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AREA CODE 617
724-3285

January 20, 1981

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Dear Boomy,

What a surprise indeed!! I judge from your letter that when things started to happen - they happened fast! Sometimes I think its best that way. You don't get all steamed up over things you can't do anything about till you get there anyway. My immediate reaction to your letter was "Great"! and it hasn't changed any. I hope it turns out the way you want it to, and I don't see any reason why it shouldn't.

This reply to your letter has been slow getting started. Lucy and I have been more-or-less under the weather since Thanksgiving - colds that went away and then came back again, with bells on. Then about a week ago I developed some symptoms very like those from the kidney infection I had a couple of years ago (the kidney stone episode). The doctor gave me some pills that have cleared this up pretty well, but I'm to go and see again next week. Right now we're both a lot better!

Though we have spent a lot of time in the far Northwest, we haven't seen very much of Alaska. In 1944 we went on the Alaska Highway to Fairbanks and spent several days there. Most of my time had to be spent getting supplies and army transport for the trip back down the road. Fred Johnson and I did get out to the University one afternoon where we had a wonderful talk with the old man who was then President, Dr. Bunnell. I only remember a couple of his remarks; that Alaska was really only a "colony of Seattle", and that if he could just get a dozen or so families to come to Alaska and stick, he could feed the populace,

We stopped for collecting in only one place in Alaska. This was along the Tanana River a few miles east of Big Delta. We didn't intend this to be much more than an overnight camp, but it rained heavily that night, and the bridges on both sides of us went out, so we were there about two weeks. This took up all the time we had left, so we didn't stop again except for camps. I've been to Alaska twice since - both on short trips to Barrow (with NSF panel to look over the IBP program in the early 1970's). On the first of these Lucy went with me and we had two short side trips. The NSF drove us up the road to Circle, but only as far as Eagle Summit. Then we took the train from Fairbanks to Anchorage, stopping

off for 24 hours at Mt. McKinley where we had a lovely bus trip to a place where we could see the Mountain. At Anchorage we took a sight-seeing trip around the town and to the Matanuska farming country. On my second Barrow trip we came back to Fairbanks by the Laboratory's plane, with stops at Umiat, Anaktuvck Pass and Bettles.

Karl, of course, has seen much more of the state than we have. While he was in college he put in two summers with the USGS, mostly in the Bristol Bay region. Then he had at least one (maybe two) tours with the Air Force at Anchorage, where he lived on the base. Jackie and Bill were with him there; and I think they did a good deal of tripping around. They had a small camping trailer which gave them a lot of satisfaction - skiing, fishing, etc. Karl drove their car to or from Seattle at least once, and maybe more times. We don't remember the route he used, if we ever knew. If you want, ask him; his address is 630 Albertson Place, Orlando, FL.

Our knowledge of travel on the highway is now too old to be of any use. In our day there were no "stopping places" that provided meals and beds, but we're told that there are quite a lot of them now. But even now Blanche ought to be provided with emergency grub, some camping gear, a few spare parts for the car, lots of time and patience, and enough money to see her through delays. Probably there is a period in the spring when she could not try it. It is the thaw season!

Your experience with your eyes is truly remarkable, and must be giving endless satisfaction! I don't know what might have happened if my doctor hadn't discovered my glaucoma in 1951. In addition to the 5 operations I've had he has checked my eyes 3 times a year ever since and has found no further deterioration. I'm still using the "hard" contact lenses, and he doesn't seem at all interested in my changing to soft ones.

By all means you should "get around" in Alaska as much as you can. And don't put it off too long. You should see the interior "dry" forests before you get too much involved with planning for the heavy coastal forests. The contrast is stunning. I have never studied Harold Lutz's paper on Alaskan fire. Sometimes I think that forest fire study should not be left to foresters. Fire protection has been so thoroughly established in the thinking of American foresters that I doubt if they can ever get an "objective" view of it. I've been getting papers from a Professor E. A. Johnson at the University of Calgary on vegetation in the open forests east of Great Slave Lake. He and his students went at it with all the fancy ecological clap trap they could think of. The base unit was of course the "community". They made a great "discovery". They found that the place had been burned over repeatedly, and that what came up after the fires was just what happened to be on hand, and that it bore no relation to the theoretic community structure they had been at such pains to describe.

For that region they are now attempting to relate the incidence of fire to long-term climatic changes, tying it to alternations of Arctic and Pacific air mass fronts. This takes them into long times between fires (400-500 yrs or more). From all my experience with the boreal forest this is absurd, for the fires have been far more frequent. I have argued a bit about it, but don't seem to get anywhere. We traveled with some Indians in S.W. Yukon for three weeks. Their chief

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a man about 40, remembered his father (also chief) telling him about the tribe's first contact with white people (probably Russian traders). These Indians lived by hunting. They did not come down out of the mountains until the days of the Yukon-Alaska gold rush. The point of all this is that in all the time we were with them they did not put out their campfires. And some of those fires were whoppers, for which they dragged in big logs. I didn't remonstrate with the chief about this, I just asked him about. He said he wasn't concerned about it in the least. Suppose a fire got away and burned out this valley - the next valley over would be just as good for hunting - they would go there.

We had been traveling in the mountains north of Kluane Lake, and to get back to Burwash on the south shore we had to be ferried in boats. As we approached the shore the pack train (about 30 horses) suddenly stopped. We were at the tail end of the line, and sat there wondering what it was all about. There was a little "yip" from the Indians at the head of the line, and a tall spruce tree went up in flames with a great roar, sending a column of smoke a couple hundred feet into the air. This was the signal that brought the boats! We all continued blythly down the trail, leaving the tree burning merrily.

Another case, from our earlier trips, was near the east end of Great Slave Lake where we camped for about 5 weeks in 1927. A group of Indians, perhaps 3 or 4 families, showed up and camped about half a mile from us. They were there for a week or so, and one day I went over to see them, only to find them loading their canoes to pull out. Next day I went there and found all of their fires still burning.

Indians on Great Slave Lake are known to have deliberately burned off small islands to give themselves dry wood for their winter camps. There have been Indians around Great Slave Lake for at least 7000 years (many C-14 dates from archaeological sites). Foresters and ecologists don't seem to think this means much, but I believe it does.

The pre-eminence of the physical disturbance factor in the forests of interior Alaska seems clear to me. I think it must also be true for the coastal forests, but I've never seen any "hard" data on it, one way or the other. Do you have any good data on the age structure of these forests? Can you find windthrow evidence? Or fire remains?

I don't have many Alaskan acquaintances anymore. At the moment I can think of only two that I think you should know. One is Leslie A. Viereck, who is at the Institute of Northern Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, at College. The other is David Murray, who is a botanist at the University of Alaska. Troy Péwé, a geomorphologist used to be at the University, and may still be there. If he is you should get to know him..

Yes, we have read McPhee's book and liked it very much indeed. In fact, we are McPhee fans. Did you ever read a little book of his called "The Deltoid Pumpkinseed"? We saw the contrasting domestic architecture in Fairbanks when we were there in 1944, I think I have a picture of a brushy little log cabin with a sod roof right next door to a modern dwelling.

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We had a splendid visit with the Stouts last fall. We flew out and they met us at Billings, Montana, then drove us north through the plains to about Havre. This put us on the route we took on our honeymoon trip in 1925, west to and through Glacier Park. We saw a lot of the places we had walked through and camped in. In Missoula we had about 9 days, nearly every day on the roads. Distances are great in that country. Ben said one day that no matter where you wanted to go from Missoula, it was 120 miles! But people seem to think nothing of it. Ben and Phyl seem to be very happy there. Ben has got himself into quite a job, but I think he will make a go of it. It is not easy.

This has got much too long - so I'll just stop.

We're wishing you everything good.

Hugh M. Raup

HMR:drs

DEAR DR. + MRS. RAUP,

HOPE YOU ARE ANTICIPATING A MERRY XMAS. THIS ONE WILL BE MUCH DIFFERENT FOR ME THAN LAST YEAR'S. BLANCHIE IS HERE, HAVING MOVED UP IN JUNE. SHE HAD VISITED WITH ME FOR OVER A MONTH IN MARCH DURING WHICH WE ARRANGED TO BUY A NEW CONDO. I WENT BACK TO ALABAMA AND WE DROVE UP WITH THE HELP OF MIKE, KATHY + OUR LITTLE GRANDDAUGHTER SUZANNA. WE DROVE 2 CARS SO HAD PLENTY OF ROOM - WE HAD A GOOD TIME, BUT 5000 MILES IS A "FER PIECE"!

WE ARE ENJOYING ALASKA VERY MUCH. BLANCHIE HAS BEEN ON EVERY SURFACED ROAD IN ALASKA EXCEPT THE ONE TO SEWARD! SHE HAS BEEN ON THE CIRCUIT OF ANCHORAGE, FAIRBANKS, DELTA, GLEN ALLEN TWICE ALREADY; ONCE IN THE WINTER + ONCE IN SUMMER. SHE LIVES OUR CONDO. WE HAVE A SPECTACULAR VIEW OF THE CHUGACH MTS. OVER A BLACK SPRUCE BOG. A COUPLE MOOSE, COW + YEARLING, COME DOWN TO BROWSE AND WE'VE SEEN THEM SEVERAL TIMES. BLANCHIE SAW AN ERMINE THE OTHER ^{DAY} FROM THE BACK WINDOW. OUR CONDO IS NEXT TO A CITY PARK, UNDEVELOPED LAKE, BOG, ETC. MAKING THINGS VERY INTERESTING.

MY WORK IS PROGRESSING WELL. I'LL SEND YOU OUR FIRST REPORT, IT WILL BE READY NEXT WEEK. CERTAINLY LOTS TO DO.

OUR KIDS ARE WELL. TIM STAYED IN ALABAMA, LEARNING TO BE A MACHINIST AND TAKING COURSES AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE. MIKE + SCOTT STILL ARE IN AUSTIN TEXAS, DOING MOSTLY WHATEVER THEY WANT TO! KATHY IS MARRIED, LIVING IN HEARN, TEXAS,

AND HAVING FUN RENOVATING AN OLD FARM HOUSE NEAR THE BRAZOS RIVER. SHE HAS A DAUGHTER, ALONG WITH DOGS, CATS, GEESE, CHICKENS, ETC. AND SEEMS TO BE HAVING A BALL.

YOU FOLKS TAKE CARE. HOPE THIS NOTE FINDS YOU WALE + HARDY. PLEASE GIVE OUR REGARDS TO ALL AT THE FOREST. MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

LOVE,
Boomey
and Blanche

It is just so beautiful here! I spend a lot of time looking at mountains + sky. What has happened to Lutzie? A note I sent to her this summer was returned.

POLAR BEARS



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