

had never built a boat before, so you can imagine the awkwardness of our effort. But we accomplished it in three weeks.

"The day finally came for us to start. The wind blew the broken ice down the lake and into the river, and almost like magic hundreds of small boats—of all shapes and sizes—loaded with thousands of excited men and a few women, set sail toward the land of the 'midnight sun and shining gold.'

"There were three of us in our boat—one being my wife. With all our bags and baggage we floated down the Yukon toward Dawson.

"At midnight on June 26 we sighted Dawson and thought our hopes realized. There were so many boats lining the shore that we had to tie up to the sixth tier of boats, and were thus compelled to carry our two tons of provisions over six boats to reach shore.

"The first night ashore was the greatest surprise of our trip. At 12 o'clock at night, to find it so light that we could lay in our tent and read without a light, was indeed something new.

"Then came our first stampede. We had fifty miles to walk over a pathless and untraveled mountain. Each person had to carry his provisions, cooking utensils, bedding and tools on his back, and at the same time try to make speed so as to outstrip some competitor. For the first on the ground was supposed to get the richest ground. There are many things to see and hear on such a trip, but none were more surprising than the mosquitoes. In some of the swamps they were so thick that when disturbed they would rise in such numbers as to darken the sky, and when you stopped to rest would completely cover you. There were many men who gave up and tried to die because of being tormented by these mosquitoes. But I persevered and staked No. 50 on 'To Much Gold' creek.

"In September of that year we went on a stampede up Stewart river 300 miles from Dawson. It took more time than we anticipated to make the trip and our provisions gave out and there was no place where we could secure a new supply. So for four days we lived on one tablespoonful of flour at each meal. We mixed this flour with water from the river and baked it on a piece of tin, as we had thrown away our cooking utensils to lighten our load. We were floating down stream on a raft made by lashing four logs together. We became so chilled the second day that we had to tie pieces of soft wood in our mouths to keep from breaking our teeth out, so much did they chatter. We finally came to where we could get something to eat, and you who read this must strain your imagination to conceive how

we enjoyed that meal. Too numerous were the occasions that we had similar experiences for us to name them all; suffice it to say we lived through them and came out well and hearty.

"The country is very beautiful in summer, which lasts four months. The flowers cover everything and the mountains look like huge bouquets. In winter, which begins the middle of September, everything is covered with snow and sometimes it is very cold. I have seen it 72 degrees below zero for several days at a time. The rivers freeze over and we use them for wagon roads.

"The first winter was a hard one. I lived 35 miles from Dawson and had to pull all my provisions on a hand sled that distance. I had never worked in mines before, but managed to dig two holes 95 feet deep and when I reached 'bedrock' found that there was no gold in either. It was then spring and I found I had worked all winter and had not made a cent. Thus I found myself in the spring without money, without provisions and in a country where it costs five dollars a day to live.

"During the nine years spent there I saw many things new and strange; gold dug from the ground, bands of caribou that numbered thousands, bones of prehistoric animals of immense size imbedded deep in the frozen earth, sunshine all night in summer and darkness most of the day in winter. The northern lights of winter were scenes of beauty, as well as objects of wonder and study.

"In these years I helped to prove the fallacy of the old saying that the Negro cannot stand the cold. I was as comfortable and happy as any one there, and was not any more affected by the change in temperature. Having worked nine years in the mines, I am convinced that the goddess of fortune is no respecter of persons or races and bestows her frowns or favors on all alike. In my wanderings I went to the headwaters of a fork of the Mackenzie river and saw the waters flowing toward the Arctic ocean. I spent some time inside the Arctic Circle, where the Arctic bear roamed the hills and the wild goose reared its young in the swamps, where the midnight sun made summer delightful and the aurora borealis made winter grand. I stood on the northernmost point of Prince of Wales island, from which place the shores of Siberia were visible. I mingled with the Laplander and his reindeer, and traveled with the Indian and his huskie. I watched the Esquimaux eat his seal oil and whale blubber. And then with 'scenes of my childhood rising before my gaze,' set sail for the States, where home and loved ones awaited me, feeling none the worse for my tramp, much improved in health and with a wealth of experience."

