; and I would find myself thinking, "For God's sake, when will this end?" [Porter p. 81.]

Coffin was sure some of his sailors were out to do him harm, even if only psychologically. In December, what was probably an accident took on great significance:

This morning I took down my wash basin from its usual place above the stove. Noticing the water looked dark, I took it to the light and discovered a large dog's excrement or a human's in the bottom of the basin. I had always filled it with clean snow and hung it up over the stove to melt. The morning before, I noticed my water was discoloured and refrained from using it. So this time in filling it with snow, I cut snow. . . not less than four feet high and positively free from any kind of dirt. I took Mr. Haven out to view the exact place. . . the snow was perfectly free from even a stain. So some scoundrel put it in my washing dish. I offered 5 pounds reward for the name of the man who did this dirty trick, without results so far. [Elmwood, p.25.]³

Coffin's reaction made such an impression on Porter that, years later, he wrote about it in his book:

¹ From the journal of Russell W. Porter, U. S. National Archives. Hereafter, simply "Porter."

² For details of the crushing of the *America* and other background, see previous installments in the *Intelligencer*, beginning August 1998.

³ Five English pounds at the time was about \$25, nearly a month's pay for a sailor. This is from Coffin's more intimate journal entitled *Elmwood*. Hereafter, cited that way.

I never saw him so wrought up with the world at large. . . keeping up a steady fire for a full hour until his eating forced him to stop a while. But he will be as good and sociable as you please by afternoon and generous and good hearted at core, although you couldn't get many of the sailors to agree with you.⁴

This episode, most certainly inadvertent (the dogs ran freely around the house where Coffin picked up the snow), was the first of several "strange" events that convinced him a conspiracy was building. This, soon after:

Some one has been out to the Forge house and wrecked Havlik's Forge. This is a sample of what kind of men there is among this lot. Who did this vandalism I know not, but hope to find out, as well as some other equally as mean and cowardly tricks. . . crew are not under orders of any of their legitimate officers nor do I try to deceive myself by thinking they are under any orders of mine. 'Tis simply cowardice which holds them in check and maybe knowing there are a few good and true men among them. For 'tis always the good men who come under their hatred. This trick I shall record down separate. . . in my book containing all important events.

The book that he wrote it in was his "Elmwood" notebook, mentioned earlier, a collection of various items for future reference, often containing more detail than his journals. After describing the damage to the forge, he added:

There can be only one explanation. Havlik is a good worker and does nothing excepting under orders from myself. And about all of the rest of the crew are for not doing any work at all. . . [Later, he wrote:] There is a bare possibility of the dogs doing the above damage.

A third piece of "sabotage" again involved hard-working Havlick.⁵ While the others lounged in their bunks, the Norwegian was usually working, making the loungers feel guilty and, Coffin was convinced, anxious to get even:

Havlik keeps busy, but this day the [soldering] acid would not work. Dr. Vaughn said the acid had been mixed. As I am the only one supposed to handle it, some one must have tampered with it. If so, 'tis still another incident on this line. The acid in the bottle leaked out through a small hole in the corner (hanging up), but when put away was all secure. Still another incident against Havlik's working. I cannot explain the why or wherefore. These accidents have occurred all within a few days.

Such happenings weighed heavily on the captain. Having spent his life at sea where mutiny was a constant worry, he

⁴ Herman Friis, Editor, *The Arctic Diary of Russell William Porter*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, 1976, p. 63. Hereafter: Friis.

⁵ Havlick is the correct spelling, but Coffin spells it "Havlik" or sometimes "Hovlik."

took such incidents seriously. He even changed his routine:

There have been so many unaccountable things occurring in this camp that I do not like to leave my corner without Mr. Haven or Hudgins in charge. So I do not take all the outdoor exercise I would if I could. I am doing this without fear or favor and I am certain there is cause for my doing as I have.

The captain may have been unduly suspicious, but he did have a responsibility for the safety of the crew. A mutiny would jeopardize all and its likelihood would increase during the months of darkness. Strict discipline was needed to assure their food would last until August, the earliest date relief was expected. He even worried that relief might not get there at all this summer. If not, starvation was a real threat.

He and First Mate Haven maintained an inventory of the food, most of which had been left by previous polar expeditions. Arctic temperatures had kept it edible. They also had fresh meat, garnered by their summer hunting. Additional food had been unloaded from the steamer at Teplitz Bay, but it was 165 miles away and inaccessible during winter. Smaller caches were known to be in other places in the archipelago, but they, too, would not be available until daylight returned.

To make sure the food lasted until relief came, Coffin and Haven made up a detailed menu each week, allotting provisions to the cook depending on the number of men being fed. When Porter and Jimmie Dean returned from the Fiala party, that meant 17 men instead of 15. Coffin had to recalculate:⁶

Now I have got to go through all the old business of making out a new scale of allowances for 17 men [instead of 15].

In addition, there were dogs to feed. Both Little Italy and Elmwood had a team of dogs for hauling during daylight months. Now, in winter, their only function was to keep the rare bear at bay until it could be shot. They were fed walrus and bear meat from summer stockpiles. With Porter's five dogs added to the pack, Coffin had a decision to make:

I have made the only proposition to Porter about his dogs that I can . . . Kill off three of our poorest dogs & keep his five, all large, hard working dogs in fine condition. I have about four not up to the mark. He will go over to Camp Ziegler with our team when they leave here in the spring. After ar-

⁶ Eight men of the Field Department lived in the separate Little Italy or Round House and had their own kitchen. Francis Long, in command there, worked out their rations. He and Coffin divided the food: 8/25th to Little Italy; 17/25th to Elmwood. It was a tedious calculation.

iving there, he will turn over to my dog caretaker, Mr. Hudgins, 2 of his team. From Camp Ziegler [to Teplitz Bay] tis all channel travelling, and twill be level and hard in early spring & three dogs with his light Norwegian sledge will have no trouble.

And so the Ziegler Polar Expedition prepared for its second winter on Franz Joseph Land, the most northern land in the eastern hemisphere. Its 38 men live in three camps. One is far north at Teplitz Bay where all had spent the first winter and where the *America* was crushed. Commander Fiala is there with 10 others. Down at Cape Flora, the most southern point of the archipelago, there are 25 men, 17 in Elmwood (the log house) and 8 in Little Italy (Round House). Coffin and Francis Long are in command of the two houses, although discipline in both is relaxed. At Camp Ziegler, 80 miles to the east on Alger Island, there are two men, left there by Fiala on his way north. There is plenty of food there, cached by the previous Ziegler expedition.

During their first winter, the mood of all had been good, buoyed by an expectation of going down in history as discoverers of the North Pole. Initially, at Teplitz, they had plenty of coal and food – even electric lights.

Then came the disaster. The polar ice floes crushed and sank the *America*. Tons of coal and provisions were lost. But the North Pole and fame still beckoned. They still had a goal, a reason for being in such a desolate place. When spring brought daylight, two attempts to reach that goal failed, almost before they had started. Their mood changed to depression.

Now, for most, their dreams are only of going home. Fiala had given up on them and marched them south, across 165 miles of ice, to Cape Flora to mark time until the relief ship arrived. But the ship had not come. Thick ice prevented the steamer from getting through. Now for those at Flora, survival is all that matters. And rescue.

There were many shortages. With almost no soap, sanitation suffered. Yet, they were surprisingly healthy.⁷ Only one of the men, Second Mate Nichols, was chronically ill and unable to work. His illness was never diagnosed. At first, his eyes gave him trouble, later he became lame with rheumatism.

⁷ One of the men who had remained at Teplitz Bay, Fireman Sigurd Myhre, a Norwegian, had died of "natural causes" late in the summer, the only casualty during the two years.

Coffin seemed to think he was malingering and furthermore he was a bad influence:

Second Officer Nichols, who has been laid up and been no use and done much growling, [is] setting the example to the men always. Only since the rheumatism developed on him that he stopped, through sheer necessity. . . I will close this subject by saying this -- I do not know of any loyal man in the whole outfit, barring 1st Officer [Haven].

Seaman Kunold was occasionally too sick to work, but except for these two, the men had few ailments. That was fortunate as medicine was scarce. As with food and shelter, they relied on what had been left by earlier explorers. Coffin, of course, blamed Fiala:

The medicines are rather limited. Were it not for Andrus we should be quite out by this time.⁸ 'Twas a bad oversight not to leave a good supply from our large inventory which could been so easily spared of all kinds. Shows Mr. Fiala never intended to have me winter the steamer in an unsafe place or he would [have] provided a retreat [in case of] loss of the ship.

There were two doctors, plus a medical student, at Flora, but there was little they could do. Treatment was minimal; sometimes self-prescribed. Coffin was always ready to suggest a favorite whaleman's cure, kerosene:

Kunold is gaining on his cold. I am giving him the kind of medicine he asked for, Kerosine & molasses. I always believe in Coal oil [kerosene] for many ailments, both internal & external.

The journals contain almost no mention of personal hygiene. Clothing was rarely washed, as soap was so scarce. During the coldest months, they probably never removed their clothes. They certainly had few changes of clothing. Beards and long hair became common and only the most self-disciplined kept clean. Coffin was one. He even brushed his teeth. We know that because when the relief ship finally arrived, among the items he left behind in the hasty departure was his toothbrush.

Given the diet and lack of cleanliness, one would have expected intestinal problems, but none was recorded. Rarely, one had a common cold, but only rarely. Coffin complained of a stiff neck for a while and Porter had toothaches and neuralgia, but that was about it. Coffin did develop a problem when he was forced to quit smoking:

⁸ Does anyone know on which expedition there was an Andrus?

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My 4th day of Tobacco abstinence. Now I am glad my Tobacco is gone as it does not trouble my mind in the least, but does make a difference in my regular habits of digestion [sic]. That will naturally correct itself in time.

Preparing for a second winter, Coffin makes a rare reference to a privy. He writes of their "W.C.," the water closet. Of course, there could be no water in an Arctic W.C., nor were there such "luxuries," as toilet paper or wash basin. The ailing Second Mate Nichols helped to build it, one of the few times he did any work:

Cowing & 2nd Mate building a W.C. out of Snow. [Three days later:] Mr. Nichols finished the W.C. of Snow, about forty feet long with several turns to prevent the snow drifting in. [It is] also a fine shelter for the dogs, plenty of entrance room.

Another rare mention of bodily functions came because some men chose not to walk out to the cold W. C. to urinate:

The outside door is not taken care of in the least by some of the men on duty as housekeepers. I personally have chopped the ice off of the door edge where some of the "don't care" ones have thrown water out in the face of a gale of wind and had it all blown back and, still another trick, using the door just ajar for an urinary.

The captain's comments included a revealing, gratuitous remark about his opinion of his crew:

In order to have a tight doorway, I took my hatchet and chopped off the frozen urine so the door could come to against the weather stops. I have talked until I am tired, but not one man seems to have any ambition to do this thoroughly, with 14 men doing positively nothing. I want to get along some way in peace, but I have no wish to be thought a good fellow by my inferiors in station and manners also.

Keeping clean under the conditions they were in was not easy -- not simply a matter of turning on the faucet to get water, cold or hot. Water for drinking and cooking was obtained by chopping fresh-water ice from the glacier and melting it in a large tray mounted above the cook stove. This water was reserved for cooking, drinking and washing utensils. Water for personal use came from snow melted by each man for his own use, usually in an old tin that originally contained ham. We learned from Coffin that the snow-filled tins were placed near the stove at night to provide wash water.

Soap was scarce, virtually none was available. But that shortage was a minor problem compared to the scarcity of tobacco. During the first winter, tobacco had been rationed out

weekly from a supply brought from Norway. When the men trekked south to Cape Flora in the spring, their weight allowance was restricted. Each man carried only as much tobacco as he thought he would need until their rescue. The main stock remained at Teplitz. Now, months later, their tobacco has gone up in smoke. Pangs of withdrawal are being felt. As the supply declined, tobacco became valuable in the trading that followed ration distribution each Sunday morning:

Porter gave Hudgins 2 ½ pipe fulls of tobacco for ½ lb butter. Truden wanted to give half his winter's butter for a little tobacco. Some of the men are wanting the weed much worse than others. . . Porter started the trade and has a little tobacco left yet. I heard none other offer any butter

Porter described tobacco's grip:

It would surprise . . . anti-smokers to know what offers I have received whereby I would part with tobacco. Men can be as great slaves to tobacco as to liquor, I have found out this winter, even to theft. [Porter, p.65.]

Elmwood was so small and so crowded that little occurred without becoming known to all. Conversations, even intimate ones, were overheard and often misinterpreted, sometimes causing dissension. The sailors heard the officers talking and discovered they were not so different from themselves, lessening respect. Coffin thought it potentially dangerous.

He was increasingly concerned about the loyalty of his second officer, the ailing Nichols. The two had not spoken to each other in months, not even about his health problems:

2nd officer is up, sitting back to the light with a visor of tin over his face, feeling somewhat better, I presume. He long ago sided with the mutinous spirits among the crew & I have seen no occasion to trust him after I was assured this was a fact.⁹

Not that Captain Coffin spent much time in conversation with anybody. If he did, he doesn't record it. He was not one for idle talk, at least not with "inferiors." No wonder he had difficulty getting close to his sailors. Haven was the only one he regularly talked with, usually while out walking and he was too lenient with the men. Coffin wanted strict discipline:

Had I a Mate like [George Fred] Tilton, they would [have] been lambs from the start.

⁹ Readers who have been with this story from the start may recall that Nichols was a "mystery" hire. Coffin had signed on Walter Hoxsie of New Bedford as second mate, but just prior to leaving New Bedford, Hoxsie left and Nichols came on board. No explanation was given.

We learn almost nothing about Mr. Haven, as the captain always called him. His first name, Edward, never appears in the journals. Our best information about him is from Porter who considered him a far better officer than Coffin did:

The mate, a tall, very tall, white whiskered man, slightly inclined to the effeminate, is best described and almost completely so, as "The Captain's Echo." He is certainly a model of devotion and humility to the skipper and would, I doubt not, fall at the old man's feet and kiss them too if the occasion demanded. . . It is fortunate for the Captain he has such a reliable officer. [Porter, pp. 63-4.]

Coffin rarely visited the Round House or Little Italy, the smaller building at Cape Flora, where the eight men of the Field Department lived. It was only a hundred feet or so away and daily, one or two from there would come to Elmwood to visit the captain, often to talk to the sailors, which annoyed Coffin. In his mind such attention gave the men an inflated opinion of themselves, destroying his beloved discipline. The Field Department men were better educated than the mariners, better even than Coffin, and were not wedded to the protocol of a whaleship. Among them were scientists, physicians, veterinarians, a meteorologist, two supply clerks and, one special person, the French-Canadian Pierre LeRoyer, who was William Ziegler's personal fishing guide in Quebec. Many were experienced in Arctic life, some having been on the Baldwin Ziegler Expedition with Fiala. One man, Weather Observer Francis Long, had also been on Greely's expedition and nearly died of starvation.¹⁰

The men in the Round House were even more depressed than the sailors. They had come to Franz Joseph Land with Fiala to discover the North Pole. They were his support troops. Now, he had abandoned them, declared them unfit.

Their house, Little Italy, was colder than Elmwood. It had been built as a storehouse without the thick log walls in Coffin's house. With only one stove (Elmwood had two, a cook stove and a heating stove), it was rarely above freezing in winter. Even with its two stoves, the Elmwood inside tem-

¹⁰ Long survived on the Greely Expedition to Northwest Greenland in which two relief ships failed to make it to the camp at Cape Sabine. They were so low on food that in 1884, when the third ship finally got through, only six men were still alive, the others having starved. He had also been on the earlier Baldwin Ziegler Polar Expedition with Fiala and Porter.

perature would sometimes fall to 20 degrees on the coldest nights; 30 degrees was normal. In daytime, with cooking going on, temperatures sometimes reached 55.

Cold as both buildings were, without them and the food that the Jackson and Abruzzi expeditions had left years before, the men would not have survived. Coffin blamed Fiala for not having dropped off more provisions a year before when the steamer stopped briefly at Flora on their way to Teplitz Bay. Tons of the provisions were never unloaded from the ship and now were at the bottom of the ocean:

Not a day passes but what I think of how fortunate we were to have this good house, so much food not spoiled or even stale (with only a few exceptions) and only compare the small cache of stores left here by us on our coming up, when we had fine weather and plenty of time. Also a large quantity of provisions, some of which we never under ordinary circumstances would ever have used. Hard Bread for instance, 6000 lbs of ship's or crew bread, none we ever used . . . canned meats, etc.¹¹

The main activity the men had to break up the monotony was hunting. As darkness of winter approached, there would be little chance of that. Only rarely did a bear get close enough to be seen during that period. Early in November when one happened on the scene, the sailors all joined the hunt. It was the only bear killed during the four dark months:

Kunold who was out for a walk saw a large bear surrounded by dogs apparently holding him. I immediately let all the good men have rifles, giving mine to my boy Jimmie & the Mate gave his to Cowing. . . It proved to be a large full grown Male, one of the very largest we have got. Jimmie shot him in the jaw knocking out a large tusk and breaking the jaw badly as my rifle is a high power 30-30 with smokeless powder & soft-nosed bullets . . . One dog (Monk) was struck hard by the bear and torn badly & had to be shot, one of the best bear dogs here. . . This [bear] was very fat inside and a heavy coating of blubber on his skin. Now we put all the meats & fats on top of the house. This bear will be divided with the field party in proportion to 8 men to 17, 10 dogs to 13 here.¹²

Another happening, this one less enjoyable, broke the monotony that day:

Kunold had one of his looney spells and threatened to cut Ross's heart out and did actually draw a sharp pointed 8 inch hunting knife. So got knocked down for his foolishness. I had previously stopped these parties [fighting]

¹¹ These items and more, including tons of coal, were lost with the steamer in January.

¹² All rations were divided fairly by population. The meat was stored on top of the log house, where it was out of reach of the dogs, at least most of the time.

when Kunold commenced again & Ross kept away from him until human nature could stand less and he would still persist that he would cut his heart out, even at some future time. . . Kunold is always like this.

The fight was soon forgotten. Thanksgiving day arrived, bringing the captain his warmest moment in the two years on Franz Joseph Land. He was invited to join the men at Little Italy for Thanksgiving dinner. He rarely went over there, but on this holiday, he joined them:

I went over & had dinner with them. The dinner Menu was Erbswurst, Pemmican Soup, Fricassee of Loons, Dumplings, Mashed Potatoes, Corned Beef & Cabbage, Dessert of Plums, Biscuits, Butter, Coffee, Milk. Breakfast: Apricot Fritters, Molasses, Italian Hash, Bread, Butter, Milk. Supper: Fried Ham, Bread, Butter, Cocoa, Milk.

The dinner was excellent and they made it very pleasant for me & it was a real enjoyable occasion which will ever be remembered. . . Fiala [had once] said he was obliged to stay here to keep peace tween us. . . he always managed to represent to each party that the other was wrong. His absence has caused the only peace and understanding since we arrived.

Tis true on the way coming up with the Steamer there was much said, but now I know there was much excuse for their doings¹³. . . After dinner, Seargent Moulton & Truden sat down to a game of chess, played two games. Seargant won both. After, played whist, Seargant & Truden against Dr. Vaughn & myself. We won three games out of four & as it was 5:30, I had to come over [to Elmwood] to give out the tobacco which the Menus called for. I also wished to be with the ship's company at such an event.

We all wrote our autographs on the margins of the Menus and this ended the enjoyable occasion at the Little Italy Thanksgiving Dinner. I almost forgot: I wrote on top over my autograph this significant word, "Peace."

Thanksgiving of 1904 will be remembered always by us all in the years to come as the pleasantest day up to date at Cape Flora.

Thus, he recorded a rare warm-hearted moment. He left, genuinely fond of those he had so often criticized. This is as close as he ever comes to admitting friendship. Part of the joy, no doubt, was prompted by recalling what Fiala had said. Nothing pleased Coffin more than proving Fiala wrong.

Back in Elmwood, he dispensed the tobacco ration and ate a few bites of the Thanksgiving dinner. But it was anti-climactic after the grand society of Little Italy.

With the arrival of December, Porter began getting ready for his February trip to Teplitz Bay to join Fiala. He asked Coffin if he could work on his sledge inside the house, the only warm

¹³ He is referring to the strong criticism he received from these men while trying to take the steamer through the thick ice floes.

area. Coffin agreed. The bulky sledge filled most of the open space, adding to everyone's discomfort. Cowing, the ship's quartermaster, was helping Porter with the sledge and in moving around the crowded room he inadvertently bumped into the captain. The heated exchange of words that followed caused Cowing to offer Coffin some advice, something the captain did not want or, he felt, need:

Yesterday, Cowing accidentally (but very carelessly) hit me in the nose with his arm while doing unnecessary work on a sledge brought in here by Porter. Because I did not thank him for this clumsy act, he commenced to tell me that I would be indebted to him for some knowledge on how to get along with my crew — just as if I was here to suit them. . . . Tis only the equality plan cropping out. Now tis Porter who makes these men think they are extra smart.

In the captain's mind, that "equality plan" would bring disaster. He was no democrat:

The greatest fault I find is to have to live in the same room with a lot of men who know it all, but really know very little. Not even one is a rising man.

Porter felt otherwise and this difference increased the tension that was building between them. Porter believed that the circumstances required a more democratic attitude than on board ship. Coffin disagreed. Again, it was Fiala's fault:

Mr. Porter . . . causes disorder in among the men. Not intentionally, but through this same equality which Fiala bred here & after leaving sent more in his place. . . . I am sorry to record this but tis as I experience it from the highest to the lowest.

An artist, Porter was much more empathetic. He saw things in a different light than humorless Coffin did. Each recorded the arrival of "mid-winter day," the day the sun, far below the horizon, ended its decline and began to climb back. Porter saw it this way:

Dec. 21: And at last, after days and days of waiting, this red letter day has arrived. After all, it only means that the sun has stopped going down and will from now on gradually return to us. The change will not be noticed for at least two weeks yet. Still, midwinter day is always, to one in the polar regions, a cause for rejoicing. From now on I can always say as I awake in the morning, "there will be more daylight today." [Porter, p. 68.]

Coffin, describing the same phenomenon, was matter-of-fact. It was a day to record, but no rhapsody was necessary:

Today, the shortest day and the longest night for this year.

Yet Porter also had his dark moments. One such came

the day before his 34th birthday. On December 12th, he wrote:

Tomorrow will be my birthday . . . I have been getting rather morose and ruminating over the effect of this Arctic business upon my life, blasting all my prospects for a successful business career, aging me beyond all natural bounds and bringing nothing but the memory of a satiated desire.¹⁴ My hair is rapidly falling out, my eyesight becoming defective more and more, and my teeth fast going to pieces. [Porter, p. 65.]

Perhaps to shake off his depression, he added a light-hearted description of a typical morning at Elmwood, providing an insight we never get from Coffin's journals:

. . . the walls bristle with bunks, shelves, tin cans of all descriptions, containing different men's week's rations of bread and butter. At six in the morning (I am always awake at that time), the cook appears with a flickering lantern, who proceeds to light the big seal oil lamp and start the two fires. At eight thirty, he sounds the breakfast, or rather rising call, by rapping vigorously with a table spoon upon the back of a fry pan.

Then, evidences of life are noticed by yawns, heavy feet hitting the floor from the third-story bunks, then washing in the ham tins. Little oil lamp tins made from cans twinkling here and there, until a canvas curtain is drawn aside from a top bunk and the skipper [Coffin] appears and makes his toilet. When this is finished, it is a cue to the cook to serve the breakfast, which Jimmie [the cabin boy] brings on to the skipper and mate at their table and to me over here,¹⁵ the crew lining up at the kitchen entrance (much like a ticket office opening), each with his plate and cup; and each man, after receiving his ration, goes to some selected spot -- a keg, an upturned box, the edge of a bench or even standing up -- and silence once again reigns.

Oh, how good that oatmeal tastes with nothing at all to put on it, and how warm and stimulating the black coffee. Just so much bread and so much butter -- no more -- or you will come out short before Sunday morning.

After breakfast, the Mate [Haven], in the most dignified and majestic manner, dons his silk parakee and helmet, which he carefully adjusts to his head and, lighting his oil lantern, disappears outside. [Porter, pp. 66-7.]

First Mate Haven seemed happiest away from the crowd. Much of the time he went outside to shovel snow or do something, anything, just to be by himself. It bothered Coffin that he didn't order the men, sitting around doing nothing, to do the work. That was the way it would be done on board ship.

¹⁴ In his book, Porter explained why he kept doing this: "My arctic goddess has given me many thrills, many heartbreaks, many crushing defeats, few favors. . . . Yet always after a month or so of civilization, came [her] magnetic pull that brooked of no resistance, could not be denied." [Früs, p. 3.]

¹⁵ It is revealing that, even though the cabin boy treats him like an officer and he was named by Fiala to be in command of the entire Cape Flora operation, Porter does not join the First Mate and Coffin at the captain's table. Like the sailors, he ate alone in a crowded room. We have no way of knowing if Coffin ever tried to get him to join them. Strange.

But Haven preferred to do it himself – most likely because he wanted to get away from the tension inside. Occasionally, that tension would cause an eruption as Porter tells us:

The Skipper is sitting in his chair mumbling, delivering his asides as usual; some of the crew are sitting about the room conversing in low tones, some have disappeared into their bunks, when one notices loud talking down the passage by the kitchen.

"Look out now! Look out now!"

"Don't you touch me! I am a sick man."

"You're no more sick than I am. Look out!"

"Bill Ross,¹⁶ if you hit me now, I would drop like a dead dog. If you dare strike me, I will run this knife through your heart!"

There is a quick, shuffling sound, an oil lamp goes tumbling to the floor sputtering in its spilt oil and goes out. A sound of a man's wind being slowly cut off, growing fainter and fainter, until a sharp metallic ring is heard, as the knife falls from the relaxing fingers and a man emerges from the passage and throws a long sheath knife on the table in front of the Captain.

"Dere, Captain, you see, over six inches long, eight inches if a inch. I've half a mind to run it into him now."

Oh, that I were well out of this business – anywhere where men do not act as savages! [Porter, pp. 67-68.]

Two days before Christmas, another fight broke out. This was between Seaman Thwing, 22, and Fireman Butland, 21. Neither was a Coffin favorite: Thwing was "rattle headed" and Butland, "incompetent." The captain's description of the fight was very brief and not as angry as one might expect, especially when they damaged his writing table:

Tis very annoying. There had to be a fracas between Thwing and Butland and they must get over in my corner and busted my table.¹⁷

Porter was much more shaken:

Soon after breakfast. . . two of the sailors. . . quick as a flash, they were staggering across the space between us and giving it to each other in earnest. And when they arrived here at this end of the room, with a bang, over went my oil lamp. . . and down came the Captain's table with its contents. . . When they had had enough, I got out as soon as I could into the fresh air. These things are coming thick and fast. [Porter, p. 73.]

Despite the approach of Christmas, or maybe because of it, Coffin was becoming more morose, more self-pitying. Porter noticed the change:

¹⁶ Seaman William Ross, 37, from New York, is only rarely mentioned by Coffin. In his crew list, Coffin rates him, "Fair." The man claiming to be sick is Charles Kunold, also a N. Y. seaman, 35 years old. Coffin described him as "Light headed." He is frequently mentioned.

¹⁷ Elmwood Booklet, pp. 66-7.

The skipper is evidently being disagreeably affected by the Arctic night, or some other cause – from the way he stumps the floor hour after hour, mumbling his inconsequential nothings. I give thanks every night that I am afflicted with deafness, for different members of the officers and crew tell me his "asides" are almost wholly confined to personalities. The first officer tells me it has been ever thus and is inherent in his temperament. [Porter, p. 69.]

Christmas meant extra work for Coffin. A special menu had to be prepared. Tasty items from the caches had been saved for the occasion. For them, Coffin is grateful:

Almost Xmas and very thankful most of us are to have the good food we eat through the instrumentality of Jackson & daBruzzi Expeditions. . . Today we start getting ready for Xmas, giving plenty of time to thaw out the meats.

There will be no Menus printed. I have written the following & handed it to the cook: Breakfast: Fried Ham & Pancakes, Coffee, Milk (Hard Bread & Butter with each meal). Lunch: Roast Beef in Jelly, Roast Mutton, Mashed Potatoes, Stewed Tomatoes. Dinner: Pemmican & Erbswurst Soup, Pony Steak,¹⁸ Mashed Potatoes, Egg Plums, Green Peas.

Only rarely does Coffin reveal his emotions, but at this Christmas time, in an unguarded moment, he displays a bit (just a bit) of sentiment. It is 11 a.m. He's thinking of home:

. . . the folks are all snug in bed with the hour 3 o'clock in the morning. . . And I suppose the first thought after awakening in the morning is where is the old man & as I know they can have all the guesses coming to them without once guessing right. Hope it won't spoil their Xmas or New Year's celebration. I know they will have the comforts of a good home and I hope health to help them enjoy what they have.

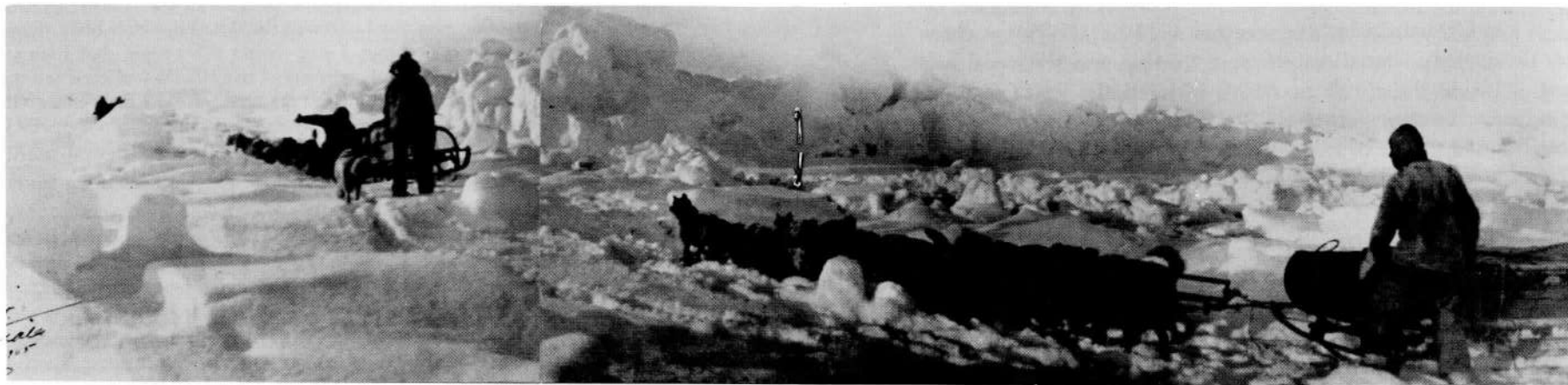
My poor old Mother who did depend on me to transact all her business for her too. I am thankful now that she is so forgetful as she will not sense my long absence should she survive until I arrive home in 1905 when she will have reached the ripe old age of 91 years & about 7 months.¹⁹ 'Twould be one relief if I could only let them know we all are living in comfort but not exactly luxury. . . [We're] having a Xmas menu which wouldn't be so bad even in civilization.

Coffin turned down Porter's offer to make a decorative Christmas menu, a souvenir for the men to keep. He had made one for Little Italy, but Coffin said his men didn't deserve such a treat. That didn't stop Porter from making individual Christmas cards for each of them:

I have just finished the menus for the Field Department for Christmas . . . The Christmas greetings to the [ship's] crew (from the artist) are also finished and will be given out on that day at dinner time. On asking the

¹⁸ The pony steak had apparently been saved after killing the ponies on arrival at Cape Flora.

¹⁹ His mother died before Coffin returned.



On his final attempt at the North Pole, Fiala photographed the three sledges (the third is barely visible in the distance at left). Rough and shifting ice forced them to quit at 82 degrees north latitude.

Captain for some ideas for these Christmas souvenirs, he replied, "We don't want any." But he will receive his just the same, whether he wants one or not. Later on, I believe he will be glad to have it. [Porter, p.70.]

Porter was invited to eat Christmas dinner in Little Italy. He should have been living there, but he had chosen to stay in Elmwood, accepting Coffin's invitation. Perhaps it was because it was warmer and roomier or perhaps because of what happened the day he returned from Fiala's sledge trek north with the commander's order placing him in command at Cape Flora: I hadn't been in camp an hour before one of the men from "Little Italy" (as the scientific staff has dubbed the Duke's hut) accosted me: "So you're in charge here, are you? Well, I don't recognize you. Or Fiala either, for that matter. We're shipwrecked, we are, and all contracts are void. It's everyone for himself now."

With this attitude taken by men who should have known better (they regretted it later in the States), the prospects for a harmonious winter were not the best. However, I bunked with the sailors, who seemed glad to see me, and waited patiently for returning sunlight.²⁰

Porter was a loyalist, on his ninth Arctic expedition, including two with Peary.²¹ He knew more than most that sur-

²⁰ Friis, p. 58 and p. 136. The man referred to was probably Dr. Colin Vaughn, Ass't Surgeon.

²¹ Porter, even after this experience, had not had enough of the north. He joined Dr. Frederick A. Cook in his attempt to climb Mt. McKinley in Alaska. That climb made Cook famous, but his claim of reaching the top was proved fraudulent. Porter was not on the final climb so was not part of the deception. Much later, he became well known as an amateur telescope maker, writing a column on the subject in *Scientific American* magazine. His reputation was such that he worked on the production of the 200-inch mirror for the Mt. Palomar telescope.

vival depended on working together and on respect for the commander. He never criticized Fiala. The two had been together on the earlier Baldwin Ziegler Expedition and had become friends. His book, often cited here, is filled with praise for Fiala. Such loyalty was difficult for Coffin to accept and may have affected their relationship. First Mate Haven had become so troubled about the growing tension between the two men that he talked to Porter about it:

Mr. Haven came into the observatory . . . and apologized for the Captain's slurring remarks that have become so prevalent of late, and hoping that I didn't think him partial to any of it, although he was obliged to have it poured into his ear hour after hour. He told me he was on the point of going crazy as he couldn't get away from the perpetual hail of sarcasm flowing forth from the old salt at everybody, but especially at me, and didn't know whether he could control his temper much longer. . . I told him my deafness saved me most of the unpleasantness and that if he (the Captain) was not man enough to say what he says straight to my face, then the whole business interested me but little. [Porter, p. 72.]

Even on the day before Christmas, Coffin could not bring himself to be filled with "good will towards men." The business of "equality" was a constant bane to his happiness:

One of the great afflictions is to be shut up with a lot of characters of all kinds on an equality basis and to listen to the idle and foolish arguments going on. Tomorrow, many a heart will ache with envy and sorrow too. Many will be gratified & flattered. So many disappointed in their hopes, even as Mr. Fiala has been disappointed at every turn after landing at the

locality he wished to winter, only making $\frac{3}{4}$ mile toward the North Pole.²²

On Christmas day, the weather was fine. Of course, there was no daylight, but the stars were shining and the wind was gentle. Inside the house at noon, with all the extra cooking going on, the temperature rose to 54 degrees. Christmas Eve, Vaughn had come over from Little Italy to visit (and bring gifts). He seemed to like Coffin, perhaps because of their joint dislike of Fiala:

Dr. Vaughn came in last eve just before we went to bed and brought over a little tobacco for Xmas which he had saved up (he does not smoke). . . He also brought me some doughnuts & some of the coffee from our Ziegler Expedition for which I was very thankful. Shows a good feeling which is what should be.²³

They all slept late Christmas morning. Most of the men from Little Italy came over to wish the sailors a Merry Christmas. Even in this most joyous season, the first mate, Haven, was too friendly with the sailors to suit Coffin. Vaughn's tobacco made a hit, as did his doughnuts:

I sampled his doughnuts this morning and I found them good. No eggs in them and Molasses used for sweetening. At 12, we had our breakfast of Fritters & fried Ham, both good. About all the folks from Little Italy were over here to wish a merry Xmas. All hands are up and have good appetites for their Xmas meals. Mr. Haven is busy all the morning over in his old corner, talking very friendly with the congregated crowd that nearly always are over there: Thwing, Beddow, Hudgins & Nichols. Havlik is busy singing Norwegian tunes in a low tone for his own amusement.

Now 2 here, P.M. 'Tis 6 A.M. at home and the little ones are about thinking of what Santa brought them.

Smoking is all the rage, but about all the tobacco is used up by this time. Some of the sporting crowd are playing Polka [poker] for Hard Bread. . . 7 P.M. and Xmas dinner of 1904 is over. . . I hope to spend the next Xmas in some civilized place, if not at my own home.

After the long dinner, Porter distributed his cards, making the spirit of Christmas real, even in the unfriendly Arctic:

After dinner I distributed Christmas greetings to each officer and member of the crew of the lost *America* and the day closed with a large poker game, in which small pieces of rectangular shaped tin represented chips, and their value — some fifteen equal to a hard tack (soda cracker). [Porter, p.74.]

²² He refers to Fiala's failure to make much distance in his two efforts to reach the Pole. Coffin had taken him closer to the Pole on the *America* than he had been on his two sledge trips and he was very proud of that all the rest of his life.

²³ They were using coffee from an earlier expedition. The coffee they had brought with them on the steamer was scarce. It isn't clear why what was left was controlled by the other house.

The captain was pleased to receive Porter's Christmas card, an idea he had turned down a few days before. As Porter had written, he could be a warm human being at times:

Mr. Porter has just distributed a lot of Xmas cards, one to each man in the house. All done well. Some character sketches. Comic & landscapes, one of the camp with the mountain background. Mine the interior of Elmwood, with myself sitting at the table reading, holding my head with my hands.

Everybody (except the disciplined Coffin, of course) ate too much, especially those at Little Italy where the cook, Dr. Vaughn, delighted in making special dishes. Their stomachs were not accustomed to overeating and for a day or two they suffered. Porter, who Coffin said loved to eat too much for his own good, was especially uncomfortable, but claimed it was a cold he had picked up. Coffin was sure it was too much food:

Dr. Vaughn's doughnuts were really fine. Much better than I have seen put on a private family's table & from what I hear of the Plum Pudding twas a complete success. Porter has been over there twice, both times ate so much he was sick the next day. This time it went 20 hours longer.

Another celebration was held New Year's Eve. Coffin did not stay up to welcome in the year 1905, but some did. The outside temperature was minus 30 degrees, but as at Christmas, Porter was filled with the holiday spirit:

New Year's eve was observed -- slightly. The poker crowd played until midnight, several of us went outside and Butland and I shot two rifles into the air, my Winchester and one of the blunderbusses. Afterwards, he and Jimmie resorted to the passage of the other house and with the bugle and frying pan serenaded the sleepers. Hearing a commotion inside, [they were] afraid of their wrath . . . but as it happened, the inmates within were really trying to give the serenaders some doughnuts that had been made that day for New Year's dinner. They don't even know now -- those two fellows, -- what they have missed in the eating line. [Porter, p. 75.]

The serenaders may have missed their doughnuts on New Year's Eve, but more were delivered in the morning. Coffin, not always an admirer of Vaughn, was laudatory:

Mr. Long brought over some Doughnuts this morning & they were fine, even better than ones Vaughn made before. No use, that man can, when a mind to, bend his energies to almost anything & make it a success. . . Nothing differs here for New Year's (only a taste of Plums & Apricots). . . Mr. Haven by invitation takes New Year's dinner over at Little Italy. Mr. Porter is missing, so I have come to the conclusion he was invited over also. This afternoon the men are playing Polka. Now they have a pack of cards, the game will be run until they get tired or wear out the cards.

With the New Year, Coffin became less grumpy, especially pleased that the two houses were getting along so well:

... the best of good feeling still between the two houses, very contrary to our Leader's talk that he was needed here to keep one party from eating up the other. Now one party wishes to help the other. That is the difference.

But he still had complaints about the housekeeping, especially about that outside door with its constant ice buildup, and Haven's refusal to order the men to keep it clear:

The new housekeeper Ross is doing all right with the stove, but I do not see him even looking after that outside door. . . it has to be cleared by [Mr. Haven] & as I was coming in I used the hatchet while he held the lantern. Tis my opinion, Ross would have cleared away the ice off the outer door if he was ordered to do so.

In Coffin's mind, there were so few things to keep the men busy that they should be told to take care of the door, especially as they were the ones befouling it. Useful work was more satisfying than scrimshawing:

Since Porter has commenced to do what the sailors call scrimshawing, making souvenirs out of Ivory & hard wood, now others are starting in. Something to take up the time, other than the legitimate duties of the care of the house. Take the outside door for instance, which nearly every day I have to say something about. . . To winter here in the same room with the crew of the *America* is worth much more money than bringing the Steamer through the ice to Franz Josef Land.

Tension between Coffin and Porter was increasing:

Porter is doing some painting in water colors in which he excels. This forenoon just before dinner a number of the men watched him, fairly fascinated. Mr. Haven was among the number. He takes much interest in art. . . I don't think very much of Porter's way and example in this room day by day. . . [he] is much inclined to be sarcastic and rather unreasonable at times. This morning, pretending some mistake about obtaining some lamp wicking for his oil lamp. Not worth jotting down however.

Coffin may not have thought it important enough to record, but Porter did:

I asked the Captain a few moments ago for a piece of wicking for my blubber lamp. "You've had your share," was his answer. Soon after, a nice, new, long wick fell upon the table before me from one of the sailors. What a trivial thing to waste ink and paper on, and how such an incident would be . . . laughed at when read some time later before a roaring open fire and surrounded by all the comforts of life. [Porter, p.78.]

Porter, despite that exception, was more philosophical than the captain. And certainly more empathetic. He asked

himself why the men (including himself) seemed unable or unwilling to work hard. They certainly weren't starving, but he suspected they were not getting enough calories to keep them warm and energetic, physically and mentally:

... when a man is poorly clothed, and on short rations, work in low temperatures up here is very fatiguing and arduous and one must have considerable enthusiasm to prosecute, with any successful results, any scientific work. I find this out this winter as never before. I say short rations, which does not stamp this place as a starvation camp. Not by a good deal. For one who has no need to stand much exposure or severe manual work (and there is comparatively little here), there is almost food enough. [Porter, p.61.]

They were living indoors, but it would drop to 20 degrees on the coldest nights. By noon, the stoves would bring it up to 50. To keep warm at such temperatures, calories were needed. Before going to their berths for the night, the men usually braced themselves with a hot fatty snack:

Now it has become the style of the house to have a little lunch of Hard tack made up in different ways. First soaked, then boiled with butter & cheese in it. Making a kind of stew [by] cutting up fine Chipped Beef or some left-over meat and also simply boiling it soft and eating it hot. This brings up the time to about 9:30 when the lot drops quickly off to their berths. Not always to go directly to sleep.

Porter needed someone to talk to about matters more important than lamp wicks and card games. Although he and Coffin spent many hours in the same small room, they never were on intimate terms, never had much to talk about. It was different with Francis Long, the weather observer. Long, like Porter, had far more experience living in these conditions than the captain. He was Porter's best friend at Flora.²⁴

Long and I take frequent walks together. . . were it not for his steadfastness, I would feel quite at sea at this place. . . This fellow is one of the best adapted persons for a life up here in many ways, but principally on account of his good disposition and trying to help daily affairs along as smoothly as possible. And his common sense. . . His experiences at the death camp at Cape Sabine on the Greely Expedition proves a constant source of interest to me. [Porter, p. 65 and p. 69.]

Here, too, the captain and Porter held different opinions. Long had been placed in charge of the other house, Little Italy, by Fiala, but displayed little authority there. Coffin claimed his lax attitude was destroying discipline at Elmwood. It was his old

²⁵ In his book, written after his retirement, artist Porter included drawings of only two men other than himself: Fiala and Long.



Porter sketched Francis Long on the steamer as they went north through the ice to Teplitz Bay.

complaint about "democracy":

Long is in all the morning talking incessantly, first with the sailors, then with the Cook, always telling how to do it and how he saved the situation. Feeling very good in this house to make up for his littleness at Little Italy. . . always talking with them as equals and [as] knowing full as much as himself. . . Near as I can tell he is what the old folks used to call "Leaky" & seems to be in his dotage. . . I hear Long has asked Cowing to help [him] . . . Nothing has ever been said by this pseudo man in command of the Field Party to me, although I would certainly have granted his request. This is a sample of his government and how he helps out dicipline [sic]. . . I wish he would stay among his own party. I do not care for his steady company.

The men's mood was growing darker, bringing an undercurrent of unrest. First Engineer Hudgins, whom Coffin described as "saucy," was rebellious:

This morning Hudgins was quite impudent. Amongst his talk, one expression: "You will lose your license & I will do it. You have done enough to hang you." This from an ignorant Chaw mouth, impersonating a first assistant engineer without any papers. [Elmwood, pp. 42-43.]

Hudgins had been signed on in New York by Fiala, as had Hartt, the Chief Engineer. Coffin was not consulted in the hiring and he was sure Hudgins did not hold a First Assistant Engineer's papers, but he had seemed pleased with the way he cared for the Elmwood dogs. Now, he was changing his mind.

Hunger sometimes caused men to take matters into their own hands. One who did so was Seaman Montrose. Coffin had

been the one who hired him in New Bedford, but he soon found him unreliable, listing him as "N.G. Inclined to make trouble." He lived up to Coffin's appraisal in mid-January:

Just now at 11:30 I came in from out of doors. They did not know I was in the house. Montrose was reviling me. Nichols and also Beddow were in the alley way between the berths. Jimmie, the boy, was outside and immediately went in there and told them I was in. I heard Montrose say he did not care if I was in. But I noticed he stopped.

The reason for this morning's talk is this: Day before yesterday Mr. Haven caught Montrose coming down from the roof with meat in his arms, bear meat, a quarter of bear meat, and had put it down on his log. Now there has been other things, bread in small quantities. . . this man said he thought it was his privilege to take meat when he wanted it. Said he wanted Mr. Haven to log that he stole the meat, insisted on it. No one had accused Montrose of stealing meat until he accused himself. Told he should ask permission, [he] said, "Why? There is a lot of meat up there." He was taking it openly, only this was the first time he was seen by Mr. Haven.

Montrose soon afterwards asked Porter, his friend, to write down what he had heard. Porter's account included:

Montrose: Took it off the roof, of course. Where did you expect I got it? . . . You don't suppose I thought it out of the way taking this little piece? If I thought it was stealing, do you suppose I'd be eating it here in front of everybody?²⁶ [Porter, p. 83.]

Two weeks later, it was Montrose again:

This afternoon Montrose was impudent to me personally. . . harping on the time he stole fresh meat off the house. . . he accused the men who have the care of the dogs & meat, namely Mr. Haven & Hudgins, of feeding out good bear's meat [to the dogs]. . . Tis only cowardice that keeps some of them from offering violence to me. I invite them to start it at any time.

Porter's friendship with Montrose and others irritated Coffin. He developed a strong dislike for the man:

Mr. Porter does not seem to have much scientific work on his hands. Very intimate with the sailors of all kinds. So tis impossible to make any rules. The men take every advantage and don't consider either the mate or I have any rights whatever. . .

Before Porter came there was no trouble whatever & what comes now will be indirectly due to the way he treats and carries himself in this house. . . He is a worse man for dicipline [sic] than Fiala was, that is saying considerable. I did not mean to write so much but got wound up.

Part of the captain's irritability may have been brought on by the diet. He needed more sugar and milk:

²⁶ Montrose was eating the bear meat raw. That's how hungry he was. The men liked bear meat, cooked, of course. Coffin noted that, "Myers is the only one who does not eat bear's meat. Said once he saw a bear eating a dead Eskimo (long ago) so he has ate none since."

I believe I miss my Sugar & Coffee more than I did my tobacco (at first). Milk is also [missed] as now with five breakfasts a week of Oatmeal, a little milk to eat on it [would] make it so much more palatable. Of late Mr. Haven and myself have been drinking just hot water.

Porter's steadfast loyalty to Fiala caused a row with Vaughn, one day when he was at Elmwood:

This noon. . . one of the men who was over here sitting on my bench, talking to me about one thing and another, concentrated his thoughts on the commander and started running him down. . . calling him a hypocrite and then a liar. I asked him if he wanted to run down Mr. Fiala to do it somewhere else. . . I told him I had not been at Elmwood twenty-four hours before the Skipper began making disparaging remarks about his commander and followed it up night after night until it got quite unbearable. . . It surprised me at first, coming from a man of his years and discretion, but since passing the winter with him, I do not wonder.

The best thing for Coffin would be for Porter to leave, but as he tells us so much about life in the house we will be much poorer when he does. Here is another example:

Blubber lamps are flickering about here and there. After supper, there is a poker crowd in one corner and a smaller one in another playing dominoes; in a third, the skipper and mate writing, perpetually writing. I wonder what they find to write so much about. They must be logging the whole conversation of the entire crew or are they writing stories?²⁶ [Porter, p. 91.]

After weeks of delay, Porter announced he would leave for Teplitz Bay on February 20th to join Fiala. It was welcome news to Coffin. Doubly welcome, no doubt, when Porter chose as his traveling companion Fireman Butland, whom Coffin found "incompetent." Porter asked for the captain's approval:

So now all he has to do is to get out. This morning he informed me he would like to take Butland, then asked Butland if he would like to go with him. Said yes. This is the first time he has ever said anything to any one [about his choice]. Mr. P. informed me, as he had agreed, to let me know before he asked the man. So ends this episode.

It is revealing that the men who ranked lowest on the captain's list were the ones picked by others to go on their sledge trips. Fiala had chosen Duffy, ranked by Coffin as "mutinous"; Porter chose the "incompetent" Butland; and Scientist Peters picked Anton Vedoe, who to Coffin was "N.G." The reason seems obvious. Personal traits that are needed to survive on a sledge trek across ice floes and glaciers were not those that appeal to the disciplinarian. He wants men who do what they

are told and no more. Initiative and spontaneity were not encouraged aboard ship. Porter explained his choice:

My preference for a field companion on this trip is . . . the fireman Butland. His record with Peary is, I knew it before I left New York, a good one and he (Duncan) has shown me letters this winter of Peary's that gave him considerable responsibility in the field. He likes the trail life, is a born hunter, is in the prime of life, strong and healthy, and has a good disposition. He has bucked against authority once here this winter, but I do not expect to find an ideal man. There are many others, good fellows, who want to go with me but I can only take one. . . If all went that expressed an inclination, a desire. . . I would depopulate half this station.²⁸ [Porter, pp. 93-4.]

Before leaving, Porter took time to leave a keepsake. For Christmas, he made the men a pack of cards out of cardboard found in barrels of bread in the cache. That pack had worn out. The men made a move:

Hearing I had decided on going north this month, they had ingeniously induced the Captain to open up the only other barrel having these cardboard discs and had me make them a new pack, which I did willingly enough on the condition that I have the old one. [Porter, pp. 91-2.]

The men wrote letters to those who had spent the winter up at Camp Abruzzi. Someone added a bit of humor. We don't know who:

The mail bag, just completed, is gradually filling with letters for Camp Abruzzi. Four copper letters are fastened to the canvas, which makes it look quite like a Government pouch. They are F.J.L.M., and stand for Franz Josef Land Mail. [Porter, p. 97.]

The sledge and its bag of mail left ahead of schedule. It was stormy and Coffin, who didn't go out to see them off, thought they should have waited. But Porter was eager:

Duncan [Butland] and I got away from Cape Flora on the 18th, though the weather was bad and there was little light. The Captain couldn't see how I could think of starting in such a storm. . . Long and many of the sailors saw us off after I had made the rounds of the houses to say my adieu; soon we were. . . pushing through the drift into Gunter Bay.²⁹ [Porter, p. 99.]

Two days out of the trail, a welcome sign:

Around noon time, the upper edge of the sun, like a splash of dull red molten metal, rolled along the horizon and sank again. It was therefore for us a red letter day; that sign in the heavens, that "writing on the wall" signified much to one emerging from the long darkness of the night. [Porter, p. 100.]

²⁸ Porter calls Butland "Duncan." It is probably his middle name as both Fiala and Coffin list him as: George D. Butland, Brooklyn, N. Y. Coffin never uses a first name for anybody.

²⁹ Gunter Bay is a wide bay between Flora and Camp Point, frozen at this time of year and smooth enough for them to cross as a shortcut.

²⁶ We don't know what Haven was writing, but our archives have plenty of Coffin's work.

Back at Flora, the "sign in the heavens" was celebrated by at least one man:

Feb. 19, Sunday. Dr. Shorkley was up high on the Talis this A.M. and saw the sun for twenty minutes. The first man to see the sun this year.

A few days later, the doctor persuaded Truden to climb the high talus with him to get a better view of the bright disk which meant winter was over:

I saw Dr. Shorkley and Truden go up the Talis to look at the midday sun. Could just see it from the house, the upper limb visible for about 1 1/2 hours.

The men in Little Italy celebrated the sun's return with a special dinner. Coffin was invited. Again, he praised Vaughn for his culinary skill:

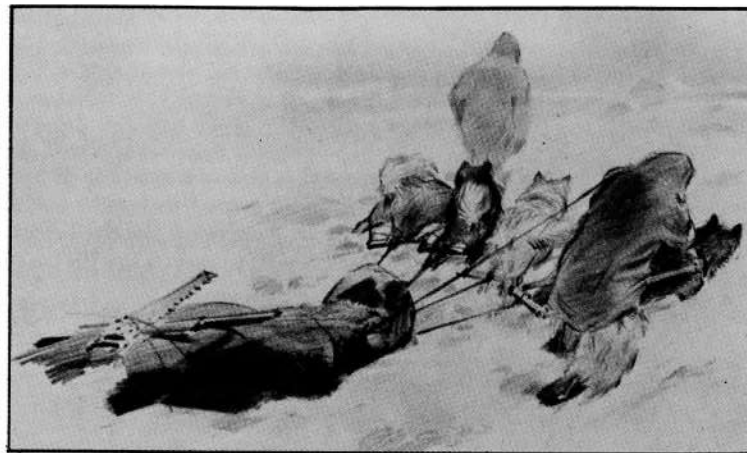
I was invited to dinner over at the Field party house this day of the returning sun, almost a Washington's birthday anniversary. All the party had their photos taken and cut their hair and trimmed their whiskers. I had a nice dinner [unlikely] the reduced fare we are having -- Erbswurst & Pemmi-can Soup, Mutton stew, with French Peas & Dumplings. Dessert, a fine boiled pudding, which was a winner for the material he had. Also tomatoes fixed up in a good palatable manner indeed. Taken as a whole, I must say Dr. Vaughn exceeded himself in such a fine cooked dinner.

Porter's trek to Teplitz Bay was rough. High wind and drifting snow forced the two men to stay in an igloo they built for days. They nearly died from asphyxiation when the oxygen inside the snow house was exhausted. Had it happened while they were asleep, they would have died, buried in the unmarked expanse of Franz Joseph Land. But while they were heating a meal, the alcohol burner grew weaker and weaker, finally going out. Porter, feeling faint, realized what was causing it and he and Butland broke open the roof, clawed through the snow piled atop it, finally breaking out into the air.

Their sledge and most equipment were buried under so much snow there was no hope of retrieving them. They made it the rest of the way by wrapping their sleeping bags and provisions inside the tent and dragging the load behind them. It was miraculous that they made it. Fortunately, the dogs had managed to stay on top of the drifting snow and they helped.

Part of what was keeping them going was their craving for tobacco, which they had been without for many weeks. Porter remembered that he had left some at Kane Lodge on his

From *The Arctic diary of Russell Williams Porter*.



Porter and Mac joined with the four dogs to drag their gear after their sledge was abandoned under many feet of snow on their way to Teplitz Bay to meet Fiala.

way down to Flora last year. When they reached the lodge:

I made straight for the table on which I had left a box of "Seal of North Carolina Tobacco" near a year before. There it was, to be sure, in its box, like little flakes of dull gold dust (and far more valuable). . . I went to the door and sung out, "It's here, Mac. Turn the dogs loose and come in right away."³⁰

Of all the impressions received above the [Arctic] Circle, this one, those first moments with that tobacco, will remain as the most satisfying to body and mind -- a rather poor standard, you will say, to have attained after so long a sojourn there, but such it was. Of course, it lasted but a moment. Then we brought the bags inside. . . got a coal fire going in the stove, and a fine hot supper with plenty of coffee. [Porter, p. 110.]

Fiala's sledge trip north to Teplitz back in October had also been perilous. With him were Seaman Duffy, Steward Spencer and Dr. Seitz. While crossing a glacier, Fiala and Spencer fell 75 feet into a crevasse, a drop equal to the height of an eight-story building. Had they been alone, they would have died there in an icy tomb. But Duffy and Seitz had a long rope and hauled them to the surface.³¹

³⁰ Their first stop on the trek north had been at Camp Ziegler on Alger Island. Two men, Rilliet and Mackiernan, who, like Porter, had started north with Fiala had been there for the winter. Porter's companion, Butland, froze his feet on their way from Flora and couldn't continue, being replaced by Mackiernan, the "Mac" Porter called to at Kane Lodge. The lodge was on Greeley Island, built by earlier explorers.

³¹ Readers eager for more details about the long, near-fatal sledge trips to Teplitz Bay by Fiala and Porter are urged to read their books, cited herein as *Fiala* and *Friis*.

Porter had planned to reach Teplitz in time to go with Fiala on his third attempt at the North Pole. Fiala was to leave on March 10th, but waited for Porter until the 16th before leaving. The next day Porter arrived:

When I left Elmwood Feb. 18. . . my sole desire was to reach [Abruzzi] on March 10; but the fates ruled otherwise and it was not until the 17th of March, one week later, that Mackiernan and I crossed the young ice of Teplitz Bay, to find [Fiala's] polar party already gone north the day before. The disappointment [was great] at missing Fiala by so short a margin, after the effort I had made to join him. [Porter, pp. 98-9.]

But Porter hadn't missed much. Two weeks later, Fiala and his party returned – their third effort at the Pole abandoned. The ice was so rough and so unstable, twisting and breaking around their tents as they tried to sleep, that they were able to make only a few miles toward their goal. Fiala and Duffy, who had been picked to go with him on the last leg to the Pole, thought of continuing, but good sense won out.

Porter was not too shaken:

It was a disappointment, of course, to see them back so soon, for it meant a [third] setback and untold effort made abortive by the very insurmountable [ice] pack. But it was just as good on the other hand to see them back, all well, and to take Fiala's hand again. [Porter, p.111.]

Fiala's disappointment was much deeper. He had dreamed of making history. William Ziegler had invested much in his dream. Now, after three attempts to reach the Pole, he had to admit he had failed. In none of his three attempts did he get as far north as he had on the *America* with Coffin the night they arrived at Teplitz two years earlier.

There was nothing left to do now but to head south to await rescue. When the others left for Camp Ziegler, Fiala and Hartt stayed to close up Camp Abruzzi. Fiala seemed reluctant to leave, unable to give up his dream. It was more than a month later that they said goodbye to Teplitz Bay:

On May 26th Hartt and I left our northern station for Camp Ziegler. We took our last look at the deserted settlement of Camp Abruzzi and at the icy bay of Teplitz behind us, the most desolate of all sights – an Arctic desolation. [Fiala, p. 183.]

While all this had been going on in the north, the men at Cape Flora knew nothing of their failure. In March, Coffin had sent two sledge parties to Ziegler to pick up provisions cached there. Their journey took much longer than expected

and Coffin was concerned. On April 9th, a welcome sight:

At 5:15 p.m. Pierre [LeRoyer] was over here. He looked out of the one window that has the ice removed and exclaimed, "Here they come" & sure enough Dr. Vaughn was at the store house and Hudgins coming over the ice pond. All well. Brought into this house 50 lbs Coffee, 42 lbs of Oleo (2 kegs) 2 1/2 cans Cond. Milk 42 tins, 24 1/2 lbs Bacon, 20 1-lb tins Bakers Eggs, 12 pkgs of Macaroni, 40 1-lb tins assorted Jellies, 90 lbs Corn Meal, 10 lbs of Castile Soap, 2 cartons Diamond Soups, 1 1/2 gal Syrup.

Vaughn and Hudgins, who had led the two sledge parties, had some news of what was happening. They were able to report that Rilliette and Mackiernan had stayed at Ziegler in October while Fiala continued to Teplitz Bay. And that Porter had made it there in March. But what they told Coffin gave him more cause to dislike Fiala and Porter:

Rilliette treated our team with courtesy and helped them out in packing & did all he could to help them out. But said Fiala had given him orders to send back the next day any parties coming from here. Also to have them sleep in the storehouse. Rather a cool reception to give should the order be carried out, which of course he did not attempt to do. I understand Porter advised him to refuse our parties anything sweet, as we had been out all winter and could do well without them but he, Porter, helped himself to a great plenty just the same.

It was not until April 22nd, when two sledges from Ziegler arrived, that the sad news of the polar dream having ended reached Cape Flora. With them was Tessem, the ship's carpenter, who had spent the winter at Teplitz and had just come down to Camp Ziegler. He had accompanied Fiala on the final North Pole attempt and he told Coffin what happened:

Mr. Fiala made a march from the camp on March 16th (reaching Latitude 82 degrees) with three parties – two [of them] supports. The first party came in after 6 days, the other two came in together, being out 16 days. According to Tessem's account, they found the ice very rough with deep snow on it and water underneath. For two days, they were camped on a flat piece of ice of a half acre's extent with water all around them. Also had to keep watch while in the tents as the ice would crack under them. Temperature minus 60 degrees.

The sledges brought more than news – they carried welcome goodies, brought down from Teplitz:

Vedoe, Tessem and Butland [brought] some provisions from Camp Abruzzi. . . 95 lbs cube sugar, 120 lbs Beans, 25 lbs Maple Sugar, spices, Pepper Mustard and 4 1/2 lbs Tobacco to each man here. Raisins, Jam and Magic Yeast.

Coffin certainly didn't shed tears over Fiala's failure.

The *America*, with him in command, still held the record:

Well, the steamer still holds the record for the north, 82 degrees 14 minutes against 82 of this last attempt.

But he was pleased to learn that Fiala remembered his need for writing materials and to receive a letter from him:

I was much indebted to Mr. Fiala for a box of lead pencils (was entirely out), erasers, pens and paper and some blotters. Every one was well at Abruzzi all winter. Had plenty of fuel and provisions. . . Fiala arrived at Camp Abruzzi on November 20, 1904, fifteen days from Camp Ziegler, about 90 miles. Very dark and horrible weather. . . Travelled more by sense of feeling than by sight (he wrote).

At Cape Flora, Fiala's failure meant little. The men there had been cut out of the dream months earlier. Their goal was to return to civilization. They were merely counting the days until relief arrived.

On Fiala's final attempt were only ten men and seven of them were sailors. Only two were from his Field Department: Chief Scientist Peters and Assistant Surgeon Seitz. It was a statement about youth and vigor over education and intelligence. Average age of the sailors was 26. We don't know everybody's ages, but Fiala, Peters and Seitz were among the youngest in the Field Department. The others were middle-aged, educated men, physically unfit for the strenuous hike to the Pole and back – more than 1000 miles.

These men had spent the last ten months at Cape Flora, doing little. Scientific work was at a minimal. Chief Scientist Peters, about whom Coffin wrote little, had done some mapping work, as had Porter, his assistant. At Cape Flora, Porter seemed to do little scientific work. His observatory, Coffin wrote, was used by the dogs as a shelter. The second assistant scientist, Tafel, also seemed to do little. Weather Observer Long did take temperature and tidal measurements, but the tidal data were unreliable due to the constant ice movement. The two veterinarians and one cavalryman had only a few dogs to care for. Altogether, the expedition's work had been finished long ago. It was time to go home. But going home required more than wishes. They were at the mercy of the ice pack and the rescue steamer.

Suddenly, they were living higher than in months. The

arrival of provisions from Ziegler and Abruzzi had brightened everybody's mood. And it was daylight again – all day – raising spirits along with the temperature:

Just now we are living high on Eggs, sweet Chocolate, fine Coffee, Milk, Bacon, Ham & Dried Fruits, Flour to thicken with. We cannot surely complain. For breakfast this morning we had Bacon & Eggs with Currant Jelly and Coca. Lunch, Coffee, Milk and beef soup with macaroni. For dinner, we have bear steak, stewed fruits and mashed potatoes with the steak. . . I made a division of the Chocolate this morning among the men. Tomorrow, will divide the condensed milk, 3 tins to each man.

More than the sweets, it was the return of tobacco that brought contentment – and with it optimism:

Everybody is happy and blowing smoke out like steam engines. . . does me good to see them smoke and I am enjoying my smoke also. Mr. Haven is making his faint smoke, too. Much contentment reigns. . . the Tobacco habit is once more established. . . All hands planning about buying clothes. Some will buy in Norway, others in Hamburg and also in England. When the time comes many will change their minds. .

Truden decided to publish another newspaper. He had put one out at Abruzzi a year earlier, sort of an Arctic comic strip, but it had not included news of Cape Flora:

Lieut. Truden is intending getting out a newspaper at Little Italy. Rumor has it he is somewhat of an expert in that business. The one copy of the *Arctic Eagle* published at Camp Abruzzi had no space for any one of the Expedition at Cape Flora. Nor for the dead man [Fireman Myhre] who died on the date of our arrival here, May 16, 1904. . . Mr. Truden showed me a fine copy of the last paper. . . All the work being done by him.¹¹

With Anton Vedoe and Peter Tessem now living in the house, there were many interesting things to talk about. They had spent the winter at Teplitz where there was more to eat and, apparently, to drink. Compared with Flora it was a picnic. The sailors were eager to hear what had gone on:

They found a large quantity of alcohol and were indulging (some, a few) rather too much in it. Chief Engineer Hartt also manufactured some Beer which they say was fine. Everything was free as water and much waste of provisions. Also say the Chief [Hartt] was more than once much under the influence of liquor. Those are only quotations from the men's side of this house. Personally, I did not ask any questions nor did I care to.

With the arrival of June, they began watching the horizon, hoping to see the relief ship. Ice conditions were so much better than last year that their hopes were high:

¹¹ On the back cover of the *Intelligencer* for February 1999, credit for the *Arctic Eagle's* publication was erroneously given to Porter. It was Truden who did it apparently.

Every one feels quite satisfied of having a ship to get to this vicinity this year. All hands are well and waiting for July for the vessel to heave in sight from the South. . . All feel as if this is to be their last summer here and are planning where to go when they reach Norway.

Coffin saw no reason to relax. Work had to be done:

Havlik busy doing work urgently needed now. I have no other man who would begin to do the work he has done and they would also expect a reward of merit for every job they finished or they would go out on a strike. That is about the character of my men spoiled by Fiala fiercely.

John Truden rushed production of his souvenir newspaper to get it out before their rescue. The captain, a pessimist, was beginning to have doubts:

Mr. Truden handed me two newspaper copies, One of the *Eagle*, the other named the *Polar Pirate*, both copies made by him. The *Eagle* [was] issued last Xmas 1904 at Camp Abruzzi. The *Pirate* issued here in May 1905.

Does not look so cheering to see the ice all closed together, makes the best of us think of possible prolonged stay here of another winter which would be probably fatal to more than one of us as the stock of Bread & Canned goods will be practically gone by the 20 of August next. The winter's diet [will be] of flesh alone. Walrus, bear, seal and some looms [loons]. All fuel too must be dug from the mine. . . Over 600 feet of steep climbing to the coal vein. . . we [need] about 18 tons to carry us . . . [a] party would have to go North to [stay at] Camp Abruzzi where there is plenty of food. As we think these things over, the prospect does not seem very bright.

But among the other, daily there was more talk of rescue. When the First Officer, who was still doing most of the chores, filled the coal bin, he had rescue in mind:

Mr. Haven filled up the coal bin this morning with the remark that he hoped it was for the last time. Which all cordially echo.

Another Fourth of July, the second they had celebrated at Cape Flora. Again, a minor celebration:

July 4th 1905: Fog came on. . . and was dense all day with occasional snow squalls. . . Hoisted the *America's* yacht ensign over the house and the Field Party also set a small one over theirs. Also one on the stable.

The men started packing. Even the captain allowed himself just a bit of optimism, not without a note of concern:

Some of the Field Party are packing souvenirs [sic] all ready for the relief ship. . . Tomorrow, I shall begin to look for the arrival of the relief ship at Flora as there is no ice to stop her, far as can be seen. . . Seriously, much depends on the relief steamer being able to get in to take us out. [Only] 4 more rations of Butter [left]. Tomorrow, the last of the beans. Bread will hold out 4 months more. I commenced packing today.

As the days passed, climbing the talus to look for the

relief vessel was again a daily routine. There were many false sightings. Betting resumed on which would be the glorious day:

Beddow and Havlik were up there this afternoon and reported seeing the smoke of a steamer off to the South. T'was about 3:30 P.M. when they thought they saw it. At eight, no smoke showing from the house, I give up the idea that they saw smoke. So easy to be mistaken when one is anxious. I was up 700 feet but saw nothing with my glass so did not give the report much credence. . . This is Truden's day for the relief ship to arrive. Now 9:30. 2 1/2 hours more for him. July 20th.

Liquor suddenly became available in Little Italy, perhaps from Doctor Shorkley's medicine chest. With rescue imminent, he may have decided it wouldn't be needed as medicine. It obviously didn't please Coffin:

Last night there was some foolish things done by some members of the Field Party occasioned by drinking alcohol. Quiet today. The men of this house were watching from the windows until twelve midnight.

Fiala, at Camp Ziegler, was about 100 miles to the east of Cape Flora. After those first sledges brought provisions, there was no exchanges between the two camps. Ziegler had been built by the first Ziegler expedition on Alger Island, about 20 miles north of open ocean. To be on the lookout for rescue, Fiala sent four men, including Dr. Seitz and his favorite, Seaman Duffy, down to Cape Dillon, the most southern point in the area. The men remaining at Camp Ziegler with Fiala were beginning to worry. It was late in July and no relief had come. Fiala described the mood:

In the last days of July a feeling of depression seemed to possess some of the men and they were harassed with the fear that we would be left in the Archipelago for another winter. [Fiala, pp. 188-89.]

At Cape Flora, there was more optimism. A sharp lookout was maintained, but the fog made false sightings frequent. Even Norwegian Havlik took time off to join the lookout:

After 7, fog clearing more from the horizon and Havlik thought sure he had sighted the ship coming in and was so excited he could hardly go up the ladder on top of the house. But alas twas nothing but streaks of fog. . . All hands were confidently looking for the ship today as they think tis the fog only which keeps her back.

Then, suddenly, it happened:

Sunday, July 30. Red Letter Day for all the boys. . . At 1:30 P.M., just as I finished my dinner, I looked out of the window and saw Long making frantic gestures. . . I could make out the words, "SHIP! SHIP! SHIP!"

Well, I guess we all were rather excited and could scarcely control our

feelings. I took my glass and from the top of the house could make out a good-sized steamer pulling up, just emerging from the fog and heading right towards Cape Flora, having evidently come from Camp Ziegler way.

After making out the colors flying at all three mastheads and spanker gaff, I told the men to get all ready to leave and when the ship did tie up in front of the camp I could make out her name, *Terra Nova*, and knew her for a fine vessel of her class, better than the *America* and a little larger.¹²

A boat brought in Mr. Champ and Dr. Mount, & as Mr. Champ said, twas the happiest day of his life. . . Everything was all ready to put on board and we did not detain the stmr any as they did want to get back to Ziegler soon as possible to get the rest of the expedition.

The relief steamer had made landfall at Cape Dillon where Fiala's lookouts were posted. When she broke out of the thick fog bank, kayaks were seen close to shore. They were men hunting seals. The steamer eased up close to them and there was much cheering. Immediately, Dietz, who was on shore, and a few others, took off for Camp Ziegler, 19 miles away, with the news. Relief was here!¹³

It was a seven-hour hike. It must have seemed endless to the ecstatic messengers. While they were gone, the steamer headed for Cape Flora to pick up the others.

When Dietz reached Camp Ziegler, Fiala was not there. It was a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon so he and Seaman Meyer had decided to go canoeing on a nearby pond. Fiala describes how he got the news:

I heard the clear notes of the bugle at camp sounding the "recall." Not since my service in the cavalry in 1898 had I heard that sound. It had an urgent meaning. . . I told Meyer to place the canoe on the sledge. . . I saw the teams, sledges and boats of the Cape Dillon party. Mr. Stewart. . . told me that the Relief Ship had arrived. On entering the house I found a happy party of men. Doctor Seitz handed me a letter from Mr. Champ. . . he was en route to Cape Flora. . . all [of us] packed and closed the camp. . . the next day [we] began the joyous trek to Dillon. [Fiala, p. 189-90.]

Porter and Chief Scientist Peters were also not in the main building at Camp Ziegler when the news came. They were in the nearby observatory shack discussing ways to conserve paper for recording astronomical and magnetic data through

¹² In January 1905, the *Terra Nova* had just returned from Antarctica with a British expedition and was bought by William Ziegler for \$48,000. to rescue his Franz Joseph Land expedition. He was unhappy that the Norwegian ship he hired the year before couldn't get through the thick ice. This time, although it took two months, it succeeded. Champ led both.

¹³ For the location of these places see the map, inside back cover, *Intelligencer*, February 1999.

the winter. Porter describes the moment:

"Chips," the carpenter, a Norwegian [Tessem], appeared, silhouetted in the doorway holding aloft a glass bottle. . . [he] placed it on the table. It was half full and I applied my nose to the opening.

"Why, it's beer," I exclaimed in surprise. "Where did you find it?"

"Help yourself," he responded. The perspiration was standing out in big drops over his forehead and he seemed to find difficulty in breathing. Surely, I thought, this man has discovered this and [had been] hitting it heavily. Nevertheless, I filled two cups and offered one to Mr. Peters.

"Here's to the relief ship's coming this year." It was all I could think of worth drinking to.

"You don't understand, Mr. Porter," the carpenter protested, "the relief ship is at Cape Dillon."

Even then I could scarcely credit the good news. . . On leaving the observatory, Mr. Peters turned to me and smiled (he rarely smiles when with me) and said, "There's no need of economizing paper now."

The next day, after a sleepless night no doubt, they headed south to Cape Dillon. They were met on the way by Champ and others who, after returning from Cape Flora, were eager to see Fiala. The joyous meeting was spoiled by sad news: Mr. Ziegler had died two months before.

Soon all were aboard the *Terra Nova*. For the first time in well over a year, the entire expedition was together. Only Myhre, the Norwegian who died in May 1904, was missing. His body would remain forever at the northern tip of the archipelago, 525 miles from the North Pole they never reached.

But his absence didn't lessen the joy brought by warm cabins, hot showers, good food, wine, clean clothes, cigarettes and cigars. And letters from home.¹⁵

The men at Cape Flora had packed in such frantic haste that they left some items behind. The *Nova Flora* headed back to get them. Even careful Coffin had forgotten some:

August 1: Steamed in and put on small boat on the beach. . . Opened the [Elmwood] house and got my Barometer, Sewing gear, toothbrush and a pair of new moccasins, all overlooked. Most of the men found something they wanted. Nailed up the door and left everything OK for the next [expedition]. Mr. Truden also went into the Round House to get something overlooked. Started for Norway at 3:30 P.M.

The trip to Norway was sheer pleasure except for one disturbing moment. Fiala called for all to assemble in the main

¹⁵ Among the letters was one to the dead Myhre, informing him that his wife had died. By an uncanny coincidence, she died the same day he did, neither aware of the other's death.

cabin. He had some news. William Ziegler had set aside a large sum of money to be distributed to the men, men he hoped to rescue. The amount each received was to be based on his individual contribution to the effort, as decided by Fiala.

What Ziegler had planned as a happy and grateful celebration turned out otherwise. We have no details on what happened, but it was reported that the meeting became most unpleasant. After incorrectly saying that dissension among the members had brought about the expedition's failure to reach the North Pole, one news account added:

That the trouble [among expedition members] was serious, however, is demonstrated by the manner in which a large sum of money, bountifully set aside by Mr. Ziegler for distribution as rewards among deserving members of the expedition, was apportioned by Mr. Fiala when all hands were safely aboard the relief ship *Terra Nova*.

Mr. Ziegler had provided that the money be allotted in proportion to the loyalty manifested and the value of services rendered by individual members, whether officers or men, at the sole discretion of Mr. Fiala. As a result, some of the men got considerably more than some of the officers, a fact which did not increase the cordiality of relations between the head of the expedition and his disgruntled assistants. [N.Y. Times, Oct. 29, 1905.]

Neither Coffin³⁶ nor Fiala mention the bonus money or the controversy in their writings. However, Porter does give us this obscure and mysterious report:

Six days have now gone by on board this good ship, a life of comparative idle luxury, and nothing to mar its pleasure, except a brief interval when Mr. Champ brought some half a dozen of our party to their knees in humble apology for one of the most ungracious, cowardly pieces of business I have ever heard of. . . Mr. Champ's eyes have been opened to the ingratitude of men in this long affair.

Clearly, Fiala offended some in the Field Department by his allocations. Who those "ungracious, cowardly" men were and what they said to William Champ to bring a "half a dozen to their knees in humble apology" remains a mystery.

When the *Terra Nova* arrived in Norway, Fiala and Champ quickly left, boarding a steamer for Hull, England. At the wharf in Hull, Fiala was interviewed:

Anthony Fiala of New York, leader of the Ziegler polar expedition. . . arrived here today on his way to the United States. He came ahead of the

³⁶ Coffin apparently did not write another word in his journal after the arrival of the relief ship. If he did, it is not included with the papers in the Society archives.

Terra Nova, which is expected tomorrow.³⁷

The news account goes into considerable detail about the expedition and the perils it faced. Fiala said his three failures to reach the North Pole were caused by ice conditions and dangerous openings of clear water.

Only eight days later, on August 30, he arrived in New York aboard the liner *Oceanic*. Meeting him, along with reporters, were his fiancée, Claire Puryear of Nashville, Tennessee, and his two sisters. *The New York Times* quoted him:

"Although we failed to reach the pole, we have brought back data of scientific value. . . the result will be a new map of the north polar regions."

Despite his failure, he offered advice to others:

I believe an expedition has a poor chance of reaching the pole without a large party. This party must be composed of men willing to remain in that region for five years, or if necessary, for ten years. . . A great point toward success is the training of the men and dogs. . . The men must be taught to feed and take care of the dogs and become used to the climate. [N.Y. Times, Aug. 31, 1905.]

This advice runs counter to his experiences. Three times, he reduced the size of his Polar sledge parties and at no time were there difficulties with the dogs. As for "training of the men," there is no denying that more of that was needed.

While Fiala was making headlines in New York, the rest of the men were still in Europe. On August 25, Coffin wrote to his wife from Copenhagen:

I am not going to write particulars of the loss of the *America* or why it happened, as Mr. Fiala is to write a long article for the Associated Press.

Coffin said he would leave Copenhagen for London where he hoped to book passage home. It would be difficult, he told his wife, because in August all the steamers were fully booked. There was no move to treat the men as returning heroes. They had failed. They were on their own.

Unable to find space on a ship to New York, Coffin booked passage to Quebec. Arriving there September 9th, he immediately took the train to New York where he was the guest of William Champ for a day or two.³⁸

On September 14th, 1905, he stepped off the steamer at

³⁷ This seems incorrect as three days later Coffin wrote to his wife from Copenhagen, Denmark. It is likely that the *Terra Nova* took the expedition there after dropping off Fiala and Champ. From Denmark, the men were on their own, passage home paid for by Ziegler.

³⁸ Champ, no doubt, had returned with Fiala, although the news accounts don't state that.

Cottage City. Greeting him were several members of his family. His wife, Carrie, was too ill to meet him. There was no welcoming throng, no parade. The captain was just another passenger, arriving on the steamer from New Bedford on a September day in 1905.

But he was not just another person one week later when he was honored at a reception and supper at the Edgartown Yacht Club. The *Vineyard Gazette* described the affair:

The reception was attended by citizens and summer visitors yet tarrying in the town and the whole affair was very enjoyable to the guest of honor and to those attending. . . One of the finest of clam chowders for which the Club is famous was partaken of, and the menu otherwise consisted of orangeade, fruit, cigars, etc. . . After the banquet, Vice-Commodore [Thomas D.] Mills rapped to order and, after a felicitous speech, introduced Capt. Coffin, who for half an hour in well chosen words told the company of this, his latest experience in the Arctic seas. . . Other speeches followed, all paying tribute to Capt. Coffin as a citizen and a bold and hardy Arctic navigator. . .

The affair was finely arranged, successfully carried out, and was highly enjoyable. Capt. Coffin must have indeed felt that he had reached "home."

Surely, he did.

(End of series)

Epilogue

Capt. Edwin Coffin Jr., died at his home on North Water Street, Edgartown, October 11, 1917. He was 67 years old. At the time of his death, he was chairman of the Board of Selectman and had served for eight years as a selectman. He was also a town assessor and a member of the Library Board.

His wife, the former Carrie Crawford Norton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Norton, died in 1907, two years after his return from Franz Joseph Land. He retired from the sea soon after her death. The Coffins had four children: Irving H., Carrie Louise, Edna C., and Edwin Jr. Carrie was taking care of her father in the family home when he died. In 1924, she married Edgar Cushman and became a loving stepmother to his five daughters.

The Society is extremely grateful to his descendants who have given so many items he collected during his many years as an Arctic mariner. The editor is especially indebted for the papers of the Ziegler Polar Expedition, on which he has based this series.

Document

A Running Account Of Matters & Things

by HENRY BAYLIES

REV. HENRY BAYLIES (1822-1893) is an Edgartown native who, with his sick wife, has gone to Alabama in an effort to cure the illness that has made her a virtual invalid. He is an ordained Methodist minister, but left the pulpit to become a teacher because of a throat ailment that prevented him from preaching regularly. Before going south, he had been principal of the Island's first high school in Edgartown. He is now seeking a teaching post in the South.

So far, he has been unsuccessful. In desperation, he will go to Columbus, Mississippi, where, he has learned, there may be opportunities.

The young couple, both in their twenties, are ready to leave by riverboat for Columbus, 500 miles north.

Wednesday, Feb'y 6. . . Having determined to leave for Columbus, Miss., we parted with our new friends at Forkland & went to the landing at Sister Kirkpatrick's to wait for an upward bound Boat. The parting with Sister Glover was with Hattie like parting from a mother. This family very much endeared themselves to us by their generous hospitality & friendly Society.

The hack to take us down & a cart to take our baggage were ready in season for us. Through Sister G.'s thoughtfulness a very comfortable couch was arranged in the coach upon which Hattie reclined easily. Passing through Forkland, Bro & Sister Newman called out to see us & expressed great interest in our welfare

expecially in Hattie's recovery. Sister N. evinced her interest by pressing into H's hand as they parted a \$5.00 gold piece.¹ We did not discover the gift till after we drove on & then I confess I was hastily ashamed of my distrust of Providence & was instructingly taught the lesson that the poor are God's almonds. I feel very unpleasantly in receiving money from a poor Methodist preacher. While I almost feel that I am disgraced, I am now fully convinced that Methodist Preachers are the most benevolent men on the face of the Earth.

We arrived at the Landing about 11 A.M. & our baggage arrived a little after. Old Sister Kirkpatrick rec'd us cordially & showed H. every kind attention. We had but just taken seats at the dinner table when the servant announced the boat close at hand. I left the table & ascertaining it was the *Clara* bound to Aberdene, Miss., stopping at Columbus, we went immediately on board & on our way at about 2 o'clock. I succeeded by aid of a servant in getting ("taking") H. in a chair part way to the boat when the Capt. sent two of his hands who took her safely on board.

We found a very agreeable company [of] ladies on board who occupied all the staterooms in their cabin. We were about to occupy a stateroom in the Gent's Cabin when an old lady generously offered Hattie her stateroom as she was designing to get off the boat during the night. The offer was unexpected & opportune for which we felt exceedingly grateful. Hattie was quite fatigued with the ride, excitement of meeting so many strangers, etc., & retired early.

We had some singing during the

¹ This is nearly three days' pay for the minister.

evening & pleasant conversation. Mrs. Dr. Franklin of Columbus as well as other ladies whose name I do not recollect showed H. great kindness & attention. I fell in company with Rev. Bro. Sanders & Lady of the Ala. Conf. with whom I enjoyed some pleasant conversation.

Thursday, February 7. This morning I missed a number of our Company who had stopped at the various landings during the night. We continued the same process of landing & receiving passengers during the day.

The River scenery is exceedingly monotonous & uninteresting. Having viewed half a dozen miles of it one might as well look for interest within the cabin. From Mobile to Columbus, a distance of perhaps 500 miles, I caught glimpses of only one village, Demopolis, & of that only now & then a straggling house. Besides D. there are two or three villages on the River which are concealed from the River by high bluffs. Cane breaks, forests, swamps, limestone banks & an occasional plantation & landing make up all the scenery. The river is principally winding, often turning at almost right angles so that the boat was obliged to stop the machinery to permit turning the corners & then even, she would often almost strike the opposite bank.

During the night I became quite alarmed at the snapping & crackling as if the boat was on fire. I sprung out of my berth through the door opening on the outside [of] the boat when my fear was changed into laughter for the crackling was of brushes & limbs of trees on the river bank into which the boat had plunged in the dark. These plunges are frequent & no danger is feared from them. I was quite amused at sailing through the

woods in a steamboat!

We arrived at Columbus about 4 P.M. The Clerk sent one of the servants to the stable & procured a hack for us & waited the boat till its arrival. We stop at the Bluit [Blewett?] House, said to be the best in the so-called city, but at that the most miserable Hotel I ever was in or ever saw. Being very much fatigued, retired early. Wrote a letter to Dr. Hamilton & part of one to Father.

Friday, February 7.² A delightful day as was yesterday & Wednesday. After breakfast, carried my letter to Dr. Hamilton to the river to be forwarded on one of the Boats. Called at Rev. Bro. Neely's. Bro. N. rec'd me very cordially & with his lady called on us, in company with Rev Bro. Maybe, soon after dinner at our Hotel. Sister N. is a very pretty woman, amiable & intelligent. Her dress rather attracted our attention by its richness & ornament. Hattie exclaimed when she left, What would Mother Baylies say to see a Methodist preacher's wife dressed so much? This however is a Southern custom. Ladies dress extravagantly, we should think at the North. . .

Bro. Neely afterwards called to take me to Judge Clayton's office to receive an introduction to the Judge, who is a Brother & the President of the Trustees of the Columbus Female Institution. Bro. C. thought I might possibly obtain a situation in the Academy [Henry's cross-out] Institution & likewise suggested the possibility of making a good Male School. Bro. Neely said to me that Methodist influence is so strong here that should they establish a school, they

² Henry has been a day off the date and is now correct. It is the 7th of February.

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could carry all before them. Made an appointment with Bro. Clayton to call on Mr. Meers, the Principal, tomorrow morning

Have strolled about the town today & feel quite weary this evening. As was said of Washington so might be said of Columbus, "It is a place of magnificent distances."³

The dwellings are very much segregated. Each house has attached to it a large garden spot sufficient for flowers & shrubbery, vegetables & a small orchard. The town extends over an area 3 miles long by from 1/2 to 1 miles wide & yet contains a population within the corporation limits of only 2611 inhabitants & in the entire town limits a little more than 3000. At the present, the place has the appearance of having much waste land but in the summer when the trees are in leaf & the gardens are flourishing, it must appear beautiful beyond comparison. The residences have a pleasing appearance of comfort & cheer. The public buildings are generally very respectable. The churches equally. The Courthouse, Town Hall, Oddfellows, Masons & Sons of Tombigbee halls are all built of brick & are substantial buildings. The streets are wide & very airy with the open lots. The stores for the place are very well stocked & appear to advantage. Lawyers' offices in the vicinity of the Court House present an array of names sufficient to stock a large city at the North. Law business must be profitable, I think.

Saturday, February 8th. This morning early, Mrs. Dr. Franklin & mother Mrs. Campbell called on us.

³ Columbus had been first settled only 33 years before, in 1817. It has the first free public school in the state of Mississippi.

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Five ladies called this afternoon while I was out. Hattie does not recollect the names of all. One however was Mrs. Judge Clayton, another was Mrs. Neely's sister & another, a teacher in the Institution. H. says they were extremely cordial in their appearance, which was light & agreeable. I regret I was not in to enjoy their society.

I called this morning at Judge Clayton's office but did not find him in. . . This P.M. met Judge C. at his office & with him called at the Institution. Mr. Means was not at home & so I missed seeing him. The Principal's residence is a very pretty, commodious house next door to the Institution. The Inst. is a very plain building entirely wanting in taste or ornament, the whole establishment including about 40 acres of land cost about \$12,000. . .

Hattie's health has been better yesterday & today since she has been quite free from pain compared with days previous. She is evidently gaining in flesh. The weather has been very warm.

I wrote last evening to Father.

Wednesday, Feb. 12. Columbus is about all seen in an hour's walk. . . Main St., a part of each day is adorned by a class of gentlemen loafers, congregated to hear & tell the news. Life is visible only on this St., or on the arrival of steamboats at the landing, for a wharf they have not.

Last Sabbath was a very inclement day. The rain was impetuous & abundant. I ventured however to Church & was gratified to find a much larger congregation than I expected, although at that a very meager gathering. Good people & bad people are very much afraid of rain

on Sabbath while on other days they would scarcely notice it.

Rev. Bro. Neely preached a discourse upon the offices of the Christian Ministry to be concluded I believe next Sabbath. Bro. N's view of the office was thoroughly Christian & spiritual & favored little the too prevalent fancy for merely scientific, literary or philosophical sermons. The one business of the Christian ministry is to save Souls & all the teaching is collateral and illustrative. His style was gorgeous, if that be a proper descriptive word. I was exceedingly pleased & perhaps profited, yet I can recollect little of his discourse. His delivery was exceedingly defective, 'twas boisterious [sic] & frantic. Bro. N. is reputed one of the finest ministers in the South & I think deserving of this classification.

Monday noon I called with a letter introductory from Judge Clayton upon Mr. Means, Principal of the Female Institution.⁴ Mr. M. could really see no opening in his school for me. I suggested to him I was desirous of testing the Southern climate for my wife & that I could be easily induced to remain in C. & serve him -- part or all day. He requested time to consider & yesterday (Tuesday) night called on me at my hotel, still remaining of his conclusion that he did not need me. I have again failed of a situation. . .

This matter settled, I started out this morning to ascertain the opinion of influential men relative to my former & original proposition to teach a Male School. Br. Neely very kindly volunteered assistance & introduced me to several prominent gentlemen most of whose names

⁴ Columbus is now the home of Mississippi State College for Women. Was this its start?

have slipped my mind. One of them was Col. Cobb, a novelist who is just publishing a book titled "Sketches of Life in Mississippi" or something like it. Col. C. appears very much the gentleman. Several gentlemen agreed to meet at Judge Clayton's office at 4 this afternoon to consult as to the propriety of starting a Male Academy. On assembling, Bro. Geo. Harris reported he had seen Mr. Brown, the teacher of the principal male school in the town & that he is desirous of giving up the charge of his school to me & assist me in teaching. He expressed a desire to procure a minister to take charge of the School some time ago & made efforts to obtain one & failed. This led Bro. H. to enquire of him today relative to the subject. The only difficulty in the way of Mr. Brown is the disposal of his present assistant, a Mr. Pope. Bro. Neely called & introduced me to Mr. Brown with whom I made arrangement for an interview on Saturday.

Thus it appears I am likely at length to get employment in an agreeable Society & at remunerative prices. Mr. B.'s school now numbers a few more than 40, most of whom pay \$20 for a session of five months or in all \$160 per month. The bargain however is not yet struck & disappointment has so frequently followed on the heels of hope & fair prospect that I will not suffer myself to be elated but will wait with a fair confidence that if God sees best for such an arrangement to be effected he will so order . . .

Harriette has today been quite "unwell." The effect is spasms & severe neuralgic pains. They are peculiarly itinerant, at one moment being felt in her shoulder, at another in the knee.

I had the curiosity to weigh myself today & to my surprise found I have gained about 13 lbs. in my weight [since] two or three weeks after arriving in Mobile. My weight is now, in rather lighter clothing than then, 140 lbs.

In speaking of Negro extravaganzas, Bro. Neely stated one ludicrous case curiously worth recording. A negro in his congregation was a very Systematic Shouter. Becoming fully imbued with the Spirit of Shouting she was accustomed to take off her shoes, thick & heavy, & pass them to someone near her saying, "Hold my shoes, I am going to shout." Then springing onto her feet she would dance back & forth till she had spent her unction when, making a peculiar Negro breathing . . . she sat down & called for her shoes, saying, "Give me my shoes now for I am done shouting."

Another incident he witnessed at a Camp Meeting. Just in the skirt of the encampment, he saw a negroess [sic] shouting, swooning & tossing her arms in ecstasies & held by a negro who tightly embraced her face to face. A little one side stood a black, thick-rolling-lipped Amazonian negress, gazing intently upon this united couple. Suddenly without any apparent cause or movement, she began the same fantastics which she continued some minutes. At length, she paused & stood perfectly still & looking round cried out, "Who'll hold me?" Then the spirit, a kind of anxious cupid, betrayed himself. It appears she was frantic for some one to hold her most lovingly!⁵

Friday, Feb. 14. A very heavy rain

yesterday and today which together with the rain of Sabbath last has swollen the river & creeks to a freshet. . . The steamer *Romeo* had only room enough -- not an inch to spare -- to pass under the bridge. Vast numbers of stock are swept away in these freshets.

Called this forenoon at Judge Clayton's. Conversing with the Judge, we touched on the subject of Gov. Quitman's resignation in order to meet his trial at N.O. on charge of being engaged in the Cuba Invasion.⁶ The Judge spoke very freely of the ridiculous message of resignation of Gov. Q. and of his ultra-cession [sic] movements. Not one in a hundred Mississippians would entertain the views of Gov. Q.

So far as my observation extends there is more quiet on the Subject of Slavery in Miss., than in Alabama. The fact is the Mobilians & the Alabamians generally are hoping in case of cession that Mobile will become a kind of young New York.

On the treatment of slaves, Judge C. stated the following incident corroborative of statements frequently made that the slaves are not treated cruelly or in case they are, public opinion curses the master who is guilty of such cruel treatment.

A few years ago, a wealthy planter living a short distance from here in the provinces had a slave who ran away & was taken & lodged in the Jail at Tuscaloosa. The master went after him. In returning, the master rode and the slave, tied, was obliged on foot to keep up with the master. As it was in the hot weather of summer, the slave

⁶ Two attempts to invade Cuba by privately financed forces, led by Narciso Lopez, had failed in 1848 and 1850. Southerners, backing the efforts, hoped to make Cuba a slave-holding state, thus affecting their power in Congress.

⁵ These anecdotes are rather offensive to us now, indicating an insensitivity that whites, even educated ones, had for blacks in 1851.

