

EXPLORER TRAPPED 4 YEARS IN ARCTIC; GOES NORTH AGAIN

Captain Bernard Sails From Seattle
for New Dash Into Icy Region; Says
Natives Being Wiped Out

- ❑ Ice-bound four years in the Arctic.
- ❑ Capt. Joseph F. Bernard didn't know U. S. was in war.
- ❑ Didn't know war was over.
- ❑ Didn't know several other wars had started.
- ❑ He leaves Seattle for more thrilling adventures in the frozen North.

Ice-trapped four years on the white fringe of the North Polar world.

That was the experience of Capt. Joseph F. Bernard, explorer-scientist.

He is now on his way back for more.

LURE OF SNOW IN HIS BLOOD

The lure of the snow wastes is in his blood.

Returning to Seattle recently from a business trip in the East, Capt. Bernard made his headquarters in the Livingston hotel, 1931 First ave., while preparing for his next dash into the Arctic. He sailed for Nome Thursday aboard the steamer Victoria.

In August of 1916 he started his most recent voyage into the Far North and until late in 1920 he and his men endured a compulsory isolation in the last outposts of human habitation in a region which only a few white men have seen.

Released from an icy prison by the boon of milder Arctic weather, he came out to civilization last fall.

It was all news to him:

That the United States had entered the war.

HE DIDN'T KNOW WAR WAS OVER

That the war was over.

That several other wars had started.

He says:

That he believes no distinct tribe of blonde Eskimos exists, taking a view contrary to that of Vilhjalmur Stefansson.

That there are natives on northern coasts of the freak or Albino type, such as are found in all races.

That some pure-blooded natives have lighter hair, brown eyes and

mustaches, which distinguish them from the bulk of Eskimos.

That the Arctic ocean peoples are being wiped out by disease and contact with civilization.

That the food and clothing producing caribou is being exterminated.

That within 10 years the Canadian government will be compelled to clothe and provision the natives to keep them alive.

SIBERIAN ESKIMOS INVADED ALASKA

That Tartar warriors of Mongolia in the early days of history "shoved" the upper tier of Siberian Eskimos across the narrow channel of Bering straits into Northern Alaska.

That fierce battles between invaders and natives took place, with victory for the horde of invaders.

That the defeated natives pushed farther into the Eastern Arctic.

That subsequent wars between various tribes and the custom of retaining captive women gave all the Arctic region a common language base, altho each separate district has a dialect of its own.

That natives in the region of King William's Land today have relics of the expeditions of Sir John Ross, 1828, and Sir John Franklin, 1845-48.

Commanding the Schooner Teddy Bear, Capt. Bernard set out from Nome on August 23, 1916, with four men, on an anthropological expedition into the Far North. He carried provisions for two years, intending to come out at the end of that time for supplies.

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FIRST CAMP ON CORONATION GULF

Beyond Bering straits he rounded Point Barrow and stopped at Herschel island, where Royal Canadian Mounted Police act as customs officials for the Northwest Territories. He continued to Coronation gulf and established winter quarters, approximately 1,400 miles from Nome. During the spring and summer he carried on his work in that region and in August turned westward on the way to the outside.

Thick ice in Dolphur and Union straits hemmed him in.

The Teddy Bear's direction was reversed and Capt. Bernard started eastward, hoping to find an open channel along the Arctic islands to the Atlantic.

AUGUST 18, 1917, PROVED A FATEFUL DAY FOR THE EXPEDITION. THE SHORT SPACE OF TWO HOURS MEANT A STAY OF WEARY MONTHS ON THE ARCTIC SNOWS.

Capt. Bernard on that date stopped in a harbor of Taylor island, which is east of Victoria land, in the hope of finding a new tribe of natives. At the end of two hours he returned to the harbor and found his ship frozen fast in the ice. There was nothing to do but stay and that is what he did from August, 1917, until September, 1919, in a limited area

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SAYS ISOLATION NOT PLEASANT

"It was not good," said Capt. Bernard of his long imprisonment in the Arctic. "It is not pleasant being cut off from all contact with the outside world. We knew nothing of what was going on. When we left Nome in 1916, the last war news we heard was of the naval battle fought by the British and the Germans in the North sea. When we finally did

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get out again it was most interesting to hear that the United States had entered the war and that the war was ended in victory for the allied armies.

"My object in stopping at Taylor island was to make an attempt to find a new tribe of natives there. Stefansson in his report mentioned a tribe of 'Fish People' living near Taylor island. I assumed that if there were natives on the island they were the only ones never seen by white men. I was naturally quite eager to find them. After we were frozen in we made a complete search and found none at all. I believe Taylor island is without human beings, except occasionally once a year when natives from neighboring islands go bear hunting there.

"By dog sleigh we went from Taylor island to King William's land and stayed there for more than two years. We had to make the best of it. We had to eat to live and we had to hunt to eat, so we moved about with the natives and had experiences enough to keep us busy and free our minds of thoughts of our predicament.

WERE PRISONERS OF THE NORTH

"During the many months of our stay the ice held strong all about us. We were prisoners of the North. On September 2, 1919, we found the sea clear enough for sailing and made our way west again to Coronation gulf once more, going into winter quarters there. In September of 1920 we got out to Nome and

in November I arrived in Seattle. The distance from Nome to King William's land is roughly 1,800 miles.

FIND TRACES OF EARLY EXPEDITIONS

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"Only two white men, I believe, had been on Taylor island previously. They were Hansen, mate on Amundsen's expedition, and Collinson, the British naval officer who commanded the expedition in 1851 in search of Franklin. About half a dozen men have visited King William's land, including Franklin, McClintock, Hall and Amundsen.

"We found traces of the expeditions of Sir John Ross and Sir John Franklin. Franklin was the last man who tried to find a northwest passage to India for the British admiralty. He and his men perished during the winter of 1847-48. He abandoned his two ships near Cape Felix. One of his ships, apparently drifting, sunk near Sherman inlet. Natives of today say their fathers told them that no white men were aboard when the ship went down. Natives on Adelaide peninsula, near King William's land, have bits of brass from Franklin's ship and we also found a brass label from a potato tin bearing the insignia of the British government. We found a British naval uniform brass button of the Ross expedition of 1828.

"The natives of the Arctic region have come in contact with the out-runners of civilization and it has not been good for them. They are changing their ways for the worse. They are now adopting the style of clothing worn by western natives, abandoning their own distinctive styles. They have quit making their own clothing and implements. The native stove, cooking utensils, spears, bows and arrows and the like are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. I believe I had the satisfaction of bringing out the last complete collection of native art and handcraft.

NATIVES LOSING VALUABLE GAME

"The natives crave modern articles and are getting them as traders gradually push farther into the Arctic region. They are eager for rifles and are literally shooting themselves out of game for food and clothing.

"In the old days of hunting with bow and arrow, spear and harpoon, the percentage of lost caribou and seals was insignificant. Nowadays, at least 50 per cent of the caribou get away wounded and die. This is a disastrous loss to the natives since the caribou is the chief source of clothing. About 75 per cent of the seals are lost thru rifle hunting. A wounded seal flops into a hole in the ice and is gone forever.

"Formerly a miss with a spear or harpoon merely meant that the seal got away but did not die.

"I was told that at one Hudson's bay post the natives were instructed to kill caribou and string traps around the carcasses to catch white foxes. The fox catch increased immensely, but with tragic effect on the caribou. All over the land we covered we saw skeletons of caribou.

"If such reckless practices keep up, the Canadian government will, within 10 years, have to feed and clothe the northern natives to prevent extinction of the race.

"Early-day traders and explorers have told me that the northern coasts were once thickly populated with natives. Today they are sparsely settled. In 1919, at Coronation gulf, pneumonia took a heavy toll. Disease in the Mackenzie district, contracted in the days when whale hunting meant a fortune to rough and ready adventurers, is still preva-

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BLONDE ESKIMO IS FANCIFUL

"There has been much interest in the so-called blonde Eskimo ever since Stefansson was quoted as saying he had seen that kind. I am of

the opinion that the blonde Eskimo is more fanciful than real. I have seen natives with lighter-color hair, brown eyes and mustaches, and others who would suggest the Albino or freak type, but they are not numerous enough to be considered a distinct tribe. There are odd-looking Eskimos, just as there are unusual persons in any race, but they are the exception to the rule and do not prove a general racial characteristic. That is my conclusion.

"The study of the origin of the present Arctic tribes offers an interesting work, for as yet little real effort has been made in that field of endeavor. It seems probable that the Siberian Eskimos crossed the Bering channel in the early days—say, one thousand years ago—and fought with the tribes around the landing on Cape Prince of Wales. Skin boats are not a product of modern years, and could have been used for the crossing at that time.

DISTANCE ACROSS CHANNEL IS SHORT

"In fact, making a voyage across the Bering is no great feat. The distance is 44 miles by the shortest route and this is made less strenuous by Diomedes island, near the center of the strait. It is 20 miles from Cape Prince of Wales to Diomedes and 24 miles from there on to East Cape, Siberia.

"The fierce Tartars of Mongolia were continually warring with their northern neighbors, and it can be assumed that the natives of Upper Siberia, growing stale of the clash at home, took the way across the channel to seek new adventures and new places to live. They fought and vanquished the Cape Prince of Wales natives, the defeated moving on farther east. As other waves of invaders came across, the same process was repeated, the Eastern Arctic area being gradually populated as tribes spread out to escape pressure

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STUDIES BIRD LIFE OF THE ARCTIC

During his last voyage into the North, Capt. Bernard made a careful study of bird life and included in his scientific data an interesting collection of eggs and nests. He found two sets (four eggs to a set) of eggs of the knot sandpiper, which follows the seasons north and south. His find added to the scanty knowledge of the bird's breeding habits. Prior to 1916, no eggs of the yellow bill loon had ever been found. Capt. Bernard had two sets (two eggs to the set) in his collection.

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"In going thru customs at New York, one egg in each set was broken," said Capt. Bernard, "ruining my collection, which was quite rare, and therefore quite valuable. This one little incident added to the excitement of my latest trip into civilized countries. I thought a great deal of those eggs and I didn't smile when I lost them."

The explorer visited Ottawa, Canada, while in the East this spring, and had a conference with Dr. R. M. Anderson, commander of the recent Canadian Arctic expedition, Southern party. While there he disposed of a scientific collection to the Victoria museum.

HE WILL VISIT WRANGEL ISLAND

This year Capt. Bernard intends to visit Wrangel island, off the north coast of Siberia. He will make a collection of walrus groups and will search for skeletons of prehistoric animals.

It will be remembered that Stefansson's ship, Karluk, sank 40 miles off Wrangel island in 1914, and seven or eight of his men were lost.

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