

Rapport skrevet av Harald Ulrik Sverdrup, Juni 1922 fra Seattle til Nome

"Den ble maskinskrevet og sendt til min mor av den amerikanske damen. Han var forlovet med - et kapittel som ellers forbigås i taushet i denne familie, som du kan forstå. Jeg vet ikke om dokumentet finnes på inst., eller om det er av noen interesse, men hvis det er, så er det herved en gave til Norsk Polarinstitutt."

Sitat fra brev fra Siri Sverdrup Lunden (av 16/5 1976) til PH.

Sverdrup, H. U.

(see omst ende side)

June 3, 1922: The pilot left us at 10:30. Now the Maud is shaking from the motor and our light, too, is poor to-night. Wisting with Omdahl and two of our Chukchi are on deck, Syvertsen in the engine-room.

June 4: 3.P.M. Now we have Cape Flattery a-beam and the whole Pacific Ocean in front of us. We've had luck with the weather. It's almost calm, overcast and a light swell. Everything has been made fast and we are prepared for rolling now. We are slowly getting into order now. Hansen is a splendid fellow, strong as a bear and full of jokes.

For ten or twelve days now we won't see shore. All right! The next exciting moment will come when we have to go between the Aleutian Islands. There is usually too much fog up there. Let's hope we have luck.

The departure yesterday from Seattle was quite funny. I had a queer sensation, the kind you have when you take a definite step.

9:15 P.M.

We have had luck. It's calm and only a small swell. The Maud runs like an ocean liner, steady and fine. I have watch during the day from eight to eight and have the navigation; Hansen who shares the watch does the seamans' work largely. Dahl cooks and I help him find things. To find something here now is quite hard work. We know where every case has been stored but the cases have necessarily been placed one on top of each other so you may have to remove ten cases before you find the right one. And the room is so small that you have to work in the funniest positions.

I had a long talk with our Canadian flyer, Fullerton. It's a nice and quiet fellow. He has been married eight months. I saw his wife; she is charming.

June 5, 1922: 7:15 A.M. Maud hasn't forgotten her old tricks. It's calm and the sea looks smooth but Maud is lively. This morning at five I got my soapbox in my head but now I have made everything fast.

I don't know of anything much more disagreeable than when everything in your cabin starts moving. You get hold of a couple of books but have to drop them because a bottle of ink slides gayly along; you loose your balance yourself and down go the books to the floor where they continue sliding from one wall to another. And if the floor is covered with water which washes from one side to the other, then it's nice. But such things only happened when I was green,- now I know the old tub too well. I hope we'll have sun today so I may get an observation.

9:15

It has been a fine day, some headwind which makes our progress rather slow but a smooth sea. Maud rools of course but that doesn't matter. We had communication with R.A. today from the Victoria.

Did I tell you that we have twelve pups along with us? White collies. Now we have them and Sally "mothers" them. The pups are cute. They eat as much as they get and run around as much as the space permits. And they are very friendly. If someone will stay with them for a while he'll get surrounded by the eager small things which jump up on him from every side. And Sally watches them but doesn't permit everyone to pt them. She is cute too. (Sally is the Spitz, as you know.)

Enough dog-talk! I'll go to sleep. Oh, but the last days in Seattle were hurried. Here we are now and very little forgotten, only some note-books.

June 6, 1922: 9:30 A.M. We had some slight trouble with the motor this morning. It had to be stopped because a packing was leaking which had to be replaced by another.

By 7:50 it was alright again and now we are making five miles an hour. No sea, just a small swell and a light breeze. Of course it had been better if the breeze had been with us, not against us, but we cannot expect too much.

But- sorry to say so-- the Maud is getting dirty. The deck is filled up with barrels of oil between the crates for the airplanes and the barrels have been painted with some awful green stuff which sticks to the boots. We have to walk on the barrels and are carrying the green stuff about. No good!

Just now Olonkin is trying to get in touch with the Victoria where R.A. is. He doesn't get any answer from Vic; maybe she's too far away. We haven't made much progress today. Headwind. But we have crawled about 110 miles.... This life on board is very matter-o'-fact. It is no strenuous life but one day passes as the next.

June 7, 1922: Today five years ago the Maud was launched and christened. It was a wonderful summer day. I had been home for one month and had the day before defended my thesis for the degree Ph. d in public and on the next day I returned to Leipsic to stay there until August.

The day I watched the Maud slide in the water I hadn't believed it if somebody had told me that I five years later would sail aboard her from Seattle to Nome and would navigate her across the Pacific.

Oh, but you ought to see me now! I'm not much alike the young man who in January came to call upon Miss Pickett in evening clothes and took her to the theatre or to the Washington to dance. I'm in old not very clean and rather torn clothes; heavy boots; my face is getting full of wrinkles and has a four-days' beard; my hands are big and swollen and scratched and the wrinkles in them are like fine black lines because they haven't been washed with fresh water; only sea water, since June 3.

June 8, 1922: 4:00 P.M. It is getting colder. The temperature is now only 45 degrees. It will be several years before I'll experience 90 degrees again and instead of light clothes we'll soon be putting on skin clothes, one suit with the hairy side in. But now for meteorological observations.

We have a fresh N.W. wind and its rather chilly on deck. But I don't need to be on deck all the time; I have to compute the observations; to find out where we are; to write in several diaries and do other things. Malmgren stands now at the wheel. He is certainly a good sport.

June 9, 1922: 8:15 A.M. Rolling along. This is going to be a nasty day. It is foggy and raining and a fresh N.W. is blowing. The sea is increasing and the Maud is working heavily.

I don't mind the rolling and pitching but I don't like never to get a chance to eat a plate of soup in peace. Yesterday we had soup for dinner- first. I was very busy balancing my plate and had Malmgren opposite me. He hadn't learned the tricks yet, so suddenly the contents of his plate came rushing across the table and splashed down partly in my pal, partly down my high and wide sea-boots. Such is this life--- a platinudinous remark!

June 10, 1922: 10:15 A.M. Fine weather today! Almost calm and a long ocean swell from the West. We are making about 5.5 miles an hour now and that isn't bad with this tub. We may pass between the Aleutian Islands on June 19 and then Nome about the 20th reach Nome by 24th. ~~It is only you may enjoy the sea-life, perhaps only a few hours.~~ But when we leave Nome the real struggle begins. First we have to reach Point Barrow as soon as possible but we'll probably not be able to make it before July 20.

If R.A. can start before August 15 it will be fine. It will give us ample time to reach 75 degrees if possible this year. Even if we don't leave Point Barrow before August 30 we have good chances, the first part of September being the best part of the season. And then when we get frozen in we'll start to

work like the dickens to show the good fellows in Norway that we are in earnest.

The Canadian flyer, Lieutenant Fullerton, talks much with me. I know the Arctic fairly well, it seems, so I am able to give him all kinds of information.

9:30 P.M.

It's comparatively late- for us. I had a long discussion with Malmgren on the subject of philosophic systems. He hasn't the distain for philosophy which I have,- although distain is hardly the word for my feelings. My objection against philosophy is that a philosopher tries to find out the truth, but what is true to him or to me may be black lies to other persons. Malmgren and I agree upon many points,- so many that he remarked today that he would have to change some of his to give us something to agree about; he thought that I, as the older, ought to have the privilege of keeping mine.

June 11, 1922: Rainy today, with drizzle and fog. No sun, no observations. But we have a light breeze with us and are making over six miles an hour. It's Sunday but not much like Sunday. However, we may see land again Saturday. Two weeks in the open sea, nothing but the sea, not a ship.

June 12, 1922: 11:00 A.M. A wonderful day but we need it to make up for yesterday which was miserable. Now it's absolutely calm and we are speeding ahead with six miles an hour. If there had only been more space on deck, it would have been nice to walk but the deck is full of airplanes and dogs and barrels with oil.

9:00 P.M.

Today we had a little excitement. The deck around the exhaust pipe started to smoke. It didn't actually take fire but was on the point of it. We had to stop the motor and remove a ring around the exhaust-pipe and other things. We stopped for two hours, the sea calm and flooded with sunshine.

I'll go to bed now. Tonight I am feeling a bit far away from your civilized world but I tell myself: This is a man's life!

June 13, 1922: 5:50 P.M. The fair wind didn't last. Now we have a headwind again and the sea is rising.

Today it is my sister Mimi's birthday. The time certainly runs. I've written her to-day a letter which is to be mailed in Nome.

Now I have to take some observations and then go down and find my sealskin pants.

June 14, 1922: 9:00 P.M. It's a rough and disagreeable night,- fresh wind almost against us and dense wet fog. I don't envy Wisting who is to stay on deck for twelve hours now. He looked so grey and tired when he came out.

June 15, 1922. Clear weather again. We 'll go through the pass right between 16 and 17 if the weather keeps fine. The barometer is high. I like to navigate, to find this 10 mile wide entrance into the Bering Sea but it is a sure game, quite simple, but still at that fun to find the place you've been heading for and make land exactly where you want it after two weeks.

June 16, 1922.: We weren't so awfully lucky after all. But now we are at the entrance of the pass and as it is very short, we'll get through without trouble. In front of us is a wall of dense thick fog. I do not envy Wisting, who stays out all night. I think I told you this pass had a bad reputation. Oh, here's Wisting now. He had seen the light on Scotch cape and came in to have a look at the chart. The light is where it ought to be so that helps.

June 17, 1922: Saturday. We came safely through the pass last night but in disagreeable weather. A gale was blowing against the current so the spray almost washed over the Maud. Wisting and Omdahl got soaked to the skin. But they saw the lights all right and by one o'clock we were through and now are heading north through the Bering Sea.

I hope we don't get a gale here. In the Bering Sea you can risk a gale at any season. Maud is a perfectly safe boat but a gale is disagreeable. I've had enough of them! Malmgren wants one to "see how a gale feels." My curiosity in that respect has been satisfied.

June 18, 1922. The last mornings I have been up at 6:30 to make hotcakes for breakfast but this morning Wisting is making them. We have had much trouble today with observations because we are getting north so rapidly now that our compass is getting wrong. It looked very confused this noon; I could not make head or tail out of it but this afternoon I got things straightened out.

June 19, 1922. 1:00 in the morning. Maud still can roll! We have a rather strong sou'wester and the Bering Sea is shallow and disagreeable. I turned out at twelve thirty to have a look around and see that nothing could get loose in the chartroom. Everything was all right. I also wanted to ask Wisting to keep the door of the galley shut. Now the Maud just places the rails in the water but she may take water over the railing anytime and if the galley door is then open, we'll get a good portion of the Bering Sea in, first in the galley, then in the saloon and then in my cabin. That has happened before and it's damned disagreeable.

Wisting was making coffee so we had a companionable cup and a smoke. Now for bed again.

June 20, 1922:

8:45 P.M.

We are approaching Nome rapidly and may anchor there tomorrow forenoon.

June 21, 1922. We made land nicely. The fog turned to rain so we could see some miles ahead. At five thirty this morning, we sighted land and were able to recognize Cape Nome, only ten miles east of Nome. We followed the coast and anchored twenty minutes ago at eight o'clock. Fine! If we can continue having such luck, it will certainly be fine.

11:15

R.A. has been on board and he was glad to see us here so early. We will stay here a few days if the weather keeps good. If the wind changes to the south, we will have to leave at once; there is no harbour here.

But at present we can't get across Bering Strait. It's too early; still too much mush ice in the Strait. I think we may go to Port Clarence at first, some 100 miles from Nome to change the bearings for the propeller.....

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