

IN TOYLANDS all over the country youngsters stare with wonder and longing at electric trains and hope and hope.

Letter Recalls Adventurous Voyage To Arctic by Intrepid Miner, Family

By LARRY STANWOOD

Prince Rupert harbor since the early days of fur sealing, halibut, rum-running and four-masted schooners, has been a port-of-call to a diversified type of shipping, and not without its measure of drama and adventure.

And a letter I received recently recalls one of the most adventurous undertakings in west coast small shipping history in which Prince Rupert played a small part—as a port-of-call.

Writes Bill Storr of Aklavik and the coast of the Beaufort Sea, generally:

"You remember I told you about the only time I left this country to go outside, to pick up a schooner in Vancouver. I hit Prince Rupert on the last day of September, exactly 12 years ago . . ."

I met Bill Storr, 56-year-old trapper-fisherman-miner, in the foreboding Arctic in 1948, just before Christmas. A powerful man standing over six-foot-three, he looked far from his 56 years as he shouted profanely at his team of half-savage, snapping huskies. He slithered his empty sled to a powdery halt in front of the Hudson's Bay post at Tuktoyaktuk on the Beaufort and drew a wolf-skin mitten over his eyes to wipe away the ice from his lashes.

Storr told the HBC factor that he was out of grub and needed a winter's supply. He said he and his wife and 11 children had been caught in their schooner by the ice in the delta-estuary of the Mackenzie River while heading back to Aklavik in October. He had made one trip out to a nearby American Air Force base while the ice was still rubbery. Storr said the boat was alright, propped up in the ice and they would live on it all winter.

"But everything seems to happen to me in October. Must be my lucky month," Storr complained, yet with a twinkle in his eye.

Later, in the comfortable living room of the factor's home, Storr told of another October experience which began partly in Prince Rupert and saw its climax between Point Barrow and the Mackenzie.

Storr, with a bold, mining and sailing background, was an assistant to a mining engineer on an early exploration flight into the Barren Lands, landing after much difficulty and a near fatal crackup north of Coppermine, N.W.T. This was in the summer of 1926, Storr recalled.

Remained in North

But half scared to death by his hazardous flying experience, the husky miner refused to return to Winnipeg by plane. Instead, he stayed north of the Arctic Circle and to this day has ventured south of it only once.

And that was in the summer of 1941, in quest of a good fishing boat which he located in Vancouver, then sailed up the north Pacific Coast, through the Behring Straits and finally to Aklavik on Peel River, a tributary of the Mackenzie.

Storr made it to Edmonton by river boat, on foot and by train, just as he had planned but it took him much longer. Leaving in June, he had figured on reaching the bright lights of the City in a month. But he broke his leg on the way while making a portage and had to lay over in a trapper's cabin for nearly two months. Instead of July, it was late in September that he reached Vancouver.

I interrupted Storr to ask him how he liked the west coast metropolis. The northerner grunted: "Too noisy. I couldn't sleep all night." He explained that he'd spent only one night in the city. He got there in the evening, spent the night in a moderate hotel, bought the 52-foot halibut schooner the next day and spent the next night on the boat.

Following day he was on his way north.

"Couldn't waste a day. I was afraid I wouldn't make it up the Mackenzie before freeze-up as it was. Only thing I could hope for was a later-than-usual nor'wester which mostly locks the river tighter'n a drum by end of September."

Five days later, Storr—skipper, cook, engineer and deck-hand—limped into Prince Rupert harbor. Unfamiliar with diesel boat engines, he had experienced considerable trouble.

Nearly Sold Ship

"I damn near sold the boat in Prince Rupert. For a while, I would have gladly given it away, and at times I got so mad I could have scuttled her at sea," said Storr who had never sailed in a west coast fishing boat, didn't know the coast except from his charts, but had his mind made up.

In Rupert, Storr got advice on how to run his engine from a fisherman whose name he never knew, although they spent most of one day together.

"He was a Norwegian and what he told me about the B.C. and Alaska coast and about my engine, I figure got me out of an awful mess."

Although buffeted by winds of gale force and battered by dirty north Pacific and Behring seas, Storr finally got to Nome, where he took on his last fuel.

He'd had many close calls in the past 20 days. There were times when he wished he was facing a 50-mile Arctic blizzard instead of similar force gales that threatened to smash him on the rocks. But the worst was yet to come.

It was at Pt. Barrow that Storr and the schooner crossed the Rubicon. Once through the Straits, he had to pick his way through ice floes which increased as he entered the Beaufort Sea. He was not only fighting the icebergs, but time as well, and he kept on travelling by night.

"I didn't sleep very much. Sometimes I'd go three-four days without. And that's what got me."

Storr had actually fallen asleep at the wheel on his way in to Pt. Barrow, a small Indian-Eskimo fishing village, top of the crown of Alaska. Suddenly, he opened his eyes to see a wall of ice directly before him, hazy-like in the Arctic twilight. It was too late to do anything.

Jammed in Ice

But Lady Luck held on. Although the schooner rammed into the ice floe, she was held afloat, wedged in solidly. All night he rode it out in the stiff on-shore breeze. But the wind would turn in the morning and he would drift deeper into the Arctic Ocean. How long before the small boat would break loose to sink? Storr made preparations to launch his 12-foot skiff and row ashore, a distance of 10 or 15 miles and the sea not too friendly.

Storr's decision in the next half hour, probably, accounted for saving his life and was certainly responsible for him still sailing his schooner today. He decided to remain on the boat. With a squeaking and grinding noise the nose of the schooner slipped free. A water came in but not more than the bilge pumps could handle. Inspection showed major damage had been done just above the water line.

A few hours later, he was at Barrow where he left the schooner for the winter.

Another vigorous journey awaited him, however, and after an overland hike of nearly 500 miles, Storr finally reached Aklavik and his family a week before Christmas. The schooner, renamed Ice-Buster by Storr and the only vessel of its kind in that frozen north, has since provided a handsome income for its owner supplying much of that land with fresh and frozen fish.

And it also has served as a home for a family of 13 and seven big husky dogs in a pinch, like that other October.

MAN SLEEPING ON TRACKS NOT WORRIED ABOUT TRAIN

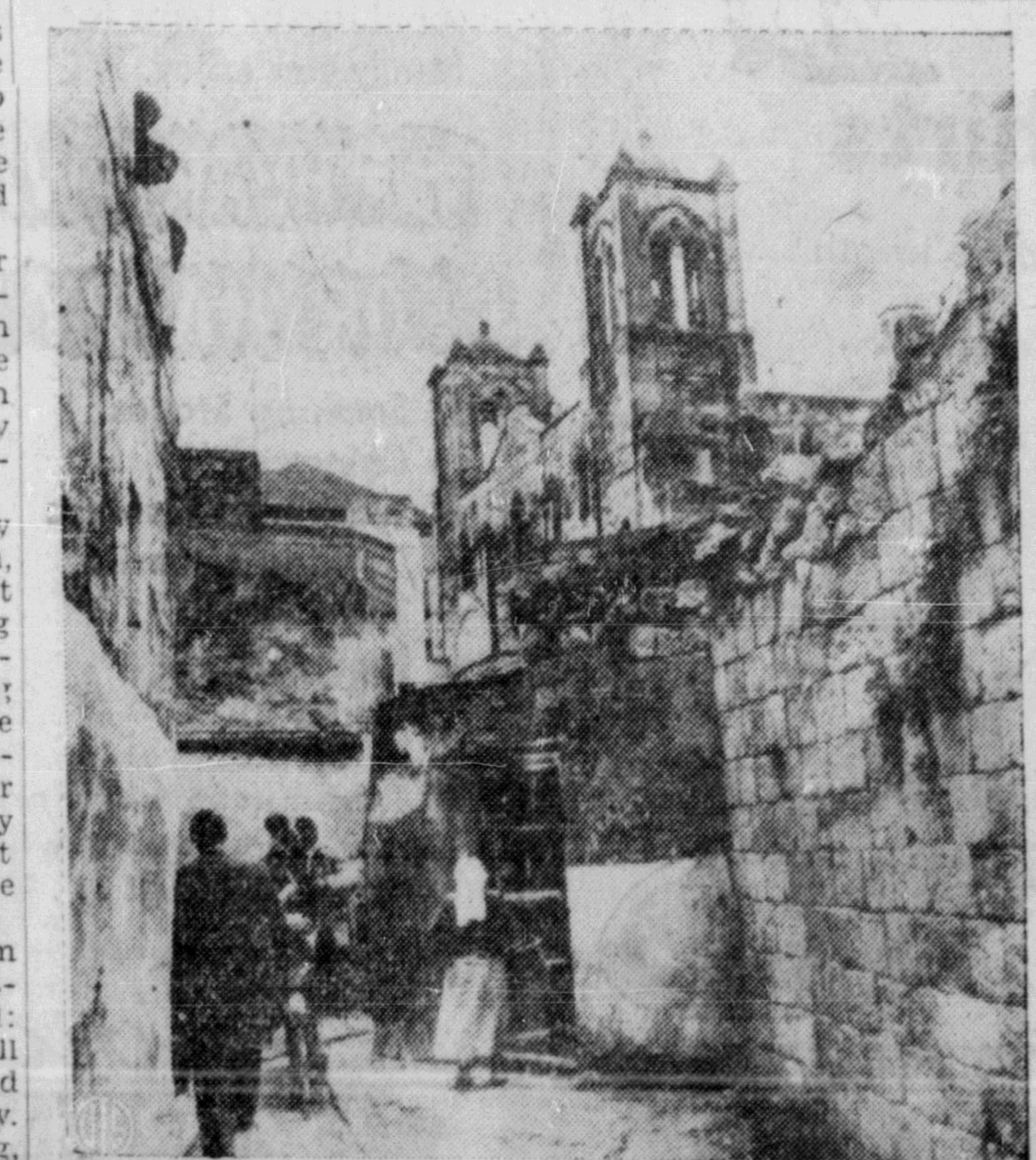
KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Sheriff's deputies found an intoxicated man asleep on the railroad tracks Sunday, his head on one rail and feet on the other.

"Don't you know a train might run over you?" asked deputy Jess Chamberlain.

"What time is it?" asked the drunk.

"It's four o'clock."

"Then I ain't got nothing to worry about, 'cause the engineer that drives that train always stops for me."



NOW A FRANCISCAN CONVENT, this is the "synagogue" in Nazareth where Jesus preached. The town of Nazareth, where Christ lived as a young carpenter, is populated by 14,000 Christian Arabs and 7,000 Moslems, and is ruled by a military governor.

No Difficulty in Finding Gifts

Exciting and Unusual Variety of Items for Home Abound for This Year's Christmas Gift Seeker

It won't be difficult to find just the right gift for home-making this year. The only difficult thing for the Christmas shopper will be to keep from buying duplicates of all the clever gift items for her own home!

The gift, housewares and linen departments of the stores are laden with gift inspirations for Christmas giving. And a delightful Christmas lies ahead for the woman who loves her home!

In choosing a gift for a home-maker, let the decor of her home govern your choice.

If hers is a modern home, be sure to check the gift ideas in

the excitingly new wrought iron home accessories. The array of these distinctive pieces is wide and varied. There are handsome candelabra, many centred with bowls for flowers or fruit, to highlight the dinner table or an occasional piece in the living room.

Extremely modern and extremely smart are the abstract designs to grace the wall of a modern home. Most often seen are the black wrought iron fish in many sizes.

Cleverly-styled fruit bowls in a wide choice of shapes are gift stand-outs. Single candelsticks to use in groupings or alone are well worth consideration as

gifts, as well as the stunning wrought iron wall sconces.

A browsing trip through a store's display of modern ceramics may bring forth gift ideas for the modern-mood homemaker. Here, again, abstract designs and free-form shapes are important.

For the woman who loves early Canadian, gift shopping promises to be fun! You can find dozens of thrilling Christmas ideas in your favorite store.

Don't overlook the copies of old-fashioned candy jars. They are the newest fad. The lucky homemaker who receives one may use it in her kitchen for cookies, in the bathroom to hold

bath salts or bars of pastel soap, or in the living room filled with, of all things—candy!

These glass jars come in all sizes and shapes from short, square ones to tall, stately beauties . . . and there's sure to delight any homemaker!

Trivets in brass or black wrought iron, gleaming copper in copies of antique tea kettles and ceramic pieces will rate as top-favorite gifts.

GIFTS FOR EVERY HOME

Don't miss seeing the new sets of sheets and pillowcases in soft-toned pastels! Many are now styled with striped or printed hems for added sparkle. Consider, too, a gift of a colorful

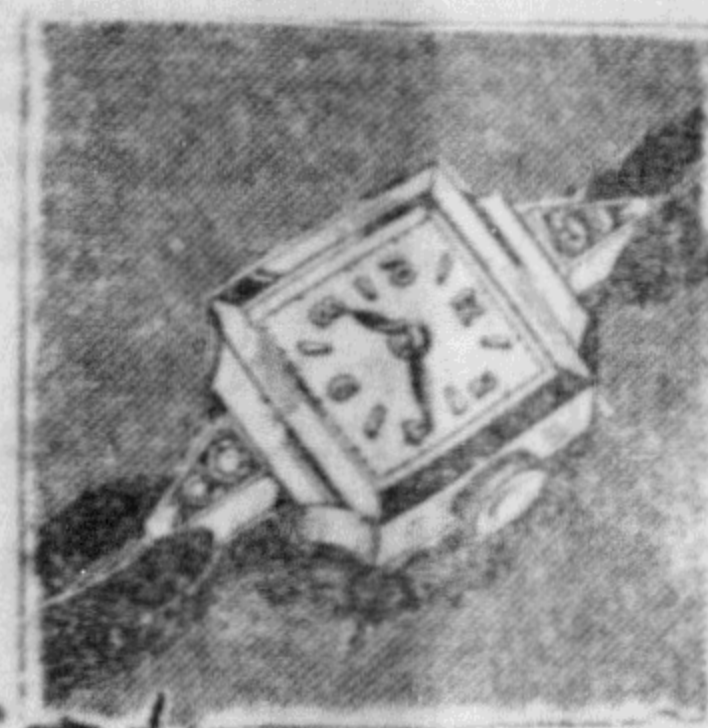
wool blanket or satin-cord comfort.

Ensembles of bath towels and matching cloths are always welcome. Range of colors has never so stunning.

Grand gift ideas are smart bathroom accessories: pastels or black, with gay painted designs. Any homemaker would love to redecorate her bathroom with these pieces.

These new gifts for the home are certain to create Christmas magic for the homemaker on your list.

10 Prince Rupert Daily Tuesday, December 15



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