

looking Jackson won on the first ballot. That was in May 1897, just after his birthday. Two weeks after his election, he was back at his desk in Washington. In another month he was on his way up the Yukon River Valley. Before the end of 1897 he was on his way to Lapland.

CHAPTER 10

LAPLAND TO ALASKA

Jackson left Washington for Lapland two days before Christmas 1897. As he waited in front of his office building for a cab to take him to the railroad station, the cold, damp wind chilled every bone in his body and made him wish that he was at home instead of starting on a journey that was certain to produce many hardships. At almost any other time in his life he would have plunged with relish into the assignment he had received, but of late he had felt more tired than usual. He pulled the muffler more tightly about his throat, picked up his bags, and walked toward the approaching cab with the steps of a man whose energies were beginning to wane. No sooner was he seated when a sharp pain flashed into his side. When it had subsided, he leaned back and wiped the sweat from his forehead. It was not the first attack that he had suffered; he hoped that, whatever it was that bothered him, it would not recur soon. Anyone seeing him walk briskly through the railroad station would not have guessed at the will power it took to keep him going. Twice he had to ask the ticket seller for the price of the fare to New York. The clerk leaned forward and almost spelled it out for him—three dollars and twenty-five cents for the first class seat and two dollars extra for the sleeping car berth.

The next morning he had an early breakfast on the train

while he made notes of the things he had to do before boarding the Cunard liner *Lucania* that night. When he had reached New York and sent his baggage to the pier, he went to two steamship companies to see if he could charter a ship for the return trip. But neither was able to satisfy him, and he left the question of return passage to be decided when he reached London. His next stop was the freight department of the Pennsylvania Railroad to see about hauling the reindeer west after they were landed in New York. Late in the morning he headed uptown for a meeting at the offices of the Board of Home Missions. This was followed by another conference concerned with the future of the work at Point Barrow and by a meeting with the officers of the Women's Board of Home Missions. Late in the afternoon he had to attend to some personal matters. After a solitary supper he returned to the board rooms to discuss more business. That night, on board the ship, he was visited by Army Lieutenant D. B. Devoe, who had been assigned to help him handle the details involved in bringing the shipment back to the States. They talked for a while, then parted after arranging to meet at breakfast to go over a few other details.

Jackson was up at five thirty the next morning, Christmas Day, so that he could get a morning newspaper. When the ship backed away from the pier at six thirty, it was coated with ice as a result of the storm that had struck during the night. Jackson and Devoe went out on the promenade deck after breakfast. It was a bright day, clear and cold. The sea was smooth, but they had to forego a walk because the deck was too slippery. The next day at dinner Jackson gave Devoe a briefing on what he had learned from reading Stoddard's *Lectures on Norway* and described his excellent experience with the Laplanders who worked at the reindeer stations in Alaska from 1893 to 1895. Devoe was relieved when he dis-

covered that Kjellmann, the Teller Station superintendent, had been sent to Norway for the purpose of hiring a new group of Lapp instructors for Alaska before Jackson received his Lapland assignment. It had taken only a cable to instruct him to expand his mission and start the roundup of animals and sleds.

Fame always had a way of catching up with Jackson despite his efforts to avoid it. Just as he was congratulating himself that no one on board the *Lucania* knew his identity, someone discovered who he was. In no time he found himself with an invitation to give a lecture on board ship about Alaska, the Yukon River Valley, and the Klondike. He accepted even though he had hoped for a quiet trip, free from what he described as the unceasing drive of the last few months.

The weather took a turn for the worst when the ship was two days out of New York and remained bad throughout the rest of the trip, one storm following another. By the time they reached the Irish Channel, the fog was inky black. The ship hardly dared to move while it sounded an incessant, mournful warning of its presence. Those who were on deck at the time stared in shock when their steamer passed close by the masts of a vessel that had gone down in the previous day's storm.

The *Lucania* docked on the afternoon of December 31. Immediately after Jackson and Devoe had passed through customs, they met shipping agents who had come to the pier to discuss arrangements for the trip back to New York. They all adjourned to the company's offices to continue the talks, but when no agreement could be reached, Jackson and Devoe caught the evening train for London. They went directly to the Cecil Hotel where they had accommodations—or at least they thought they had. The management assigned them to three different suites before the mix-up was settled.

The New Year started with a problem that was merely a warning of other difficulties to come. Jackson and Devoe went to the British Ministry of Agriculture to see what procedures had to be followed in transshipping the reindeer; they learned that a quarantine had been imposed on all animals from Scandinavia as the result of hoof and mouth disease among cattle in southern Sweden. Jackson asked if he could keep the animals on board ship while the vessel was in an English port, but that too was impossible because the government had quarantined even the ships that carried stock from Scandinavia to England. Therefore he had to change his plans and charter a boat that would take the reindeer directly from Lapland to the United States. Although it meant a delay and a complete revision of schedule, he had no alternative. As a result, Devoe had to remain in England to arrange for transportation while Jackson went on to Lapland alone.

On the Sunday morning before his departure for Scandinavia, Jackson went with Devoe to hear the preaching of the Rev. Monro Gibson of St. John's Wold Presbyterian Church. Dr. Gibson introduced Jackson as the moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and then invited him and the lieutenant to dinner. After dinner they attended afternoon services at Westminster Abbey. That night they went to City Temple to hear the Rev. Joseph Parker preach, but they arrived a little late, the only places to sit were on the gallery stairs. They had been there for a few moments when Jackson noticed that a nearby pew was not quite as full as the others. He thought about it for a moment and then beckoned to an usher. Handing the man his calling card, he pointed to the words "Moderator, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.," and asked if he would try to make room for him in the pew. The usher in turn passed the card to the people in the pew. After they had all looked at it, they moved

over and made room for Jackson. But Devoe sat through the service on the gallery stairs.

Jackson reached Copenhagen on January 5 where he boarded a train for Christiania. It was a rainy, disagreeable day. When they reached Göteborg, the conductor brought him a pair of woolen blankets and a small pillow so that he could make a bed for himself on the seven-foot seat. He went to sleep as the first snow was settling over the countryside.

The American consul in Christiania introduced him to Norwegian officials who provided letters of instruction to local officers in Lapland, directing them to give him all the assistance he needed. He traveled by train to Trondheim and boarded a steamer for the remainder of the journey. As he watched the coast slip by and became aware of the hazards of sea travel in that part of the world, he inwardly compared the navigation aids existing along the Norwegian shore line to the lack of such aids along the Alaskan coast, for as the vessel passed out of sight of one lighthouse, it picked up another in the distance. There were no such guides for shipping in Alaska. He noted too the extent of communication in Norway. Every important village up to North Cape had mail service and either telegraph or telephone contact with the rest of the world; there was even a telegraph line that extended above the Arctic Circle. By contrast, he reflected, much of Alaska was isolated not only from the outside world but also from itself.

When the steamer put in at Tromsø, Jackson took the opportunity to see a town under lights at midday, for it was the time of year (between November 18 and the end of January) when the days are one with the nights. He was surprised to find that a businessman on whom he called had gone home at two in the afternoon for dinner and a nap and would not return to his office until four. It was a practice

followed by all business and government offices. Jackson was thrilled by his visit to Tromsø, then the northernmost point in Norway to have electricity. His only disappointment was that school was not in session, for he hoped to learn something about Norwegian methods and curriculum.

He was rowed ashore at Alten, or Bosekop, and driven by sleigh to his hotel. Having greeted the owner, he was chagrined to find that the man did not understand English. There they were, standing in the foyer making efforts to understand each other. It was the innkeeper who gave up the struggle, picked up Jackson's bags, then put them down and motioned for the missionary to give him his hat and coat. What with the two of them trying to outdo each other in courteousness, it was a few seconds before arms were untangled and the guest was shown to his room. There they went through the same frustrating charade until the host departed, leaving Jackson to acquaint himself with his quarters. It was a bright and cheery place with a good view of the town, but it was also a little colder than he had expected. The bed, large enough for several people his size, was piled high with covers. He pulled back a white spread, which reached almost to the floor, to admire the linen sheet, beautifully embroidered at both ends. Beneath the sheet were two woolen blankets, under them another linen sheet, and under that a soft eiderdown cover for the mattress.

At breakfast the next morning he found that several letters and telegrams had come for him. After going through another sign-language session, he set out for the telegraph office with some vague idea about its location. Fortunately, the telegraph operator did know English.

It occurred to him while he was writing out the telegrams that he might have found the answer to the language barrier. Having finished his business, he talked with the operator long

enough to find out that his English was good and then worked out an arrangement that proved to be very effective. Jackson would write in English whatever it was that he wanted to do or buy, and the telegrapher would put the Norwegian translation below. Armed with his bilingual aid, he was able to go from store to store making purchases and to communicate with people like the hotel proprietor. The services of the telegraph operator would have been valuable the afternoon that the local Roman Catholic priest came to call. The two clergymen sat in Jackson's room, struggling to be affable in spite of their inability to say anything that the other understood. After frustrating minutes, the priest spoke a few words in Latin to Jackson, who responded with a smile because he recognized the language. Unfortunately, he could not make head or tail out of what his visitor was trying to say—except for a few words—and in the end the priest gave up the effort and made his departure. As Jackson phrased it, the conversation had not been very free or exciting.

His inability to speak Norwegian became the least of his worries after two days had passed in Alten. Then he began to worry about Kjelmann's whereabouts. The Teller superintendent was two days overdue in meeting him, and when it started to snow heavily, Jackson was fearful that some accident might have befallen his friend in the mountains north of the town. It did not help his peace of mind to learn that it was very difficult to come through the mountain passes once the first snow had fallen. He even started to worry about the Laplanders whom Kjelmann had hired to help round up reindeer and recruit drivers. Day after day Jackson watched the never-ending storm. He could feel the two-story hotel rock on its wide, stone foundations as the wind picked up in intensity. If it was impossible to see more than a few yards in the village, it would be even worse in the mountains.

Kjelmann finally arrived in Alten the next day, covered with snow and ice from the brim of his cap to the soles of his boots. It had taken him two days to get through the mountains after losing the trail. He had ridden two days and nights without rest, but his condition and report were good. Drivers were being recruited. Five hundred animals were grouped in several herds and would be brought through the pass as soon as the weather moderated. Kjelmann took a couple of days to thaw out before returning to the mountains to oversee the transport of the animals into town. He arrived back in Alten with the first herd on the afternoon of January 28 in the midst of a blinding snowstorm that was so bad even Jackson had to stay in the hotel. The weather was also having its effect on the Lapps who had agreed to go to Alaska. The two men discussed this newest development in Jackson's room.

"I don't know whether we can get them to make the trip." Kjelmann nodded toward the blanket that Jackson had hung over the window to keep out the cold. "Look at that curtain." It was billowing into the room. "Can you imagine what it's like up in the mountains? It's way below freezing and the snow is getting very deep."

"But they are accustomed to such weather, aren't they?" Jackson asked.

"Yes, but in their own country. And they stay at home during storms like the one we're having. If they go with us they will have to bring their families across the mountains in weather that even the men don't want to face."

"How many Lapps have agreed to go to Alaska?"

"If none of them back out, and now it's hard to say what's going to happen, there are forty-three Lapps, fifteen Norwegians, and ten Finns."

"How many families and children does that mean?"

Kjelmann took a pad out of his pocket and checked the figures.

"Sixteen of the Lapps are married, so that makes sixteen women. And nineteen children. Most of them are very young, and it is particularly because of them that their parents are balking."

"I don't blame them," Jackson said. "It must be hard enough to leave their homes, but to do it in weather like this!" He felt the cold draft sweeping through the room and re-adjusted one of the blankets.

"Are any of the others married?" he asked.

"Yes. Three of the Norwegians, and they have seven children between them, but none of the Finns are married." Kjelmann flipped over a page to check the list of Lapps. "I'm not certain, but at least two or three of the Lapp drivers have just gotten married."

"That means we'll have some bridal parties with us on the trip, won't we?"

"Yes. But in the long run the newlyweds may be the ones who will back out."

"Are the terms of the contracts that they signed exactly what we agreed they should be?" Jackson asked.

"The same," Kjelmann answered. "At least as nearly as I remember." He took several sheets of folded paper from his pocket. "I have the terms written down so you can check as to whether they are correct." He read slowly, pausing between items to get confirmation from Jackson.

"Each man is to work as reindeer herder, driver, and tanner, and to instruct the Eskimos in all details of raising reindeer. Each man is to get a loan of one hundred reindeer for three to five years with the original number of reindeer to be returned to the government station at the end of the contract period." He stopped and asked Jackson if that were correct.

"Yes, it is. You remember that we worked out a similar arrangement with the first group of Laplanders who came to Alaska so that if they wanted to remain in the territory they would have a herd of their own."

Kjelman resumed, reading the contract arrangement.

". . . salaries to be continued in event of illness . . . free schooling for their children . . . no taxes for the duration of the contracts which must run no less than two years . . . no military service required . . . free light and heat and washing and mending of clothing for the single men . . . those with wives get provisions once a month . . . the single men the same arrangement for supplies but a cook to prepare their meals . . . no Sunday work except what is absolutely needed . . . free transportation to Alaska . . . all necessary and required food and clothing provided except tobacco . . . salary \$22.33 a month . . . plus all other things necessary for existence. . ."

He refolded the papers.

"That's it."

"That's what we agreed," Jackson confirmed. "Now, all we need is the reindeer and the drivers and the herdsmen to get started back."

"What ship do you have?" Kjelmann asked.

"We've chartered the *Manitoban*. She's a 1,865-ton iron steamship with accommodations for two hundred steerage passengers. The master is a captain Andrew Broes. Lieutenant Devoe has written me that he is a very fine person, a veteran of more than forty years sailing the Atlantic. The only thing that I am afraid of is that the ship will be overdue. Today is the thirtieth and it should have been here by now."

"Don't worry about it. The weather is responsible, and by the time the Lapps bring the herds into town and they make up their minds to go with us, the *Manitoban* should be here."

Kjelmann and Jackson spent the next two days in Alten

waiting anxiously for the *Manitoban's* arrival. Meanwhile two more herds were driven across the mountains into the town, and several Lapp families arrived. On the third morning, Jackson walked out of the hotel and discovered that the ship had entered the harbor during the night. He rushed back to get Kjelmann, and the two men hastened to the dock to get started with the work of building pens on the ship's deck. That same day the last of the animals were brought into town, followed by all of the herders who had signed contracts. During the next two days everyone was busy loading three hundred animals, two hundred sleds, and a large supply of baled moss aboard the vessel. On February 4, when the remaining animals and equipment were on board and Jackson had ordered the herders to board the steamer, Kjelmann brought him bad news. Some of the drivers had been drinking and were refusing to board the *Manitoban* until an inventory was made of their belongings.

Jackson replied that the request was impossible, that the ship had to get under way, and that the inventory could be made later.

"I know that and I told them so, but they won't listen."

Half an hour later, at Jackson's request, the police came to the staging area and told the Lapps that they had their choice of boarding the vessel or going to jail. By the deadline set for ending the impasse, everyone had co-operated. When the mail steamer arrived that evening from Hammerfest, Kjelmann discovered that it carried four kegs of whiskey for delivery to the Lapps. He had the police confiscate it, and it was well that he did because with the few bottles of whiskey the Lapps managed to bring on board the *Manitoban* they produced pandemonium in the steerage for several hours.

Jackson also had serious troubles of his own. Climbing the hill back to the hotel to get his own bags packed, he suffered

a severe attack of rheumatism in his knee. For days he had been standing in the cold, damp wind supervising every phase of the loading, and it had been too much for him. By the time he was finished packing, he was unable to stand, let alone walk to the dock. He had to be taken to the pier by sleigh, almost carried into a small boat, and helped aboard the *Manitoban* like a cripple.

To make matters worse, his stateroom was like nothing he had ever seen. The berth was damp with the condensation of the warm air against the cold wall. One end of the bed was so wet that it could not be used. Little puddles of water were everywhere on the floor, the result of water dripping through the ceiling. Fearing that if he once got into the berth he would not be able to get out of it, he hobbled around the room for several hours, trying to put away his clothing. The moment the ship got under way, he felt much better. But he was shortly to realize that he was in for a miserable trip. The second day at sea the ship ran into a storm that left two inches of snow on the decks. The ocean was relatively smooth, but many of the Lapps were horribly seasick and lay on the open deck despite every effort to get them down to the steerage. Jackson's own physical condition gradually improved enough so that by Sunday, February 6, he was prepared to hold services for anyone who cared to attend. It was a useless effort. A heavy southeast swell rolled the vessel endlessly from one side to the other, making the herdsmen sicker than before and bringing Jackson so close to being ill himself that he had to spend the day pacing up and down the deck despite the lurching of the steamer.

The *Manitoban* passed between the Faroe Islands and Iceland the following day. With the continuing bad weather, many of the sick Lapps stayed on the open deck throughout the night. The sixth day of the trip heavy seas began to cas-

cade over the hurricane deck aft of the bridge. The pens which had been built there to hold the animals were extremely stout. But when furious waves began to smash the two-inch planking, the deer had to be removed from the damaged area and taken aft. Meanwhile, the *Manitoban* plunged and pounded through the rough seas. By February 11 wind and sea were battering the steamer so severely that Jackson feared every seam would open. Snow and hail storms slammed across the decks; under the hammerlike blows of the sea the ship shuddered violently. The water continued to sweep over the bow, swirling knee-deep the length of the deck and endangering more of the animals, who had to be removed to safer quarters. Captain Broes admitted that he had never been through such a succession of violent storms in all the years he had sailed the North Atlantic. Water which had leaked through the ceiling from the pens overhead was awash in Jackson's cabin up to the ankles. Nothing was dry.

Despite his own discomfiture he felt particularly upset about conditions among the drivers and their families in the steerage. He had gone down there during one lull in the weather and found it wet, greasy, and filthy. Later three cases of measles developed, and all the Lapps, Norwegians, and Finns had to be examined to see if they had been inoculated. Only a few of the younger children had not. Two more cases were found the next day. By then, however, the worst of the trip was over. The ship's doctor was able to cure the sick and prevent the spread of the disease. The vessel was off Sandy Hook on February 28, a little more than two months after Jackson had passed the same point on his way to Europe.

The expedition was entrained in New York for Seattle, where reindeer, herdsmen, and equipment were to be loaded on the bark *Seminole* and transported to southeast Alaska. From there they were to go overland to Dyea, across the

Chilcoot Pass, and into the Klondike region with relief supplies. Jackson himself went directly to Washington from New York, under the impression that his part had been accomplished, only to hear that the emergency situation had ended. He was ordered to go to Seattle immediately and salvage whatever he could of the project, distributing the reindeer to various stations in Alaska and locating the herdsmen where they could do the most good.

At Seattle he discovered that the *Seminole* had not reached port and that the moss brought from Europe for the reindeer was almost gone. The vessel was nine days overdue by the time it arrived. In the meantime, substitute fodder had been purchased for the herd. The change in diet killed about a dozen animals and sickened many more. Further trouble would have been averted if there had not also been a delay in transmitting orders for Alaskan moss through Army channels. Jackson's plan was to land the animals at Haines Station in southeast Alaska and give them a chance to regain their strength on moss brought in from nearby. But instructions sent to the commanding officer at Dyea from Skagway five miles away took a week to reach their destination; the moss, therefore, was not on hand when the reindeer arrived. Even the tents and other equipment for the drivers and their families did not arrive on time. Jackson then tried to drive the herd to moss beds a short distance from Haines, but they were so weak that the Lapps advised him to abandon the plan and keep the herd at Haines while moss was collected and brought to them.

The weakened, starving herd grew smaller each day. Three or four animals died every twenty-four hours. Many more were in such poor condition that when the moss was brought to the station, they were unable to digest it. By the time the herd was able to travel, half the animals were dead. To make matters worse, many more died the following weeks. This situa-

tion would have produced criticism even under the most favorable circumstances, but in light of the fact that the animals were not needed for relief work, the attacks upon those who had any part in the project were especially bitter. Eventually the animals were distributed and the herdsmen taken to various stations in Alaska. Jackson left Alaska on April 8, having done all that was humanly possible. He arrived back in Washington on the twenty-third of the month, very unhappy with what had happened but powerless to do more than make a report of the facts.