

Sam White, Alaskan

By Sam O. White

Illustrations by William Rexrode

Part XII Koyukuk Moose Hunt

rising snort and whistle. He blew in answer from far up the muskeg and in the timber at the head end, maybe a thousand yards away. He snorted and blew again and we heard him rattling his rack in the brush, challenging us, it seemed. He was reacting like he thought it was another buck spoiling for a fight and that there most certainly must be the finest fattest best looking doe he'd ever see just standing there waiting for the victor.

After the second or third answering blow, we caught a glimpse of him working towards us through the open timber flanking the muskeg. He'd snort, blow, rattle his antlers against tree or bush and pound his hoofs, then charge another fifty feet closer along the flank of the hillside, crashing through the brush, hooves beating a tattoo.

Coming to a dead stop he'd seem to wait for me to sound off. I'd give him a little teaser and away he'd go again, a fierce whistling blow, rattle of antlers, stomping of feet, pounding charge and perhaps another fierce blow that was almost a whistling scream. This was the wild, no mistake, and Mac and I could only gasp the same unforgivable word each time in answer,—"Jesus!"

If that buck blew once in answer, he blew fifty times, and each time he was closer to us. When he ended up he was straight across from us on the opposite hillside, perhaps eighty yards away, standing dead still now in the brush, his head and rack and his big ears showing plainly once you say the white and black face of him disguised by the bleak background of a couple of weathered pine boles and more leafless gray brush.

Mac plugged him neatly dead on just under the chin high in the throat, breaking his neck. When we walked up to him, the smell of those loaded scent hocks was a real thing. That buck was ready.

It was a convincer for Mac. He had seen the deer call work, and it was he who dubbed my little blueberry and yellow cedar bark call "the horny horn."

Try one. You'll get a lot more out of going into the woods, for hunting, pictures, or just getting a little bit closer to the natural state of things. And don't give up if it doesn't work the first time or two for you. Sometimes she do and sometimes she don't, but if she "do" we'll hope you get an experience like that one Mac and I had.

I'm going afield again this next weekend. Think I'll make another call and see what gives.

Oh, not just incidentally, if you are bear country, there's something about the hunt when you realize a big old brownie might make a sneak on you just as well as a curious doe or heated up old fat neck buck. ●

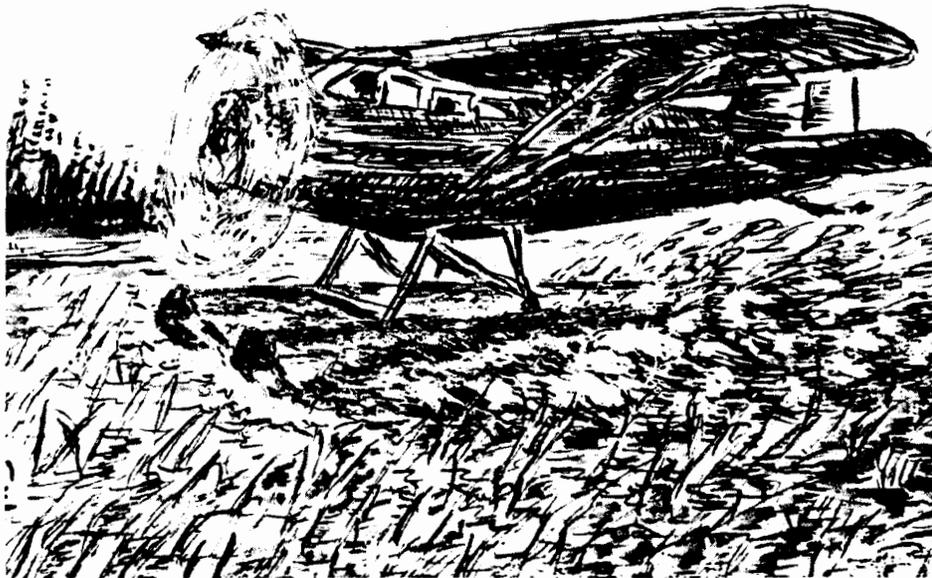
SOMETIMES you find yourself in a spot where business can very easily be combined with pleasure. That was certainly true of the Koyukuk River valley where I flew the mail on bush runs for several years in the mid-1950's. My headquarters were at Hughes on Wien Air Lines' certificated route, which I also knew well, having flown the mail to Koyukuk in the good old days when it was a bush operation all the way from Fairbanks. I flew mail, freight and passengers up and down the river and to an Air Force base at Utopia, and made connections at Hughes with Wien mainliners.

I lived at the Hughes Trading Post, operated by Mr. and Mrs. L. F. James who had been on the Koyukuk for many years. I also had my own float ship at Hughes to play around with. On off days I would steam it up and fly to distant lakes and rivers to look around. There were places where bear were uncommonly plentiful, and there were places where moose were uncommonly plentiful, and wolves were uncommonly plentiful all over the place. But there was one particular spot that I kept under observation. It was a big mud hole lake where I used to keep a cache of gasoline when I was flying game patrol in a

slow short-ranged ship during the early 1930's. This lake was of bottomless mud. It never had more than eighteen inches of water in it, and at times it got down to only four inches. The only plane that could maneuver in and out of this lake was one with an outsized motor and lots of power to make the mud fly. But at this lake, everything seemed to be uncommonly plentiful.

I had some vacation coming up and it seemed like a good time to collect a moose to fill the deep freeze for the coming winter. I communicated this idea to Noel Wien and his two flying sons, Merrill and Richard, suggesting we rendezvous in this particular moose pasture on the first of September.

It seemed like a good idea to them, too, so on the appointed day we gathered at the Mud Hole with two float ships and a lot of gear. In my ship alone, I had saws, axes, knives, whet stones, robe, tent, grub, a "come along," block and tackle, wire and much other paraphernalia I was planning on establishing a permanent cache there, which explained some of it, but all in all, we were probably the best equipped expedition that ever hit those parts, so far as gear to take care of a moose after he was collected was concerned. We selected a spot



It was a big mud hole lake and maneuvering in it required lots of power to make the mud fly.

in a grove of birches with a cold clear creek running through it for our campground, and packed our duffle and equipment seventy-five yards across the meadow and dumped it in one big hodge podge pile at the edge of the grove. Then we all gathered around and started looking for the tent to pitch before it got too dark. To add to the general mess, a coil of wire had burst its bounds when we threw it down and had looped all through the grass and around five or six of my old empty gas cans.

About this time a tremendous commotion broke loose out by the airplanes. We looked around and saw a dark shape about the size of a Sherman tank enveloped in a cloud of mud, water and uprooted grass clods barrelling right toward us. We jumped in all directions but our feet got tangled up in the coils of wire

then hit the sacks hoping no more big bulls would come barging through camp before morning.

We awoke to a beautiful scene. The sun was shining brightly on the big meadows and just a trace of fog was burning away. I had the feeling that this place hadn't changed much since North America was discovered. And at that moment it wouldn't have seemed out of place if Christopher Columbus had come walking up the meadow, claiming everything for His and Her Spanish Majesties.

This day and the next we spent taking care of our gear and getting everything in apple-pie order. We cut wood, cooked, washed dishes, tidied up camp, and Noel built a bridge across the creek. We luxuriated in the sunshine, and watched the moose parade in and out of the meadows. There were big

Shortly after we saw him stagger, we heard a shot and knew he had been hit. Merrill came out of the grass like a Jack out of the box and went over to where the moose had disappeared in the woods. Then we heard another shot, and knew there was work to do.

The tools and tackle were already in one of the aircrafts so we just taxied over. It was a huge bull with an antler spread of sixty-nine inches. The beam was heavy and the massive palms were even and symmetrical. I estimated him to be a full 1,800 pounds on the hoof. We gathered a bunch of poles and had him off the ground in jig time. I went to work on the interior department and got him field dressed, and then we all turned to, got a big timber between two big trees, and with block and tackle and the "come along" we had him strung up by the heels just like a rabbit. We propped him open to drain, got some screening around his body and a piece of canvas loosely over that, and left him to cool off and the muscles to set so that they could be cut without bulging or contracting. Then we went back to camp for a big feed, which we were in need of.

The next morning, after a scrumptious breakfast of bacon and eggs and moose liver, not to mention hot cakes with Maine maple syrup and some first-class coffee, I took a trip into Hughes to high-pressure Ralph Hoover into coming back to the moose pasture with me. It didn't take much arm-twisting. Ralph is a skookum young chap of six feet plus and at least 200 pounds, none of which is lard, and I figured he'd be real handy to

have around when it came to moving that moose. But the next day we just continued to luxuriate in the beautiful weather and have fun and watch the moose parading for us, a grand sight to see. The following day we went over to collect the meat from Merrill's moose and, thanks to the able help of Ralph and our own strong man Richard, we got it back to camp. Richard and Merrill flew the moose to Bettles and I flew Ralph back to Hughes, which left Noel and me with the moose pasture all to ourselves.

Well we cut wood, cooked and ate, and slept a little but not too much, as it was too beautiful in the meadows to spend much time sleeping. Noel shot three wild geese and we had lots of good meat. We watched the moose come and go in the meadows, but we weren't knocking ourselves out trying to get one. Our method of hunting was to sit in the tent, drink a cup of coffee, and tell each other yarns of "the good old days of bush flying" and how different the "now-a-days" had gotten to be. Every half hour or so one of us would leave the tent and check the meadows. If a moose was out there we would study the situation with a critical



That moose looked as big as a Sherman tank when it rambled through our camp.

and every move made it worse. The wire banged on the empty gas cans and raised a great metallic clamor. It didn't seem so at the time, but this probably was a great help. As the apparition approached the zero mark, it sheared off a bit, and instead of hitting us dead center, brushed past on our left and disappeared into the forest in a great spray of broken branches, flying grass and weeds. I caught a glimpse of a massive set of antlers as it swept by. Whew! That was a close one!

We took stock, and not one of us had a weapon in his hands. That bull could have annihilated us in a matter of seconds if he had been so disposed. We had no interest in opening hostilities on him either, as to have 1,800 pounds of bull on our hands at that hour was unthinkable, especially since we were hungry, a bit weary, and the tent still wasn't pitched. The big conundrum, however, was how that bull got himself out in the meadow by the airplanes without us seeing or hearing him, when we were between him and the woods. Well, we got the tent pitched in spite of the darkness and a feed of sorts under our belts,

ones, medium-sized ones, and small ones, and they showed very little fear of us.

On the third day Richard and Merrill got busy. They climbed into our five-man raft and shoved off for the north meadow about a mile and a half away with a little breeze against them. A rubber raft in a breeze is an ungainly contraption. They would shove ahead two feet and lose one foot. But at last Noel and I watched them disappear into the tall grass of the north meadow. We kept the glasses on the meadow for quite awhile, and every now and then would see a head pop out of the grass to take a look around, and then pop back.

Before long a huge moose appeared at the west end of the meadow. Out popped a head about 400 yards away and then disappeared again. The moose wandered out into the lake across the meadow and went to feeding. Out popped the head again, about 300 yards away. The moose fed a few minutes longer, then raised his head, sampled the air, and took off across the meadow for the woods in a big rush. Just about halfway, the moose staggered, then recovered, then disappeared in the fringe of trees.

eye. Usually something would be wrong, such as:

1. Not fat enough.
2. Out in the water.
3. Out in the mud.
4. Too far down the meadow (200 yards was a legitimate excuse).

We couldn't seem to come up with the right set of circumstances. But finally we realized the moose's mating season was coming up, and no one with any experience or proper advice will shoot a bull moose to eat during mating season. So we re-examined our strategy.

After much thought we came up with the idea that if a moose showed up in the mud or water, say 200 yards from camp, we could, by stirring ourselves a bit, sneak down and get between him and the woods. Then we'd hide until he walked out into our arms, so to speak. So about noon the next day, after we polished off a pot of coffee and a roasted goose, I strolled out to check the meadow.

There was a big bull about 250 yards below camp, out in the water and eating like he hadn't eaten for a week. I passed this information along to Noel who put the glasses on him and pronounced him prime and fat. Accordingly I wormed my way down through the woods until I got to a point opposite the moose. Then I made my way toward him with great care until I got to a clump of jack spruce

about sixty feet from the edge of the meadow. The bull was still feeding, so I sized up the situation and the lay of the land.

A four-foot ridge of ground like a berm shoved up by ice lay at the edge of the meadow and forest. To the north for about 200 feet this berm had no brush on it, but heavy brush lay between me and the berm. In this game, the moose had the first move, and in about fifteen minutes he made it. Grunting as if in protest, he walked slowly out of the water directly toward me.

Everything worked perfectly until it got to where everything depended upon me, and then everything sort of came apart at the seams. The moose walked right up to the berm behind the thick clump of brush and stopped. I could see one ear only, and it was swiveling around to pick up any sound. I waited a bit, but it was obvious the moose was preparing to lie down behind the berm. Then I said to myself, "Heck, at sixty feet I can put a 180 grain bronze tip right into that ear and the hunt is over."

I took careful aim and laid the bead right into that ear and let fly. The ear disappeared. There was a prodigious thump as the moose hit the ground. A couple of seconds of scuffling followed, like the moose was kicking his last. Then, to my surprise, a big old bull erupted out of the grass from behind the berm about 200 feet from

Merrill Wien's bull had an antler spread of sixty-nine inches and I estimated it weighed around 1,800 pounds.



From where I was standing all I could see of that moose for a target was one ear.

where my moose should be lying. He had his head high in the air and was looking wildly about in all directions. I was sure it was another moose that, unseen by me, had been sleeping in the grass behind the berm. But then he took off into the lake and began to shake his head violently, and I knew it was my moose. But he was in the water then, and I could do nothing about it but watch.

Well, he finally started back towards the meadow but, while still in the mud, turned south. I didn't want him to go south, I wanted him to go north because Noel was back up there at the campground watching the whole performance with the field glasses. So I rushed out into the meadow, yelling my head off. The moose stopped, shook his head at me menacingly, and then turned around and took off up the meadow toward Noel. Every once in awhile he would veer off as if to cut into the woods, but each time he changed his mind and stuck to the meadow. However, each time he started to turn, Noel would have to run over to cover the woods, and each time he turned back to the meadow, Noel had to run back to the campground. I just quit doing anything. It was all up to Noel now. I got down real low behind a jog in the berm to give Noel a free field of fire. About that time the moose got near the aircraft which were parked about seventy-five yards in front of camp. He took fright from these and barged into the birch grove. I lost sight of him, but heard a shot, followed a few moments later by a second shot, and knew that the hunt was over.

I disentangled myself from the brush and the berm and walked back to

camp. Noel was sitting on a stump, a bit winded. I was a bit winded, too, so I found myself another stump and we puffed awhile together. Then we went and looked at the moose. He was a dandy, real big and fat. But what interested us most was, "Where did my bullet go?"

Let me digress for a moment. Several years before, I was cleaning out a moose I had just shot when another massive bull stepped out from behind some jack spruce within forty feet of me. He was mad, driving first one antler and then the other into the grass and ripping it up and scattering it about. My first impulse was to shoot him, but since I already had one down and he was doing nothing worse at the moment than threatening me with mayhem, I held off and studied the situation. Then something flashed through my mind. When I hunted deer as a young lad back in Maine, I had, on three or four occasions, inadvertently shot the antler off a buck deer, and it always knocked him for a loop. Down and out for several minutes. Now I wondered what a 30.06 would do to this huge bull if I shot him in the antler. It was obvious that from that distance there was no time to be lost in cogitating, so I aimed where the beam starts spreading into the palm and cut loose.

I was totally unprepared for what happened next. The bull just collapsed straight down. His belly hit the ground with a big thump. There was a second's pause, and then he got his hind legs gathered up under him and made about a hundred feet on his brisket, scattering dry poles and slivers and blueberry bushes in all directions. He finally got on all fours and really put on the steam. Long after he was out of sight, I could still hear him knocking down dry poles and limbs.

In this case, pretty much the same thing had happened, although my intentions were definitely different. Noel and I figured that my bullet must have hit a bush and tumbled. It cut a gash in his hide across the top of his neck just a half inch behind the ears, hit the beam, then hit again where the beam blends into the palm, and penetrated clean through on a slant, giving him a terrific, though temporary, knock-out punch.

Well, again there was work to do, and just us old codgers to do it. But we went to work and cut and sawed and pulled and pushed and at long last the meat was stacked on poles in the meadow, draining and cooling. Two days later it was in Fairbanks being made ready for the freezer. Before leaving the moose pasture we cached enough supplies and equipment so that anyone arriving there in need would have shelter and food.

The following summer Mort Berry, a Fairbanks boy, and I went back to

the moose pasture and put in a proper cache. Then Mort built a shack for me there as fast as I could fly the materials in to him. I was still flying mail out of Hughes, but on weekends I would take my float ship and go over and put in a couple of nights with Mort. The bears had torn up one of my tents, but the weather was good so I slept under a tree. Mort slept under a tarp. The mosquitoes were thick and fierce so we had to use bed nets. Mort had a beautiful young dog of the Norwegian Elkhound variety who seemed very intelligent, and we depended on him to warn us if any bears approached camp--which was a mistake. This dog spent most of his time chasing the field mice that were all over the place, with considerable success. Apparently he wore himself out days to the point where he slept very well nights.



Noel Wien was ready and waiting at the camp when the moose arrived.

Anyway, about one o'clock one morning (we have twenty-four hours daylight here in the summer) I awoke with an uneasy feeling. I looked out through the bed net and saw a big old black bear not twenty feet away from me, looking pretty mean and belligerent. I reached out under the bed net, grabbed my carbine, and yelled, "Bear in camp!" Then I swung the gun over the bed net and blasted just as the bear raised his front feet off the ground to take a punch at me. Mort joined the battle with a couple of shots from his magnum revolver, which didn't do any harm but weren't really needed as the slug from my Winchester had taken the starch out of the bear. All he could do was tumble away, and we let him go. The farther they get from camp, the less they smell. The ground here is frozen year-round and it is just about four inches down to solid frost so you can't bury anything, and this bear was too big to drag. Under his own power, he obligingly got just the minimum distance necessary away from camp.

A week later when I was at the moose camp, the bear was still intact and Mort said that not a single raven

had showed up to feed on it. But about ten-thirty that night, as I lay in my sack looking up at the sky, I noticed a lone raven flying over at about a thousand feet. He never deviated from his straight course nor let out a single squawk. He just kept going west. But about two hours later a whole squadron of ravens appeared out of the west and flew straight to the bear. They made a terrific racket, and the next day there was nothing but picked bones.

It might be of interest here to record some of the observations I made of game while flying the bush runs up and down the Koyukuk River valley. That stint gave me the opportunity to watch the game closely over a period of years, and to solidify certain ideas I had and to discard a few others that I wasn't so sure of anyway. There was at that time

a big moose population in the Koyukuk, which is a very large valley. Plenty of summer and winter forage was available, and some of the range was still unoccupied.

But the winter of 1957 was a very hard one on the moose herds. Lots of snow fell and a crust formed, then more snow and another crust, and finally there were light snowfalls on top of that. Wolves could travel fast and far since they did not break through the crust. But the moose could barely move about. They ganged up the best they could in favorable places, but the wolves still had an easy time catching and killing them.

There was a large influx of wolves into the area, running in packs of twelve to thirty. One large band seemed to headquarter on the east side of Indian Mountain. But about once a month, they'd make a big swing-around. They would cross the north side of the mountain over into the Hog River valley, run down the valley to a point near or just west of the Hog's junction with the Koyukuk, travel east for a ways onto the big flat just south of Hughes, then turn north and, after a few days, turn up on the east side of Indian Mountain

again. All this was accomplished in a leisurely manner and the circuit was completed in about two weeks plus maybe a day or two.

The trail along this circuit was a shambles of dead moose. The wolves did not eat them all, and several that I saw were chewed up and left to die later. I spotted one medium-sized moose after the wolves had left him with a big hole eaten out of his shoulder. I traced the trail from the air, and the story was written in the snow as plain as day. Six wolves had jumped this moose and, due to the depth of the snow, had him down within a hundred yards of where they jumped him. There was one place on the trail ten yards long without a wolf track, and the floundering of the moose showed that all the wolves were riding him. Then one at a time the wolf tracks reappeared in the snow again with blood stains and great tufts of hair on both sides. At the end of this grisly trail lay the moose with his left shoulder mostly eaten out, but his head up. He lived through the second day, but on the third day I saw that he had gotten up, taken about three steps, and fallen dead on the opposite side. The wolves never went back to him, and before they got around on their next circuit the ravens had cleaned him up except for a few scraps of hide.

After pulling this moose down, the six wolves rejoined the main gang ten miles east. This bunch had two moose down, but they weren't feeding. Most of them were out on a frozen lagoon rolling in the snow, while others were taking their ease in the bushes on both sides of the lagoon. The sun was out and they seemed to be enjoying themselves. Several days later they were all back on the east side of Indian Mountain.

Another day I was cruising just east of Utopia over a vast area of swamps and scattered clumps of jack spruce. Three wolves were running across a lake and they seemed very intent upon something on the other side. I circled back and observed a number of wolves piled all over a big cow moose. They were so concentrated on their prey couldn't get a count. Then the other three arrived and they piled on top. The old cow would rise up on her hind legs, but her front end would stay down and she couldn't make it.

I could look down on a wolf's back and see it undulating and wrenching, and a strip of hide would come loose and fly out into the snow. The old cow didn't have a chance. Then I went over to the other side of the lake to see what the three wolves had been doing there. It was plenty. They had killed the old cow's calf there. It was late, and the moose herd had been terribly decimated. I notified the Fish and Wildlife of this, but they didn't show up. But help came at



I grabbed my carbine and yelled. "Bear in camp!"

last in the form of two native boys of the Yukon, Donald Stickman and James Huntington.

Stickman owned a Piper P. A. 18, and in his expert hands this aircraft was a thing alive. Fear was not in him. He flew between trees, under trees and around trees. He landed on mountain tops and in postage stamp areas. Huntington was the gunner and he did not miss. Probably there is no other man in Alaska who can kill ten wolves with ten shots. Rifle or shotgun, this man is a dead shot on moving targets and on a moving platform. Fear is not a part of him either.

I told them of what I saw east of the mountain. Jimmy said, "We shot four wolves just back here a ways but it got dark and two got away. We got to go back in the morning and get them two. It will take about forty-five minutes."

It took an hour, but that's what they did. Then they went after the ones I saw killing the old cow moose. Late that evening when they came back, Jimmy got out of the plane and started pulling out wolf carcasses. He had been sitting on them. One

large wolf was still opening and closing his jaws menacingly. I called this to Jimmy's attention. He looked, but was not impressed. "Too far gone to be dangerous," he said. Then he told me, "We found them close by. They went into the jack spruce thicket and wouldn't come out. I shot a 'cracker shell' and that thicket exploded. We got them all. There was fourteen." All the wolves were rolling fat, with big globs of fat under the hides and amongst the intestines. I never knew wolves could get that fat.

That winter the moose herd was cut down eighty-five per cent as I sat aloft and watched the tragedy unfold below me. The wolf kill among cows far exceeded that among bulls, running about five to one. When wolves attack the cows, they try to protect their calves, and so both fall easy prey. I do not advocate total extinction of wolves, but I do advocate preventing them from taking over like they did that winter. Wolves are vicious and savage far beyond the needs of nature.

Calving time in the spring is another time when the cows catch it good.

One May I was cruising between Hughes and Huslia with the Rev. Patterson Keller along with me. We saw five cow moose in a swamp, all heavy with calf. Three black bear were posted in strategic places holding these moose out in the open, waiting for them to drop their calves. We chased one bear out of the swamp, but while we went after another one, the first returned and took up his vigil at the same old place. We gave up. Five miles away and across the river, two more bears were keeping watch over three more cows in an open swamp. It was no use. But I couldn't help thinking that a twelve gauge shotgun in such a situation would do wonders for the moose.

One time in September, just before the moose rut, I saw a group of cows in a swamp and four big bulls at the edge of the woods. Fifty yards from the cows were two calves, who dared not come closer to the bulls. A big black bear was sneaking up through the grass after the calves, and I put the run in him in no uncertain terms.

When the bulls gather with the cows for the rut, the calves hang around the edges. They are afraid of the bulls, and at this time Mama is no help to them at all. But once, at the beginning of the rut, I saw something that was hard to believe--a big bull actually helping a cow defend her calf.

I was returning to Hughes from the Alatna mail run when I flew over a very large sand bar with a thick willow grove behind it. Out of these willows stepped a huge bull moose. Right on his heels was a calf, and right on the calf's heels was the cow. The cow and the bull walked down to the water's edge with the calf between them. Then a large bear came out of the willows right on their tracks and went about a hundred yards out on the sand bar and stopped. The bull moose turned around and charged the bear, prancing and lunging and sweeping with his big antlers, and the bear took off into the willows. Meanwhile the cow and the calf swam the river, and the bull turned and swam after them.

Another time during the rutting season I flew over a gathering of about thirty moose, with about three cows to one bull. They were not fighting at this stage, just standing around glaring at each other. The calves were hanging around the fringes of a clump of jack spruce. Suddenly there was a big commotion in the thicket. Out burst a big black bear with a huge bull moose hard on his heels. When they hit the swamp, the moose was gaining, but the bear made the next thicket and the moose gave up. He was worked up to such a pitch, however, that he selected a jack spruce and reduced it to

splinters in a hurry. Then he rejoined the group at the trysting place.

I asked the natives at Hughes if a bull moose ever killed a bear. "On yes," they replied, "in the fall they do. And the biggest piece we find is the paws."

(This winds up twelve installments of Sam O. White's story of his experiences in Alaska, from driving the dog team trails with the U. S. Coast

and Geodetic Survey in the early 1920's to criss-crossing the northern skyways in recent years. From time to time we will be carrying more of Sam's stories, because, as an author, he's gone modern too. First his reminiscences were hand-written with the trusty ballpoint on yellow legal paper. But now he has a new Sears Roebuck typewriter--and he really has learned to fly it.) ●

MILEPOSTS in northland travel . . .

An editorial supplement to THE MILEPOST, our annual guide to the Alaska Highway. Any questions not satisfactorily answered in THE MILEPOST we will be happy to try and answer personally, or forward if necessary to the proper authority. Write "Travel Editor," Box 1271, Juneau, Alaska. You may order a copy of THE MILEPOST from the same address for \$1.95, postage paid.

Old Copper Center Lodge on the Richardson Highway finally reopened for business late last summer after a major mop-up job brought about by the rampaging Klutina River. George Ashby, well-known pioneer and owner of the lodge, said the flooding last winter destroyed the carpeting, much of the furnishings and the heating plant. For a week the entire ground floor of the lodge was covered with muddy water and chunks of ice. Historic Copper Center, at the confluence of the Copper and Klutina rivers, was a regular overnight stopping place for men and horses heading into the Interior over the Valdez Trail in the early days. In recent years it was rebuilt as a hotel-motel for tourists.



Diane L. Thiede

Fiscal 1965 was a banner traffic year for three vessels of the Southeast Alaska marine highway system, and the outlook for next year is even better. State ferry system traffic manager Al Ritchie says that 108,374 passengers and 22,877 vehicles rode the ferries during the fiscal year that ended June 30. That's 12,391 passengers and 3,367 vehicles more than were carried during the previous fiscal year. And as early as last summer, while one record load after another was being chalked up, tour groups already were booking space for 1966. The vessels can carry 500 passengers and 108 vehicles. Each now has sleeping accommodations for 88, but plans are being made to in-

stall more sleeping quarters during winter drydocking and maintenance.

A New 33-room addition to the Anchorage Travelodge was completed last August, bringing its total number of units up to 93. The motel, which is located at Third and Barrow streets, also has a coffee shop, dining room, cocktail lounge and banquet rooms. The original 60-unit lodge opened in April of 1964.

In keeping with a new nationwide policy, the U. S. Forest Service began requiring entrance charges this year for 12 areas within the Chugach National Forest in South-central Alaska. The areas are Williwaw, Black Bear, Beaver Pond, Bertha Creek, Granite Creek, Porcupine, Mud Lake, Ptarmigan, Primrose Landing, Crescent Creek, Quartz Creek and Cooper Creek. The fee is 50 cents a day for a car and its occupants, or \$2 for a seasonal ticket for an individual area.

A Michigan couple, who had been keeping an eye out for Alaska wildlife all the way up the highway, finally saw some--too late. Driving along in the dusky dark at about Mile 176 of the Glenn Highway, a big moose loomed up right in front of the car driven by Mr. Wallace Masters. It was struck broadside, fell on the hood, stuck a couple of legs through the windshield, and rode out the remainder of the wild out-of-control ride on the roof, which collapsed. Mr. Masters sustained face and hand lacerations, Mrs. Masters a broken leg and foot, and the moose died.

Modern conveniences in the middle of the Talkeetna Mountain wilderness are offered at Stephan Lake Lodge which opened for business last summer after four years a-building. The lodge is located 115 miles north of Anchorage at the 2,000-foot level