

*Journals*  
Of  
*Andrew J. Stone*



*"I am content to do a lifework that may make  
worthy of my country and my friends."*





*Journals of Andrew J. Stone*

*Expeditions to Arctic and Subarctic  
America for Mountain Sheep,  
Goat, Caribou, Grizzly, Moose,  
and Muskoxen 1896-1903*

*R. Margaret Frisina, Editor*



Safari Press

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*F*or Wilson R. Stone—keeper of the flame



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*Wilson and Jeanette Stone, December 2009. (Margaret Frisina photo)*





## Foreword

As his grandson, I think Andrew Jackson Stone's exploration, research, discoveries, and adventures in the Arctic from 1896 until his death off Cape Nome in 1918 are downright incredible. Whether one is interested in his work as naturalist, hunter, nature photographer, writer, or adventurer, it's difficult to think of anyone more exciting than this man, who transplanted and remade himself from relatively humble beginnings on a Missouri farm.

For a number of reasons—including that he died fifteen years before my birth—my grandfather has always been a compelling mystery to me. There were those very few artifacts passed down through the family: a pair of handmade snowshoes, some photographic prints, a few newspaper clippings. What I needed was to find someone to help answer my questions and solve the mystery surrounding this famous man.

Thirty years ago Robert G. Schipf, then with the University of Montana, became interested in Andrew Stone and after years of research published a journal article about him. Mr. Schipf wished to write a book about my grandfather, but the difficulties of researching Andrew Stone's life—and Mr. Schipf's age—unfortunately brought that project to a halt. But Schipf's research did bring more pieces of my grandfather's life to my attention, and, while not answering all my questions, his research certainly fed my interest.

Today the Internet has made research far easier, even for nonscholars like me. Over the years I've uncovered several disconnected pieces of the puzzle, but never a complete picture of the man. *Mountain Man: The Story of Belmore Browne*<sup>\*1</sup> provided some wonderful insights. My grandfather was Browne's teacher, mentor, and leader on several expeditions. Finally, reading my grandfather's field notes convinced me of the importance of his work, the nature of his accomplishments, and the need for his work to be more widely known.

Knowing better than anyone else my limitations in the areas of research and discipline, I have consistently resisted calls from friends

\*<sup>1</sup>See notes at the end of the chapter.



and family to write a book on my grandfather, although I've known that someone ought to do it. It was my great good fortune to meet Margaret Frisina and to learn that, through her knowledge of and interest in wild sheep, she, too, had become fascinated with Andrew Stone. And the good fortune continued when it became obvious that Margaret is an accomplished researcher, scholar, and writer.

She has uncovered information on my grandfather that I had never imagined. She has shown me the buildings in Butte, Montana, where he lived and worked while training himself to be a naturalist. And she has edited this, the first of several books she plans on my grandfather, to reintroduce this once famous, but now largely overlooked, man to the world. For me, she has helped solve the mystery of Andrew Jackson Stone.

Wilson R. Stone  
San Dimas, California  
December 2009



## *Preface*

I made a huge effort during the preparation of A. J. Stone's journals to maintain their historical integrity while providing the reader with a compelling account. To achieve this end, I have employed the following conventions and approaches:

I changed minor grammatical errors, and where words were missing or illegible, I selected a logical candidate. I did this to maintain the flow of the stories and to keep the readers' interest. I placed a question mark in brackets next to missing units of measure (time, weight, and so on). In the case of original pages that were missing, I made a notation in the text. When Stone quoted others, I did not edit the text unless a significant error was found. When I felt that Stone's other writings about his expeditions might provide valuable insight and detail, I included them in the text. These entries, which have been edited for readability, are preceded by an asterisk (\*).

I replaced pejorative words with nonoffensive equivalents; I treated vulgarities in the same manner. Where colloquial terms were used inaccurately (antlers for horns and vice versa), I supplied the correct term.

I used contemporary spellings of geographic names whenever possible so that readers could readily locate sites that Stone mentioned. If the names of places have changed, I put the current name in brackets immediately following the original place name used in the journal. After the first occurrence, I used only the contemporary name. I consulted National Resources Canada (<http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca>) and GeoBC Digital Gazetteer ([www.ilmb.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ilmb.gov.bc.ca)) in verifying Canadian place names; I consulted U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 567 for verifying place names in Alaska.<sup>2</sup>

I retained the tribal names of native peoples that Franz Boas used in his publication on Stone's work.<sup>3</sup> I made notations regarding currently preferred names when I identified them.

I used endnotes to provide explanatory information or to provide useful insights. I sought primary sources for this annotation, including other writings by A. J. Stone regarding his expeditions, publications reporting on Stone's work by the American Museum of Natural History, writings by contemporaries,



newspaper articles, and Stone's adventure writing. I numbered the notes separately for each of Stone's five expeditions.

To keep the text easy to follow, I placed all zoological and anthropological notes as well as cultural information in appendixes. Appendix A provides currently used scientific and common names of mammals. Taxonomy remains a contentious and evolving field, so please be aware that not everyone will agree with Appendix A.

The publisher chose to delete some of the data Stone recorded in his journals because of their length. They can, however, be found online at [www.wildlands4wildlife.org](http://www.wildlands4wildlife.org) and from the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. These include information on the measurements of mammal specimens, measurements of native people, and anthropological notes and lore of the Aleut tribe.

Finally, I preceded each expedition journal with a brief history and itinerary to provide context for the reader.

It has been a personal honor for me to help bring Stone's work once again to the attention of a broad audience of varied interests. Because I have spent substantial time afield, sharing the hardships and habitats of the world's wildlife in remote and rugged places, Stone quickly became a kindred spirit. Preparing this volume was for me, indeed, a labor of love. Andrew J. Stone, or "Jack" as he was known by his friends along the Stikine River, will remain a lively presence as I prepare his biography, but that is another story. <sup>4</sup>



## *Acknowledgments*

Achievements are seldom reached solo; rather, they often reflect the efforts of predecessors—diverse people in diverse places.

I would like to give a special acknowledgment to the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, for giving me permission to prepare the expedition journals of Andrew Jackson Stone for publication. I am indebted to Susan Snyder, Head of Public Services, and Theresa Salazar, Curator of Bancroft Collections of Western Americana, for their patient guidance and helpfulness.

This volume would not exist without the previous transcription and dedicated research of Wilson R. Stone. His generosity in sharing materials and providing access to his grandfather's photos was invaluable, his enthusiasm contagious, and his friendship valued.

I am deeply indebted to the early research of Robert G. Schipf, former University of Montana Science Librarian (deceased) who preceded me on Stone's trail and who amassed a wealth of information over the years as a result of his skill and tenacity.

I want to thank Georgianna Ball of Vancouver, British Columbia—who was raised on the Ball Ranch near Telegraph Creek—for providing me with lively and valuable insights as well as much valued access to her manuscript-in-progress on the history of the Cassiar District.

I would like to thank Dr. Mike Frisina for giving freely of his extensive knowledge and experience in all aspects of wildlife biology, and particularly his guidance in relation to zoological taxonomy. His expert assistance in the preparation of Stone's original photographs and his critique of my manuscript were invaluable.

I am indebted to Karen M. Gordon and "Ma" of Alaska as well as Dot Chidester and Wayne Heimer, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (both retired), for their assistance in helping me identify Stone's ersatz tea.

I acknowledge Dr. Jacqueline Neufeld, editor in chief, Safari Press, who "finessed" the text.

In addition to the Bancroft, the following archives, libraries, and individuals provided valuable assistance in identifying and obtaining materials:



Alaska State Library, Juneau  
American Museum of Natural History, New York City  
(particularly the invaluable assistance of Gregory  
August Raml, Museum Library Special Collections, for  
assistance in tracking down items relating to Stone,  
and Dr. Patricia A. Brunauer, departments of  
Mammalogy and Ichthyology for access to Stone's 1902  
field report)

Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives, Butte, Montana  
Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula  
Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena  
Montana State Library, Helena, where Marjorie Smith  
was helpful as always

Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College  
(particularly Jay Satterfield, Special Collections  
Librarian, and Sarah Hartwell, Reading  
Room Supervisor)

Renne Library, Montana State University-Bozeman  
(especially Mary Guthmiller, Resource Sharing  
and Document Delivery and Dave Martinez, Spain-  
Sedivy Media Center)

## *Introduction*

Fame is a fickle consort. A simple twist of fate and what once held the public attention rapt fades to languish in relative obscurity.

New York City was abuzz on 3 April 1903. The eminent Arctic explorer and naturalist, Andrew J. Stone, was being fêted with a gala dinner and reception at the American Museum of Natural History. The walls and floors of the East Mammal Hall were festooned with specimens obtained by him and his assistants in 1901 and 1902, a mere two of his eight years of scientific contribution.

Among these were 1,500 mammals, several new to science, and more than 300 birds. An Alaskan-Yukon moose held the center of the hall, flanked by the skins and antlers of about 12 more moose. Then there were the caribou: 13 Grinnell caribou, a fine Stone caribou, and 14 Osborn caribou. To fill things out there were 17 Dall sheep, 15 Kenai sheep, and 14 Stone sheep. A Merriam bear was found to measure 11 feet, 6 inches long. A model of the Arctic region with Mr. Stone's travels indicated dominated the center of the hall.<sup>5</sup>

Stone must have wanted to pinch himself. One can imagine him standing on the sideline, formally dressed, and grinning from ear to ear. For him it would have been a rare moment of private reflection amidst a crush of East Coast notables in the fields of science, business, and industry. He had, after all, achieved more than he had set out to accomplish, and this event was one grand side benefit.

He had burned with a desire to contribute to the zoological knowledge of North America—and he had.<sup>6</sup> He had yearned to test his mettle against the wilderness—and he did.<sup>7</sup> He had sought to face the challenges of the Arctic reaches—and he had triumphed.<sup>8</sup> He had won the respect of scientists, hunters, and explorers. This night he was being fêted by all.

He did not yet know that he would be inducted into the prestigious Explorers Club a mere two years later. Membership in America's premier club for explorers was "limited absolutely to men who have been in the open and the wild places of the earth."<sup>9</sup> If he had allowed himself to be tapped for the race to the



North Pole via the Northwest Passage, he may well have added the laurel of “farthest man north” to his list of achievements.<sup>10</sup>

But Stone would not be pushed forward too quickly. “If we can secure the aid we need, the effort will be undertaken. But if an immediate start is demanded, such a departure for the North next spring, I will not go. I must have a year’s time in which to prepare for the trip.”<sup>11</sup>

He understood the hardships and dangers, and he wanted to be imminently prepared for contingencies. Based on his experience, he had firsthand knowledge of the extreme hardships he would encounter as well as an appreciation for potential tragedy. Stone viewed the endeavor in broader scientific terms. For him, being “first” to reach the North Pole was not the overriding issue. “The expedition that circumnavigates America and finds the North West Passage will rival the honors of the expedition that reaches the North Pole, and would far surpass all Arctic expeditions of modern times in its scientific results.”<sup>12</sup>

Four species had received his name—*Ovis stonei* (Stone sheep), *Rangifer stonei* (Stone caribou), *Citellus stonei* (Stone ground squirrel), and *Microtus stonei* (Stone vole); unfortunately, the only surviving eponym for Stone is his namesake sheep.

His bookplate, designed by Daniel Carter Beard and printed on the title page of this book, incorporates a caribou and a sheep and bears Stone’s personal motto “Labor of Zeal,” though Stone preferred the translation “Labor of Love.”<sup>13</sup>

What Stone could not have foreseen as he stood amidst the glitter of the American Museum of Natural History gala was that his fame in only a few short years would be eclipsed by world events or that the world would believe he had died in the stormy waters of the Bering Sea,\* buried as surely as his work.<sup>14</sup>

Andrew J. Stone exhibited the nature of a meticulous man. He was a consummate autodidact who exhibited pit-bull tenacity in pursuit of his goals. Above all, he was a creature of the wild places. A magazine article of that time captured the temperament of Stone the man:

\*Stone’s death is, in fact, still a mystery.



Few men, if any, have so perfect a knowledge of the larger wild animals of the West, North, and Northwest as [does] Mr. Stone. He has studied the animals of these vast and inaccessible regions for years; he has traveled more of their country and visited more of them in their own native homes than any living man. He has had the courage to penetrate the most forbidding regions and suffer the deprivations one must experience in order to study these animals from life. The results of this work is [sic] found in many new and important forms of animal life never before known, one of which, the black sheep, is named in his honor, the *Ovis stonei*. . . .

He has penetrated and crossed the most northerly reaches of the Rockies [in] both summer and winter, and for forty-five days [he] lived on nothing but fresh meat and tea. Mr. Stone is a true type of a brave, adventurous spirit: enthusiastic, strong, and determined, but controlled by cool judgment. It is such a nature as this, added to knowledge gained from actual experience, that makes a true leader of men in a difficult and dangerous expedition, and as such Mr. Stone is destined to make for himself a name that is worldwide.<sup>15</sup>

Stone kept a set of journals of his expeditions and protected them against the elements. Thanks to his care, and not a small part to Providence, those journals ultimately surfaced at the Bancroft Library, University of California-Berkeley, where they awaited a reawakening for the benefit of future generations. That long-overdue awakening has arrived. What follows is uniquely his—in his own words.



## *About the Editor*

Margaret Frisina's poetry, prose, and photography have appeared in numerous outdoor and travel magazines and in several books. Trained as a psychologist, Frisina holds an advanced degree in counseling psychology. She pursued this profession and taught advanced writing at the college level before giving in to her wanderlust and lifelong avocations of natural history, writing, and photography. For several decades she has assisted Dr. Michael Frisina, a certified wildlife biologist, on wildlife fieldwork around the world, particularly relating to the wild sheep of Asia. Margaret Frisina is a member of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers & Photographers as well as a number of wildlife conservation groups. Butte is home base for the Frisinas.



*Margaret Frisina on Broadway Street in Butte, Montana. The brick building behind Frisina and across the street (cafe sign on side of building) is the Hamilton Block. It was here that A. J. Stone made his home and trained himself for a noted career in exploration and natural history. (Mike Frisina photo)*



# Notes

1. Robert H. Bates, *Mountain Man, The Story of Belmore Browne: Hunter, Explorer, Artist, Naturalist* (New Jersey: Amwell Press, 1988).
  2. John J. Orth, *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, Geological Survey Professional Paper 567* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1967).
  3. Franz Boas, "A. J. Stone's Measurements of Natives of the Northwest Territories," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XIV, Article VI (New York: Trustees of The American Museum of Natural History, 1901), pp. 53-68.
  4. "Jack Stone to his friends." Georgianna Ball, "History of the Cassiar District," n.d. This may also have been the case in Butte City, where folks would nickname you if they thought your moniker sounded a bit "high toned."
  5. "Explorer Stone's Treasures," *New York Times* (4 April 1903), p. 8.
  6. "Dinner for Andrew J. Stone," *New York Daily Tribune* (5 February 1904), p. 10.
  7. "As the World Moves Round: Explorer Returns," *Custer County Republican* (12 July 1900), n.p.
  8. "Discoveries by A. J. Stone," *Recreation*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (July 1900), p. 45.
  9. "Explorers Now Have their Own Club," *New York Times* (5 November 1905), p. SM7.
  10. "May Try to Reach the Pole: Andrew J. Stone Considering An Expedition Via the Northwest Passage," *New York Times* (12 November 1903), p. 1.
  11. "Dash for the Pole: A. J. Stone May Lead an Expedition in Summer of 1905," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (11 November 1903), p. 14.
  12. A. J. Stone, "On the North West Passage and the Circumnavigation of America," *Bulletin of the American Geography Society*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1903), pp. 143-47.
  13. "A New Book-Plate of Unusual Interest," *Lamp*, 26 (1903), pp. 69-70.
  14. "Among Our Contributors," *Century*, Vol. 100, No. 5 (September 1920), n.p.;  
"Among Our Contributors," *Century*, Vol. 100, No. 6 (October 1920), n.p.
- According to Wilson R. Stone, his grandfather was believed drowned off Cape Nome, Alaska, in 1918; "Court Calendar," *New York Times*, 10 September 1918, n.p.
- To date the only record located relating to Stone's death is a notice of probate.
15. "People Worth Reading About," *Mail and Express Illustrated Saturday Magazine* (June 1900), n.p.





*Three of the twelve “black sheep” brought back from the Stikine by A. J. Stone that appeared at the 1897 Sportsmen’s Exposition at Madison Square Garden. The building is most likely Charles Emsley’s taxidermy studio in Missoula, Montana. (A. J. Stone photo—courtesy Wilson R. Stone Collection)*

# How I Became a Naturalist,

## Chapter I

*"It was in the heart of the Rockies that I met my fate."*

Man, like plants, may often be improved by transplanting, but his success in life largely depends upon his adaptation to his profession or work. Though many years compelled by circumstances to follow a business life, I was never really satisfied with it, and my first sight of the Rocky Mountains made me thoroughly restless. For I had spent my boyhood out of doors—off to the East as we called it in Montana, but on the Atlantic Coast it seems very far westward indeed.

As a boy, I used to gallop over the prairies on horseback or wander through the big white oak woods in autumn, wading through the beds of dry leaves everywhere piled up to a great depth. I'd gather hickory nuts and hunt the wary gray squirrels with my old-time muzzleloader, which was much longer than myself.

I have watched the deer playing in the meadow undisturbed and the great droves of wild turkeys feeding in the stubble. Many an evening I have sat on the doorstep and listened to the *putt putt* of the turkeys going to roost in the big trees down in the timber. As I traveled to and fro across the hills through these same woods in winter to the little log schoolhouse a mile away, the deer and turkeys often left their tracks ahead of me in the soft snow, and they frequently waited until I came up just to show me with what ease they could run away.

On winter evenings I would prepare my lessons for the next day, sitting around the old-fashioned open fireplace and cracking nuts. I'd listen to father tell stories of Old Virginia and slavery days, and I'd read stories of the mighty deeds and daring of great men, all the while wondering if I should ever know any experiences beyond the limits of the old farm. At thirteen I went away to school and was just a little surprised to find the world so large.





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After a few years schooling, far too few, I went to do battle with the world on my own account. I was not strong, but was generally prudent and grew stronger as I grew older. But my life was buried, for there was nothing in it in keeping with my tastes or my ambitions. All the beauties that charmed my boyish days were shut out completely. My fondest dreams lay buried beneath a weight of business cares and, in all probability, would have forever remained there, but for my visit to the Rockies.

It was in the heart of the Rockies that I met my fate. To live in the very shadows of lofty mountain peaks, whose crests were always white with snow, was to me a privilege, and I appreciated and enjoyed it with an ever-increasing admiration. It was from the little stream, cold and clear, which came tumbling down from the melting patches of snow, that I lifted my first speckled beauties, the mountain trout. It was among the spruce that clothed the mountainsides in shades of richest green that I winged my first blue grouse.

Farther and farther into the mountains I ventured, and longer and longer would be my stay—first with a fishing rod, then with a shotgun, then with a rifle. The Rockies were my real home. I lived in them and I traveled and hunted in them every time opportunity gave me a chance to do so. Those were happy days, full of freedom, sunshine, and fresh life, and a few of them were worth a lifetime in a stuffy office or surrounded by “dry goods” where I would be compelled to wear an artificial smile twelve hours a day.

I loved to sleep on the sweet-scented spruce boughs and to breathe the health-giving mountain air. I loved the song of the trout stream, I loved the taste of wildlife, and I craved to feast upon it. There, I could read many of the beautiful things of life and learn to appreciate all of the various orders of living, breathing things and to care for them. There, I could better understand my fellow man and appreciate the superior gifts with which he is endowed.

I had for years read with great interest all the books on general natural history and outdoor life I could get hold of—zoology, hunting, shooting and fishing, canoeing, camping and mountain climbing—and when I found myself in the home of many of our beautiful animals, where I might see them and study them, and where I might camp and shoot and climb mountains, I felt a desire to know all this by personal contact. And then it was that I felt the desire for somewhat heavier reading matter: I felt a desire to know the variety and forms of animal life, the history and habits of the individual animal.





*Scene on the Porcupine River.* (A. J. Stone photo—courtesy Wilson R. Stone Collection)

I purchased books on zoology by our best authors, books on vertebrates and invertebrates, land animals and animals of the sea, animal anatomy and animal locomotion; books on camp life written by men who had camped; books written by the hunter, the naturalist, and the explorer. I would come from business in the evening, get myself into something light and comfortable, and go to work in my little study. There I would remain from eight until twelve o'clock and often as late as one. I kept up this work for five years and never once tired of it.

At the same time I never lost an opportunity to take a climb in the mountains or a tramp in the country. To cross the open meadows, to follow the windings of a wooded stream, to visit with the birds and animals and to study them from life, to breathe the fresh air and to relieve my mind of business cares, and to find rest—real health-giving rest—was in my way of thinking the only correct method of fitting myself for hard work. Every time I would visit the woods, something would whisper to me, No more carpets, no more draperies, no more cranky customers to entertain!

I was always a hard worker and I was a hard student, so I progressed with my studies. I did so by simply following the dictations of my own



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impulses. I found my studies changing, concentrating. Birds and fishes took less of my time, the animal life of foreign lands remained on the shelf, and our own mammals became my one attraction. I think I have for my native land something of the instinct of a savage.

I found my native land so full of what is beautiful, of what we can love and admire. Many rich treasures yet lay hidden deep in the unknown wilderness. To hunt for these and to bring them to light and to the knowledge of man, one by one, is a beautiful, inspiring, and stimulating work. What a great and wonderfully diversified country our own North America is! In the tropics or in the Arctic, its remarkable topography, its mountains, its magnificent and varied flora, and its climatic conditions all combine to foster an abundant animal life in many forms.

Beneath the shades of a tropical forest in Central America, the timid little deer finds a home, congenial and pleasing. Walking on the highest, storm-swept mountain crests of the Arctic in midwinter, the *Ovis dalli*, the beautiful white mountain sheep, defies the cold. What a difference in surroundings and how very differently these animals must be constituted, for both of them are at home, both of them are to the scientist "American mammals."

The study of these native forms of animal life appealed to me because they were our own. I found pleasure in the work of tracing their many forms and habits, their movements and their distribution. And I found a very great disappointment at a lack of knowledge of many varieties. Everywhere I hunted for publications regarding them, but nowhere could I get anything approaching a complete history.

Bringing together such writings as I could find, I soon discovered that their history was not nearly complete and that there must be many of our important mammals yet unknown and undescribed. These writings were, and still are, but isolated bits of scientific literature, the whole of which does not nearly comprise a complete and intelligent description of even the most important of North American mammals. And what is worse, a very considerable percentage of such history is entirely unreliable, but little better than fiction.

Wealth has contributed largely toward the prosecution of scientific work for many years. Just why our zoology has not shared fairly in the distribution of this support and has been made to suffer in comparison with other scientific studies, I will not attempt to fully explain here, but that it does is most certain. And this is peculiarly unfortunate, for our animal life is everywhere becoming rapidly exterminated, completely





swept from the face of the earth, while subjects of botany, geology, meteorology, and so on, remain virtually undisturbed.

Ignorance is the vandal, the destructive element, that is everywhere playing havoc among the life of the animal world today, and it is this want of knowledge that is the base of our lack of interest and appreciation. No more energetic, persistent, and tireless workers are found in any field than in the work of zoology, but evidently our zoologists must learn to use the same energy in the fight for funds with which to carry on their work. They must look to the distribution of knowledge of natural history in forms intelligible and pleasing to the public. In this way they may educate people to the proper appreciation and love of our wildlife, and may garner substantial aid in support of their work. The fauna of our country is a part of our country: We have taken possession of its home, and we have slaughtered it wantonly, unscrupulously, ignorantly. There is scarcely enough of it left by which the naturalist may trace its history.

I pursued my studies with the thought of aiding in this work: The more I learned of the wildlife of our country and especially of that of our animals, the more I became in love with them, and the more I wanted to see and know them. Buffalo, bear, elk, deer, sheep, goat, and antelope were ever to me creatures to be admired, loved, known, protected—to be known not merely to a few hardy mountain climbers, but to everyone in the city or country who may find a place in their hearts for these beautiful things, these treasures of our native land. The great West was once a paradise of all these animals, and it would be today, if the merciless hunter were willing to allow anything to live besides himself.

I became deeply interested in the beauty and variety of the “Native Americans,” and I could not help but wonder what the northern reaches of the great Rockies might hold. What was there in animal life in the boundless unexplored North? No one knew. Behind the frowning walls of a high coastal range, there stretched an endless wilderness of brush and barren mountain and muskeg enwrapped in mist.

To look into this was to gaze beyond the limits of well-defined zoology. Here was a virgin field—rough, forbidding, desolate, but inviting. Here was a work worthy of time and labor. For whose efforts was it waiting? Was it beckoning to me? Had I the strength, the courage, and the endurance to travel the unbroken wilderness successfully, to survive its elements and wrest from its icy grasp some of its secrets?

I realized that the difficulties of travel in such a country must be very great, that the carrying of supplies of any kind must be difficult,





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and that to transport anything so heavy as food would be next to impossible. There were no roads of any kind across mountain or muskeg, and there were no bridges across the streams, and these were numerous, full of dangerous rapids, and often very wide. To make an extensive tour of such a country was to travel thousands of miles of the wildest, trackless regions, without any real base of supplies or promise of assistance in the face of difficulties. No point on the globe has ever been reached by man that places him farther from civilization than would be the heart of this great unexplored region. For the conditions are often such that to reach civilization from such a position would require one year of constant toil and travel.

The more I thought of the difficulties of such an undertaking, the more perfectly I understood why all this great stretch of country had been left severely alone by explorer and naturalist, and the more I became determined to know something of what it contained and, if possible, to add something to our limited collection of zoological specimens from these regions.

I had experienced some pretty hard tramps in the hunting field, and besides this, I frequently found pleasure in putting my physical strength to the test of endurance, without making my experiments known even to my immediate friends. I have left my bed at four o'clock in the morning and, without even so much as a cup of coffee, put the little city<sup>1</sup> behind me, crossed several miles of rolling country, and been high in the mountains to greet the rising sun. All day I would climb in the mountains, following the crests of bold rocky ridges, and peer into every nook and crook to see what strange beauty might be in hiding there. It seemed to me that I would never grow tired of watching the pine squirrels as they scurried from tree to tree, and many times it would be late when I would return home, never having tasted food since the day before. With these experiences, my faith grew in my ability to endure hunger, fatigue, and even hardships. But I never allowed myself to be misled. I knew if I succeeded in traveling over much of the Northlands, I would get experiences without hunting for them, and would most likely find need of all my strength.

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Polk & Co's *Butte City Directory* 1893 (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk & Co., 1893), p. 516. Most likely Stone meant Butte City (now Butte), in southwest Montana. Records show Stone employed as a salesman for M. J. Connell Co. in Butte City in 1893; George Shields, "Off to Alaska," *Recreation*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (September 1897), p. 239. Shields writes of Stone leaving his home in Missoula, Montana.





Time passed rapidly, and my studies were earnest and diligent. Paraphernalia for the field—tent, blankets, camera, guns, and ammunition—began accumulating. Nothing ever looked nicer to my eyes than did this camp outfit.

I had long been deeply interested in northern travel, and I never at any time gave up reading about exploration of the Arctic. Camp life and roughing it in all latitudes, especially in the North, sledding the ice fields with dogs, and testing man's endurance under difficult and trying circumstances were all of the greatest interest to me. I have followed practically all of the leading expeditions that have ventured into the Arctic for many years; I have rejoiced at their successes and have grieved at their losses and disappointments. I mourned the fate of Captain Hall, sympathized with Captain Tyson in his long suffering on an ice-floe—the most remarkable of all Arctic adventures—shed tears over the death of brave Lieutenant Lockwood, experienced a feeling of deepest regret at the awful fate of the Sir John Franklin Expedition, and worshipped McClintock for his most remarkable sled journeys. All of this reading was in reality an education in the preparation of the work before me.

I have since traveled our Arctic ice field on a midwinter's night, without tent or stove, in the very latitudes in which Franklin's expedition perished. One winter I almost doubled McClintock's best record at sledding—that too, in very nearly the same latitudes. And, let me thank an all-wise Providence that there was no sad story to tell at the end of this travel.

It was in the spring of ninety-six that I said good-bye to the old department in the Montana store and to my employers. My friends said good-bye very much as if I were being taken away to be buried, and many of them really thought that was the case.

I had resolved to make a preliminary trip into some of the roughest country in the Northwest to further my education physically and otherwise for the more extended work that lay ahead of me in unexplored America. I selected the Stikine River for my debut into the world of actual and real natural history work. The selection of this region was really a chance one, but, looking back now with a thorough knowledge of the North, I realize I could not have made a better choice.





*This photo of A. J. Stone was taken just prior to Recreation's Northland Expedition of 1896 at Ingalls Studio, Missoula, Montana. (Courtesy Wilson R. Stone Collection)*



# Recreation's Northland Expedition 1896

## Chapter II

*"For here was a work worthy of time and labor."*

### *Expedition Background and Itinerary*

Andrew Stone made his first expedition in 1896. Referred to as Recreation's Northland Expedition, the effort was organized by *Recreation* magazine under the guidance of George O. Shields, founder of one of North America's early conservation organizations, the League of American Sportsmen. *Recreation* was the official publication of the League, with Shields as editor and manager.

In announcing Stone's leadership of what he called "one of the most important pieces of exploration work that has ever been done in Alaska," Shields spoke of Stone as follows:

Mr. Stone is a young man of marked ability as an explorer, photographer, hunter, and writer. His experiences in the Rocky Mountains of Montana during the past ten years<sup>1</sup> have fitted him for this important commission, and it is believed that he will give to the world, through the pages of *Recreation*, more accurate and reliable information as to the flora, geology, topography, geography, and climate of Alaska than has ever yet been given through any other channel.<sup>2</sup>

Initially the expedition was to focus on the exploration of Alaska. The *Recreation* team included Stone and A. M. Hummer, Stone's brother-in-law. The plan was to move their families to Juneau, build houses there, and establish permanent residences as a base of operations. From the outset plans were afoot for them to spend three years exploring the upper Yukon and well into the Arctic Circle. The expedition was outfitted with four cameras "of various sizes and styles,



and a number of the best lenses together with a full equipment of glass plates, film, printing and developing apparatus, etc.<sup>23</sup>

Like all well-laid plans, however, the only constant was change. Stone's first impression of Juneau was far from favorable, as seen in his journals, and the team apparently returned to Tacoma. When Stone again headed north, he chose Wrangell, Alaska, as a launch point, and he made plans to travel into the Cassiar District of British Columbia. While speculative, it is possible an experience Stone previously had in Tacoma may have influenced this decision.

In a letter to G. O. Shields, Stone wrote of his encounter with a huge bighorn sheep that was taken in British Columbia. Known today as the Tacoma head, it was a ram of incredible horn dimensions. Of this ram Stone wrote:

I have just visited W. F. Sheard's studio and was shown some fine heads; among them was the largest sheep head I have ever seen. I saw it measured. Horns  $18\frac{1}{2}$  inches around base and  $52\frac{1}{2}$  inches long around curve. I send you herewith a photo of the head.

A. J. Stone, Tacoma, Wash.<sup>4</sup>



*Tacoma head.* (A. J. Stone photo)



Scotty MacDougall took this ram in the Selkirks, but felt bad about it afterward. He was going to sell the head to Sheard, but in the end stated he'd never sell it unless he was desperate. After he was killed in a snowslide four years later, MacDougall's partner did sell the ram to Sheard.<sup>5</sup> [See Appendix B.] A grand animal such as this may have spurred Stone's decision to reroute to the Cassiar, but the facts remain elusive. The focus did indicate that such was the case, however, as the primary mission was stated as obtaining specimens of the black sheep.

It was during this expedition that Stone made the scientific contribution for which he is most widely known today—the description and specimens of his namesake, *Ovis dalli stonei* or Stone sheep. Although Stone says the natives called this animal the black sheep,<sup>6</sup> the Tahltan and Kaska term for this mountain sheep is *de bah* or gray. As this sheep matures, rams often darken to the point that they sometimes appear almost bluish-black. The main purpose of the expedition was the discovery of this black mountain sheep (for science) and the taking of specimens for *Recreation's* museum. In the words of Shields: “When this work is completed and the results of their work placed on exhibition in this office, it will be a veritable mecca for all lovers of nature.”<sup>7</sup>

Three of the twelve mountain sheep collected by Stone on the expedition were displayed in *Recreation's* booth at the 1897 New York Sportsmen's Exposition in the Concert Hall of Madison Square Garden.<sup>8</sup> The bighorn display generated considerable interest. Following the show, the American Museum of Natural History purchased the sheep and put them on exhibit, mounted as a group.<sup>9</sup> An article in *Forest and Stream* provided details on the sheep exhibited in New York City:

At the Sportsmen's Exposition, held last month, there was shown a group of three mounted bighorn or mountain sheep, which attracted much attention from persons familiar with this animal. The specimens in this group were of different ages, one being apparently a yearling, one three or four years old, and one perhaps six. They were remarkable to the eye for their small size, for the slenderness of their horns, and for their color, which was very dark. The hairs of these sheep were black, which contrasted with the wood-brown summer coat of the ordinary mountain sheep. As a label stated that these specimens came from Alaska, a number of individuals, recognizing that these were not the common mountain sheep, jumped to the conclusion that they were Dall mountain sheep—an Alaska form—in its summer coat. The original description of Dall






mountain sheep speaks of it as being of a “nearly uniform dirty white color,” but, if the type specimens were winter skins, this might not give any clue to the summer pelage, as it is well known that in the late winter all mountain sheep become extremely pale in color.

In an article in Volume IX of the *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, Dr. J. A. Allen describes these three specimens as representatives of a new species of mountain sheep, which he called *Ovis stonei*, after Mr. A. J. Stone of Montana, the collector of these specimens and the one who brought them to public notice. . . . As a resident of Montana Mr. Stone is no doubt well acquainted with the ordinary form of mountain sheep found there, and he states to Mr. Allen that he is familiar also with *Ovis dalli*, which he reports as occurring some 250 miles north of the locality where he obtained the specimens here described.

“Dr. Allen gives the following observations on the habits of *Ovis stonei*, as observed by the collector”:

The three animals were killed in the Chee-on-nee Mountains, British Northwest Territory. These mountains are a part of the interior of the Coast Range, drained by the headwaters of the Stickeen River [Stikine], and not far from Alaska Territory. . . . The youngest of the three, now in the museum, was secured 8 August 1896 in a very deep and rocky canyon just at the base of one of the highest peaks in this part of the mountains . . . the two other specimens were taken on 10 August, about five miles distant from the first, and were the only ones in the bunch. . . . They were very fat.<sup>10</sup>

On this initial trip Stone traveled from Fort Wrangell to the headwaters of the Stikine River in northern British Columbia, taking trips to the Tahltan, Tuya, and Tanzilla Rivers, the Hotailuh Mountains, and Dease Lake.

May 1896 

Tuesday, 19 May 1896

Morning cloudy; made preparation to take steamer. Steamer in at twelve o'clock. Went on board at two o'clock. Cleared off in afternoon; steamer left dock about 5:30 PM; everything beautiful. Got a grand view of Mount Rainier just after leaving Tacoma.





*Wednesday, 20 May 1896*

Left Port Townsend seven o'clock; passed a number of large English sailing vessels at anchor. Got good view of Mount Baker; nine o'clock fine view of the Grand Olympic Range—very beautiful. Water calm; passed to the west of the [illegible].

Reached Victoria at eleven o'clock; left at 12:30 P.M. The day perfect; 3:20 P.M. passed Darcy Island, a place where British Columbia sends her lepers. Entered Gulf of Georgia 4:45 P.M.; Vancouver Range to the north.

*Thursday, 21 May 1896*

Morning bright—day beautiful—travel delightful; passed through Queen Charlotte Sound forty miles from 11:45 A.M. to 2:45 P.M. The sound calm; only very slight rolling of vessel felt. No one sick yet. Sighted seven whales and several schools of porpoises during day; passed pretty Bella Bella and her totems in early evening just after dinner. A large number of golden eagle flew directly over and alighted near ship on small island; evening quite cool.

*Friday, 22 May 1896*

Beautiful Metlakatla—arrived eight o'clock; left 9:50 P.M. Went uptown, visited school, old and new Presbyterian Church; new church to cost \$15,000. Gardens and flowers, good sidewalks, neat cottages, stores, more houses, canneries. System of waterworks with power to move machinery; make their own cans, do their own canning, build their own houses, cut their own timber.

On pretty inlet with softly rising hills to the south; high rugged mountains to the east, in which far above the sea nestles Lake Metlakatla from which flows a very picturesque stream down mountain to the sea. To the north across the straits lies the Mountain of the Cross, a grand snow-capped range nestling in little groups. All through the straits are low rock-bound and sparsely timbered tiny little islands, swarming with pretty white gulls.

The natives talk good English, wear the clothes of civilization, are intelligent, industrious, and honest. They seem happy and contented and prosperous. Their band rendered several of Sousa's marches just before we took leave. We were sorry to say good-bye.

As we passed out of Dixon Entrance into Tongass Narrows, the moon was bright. We drew up to Ketchikan Fishing Station, a



romantic looking little village. Here I saw the antlers of an elk nailed against a house.

*Saturday, 23 May 1896*

Passed Loring about twelve o'clock midnight. Morning dawned cloudy. We were in beautiful narrows: low, wooded hills reaching down to the water's edge backed by solid ranges of snow-capped mountains from which flowed many threadlike streams tumbling down the mountainsides in pretty little cascades and waterfalls. Later the sun came out and the day grew bright and beautiful. We reached old Fort Wrangell at eleven o'clock and remained there until 4:30 PM, which gave me ample time to examine its many totems and other points of interest. After leaving Fort Wrangell, we passed through the beautiful Wrangell Narrows and later about 8:30 PM came in sight of three immense glaciers; evening cold.

*Sunday, 24 May 1896*

Arrived at Juneau six o'clock; found a comfortable place in the Occidental Hotel, but the town—it won't bear description. Simply the worst of all towns we ever saw and rains there all the time.

*Monday, 25 May 1896*

Still raining. R. Willoughby (Old Dick) been in possession of skin sixteen years. Came from Hoonah Chief Konelth; had been in Dick's family to his knowledge 150 years. His grandfather, father, and great grandfather, they had all been wrapped in this skin after death and before cremation. Chief Konelth had seen every member of his family, except three or four of his last wives, wrapped in this skin at their death, and he himself was wrapped in this skin [upon] his death and afterward carried into the mountainous country and buried by his trading post as per agreement between himself and Konelth.

Dick came to Alaska 1862; has been here permanently since 1874. Born in Virginia in 1833; has been all through British Columbia and Alaskan Territory as far west as Bering Sea. Left Sitka in 1879 in canoe and traveled this coast extensively in that frail bark. Hoonah Bay. Never seriously ill; yet in good health.

*Tuesday, 26 May 1896*

Juneau. Rained all day.

*Wednesday, 27 May 1896*

Leave Juneau at four o'clock; very cold in evening. Met a large school of seals; sighted several whales and saw a number of pretty little icebergs. Snow on the mountains extends down to water's edge in places; about 2,000 deerskins loaded for the Sound.

*Thursday, 28 May 1896*

Morning cold and foggy; weather continued bad until about 3:30 PM; reached Loring, a pretty little fishing station, at 4 PM. Here lie the remains of the steamer *Ancon* where she went ashore on the rocks. A very pretty waterfall near landing. Just after leaving here I saw a pair of bald eagles, beautiful birds, circling a little island that evidently was their home and nest; then a whale entertained us by playing along the ship's side.

At Ketchikan at seven o'clock; found a pair of elk antlers here and was told the elk was killed near here and that they were to be found on Stikine and back from the coast, contrary to the opinions of many parties I have talked to who declare emphatically that elk do not exist in this country.

*Friday, 29 May 1896*

Morning perfect and bright; day was perfect. Milbanke Sound, that lovely sheet of water, was perfectly calm. Passed Bella Bella 4:30 PM. J. G. Davies, Mount Saint Elias cub bear story—viz bear oil and fish oil.

*Saturday, 30 May 1896*

Decoration Day—no flowers on boat. Morning pleasant but a little gloomy—lying to for four hours waiting for favorable tide to pass Seymour Narrows. Passed narrows at noon; stopped at Comox for coal. Went ashore and gathered flowers so we had a few flowers on Decoration Day; met young Englishman here hunting; reported plenty of elk back in the hills but no caribou.

*Sunday, 31 May 1896*

Sun shining bright; pulled into Victoria about eleven o'clock. Puget Sound quiet; a lazy Sunday afternoon on board ship. Rev. L. F. Jones and wife from Juneau have with them an Indian maiden, Clara Morris, taking her down to Washington to leave her. Arrived at Seattle.



*June*

*Monday, 1 June 1896*

Stopped at Hotel Stevens. Angeline died Sunday at 5:30 PM; over 100 years; lived here all her life, used to work for Mrs. Mayden. Died with sickness; was downtown the day before she died.

*Tuesday and Wednesday, 9 and 10 June 1896*

Made ready for trip back to Wrangell.

*Thursday, 11 June 1896*

Leave on Al-Ki 1:25 PM. Weather fair. Reached Tacoma 3:45 PM.

*Friday, 12 June 1896*

Leave Port Townsend once more—ten o'clock. Active pass three hours out of Victoria, beautifully grand, then Point Comfort, Strait of Georgia. Beautiful day.

*Saturday, 13 June 1896*

Bright morning. Alert Bay (worth photographing). Gordon group photograph. Reached Queen Charlotte Sound 5 PM; rained all the way across.

*Sunday, 14 June 1896*

Rained all last night; Milbanke Sound very rough. Raining all morning—cold, dismal. Fort Tongass—rained all day. Green Island (gulls).

*Monday, 15 June 1896*

Cold, wet morning, and I am feeling sick and very miserable. Sick all day; rained all day. Reached Wrangell at 8:30 PM. Friends on boat kindly carried my grips ashore, and I was met by Ed and shown to the little hotel where I could get a room.

*Tuesday, 16 June 1896*

I think I feel a little better.





*Wednesday, 17 June 1896*

I think I feel a little worse.

*Thursday, 18 June 1896*

I think it a standoff.

*Friday, 19 June 1896*

Sun trying to shine. Letter posted on totem pole:

Juneau, Alaska, 11 June 1896

Chiefs Dune Yat and Man Gen, Fort Wrangell, Alaska.

My canoe here Juneau Saturday morning 13 June for Fort Wrangell. Please tell your people to assemble at Fort Wrangell to meet my boat. I am going to feast in July. Want am going to be here by the 4 June. My people wait here to meet your people.

Your friend,  
Yosh Nush, Taku chief

Fresh young tourist to Wrangell klootchman: "I have been on boat some days and am tired traveling. May I talk with you?"

Klootchman: "Yes, if you talk like a gentleman."

*Friday to Sunday, 19-21 June 1896*

Nothing.

*Monday, 22 June 1896*

Made twelve exposures in Wrangell from 10:45 AM to 12 PM; weather cloudy; light very poor. Left Wrangell at 4:30 PM under sail in small skiff; about 1,000 pounds baggage and Bill Gillis, Rosa, Mix, and myself.<sup>11</sup> Sea rolling pretty high for our little craft, but she rode through all OK, and we landed one mile up the river at [missing text] o'clock. The shore all along was one of the prettiest I have ever seen. We had a very pretty place to camp; flowers were growing in profusion. We made a shakedown of spruce boughs and laughed ourselves to sleep about twelve o'clock. Well pleased with our first day's work.

*Tuesday, 23 June 1896*

Breakfast over and started again under sail at ten o'clock. Sail soon failed, then oars, then towing, then oars; hard work—rapids





after rapids; rained nearly all day. A hard dangerous day on the river, but above all our troubles we could hear the *hoo hoo* of the grouse from the woods on either side—numerous small birds passed and repassed our little craft.

Geese and ducks in plentiful number. One old redhead duck with her brood of little ones fluttered around our boat. Five o'clock we were tired and hungry and stopped in rather a dismal place to pitch our camp. Feeling pretty well after hard day's work; Rosa bent to the oar today and proved herself very useful. Did not have spruce boughs tonight but used a few alder instead to keep us out of the mud.

*Wednesday, 24 June 1896*

Sun shining; clouds rising above and displaying beautiful mountains on every side—the ideal home of the goat. Little humming birds flew around camp. Several flock of Canada geese passed over, but too high; birds singing and everything more cheerful, though I am very sore from pulling the oar. We started rowing, but soon laid down the oars and started pulling; pulled for about two miles through a slough when we came out to main river and almost directly opposite Little Glacier, which, though small, is beautiful. Then we rested—then took to the oars and pulled hard against a rapid current for about two miles, skirting the shore all the way. Pretty little waterfalls came tumbling down the mountainsides almost from over our heads.

Passing three pretty falls in one place only fifty yards apart, one of which we called Shower Bath Falls as it threw a heavy spray over the boat. Lunched at two o'clock on top a great snowbank at the foot of a very high wooded mountain, the first time we had lunched since starting, but the rest and lunch did us good.

On our way again, we started to pull a rapid current and cross the stream, and then pulled up the north bank for some distance, finally leaving the main river and moving into a slough. After having passed up the slough for about one mile, Chief Shakes<sup>12</sup> and family overtook us in his light canoe and informed us we were in a long winding slough that would lead us far out of our way, so we turned back and recrossed the river, first stopping to rest and photo Grace Mountain and Scud Mountains.

After crossing the river, we had about one mile of good rowing, then a half mile of very hard rowing, so hard that several times every



effort was made in order to move boat at all, but we again pulled into a slough where we found nice rowing. At eight o'clock we stopped to camp on a pretty little island with cottonwood dotting its center; on the edge we pitched our tent.

It made the prettiest camp. Looking just across the slough was a beautiful spruce-wooded mountain, to the right the sun rested just behind pretty clouds that hovered over Little Glacier Mountain, and to the left was the bold, rugged, and snow-covered Scuds. To our back was a pretty fringe of cottonwood; at our feet a pretty sand beach. We were all very tired but in the best of spirits. 'Bout the time dinner and camp work were over, it was most twelve o'clock, rather late to turn in after so hard a day's work. Everyone had gotten his clothes well dried except myself. I went to bed in wet clothing but was soon asleep. A beautiful day, all day.

### *Thursday, 25 June 1896*

A sore throat from sleeping in wet clothing. A bright morning; up at half-past seven. Headwinds too bad; this makes it hard, but will do the best we can. Perhaps the wind may change and give us a chance to use the sail. I do wish it would, as my hands are covered with blisters.

Morning proved fair; pretty rowing and we made fair time up to five o'clock. Went in from the river and made exposure on a pretty waterfall. No wind today; hard work all day. Took what we supposed to be a slough at five o'clock and rowed till six o'clock before discovering our mistake, then one hour back and camped, put up right where we were two hours ago.

But the worst of all, while we were bending to the oars this time, the mosquitoes were fairly eating us alive. Great big fellows large as cows walked over us and fed on us as though we were grass. We did not only suffer, but were in agony, but everyone kept in good humor but me. Made very pleasant camp on large sandbar; Bill killed a beautiful little duck. Tried to skin him, but it was shot so badly that I gave it up. I had been wet all day but got into dry clothes; felt much better. To bed at 11 PM.

### *Friday, 26 June 1896*

Up at 5:30 AM. Wind against us; remained against us all day. Sun shown bright and warm all day. Rowed one mile, poled one mile, rowed



for dear life two-and-one-half miles, towed one-half mile, rowed one-half mile, towed one-half mile, rowed across river in very rapid current, rowed one-half mile, and camped on a pretty, grand beach.

Sick when left Wrangell in the rain and without any desire for food and with a fearful cold; put into camp in the rain and wet to the skin, but I have grown to feel stronger every day. My cold has almost left me, my digestion is better, my appetite good and I can now work all day without getting much sore, but my hands are lined with blisters.

But we have made fair progress. The mosquitoes make us suffer more than all else. Today has been an eventful day. We lunched at the mouth of the Scud River, passed the boundary into British Columbia, camped opposite the mouth of the Skoat and in sight of Big Glacier, and have dozens of mosquitoes in camp strong enough to bring camp wood and a saw blade strong enough to cut it.

### *Saturday, 27 June 1896*

Morning bright; wind against us. Made exposures on Panorama Range again and on southeast mountains, then started on our day's journey by towing about two hundred yards. Then came a pull with the oars against an awful current that took over one hour to make, after which we had about one mile of comfortable work, then continued our awful task.

Having landed alongside a sandbar, we made a lunch of beans and bread and drank from the muddy river. After, we commenced rowing and poling alternately. Fearful rapids; river at this point was almost a waterfall for two miles. The water was so shallow in many places that we often found ourselves aground and would have to get into the water to get the boat off, back out, and try another current, hunting our way up these rapids through a seemingly endless wilderness of great monster log drifts. Sometimes compelled to wade almost waist deep in the rapid current towing the boat from point to point, many times nearly losing our footing, which meant almost certain death.

Five long hours we fought our way through the fearful rapids, landing for a rest in a little cover below a large log drift on the upper point of a small island. At 7 PM, well fagged, but the worst was yet to face; the river was rising rapidly and soon liable to carry away the drift and our little craft with it. Besides, the island was too low for a camping place during such high water.







*Recreation's party, Stikine River 1896. (A. J. Stone photo—courtesy Wilson R. Stone Collection)*

The nearest place of safety was a point of the mainland two hundred yards to the north, but could we make it? We had pulled some fearful rapids, but the water between us and the mainland where the main channel of the river separated and swung around our little island was one seething, boiling, raging torrent so full it seemed an utter impossibility. But to try we must, for to undertake to drift back from our present position meant destruction of property and most likely loss of four lives.

Luckily, the entire party showed pluck; no one gave expression of fear, no one would be the first to say give up. I sprang up on a mass of driftwood and calling our steersman indicated to him what I thought looked to be the most feasible route across this fearful channel to the mainland. Then we nerved ourselves for the pull. The word was given and oars struck the water simultaneously. The boat shot forward into the heavy current.

“Pull for life,” cried the steersman!





*The Journals of Andrew J. Stone*

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*A. J. Stone during Recreation's Northland Expedition, 1896.*



And with a fearful determination we threw our every effort into our work, every oarsman plying the HB stroke [Hudson's Bay stroke] with all the power within us. But every stroke seemed to only have the effect of setting us adrift. Not one inch forward did we go, but were drifting rapidly farther into the current.

"Back to the cove!" I ordered.

With our greatest effort and good work on the part of our steersman, we landed once more one hundred feet below the little cove we had just left, working our way back to our temporary retreat to rest and to plan. We concluded: unload a part of our baggage and thereby so lighten our boat to such an extent as to enable us to pull the boat over.

Again we tried the current; again we failed in the same manner, but we were determined. We carried ashore more baggage, even the bulk of our provisions, and placed them carefully stacked on the highest point with hopes that we might recover them. We even carried our only dog ashore and left him with our baggage. Once more—the third, and to be our last, effort—"Bend your oars!" and we all rose and gave the hardest pull. The boat shot once more into the rapids.

"Bend to your oars for your life," I cried.

As rapidly as we could recover the long sweeping strokes of our heavy oars, we plied with all our power.

"We are gaining!" cried the steersman. "Pull!"

A glance back showed we had advanced considerably, yet at the same time I realized we were drifting rapidly from our course in spite of one of the strongest and best steersman I had ever seen. But there was no time to consider. I knew if we could keep the boat advancing that he would eventually land us and went at my oar—if possible—with a still greater effort, every few moments calling to my party to keep courage. Yet I felt my wind going and my strength failing. But I well knew I could not surrender one stroke. I heard Ed's breath—who sat just back of me—coming fast and heavy. I feared, for I knew Ed to be much stronger than myself, so I knew if he failed, all was up.

At this point the voice of our third and only other help at the oars rang out. "Pull! You've got to pull!"

Such pluck from a little Indian woman who had been pulling all this time as hard as her strength could back, and pull she could. What man would surrender in the presence of such courage? He was not in our party. A wild, half-crazed cheer went up from our little party.





Our blood was up—a fight for the end—we seemed to catch a second breath. There was a renewed rush of the oars and a moment later Bill, who was steering, called out “One hard pull!”

And we land. With all our might we pulled and just as it seemed the last breath had gone, we felt our boat touch. We had landed where we could anchor the boat just out of the current, where our little party staggered ashore. Poor Rosa almost fainted. The mosquitoes met us in swarms of millions, fairly making our clothing black. We could not fight them off. They just simply feasted off of us while we rested.

Here we were on the mainland, but our bedding, most of our provisions, our clothing, our tent, guns and ammunition, and my plates and expensive camera outfit were on the island, and the river was rising every moment. We had plenty of rope, so Bill suggested splicing it and two of us letting ourselves back to the island with the two left on mainland towing us in. This we decided to do. We quickly took from the boat what little we had landed with, and splicing the rope we made her fast on shore at one end and to the boat at the other.

Bill and I took to the boat to make the trip back, Bill steering, I paying out the rope. We landed on the island once more without special trouble except that once in the current our boat turned completely around in spite of all our efforts to keep her straight.

We quickly loaded provisions, tent, and bedding, but decided to leave my instruments, plates, guns, and clothing as we felt we could not make it back with such a load. All ready and the signal given to pull in, but the line could not be budged an inch so we once more had to work our own way. I told Bill to steer and I would pull in the rope. This worked fairly well until we got about halfway home; at that point we drew up to some drift and our line washed underneath and got itself caught, and we could not release it.

There was then but one way out: cut the rope and drift down the side channel until we might land on mainland below camp. This we did. I took to the oars and pulled for life; Bill steered hard for shore and we landed about two hundred yards below camp. This under the circumstances was not bad. Making the boat fast, we climbed an almost perpendicular bank fifteen feet high and made our way through a veritable jungle to our first landing point. Here, as luck would have it, we had an ax.

Working our way along the riverbank, we cut an opening through the brush on the bank as near as we could judge over fifty yards until

our boat was reached. Then we took our ropes and Ed and I would advance fifty yards, tie one end of the rope to a large piece of wood and cast it out; it would float down the current carrying the end of the rope to the boat. Then Bill would catch it, and making it fast we would tow him to the station; we repeated this until load number two was landed. This style of towing will be easily understood when we tell you that the banks were so grown with overhanging brush and timber that we could not walk them with a tow line. Once this load was landed, the entire party succeeded in pulling in the remaining rope.

But night was upon us though it was not dark, for in this latitude it was now bright twilight almost all night. What about my instruments? I had not the courage to ask the party to again face the current, but this I did not have to do. Bill said we must save those instruments. Rosa said she had rested and wanted to help, so it was decided that the entire party would go back in the boat and try to pull the current once more, as the load would not be heavy. We were soon away; everyone as true as steel. Our guns and instruments were soon loaded and at the current we went, but failed again and again.

I then told the steersman we would try once more and for him to try to put us into the side current and land us below camp again. Once more we fought the same hard battle. When, just as it seemed we had again failed, our boat leveled for a moment on the crest of the dividing. With a last and our strongest effort, we threw her into the side current, and away we dashed like a shot down the rapids between great piles of logs, rocks, and rubbish looking every moment to be dashed to pieces against some of them. But fortune favored sufficiently, and we landed this time fifty yards nearer camp.

Making fast, we proceeded towing as before and got along fairly well until we undertook to make the last station. It was then that our strength so failed that we were compelled to make the boat fast where she was, carry our instruments ashore and making ready to spend the balance of the night, for it was now midnight.

We managed to erect our tent, and Ed made some tea. Cold boiled beans and tea made our supper; we had no bread and were too tired to make it. All this time we had suffered so severely from the great black swarms of mosquitoes that we were almost crazed. In fact, we were actually mad. But after we got to bed we covered ourselves with mosquito net and managed to get a little sleep.





*Sunday, 28 June 1896*

Very little sleep. Bill got up at 8 AM and drove out the mosquitoes, and we then fell asleep and slept about two hours. But when we did get up we found that our faces were badly swollen, the backs of our hands were blistered from the sun and badly swollen, and the insides of our hands were covered with blisters.

We spent the day arranging camp, fighting mosquitoes, and preparing our tent to keep them out. The river is constantly rising and threatens to drive us from our present camp, but we can get on higher ground by moving upstream one-quarter mile. We are camped directly opposite the Big Glacier. Our tent made tight and mosquitoes smudged out, we are all in for the evening, nursing our wounds and enjoying the first real rest in forty-nine hours.

*Monday, 29 June 1896*

River still rising and have not got our last canoe load to camp yet. Will have to get it up today as we are likely to have to move camp at any time. At noon the river was within one foot of camp and I ordered a move. We got up the boat, loaded in everything, and towed her upstream about one-eighth mile to a higher and better camping ground. Finished moving and pitched camp again in the mud but are now safe beyond a doubt from high water. Will try to visit the glacier while here and get some more views of her.

We are all feeling better; tried to find towing up the river today but failed after lots of hard work. Going to bed early tonight: smoked mosquitoes out of tent, fastened it up as tight as possible, and bent an alder pole in the shape of a bow above our heads. I made some cheesecloth I had into a sheet nine by eleven feet and spread it over us, and we slept free from gnats and mosquitoes. Poem: Wading Knee-deep in Hell.

*Tuesday, 30 June 1896*

Last day of June; not quite a third the way up the Stikine to Telegraph and the water so high we cannot proceed. We might visit the glacier, but as yet we do not tackle the river here as it is so very rapid. Am sorry we are not camped on the same side of the stream. If we are held here much longer, we are going to try and make it across, however. Our grub is going fast, no game near to be had. This morning my hands



were swollen badly, my face was swollen almost beyond recognition, my right eye was almost shut, and my eyelids stood out in great rolls. Am going to try to keep out of the path of mosquitoes today, bathe my flesh, and use liniments to get the swelling out. Just visited old camp; water already in part of it. The Stikine is as high from all appearances as it ever has been. We are compelled to use river water, which is half mud and sand.

Great masses of brush and logs are still floating, but the foam is now white instead of yellow as it was two or three days ago. Remained in tent most of the day trying to get relief from mosquitoes and doctor the wounds they and the black flies have made. The little black fly makes a small blood blister whenever it bites, and my hands are covered with little red blotches. My legs are full of briars from Devil's Thumb that grow about as high as your head and so thick and bent as to form a perfect tangled mass. Every stem is one solid matt of briars. Then up through this grow the alder, which are crooked in every conceivable manner. Then the large timber—spruce, hemlock, and cottonwood. The Stikine on the lower half of the stream is lined with cottonwood on either side.

The scene along the banks of the lower Stikine is almost tropical in appearance in most places while often less than one hundred feet back of this jungle lays the snow piled high and reaching up in great drifts clear to the mountaintops. Now and then this scene is broken by a green-clad mountain with a great bank of snow stretching down through this belt of green woods to the very water's edge. One day we touched a depth of no less than twenty feet of snow beneath us when we were within thirty feet of the water.

## *July*

### *Wednesday, 1 July 1896*

Up late as we did not expect to move, but we found the river still rising and we were tired of camp. We knew we had just come through an awful rapid and that we had at least one and one-half miles of them yet immediately ahead of us, but we were tired of waiting for the heavy flow of water to subside and concluded to try the current once more.



We left camp by rowing about one hundred yards, then for three-quarters mile we drew our boat along by clinging to the branches of alder overgrowing the banks. Here we were again confronted by furious rapids, which showed a drop in the river of at least five feet over a distance of two hundred yards.

We commenced by towing from the bank in sections, and while the work was extremely slow and difficult and laborious, we kept everything going nicely until we came to make the last haul. Here our skill and ability were tested to the utmost, and we came near swamping the boat, but with much patience, endurance, and I might add, suffering, we finally finished pulling the boat in, having been



*Tahltan graves.* (A. J. Stone photo—courtesy Wilson R. Stone Collection)

