

Palmer, Alaska
Mar. 12, 1936

Dear Mrs. Bahti,

Please accept our apologies for not writing sooner, but it seems as though time flies so fast with plenty of work and everything new that one don't seem to set down to write. We wish to thank you for all you did for us before we left. We have not regretted coming here at all. We really like it here, and have every intention of staying unless the whole works blow up, and we are forced to leave. So far everything has been satisfactory and far beyond our expectations. We naturally thought we were to have a small log cabin, but now we have a nice 5 room modern home, and new furnishing, gasoline washing machine, radio, etc.

We have a team, 2 cows, 2 sheep, a hog and a calf. We have ordered more sheep and chickens for the spring. The creamery will open soon, when all the cows have freshened so they'll have a large enough amount of milk. We sell what butter and cream we have now to Palmer families there. Cream is \$.90 a qtr., and Mr. Sheely our General Manager says that anybody selling for less will be kicked out of the corporation. We have about 10 acres cleared and a half of that was plowed in November, so we'll have a nice start for spring. We have 80 acres and I have filed for an extra forty homesteading. We are allowed \$45.00 (3 in family) for food. Clothing we have been able to purchase too in reasonable amounts.

We have been very fortunate as to climatic conditions. The winter has been wonderful compared to your Michigan winter. Giving us a break I guess.

I haven't had a chance to do much hunting here yet, because you have to go so far now that this valley is so closely settled. An old settler that lives a half a mile from here, shot a big moose in his back yard this fall. It was 52 in. between the horns. We had a piece of the meat and it was very good. We got reindeer here at the store, but that isn't as good as your venison, Spruce-hens are in abundance and are very nice eating in the fall. Just now they would taste too sprucey. The woods here are mostly spruce, white birch, and large cotton wood. They all make good firewood.

For hay they grow oats, peas, and vetch mixed for cattle. That grows the height of a man almost on account of so much rain, but it don't ripen till its cut and put on racks like they did in Finland. It sure makes the cow's milk though and they love it. They average about 10 ton to an acre. Potatoes grow good, but not as much to the acre as over there. All vegetables grow good. We had a community garden last summer at camp. We had wonderful celery, head lettuce, cabbage, beets, carrots, peas, radishes, etc. One thing we'll miss here is the apples. They claim that the apple tree will not thrive here. Flowers grow to twice the size as out there, and the people thrive too. I could just bet anything that every child and grown up has gained out here. Our son has out grown every one of his clothes we got before we started.

They have a beautiful school building in Palmer built this winter. Also a hospital trading post, barber shop, power house, post office, beauty parlor, drugstore and a couple of restaurants. Our new depot too takes the cake. Will have to get some pictures of these and send you folks up there. We have a weekly newspaper "The Matanuska Pioneer". I've been sending them to my brother in Hancock.

We have been getting mail once a week here all the time. Rumors have it that we may get two deliveries a week. Last night we heard on the radio that they were trying to get an air-mail route from here to Seattle. That would be great.

We have sent Pat Kelly an application if he wished to come here. If so, maybe you could write to Mr. Ross Sheely, Gen. Manager, Palmer, Alaska and give him a recommendation. I'm sure Art himself would like it here, also the children. Mrs. Kelly seems not so interested but she may change her mind.

Our wells were drilled for us too. Ours is 53 ft. and good water. I didn't hear if anyone striking an artesian here. Some have to go over 200 ft. to get good water.

Our groceries are delivered to us once a week, and children are taken to school on the bus. We also have bus service for church, Sunday school and dances. Mr. Lasko from Mo. has played in the orchestra here for the dances. He's a great accordion player. Perhaps you've heard him, he used to play in Hancock. The Greens live a forty away from us, so it makes it nice for us to visit each other. Of course we are all good friends here having come here all at the same time, we have so much in common.

Well, I guess this just about covers our history for the while we've been here. I'll stop and if there's anything you wish to know we'll be glad to let you know. We'd like to hear from you sometime and if you should happen to see Miss Roach and Mrs. McClennan give them our regards. Hoping this find you all just fine.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Johnson