

July 13, 1952

Adventure stories, especially of true experiences, have always been my favorite tales; so I thoroughly enjoyed Martha McGowan's "The Trail Led North" and was so wrapped up in its story, I was willing to sacrifice my beloved sleep and stay awake an hour longer each evening until the book was completed.

For Monte Hawthorne was not fiction and his trail led North into the fascinating land of Alaska and the Gold Rush; and it is noteworthy that his niece, Martha, is so talented to catch his adventures for posterity. One could never learn as much of Alaska as they could from reading this intriguing story.

Now Monte's trail leads to the Great Beyond and we would like to think he will tell all of them up there his wonderful stories and he will meet his old Alaskan friends, too. He lived to be 89 and what a full worthy life he had; and his old age was filled with colorful memories to keep him company.

My Grandfather and an Uncle went to Alaska during those adventurous years; but I never heard too much about their experiences--not every family is blessed with a writer. But Alaska must be a great land for the Uncle married and moved his family to the Northern lands and there he fished and hunted and finally was laid to rest.

Few ever become wealthy from Alaska's gold; but it did open the eyes of the world to its other wealths and those men who love the great out-of-doors stayed and helped build the territory and keep its story alive.

Perhaps if I were a man, I would taste Alaska for its adventure and I, too, would be really "living" and my everydays would each be a new experience.

Note: Now I'm wondering if this story was one of the influences for Marj to eventually write The Land That Kept Its Promise and, in so doing, become the recorder of her families' adventures for posterity, just like this author that she admired. As she says: "not every family is blessed with a writer," but she became that blessing for her family as well as for many others in her recording of early Lincoln County events. - Virginia Vandehey, Marjorie's niece

July 14, 1952

As I was watching the Easy do my washing this morning, I was dreaming back to childhood when all the family laundry was done up and down on the copper wash board. My back has a little ache for those old days and I gave a prayer of thanks to modern invention.

I often wonder how Grandmother accomplished so much with the meager tools allotted her. It was only a day's job to wash and clean and make the bread. Somehow she got it all done; but I am sure she had little time for leisure.

With all our labor saving devices we seem to fill the days and plenty of work left over for the next. Why is this?

Grandma never lived so near the grocery and didn't spend any time running to the store two or three times a day and she didn't have the radio to adjust and break into her work pattern. Nor did she have an influx of salesmen at the door and the government men to check up on her husband's business.

And she didn't have the automobile to keep clean and shining; and she didn't fix the electrical cords—there weren't any. There actually weren't as many clothes to wash because everyone wore dark colors and weren't as fastidious as they are now.

And only a few rooms were actually used in the house. And the kids all helped or else Pa would use the razor strap. Now we haven't any straps. And baths were only taken on Saturday night and in the kitchen; so there wasn't any bathroom to be cleaned.

Little matter what day and age we lived in, it all goes to show there is work to do with or without labor saving devices.

July 15, 1952

A one-roomed house is rather a small affair for a family of five; but it is snug and warm and this one has an extra lovely location beside a rippling brook and all around is the beautiful silence of the forest; and the neighbors are cordial but not chummy.

Mother Wick and her four young ones enjoyed the bounties of nature and she found it simple to provide her growing family with the necessities of life. As the children grew older and bigger, the living quarters became cramped and the children were restless to learn about the forest world around them.

Gradually they wandered farther and farther from home and any morning would see Mother Wick and her four healthy children Indian filing it down a woodland path. The birds chirped a noisy welcome and the furred neighbors sniffed the air and walked away—like other neighbors we know.

Mrs. Wick stopped and motioned to her brood to hide in the salmonberry thicket. There was a hum and big noises all about them. Danger lay ahead and signaling this, she led her young ones back to their lair. When the family was curled together asleep, she crept into the night to investigate this strange noise and activity.

What a mysterious place she found—now very silent; but she caught the scent of a strange animal and creeping cautiously toward the buildings, she saw this beast with its long tail and bewhiskered face and eyes like two blazing stars. She raised her flag of friendship but did not release danger to this new friend for she sniffed the odor of delicious food and an investigation disclosed milk.

The taste was out of this world and when the cat came near, Mrs. Wick gave it a slap with her handshaped claw. This was food for the best and her babies must have this

luxury. Away she fairly flew to the Wick house and nuzzled the young ones to follow her and one by one she cautiously led them up to the plate of milk.

Mrs. Wick and her family came again each evening to taste this treat. The cat watched in fascination dreaming about the family she had left in good hands to become the companion and mouse trap to the watchman of the sawmill.

Poor Mrs. Wick, this was her undoing, as the occupant of the little house by the mill does not like intruders who use the wrong perfume. A shot in the night left her four babies orphans; at least, they were old enough to eat by themselves.

July 16, 1952

Orphaned babies of any species get human sympathy; and having tasted milk and an easy source of food, the grieving babies came to the little house by the mill; and were a source of pity by the millmen.

Knowing not the fear of adulthood the Wick children were easily tamed and one was placed in a box and taken for a long ride and to a strange adventure into a building reeking with smells no woods ever produced.

The story from here concerns "it" and duly named by your truly as "Heir Wick." Heir had his head stuck in a bottle and the fumes put him into blissful sleep and when he did awake he felt a stinging in the posterior and when he raised his flag, nothing--absolutely nothing happened; but he would always keep trying.

Another ride in a box and strange noises and then into a screened box and a big dish of that good milk. There was a soft rag and he dug into it and made a very comfy bed and slept and slept. A huge hand raised the screen and his keen nose caught the odor of fresh meat. The huge head above the hand wrinkled its mouth into a happy expression; so Heir cautiously crept closer and soon tasted the best meat he had ever had--ever so much more delicious than mouse.

His box home was enlarged to include a sand lot for which he was very grateful as no fastidious skunk likes to use his parlor for a bathroom. During the process of an addition to his home, he was put into a large room and could roam at will. My what a strange place! It was filled with the odors of food and kept very clean. The floor was as slick as a debarked log and he had more fun seeing how much noise he could make with his feet.

Heir wished he could have this for his home, but gentle hands soon lifted him into the confines of his own box palace. "Perhaps some day I will have the big room for my house," he pined to himself. And perhaps he may for if he tames he can also have a fine young cat for a companion.

(We hope he gets real tame for he is such a cute little skunk.)

July 17, 1952

This week I have been going to the hospital to visit Helen, who isn't actually very ill but must lie flat on her back and be there for shots and observation. She is getting some first hand information on hospital life--a life I have already had the misfortune to learn of several times.

Anyway, a visit among the sick makes one very thankful to be well and able to kick around. In bed in the atmosphere of ether and illness, is enough to make the healthy become sick. After two or three days the monotony wears away and no longer hospital life is a new experience.

Seeing suffering and misery should be a lesson for everyone to guard health against all hazards; and the road to the stomach should especially be protected and that which runs into that stomach chosen with care. Not all illnesses come from eating; but many pains can be laid to faulty food habits.

About the only thing sickness is good for is a lengthy subject for conversations. A fellow who hasn't had his turn in a hospital doesn't have much to say at a convention of appendectomy alumnus.

Speaking of health brings up a sore subject; and that is the milk situation. I cannot see why we cannot have milk in its pure form as nature intended it. Now it is diluted to a certain percent. What happens to the cream, I don't know as you certainly can't buy decent cream on the market? Milk can still be clean and free of disease but does it have to be made tasteless and its health giving vitamins removed? Thousands of babies have been fed cows' milk that was never pasteurized and lived to be healthy adults. To be sure certain standards of cleanliness were met and with all our modern facilities these still could be accomplished easier.

July 18, 1952

Worry warts are supposed to have gray hairs. My hair is turning darker and I am told the next stage is gray. I doubt if I ever dye the stuff because it isn't any novelty to wear a gray topknot.

Having gray hair is growing old gracefully. There should be some security built up in younger years against this sign of age. Worry is blamed for it; but I don't think it is the real enemy.

Anxiety brings on other health hazards which can upset the emotional balance and weaken resistance to aging. If we would all watch our health habits and try to run human machinery at a slower pace, then our hair crop wouldn't be so dull.

I suppose if and when I do get a few gray streaks everyone will say, "My goodness! But you are getting old, too."

And I will answer, “Hadn’t you noticed that before--I have had gray matter since I was born and now it is just beginning to be noticeable.”

July 19, 1952

Strikes have been floating around on the breeze and I got a sniff and sneaked away from the household tasks to go down and watch the ocean. That great big old restless ocean is so much like us “beings”; but it never goes on strike and refuses to work.

Every day it has a different color. You can tell when it’s mad or when it feels a little lazy. Today it was a little angry and was greenish gray and very noisy and wild. Sometimes it is a refreshing blue and laps upon the beaches ever so quietly.

No man has yet, with all his ingenious, been able to conquer the power of the ocean. All wonders of this earth would cease to be when the day comes that human hands have harnessed the mighty sea. The ocean is God’s way of telling us there are yet some things we cannot overcome and we must respect other powers, too.
