

Mattie Gilbertson Leckwold
Matanuska Valley
Woman dog-team mail carrier

Palmer Pioneer Home
Sept. 1974
N. Jacobs, interview
1 hour

Mattie Leckwold was the first homesteader in the Matanuska Valley, settling at Four Corners about 1916.

She was born about 1899 in Clarissa, Minnesota, and came to Alaska with her husband who was in the army but was disabled by WW I injuries.

Soon after they homesteaded, Mattie began carrying the mail between their homestead and outlying settlements to the railhead. "Day-in, day-out," she ran the mail for ten years. In the summer she jogged with packs on her dogs backs; in the winter she used a sled and harnessed the dogs.

Mattie tells of one close brush when the mercury was down to minus 60. She made the round trip journey but only with the help of a doctor along the way. She was badly frozen and has suffered ever since from the frozen skin, she says.

Mattie tells about raising, training and using her dogs.

She tells about building their log cabin, then later a "big nice house," and how she was the "breadwinner," while her husband kept the homestead going. After his death she moved to Anchorage where she lived in "comfort," but always loved her homesteading days.