Crocker Land Relief
Cocker Land Expedition Relief

When the old Newfoundland sealing "Erik" came back after landing Mr. MacMillan and his party at Etah in August, 1913, from the Arctic in the fall of 1913, she brought letters from Mr. MacMillan and his staff telling of the safe landing of the party and their efforts at the point where Peary had his headquarters at Etah in the winter of 1899-1900. They reported that few articles missing as a result of the grounding of the "Diana" in the Straits of Belle Isle and asked for certain supplies to be sent up the next year, if opportunity should offer. Although they had 500 tons of Sydney, N.S., coal, cook and messing apparatus, etc., Small said that that was scarcely enough for one winter, to say nothing of two long, cold years, but he was figuring on the basis of the consumption of the store at the Cape Cod life-saving station where he had served for nine years and could not realize the ease of warming the tightly built snow-banked house which the Expedition was to have for its headquarters. In May-June, 1914, the winter mail from Etah arrived and reassured us as to there being coal enough for the two years that were assigned to the Expedition's life in the Arctic. Little did
any of us suppose then that the code and the provisions
would be called upon for a four years of service
or that they could answer the call, if made. Nevertheless,
The American Museum got together barometers to take
the place of those broken on the voyage to Etah, a box
of scientific supplies to take the make good the deficiency
caused by the failure of the original box to connect
with the “Diana” at Boston on the way northward, other
desired supplies and much mail matter to be sent
to Etah. Mr. MacMillan in the summer of 1914, since
several enterprises had been proposed as means of trans-
portation. One after another these projects failed to
materialize and finally even that of “Fletcher” Scott
to visit his mineral prospects in the Jones Sound
region, with a side trip to Etah, fell through, and
thus we could not communicate with our men
that year, except through the mail via Denmark.
This goes by steamer to Upernivik and thence by dog
sledge once a year for the remaining stretch of 400
miles of sea ice and glacier to the Danish trading
and scientific station at North Star Bay and
thence similarly by special conveyance 140 miles
further to Etah.

Great things were hoped for from the wireless tel...
graph outfit that was taken by the Expedition. When, however, the season of 1913 passed without the establishment by the Canadian government of a wireless station at Cape Wosterholme, we felt discouraged as to the probability of our receiving any messages through lack of power in our apparatus to reach the nearest active station. Nevertheless, we felt sure that our men could receive messages from us and send out despatches in November (Thanksgiving Day) and at Christmas (Quote any of the messages?). But the letters which left Utah at Christmas time in 1913 and reached us the following June informed us of the failure of the Expedition Headquarters to receive any word at the Punch Lodge - as the Expedition Headquarters were named - from anywhere but by wireless. Later we learned of the strenuous efforts that had been made to set up the apparatus and get into touch with the outside world. First free at the main house itself, and the second free and the second fall at a little island - Starr Island - Dr. Hayes - two miles out at the entrance to the Tunge Fjord. Two miles from Headquarters to see in a more exposed situation where the outlook toward the south was not intercepted by near land of high altitude, as it is at the Lodge. As has been related by Mr. MacMillan, aerials were erected, transmitters and receivers were installed, the engine, direct dynamo and storage batteries did their appointed
work but no signals were received and none that were sent out reached any other station. By arrangement with the Canadian Government and the Canadian Marconi Co. the operator at Fogo, Newfoundland, "stood by" on certain evenings every month listening in for signals from Etah but none reached his attention ear.

The understanding with Mr. Mac Millan and his staff was that the Museum would provide for the return of the party in 1915, unless word were received that Crocker Land had been visited and that sufficient scientific work remained to be done to make a third year in the Far North desirable. In December, 1914, word reached us from Mr. Yeblaw that Messrs. Mac Millan and Green had returned from their journey on the ice of the Polar Sea and that "Crocker Land" did not exist there was no land in sight from the spot where "Crocker Land" was supposed to be. The storm that called Mr. Yeblaw at the place where he met Knud Rasmussen's motor boat and sent out this word prevented that boat from getting to Etah and bringing out Mr. Mac Millan's own report on the quest for Crocker Land, but we inferred that the Expedition would be ready to return in the summer of 1915. Hence early in the spring of 1915, while the writer was absent on an
expedition to the Lesser Antilles, the Museum began to look about for a vessel to send to Etah for the members of the staff, their collections and the expedition property that was to come back. Principally in account of the accident to the "Diana", which entailed unexpected expenditures amounting to about $11,000, the funds of the Crocker Land Expedition were exhausted, and it seemed necessary to employ the cheapest means that could do the accomplish the task. A steamer being considered out of the question, a good auxiliary schooner was suggested as being the next best thing as being perfectly competent for the enterprise. Captain George Conner, a well-known whaling captain of long experience in Arctic waters, was engaged to report upon the several vessels that were available and he reported that the "George B. Cluett" belonging to the Wilfred T. Greavell mission among the fishermen of Labrador seemed to meet requirements.

Inasmuch as the Carnegie Institution of Washington gave a favorable report upon the work which this vessel had done for it in Hudson Bay in 1914, she was engaged for the relief of the Crocker Land Expedition.

The "Cluett" is well known to the American...
public through belonging to the Wicfred F. Greenfell Association and being engaged in promoting Dr. Greenfell's medical missionary work among the fishermen of northern Newfoundland and Labrador. She is a three-masted schooner of graceful lines, one hundred thirty-five feet long overall and one hundred fifty-five tons register. Her equipment includes a seventy-five horse power Wolverine gasoline-kerosene engine as auxiliary. Her master was Captain Harris C. Pickels, a deep sea master-mariner of many years' experience. With his approval, Captain Comer was engaged as ice pilot for the voyage. The vessel was to be delivered to the Museum's use at St. Anthony, N.F., or Battle Harbor, Labrador, on 1 July, and everything looked favorable for the accomplishment of our desires. The writer was instructed to accompany the vessel as the representative of the Museum in charge of the relief work.

Delayed by her work for the mission the "George B. Cluett" was not freed at St. Anthony for the Crocker Land Expedition work until noon of 10 July, and then it was necessary for her to come to Sydney, N.S., for kerosene and gasoline and for supplies which the Museum wished to send to Utah, it being Mr. Comer's account of
MacMillan's desire to spend a third year in the Arctic to carry on some studies which he had not been able to make, while so much of his time and energy were employed in caring for the administrative work of the large enterprise under his charge. As matters eventually turned out, it was fortunate that these supplies were taken north, though they were not used for the purpose for which they were procured and forwarded. Six days were consumed by the schooner in making the voyage from St. Anthony to Sydney, so that she was not ready to receive one cargo of coal and provisions until the afternoon of Friday the 16th. Thanks to the energetic assistance of Captain A. J. Morrison of the Imperial Supply Co., repairs to the windlass of the schooner and the kerosene and gasoline that she needed were gotten on board on sight so that the vessel was ready to leave by the afternoon of the 19th, in spite of the intervention of the Saturday afternoon holiday and Sunday when no one in Nova Scotia works, if he can avoid doing so. Meanwhile Captain Pickers had gotten together an almost entirely new crew, only three of the men who brought the vessel around from Boston to Sydney remaining on board for the voyage to Etah. When we set out from Sydney at 6 o'clock the men upon whom depended the success of our enter-
prize were, in addition to the captain, as follows: in the afternoon of Monday, 19 July, there were on board besides Captain Pickels, Captain Cormor and myself, the following as crew: Michael Davis, first mate; Dan Norman, second mate; William Flavender (or Flaner), Ralp Parsons, William Mac Dougall, Frank Taylor and William Wendon, seamen, all natives of Newfoundland, Melrose Cotton of Melrose, Mass., engineer, Nathan Hill of Mahone Bay, N.S., cook, and Charles F. Murphy of Mt. Sinai (L.I.) N.Y., cabin boy and steward. The two mates, Flavender, Parsons and the cook were the only members of this crew who had even seen service at sea or who knew the difference between a sheet and a block, but all were willing enough to work. The three Williams were distinguished as "Uncle Billy," "Mac" and "French Ben", while the cook's sobriquet was "Yankee Nathan" in spite of his German origin. Captain Pickels's home is Mahone Bay, N.S., but he is of American birth and retains American citizenship. All except Norman, the engineer and the cook were the holdovers from the crew that brought the "Cluett" to Sydney, the others being wholly new to the vessel. Mate Davis had had experience as a fisherman on the Grand Banks and elsewhere, and as a sailor in coasting vessels; second mate Norman had seen service as a Jack in the United States navy, and on coasters, Parsons had been sealing from St. John's
The coast had been all over the world in all kinds of vessels for nearly fifty years, though he did not look his years. Captain Pickles par away to sea when he was thirteen years old and had been master of sailing and steam vessels in all parts of the world for more than twenty years. A century later, in 1911, he entered the service of the Grenfell Medical Mission and began to make frequent trips along the Labrador in the "George B. Cluett," ministering to the needs of the various stations.

At precisely six o'clock of the beautiful afternoon of Monday the twentieth of July, lines were cast off from Ingraham's Head, the motor was started and we got under way for the Far North, full of anticipations of an agreeable and interesting voyage to a rarely visited portion of the globe and a safe return to civilization and home in the early autumn. Like many deep-water ship masters Captain Pickles and Captain Conor are great story tellers, and the first evening of our long voyage was made memorable to me by their narration of some of their varied experiences.

At eight o'clock there were indications of a breeze and we hoisted sail. As we were soon afterward the engine refused to work, but the wind freshened a bit and we made fair progress during the night. The wind died out late the next afternoon, but our run for the first 24 hours was 1.35 knots - a rate that would if main...
tained first us at Etah in three weeks time. After supper we unpacked the victrola, which Admiral Peary was sending by us to Ootah, who was one of his four Eskimos at the North Pole, and started a concert on the quarter deck. The behavior of "Chimn", Captain Pickels' year-old full-blooded Newfoundland dog was curious in the extreme. He had never seen or heard such a thing before and he did not know what to make of it. He looked at it with amazed interest and curiosity cocked his head first to one side and then to the other cast inquiring looks around the group of men standing about, and then came around to each of us in turn and sniffed and listened. Satisfied at length as to the source of the music, he curled up beside the machine and settled down to enjoy himself. The performance was a good reproduction of the well-known advertising picture entitled "His master's voice."

Calm weather or light winds were our lot for the next four days and we did little more than drift along northward. The engine had been overhauled by the its builders in preparation for this voyage and had been declared by them to be in perfect order. When it left the shop in June, but trouble had developed in the schooner's voyage from Boston to St. Anthony
and now it became more acute. The flywheel persisted in working loose on the crank shaft, despite all the engineer's efforts at tightening it in place, and on Friday we learned that a crack had appeared in the hub of the wheel, caused by driving home the key as often as was necessary to keep the engine running at all. The cracked flywheel put the engine entirely out of commission for the time being, but the wind improved and about eight o'clock Saturday evening Captain Pickels announced that we had passed Cape Rich and were therefore in the Strait of Belle Isle. Sunday morning we could see Red Bay in the distance and a few miles northeast of there the place where the steamsealer "Diana," miles out of her course, went aground on Barge Rocks on 16 July, 1913, with the Crocker Land Expedition party and supplies on board, nearly wrecking the whole enterprise.

On our way through the strait we passed many ice bergs, some of which were imposing in dimensions and beautiful in appearance and I got up a good deal of enthusiasm over them, never before having been close to any of these dangerous derelicts of the sea. Later experiences in Davis
strait. Drove Sound and farther north took the edge off these first impressions. Sunday afternoon at six o'clock we cast anchor off the fishing village of Battle Harbor, having used up six days in making the trip that should have been accomplished in three and one-half days at most. Monday was spent by the Captain Pickles and the engineer in the primitive blacksmith shop of the little fishing hamlet improvising as best they could a yoke of oak and iron to prevent the fly wheel from going to pieces in service, tools and materials for making better repairs being lacking.

At four o'clock in the afternoon we got under way again for the north. Right here is where the great mistake was made, which cost dearly to all concerned. The relief expedition in the "George B. Chad" should have been abandoned as being inadvisable, but Captain Pickles said that the engine would run all right when needed and the vessel could make the trip successfully; Captain Conner, arguing from his own extensive experience in sailing vessels without auxiliary power, said that the schooner ought to be competent for the voyage and I was anxious to deliver to Mr. MacMillan the supplies which he was supposed to be in absolute to bring back to civilization the returning members of the C.R.S. staff and...
need of to enable him to spend another year of study in the Smith Sound region.

We came out of Battle Harbor under power, but the wind being fair, the engine was shut down as soon as we cleared the land and we bowed along under sail in fine style. We had however scarcely settled down to enjoying this method of progress than great excitement arose on Churn 1915 note Bc, beginning on p. 19 of "Chuatt Voyage" + continuing through Martinique 1915 note Bc + St Vincent do -

About midnight of the ninth of July I was aroused from a good sleep and summoned from my bunk to welcome Knud Rasmussen, who had arrived by the ice-cap route from North Star Bay, accompanied by Peter Foschen, Lange Koch and three Esquimos, White-laho, Igmitaluk and Tobias. I was particularly glad to see Mr. Rasmussen on account of his international reputation as the sympathetic student and portraitor of the character and customs of the Greenland Eskimos and on account of the many courtesies he had shown to the Crocker Land Expedition through his scientific and trading station at Thule, North Star Bay.
Mr. Rock is a young Danish geologist, nephew of Captain Koch who made the traverse of the Greenland Ice Cap in 1913(1), whom Mr. Rasmussen brought with him to map the coast line of Melville Bay and to map and study the geology of Peary Land, it having been Mr. Riis's intention to visit the northernmost land on the globe in the summer of 1916. Tobias Gabrielsen is a south Greenlander of note, having been a valuable member of the important Danish expedition that explored and mapped a large portion of the east coast of Greenland in (?)

There was much to talk about, but we broke off our conversation about 2 a.m. and turned in again, though the excitement of the meeting kept sleep from my eyes for several hours.

Influenced by Mr. Rasmussen's opinion regarding the unsafe position of the "Claret" in Parker Snow Bay and the supposed certainty of the coming of the new relief ship for the Crocker Land Expedition, I decided to embrace the opportunity offered by his presence with six empty tukumotiks to transfer Captain Corner and myself and our most important effects to Thule. Furthermore Mr. Rasmussen assured me that his little schooner "Kap York" would be at North Star Bay at the end of August or the beginning
of September, and that, if both the Expedition relief ship and the "Kap York" failed to come, I could have his strong motorboat "Iger Liis" to transport myself and the members of the Expedition party to South Greenland for the purpose of connecting with one of the last ships of the season for Denmark. Events, however, proved the uncertainty of plans made for travel in the Arctic, for the "Cluett" reached America safely in September and while the other means of exit to civilization failed to accomplish their purpose, but that anticipates my story.

Preparations were hastily made and at 5 a.m. midnight of 11 July the fleet of kahmoottikas got under way for the journey to North Star Bay, Captain Conder riding on Peter Frauenhen's sledge while Knud Rasmussen took care of me. It was not without misgivings that I deserted the schooner, though I was glad to leave the vessel that had been the source of so much distress to me and had been my home for a year. The ride over the ice cap was comfortable and enjoyable, although the sky was clouded over so that the surface of the snow was not frozen so much as it would have been, had the night been clear. The highest part of the route is 1800 or 2000 feet above the sea, and from
many points, we had extended views over the famous "North Water" of Baffin Bay. Its comparative freedom from ice raised our hopes for the early arrival of a new relief ship. As we crossed the extreme head of the Peter-wick glacier and looked down the length of that great ice-stream and across the rugged country lying between its lower reaches and North Star Bay, I was impressed even more deeply than before with the foolhardiness of the attempt to walk from the schooner to Thule that was made by Norman and Taylor in February. Had they persisted in following the route that they were taking, they would surely have lost their way amid the mountains and gorges and have died of cold and hunger in the long night of the season that was upon them.

Our long descent of the ice cap to the head of the valley leading to North Star Bay was an exhilarating slide, the dogs having to maintain full gallop to keep out of the way of the rushing sledges, and the last glimpse of fifty yards to the ground was made on the rear points of the runners, myself sitting as far back on the sledge as possible, Mr. Rasmussen holding back in the upstanders and digging his heels into the snow and the dogs trailing on behind. It being now about six o'clock past, a halt for tea or change was made in the lee of a big boulder for rest and breakfast.
I was glad enough to stretch out for a time on some
skins after the night's experience, since this was my
first long kahmoo'tik ride after coming back from
Cape York six months before. About twelve o'clock
we got under way again for the ten mile stretch still
before us. The snow was gone from the valley for the
most part, but here and there a patch helped us
on our way though the dogs made good progress
over moss and grass and even among stones, so
that Rasmussen's promise that I might sit on the
kahmoo'tik from one end of the journey to the other
was fulfilled. About ten o'clock we made our
way across the bordering loose cakes of ice onto the still
firm ice of North Star Bay and a few minutes later
were welcomed by Mr. Skelaw and Dr. Stuntz at the
headquarters of the Southern Substation of the Croker
Land Expedition.

The change to North Star Bay was an agreeable
and beneficial, and the time passed pleasantly
and rapidly, especially at first before we began
to be anxious about the arrival of the new relief
ship. The weather was good and interesting
excursions in all directions were made on
foot, by canoe and in the motorboat.
Corner to excavate refuse heaps near Idaho this summer, supplementing valuable work done near North Star Bay last summer.

Making botanical and ornithological studies this summer.
Left Etah 24 March. At Igloolik, Macmillan started the next day with three Eskimos to map certain portions southeast coast Ellesmereland and make studies as far as Lancaster Sound returning Etah 30th June. My own sledge journey eleven hundred miles sixty-one six days accomplished without serious accident. Arrived Godhavn twenty-ninth May. Spent four days on bunkering "Danmark" frozen in near North Star Bay. Vessel and crew all right with coal enough for journey Etah and back to South Greenland. Knud Rasmussen and two assistants besides several Eskimos were leaving Northstarbay fifth April on trip Fort Conger and Pecquayland. I left Cape York eighth April and consumed twenty days crossing Melville Bay. Mostly good weather but deep snow on ice. Arrived Upernivik second May and left on sea ice three days later. Winter in Danish Greenland open warm and little ice. Spring late cold. Heavy sea ice. Much snow down to Disko Bay. Delayed eight days South Upernivik account fresh snow. Eskimos here but coming to Godhavn July await Crockerland Expedition relief ship. I crossed Yaught open boat. Sledges broke through rotten ice Mudderbay Disko. Twenty-seventh May. Left Godhavn "Hans Egede" tenth July.
Katdla

Inomhedenes Sjæl.

Katdla stod i den for sin Forfang og fros. - Og dog gik hun ikke med den andre
vest i Venets Vælbønne.

Såg jegde hende sig godt og højt hende
fast som mørke i Stormen og Hjelme hav
sæter i deres lille Vær.

Brød mod Elephanten, der bred dere

Trodsigt lod den rene Pandu mos
i deres hvide Valde. Men hvide Pandu
sag og Bilde, og ved Broddens
hvit Forvende Broede skel op i Ven-
den som Befog i fresh hav af
Prekmærke afmørket sau som af
magnetiske Vrede må mod Givende
der stor tause og stjere g

Aug ment ja, men over sj.

Katdla stod i den gade, straks hun
saa Levet og Selv komme
nillede mod land, men hende
angste slog samt hurtig over i vel, og
rende Fælles af Ikke kan hun
Left Etah twenty-fourth March all well. Ekblaw well South
Uperminke coming Godhavn await relief ship. Am well expect any
instructions Nyeboe Copenhagen. Inform usual list plus Beaty Crampston.

Macmillan Corner Small South Uperminke
both well Etah March also Ekblaw May. Send me any instructions Nyeboe
Copenhagen. Home via Norway information list plus Beaty Crampston.

Macmillan Corner Small well Etah and March also Ekblaw South
Uperminke middle May. Left Denmark all right April
Cable me Nyeboe Copenhagen.

All well cable me Nyeboe Copenhagen.