

**REPORT OF THE CRUISE OF THE  
REVENUE MARINE STEAMER  
CORWIN IN THE ARCTIC  
OCEAN IN THE YEAR 1885**

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Report of the Cruise of the Revenue Marine Steamer Corwin in the Arctic Ocean in the Year  
1885 by M. A. Healy

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**M. A. HEALY**

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U. S. - Department of the Navy

REPORT

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IN

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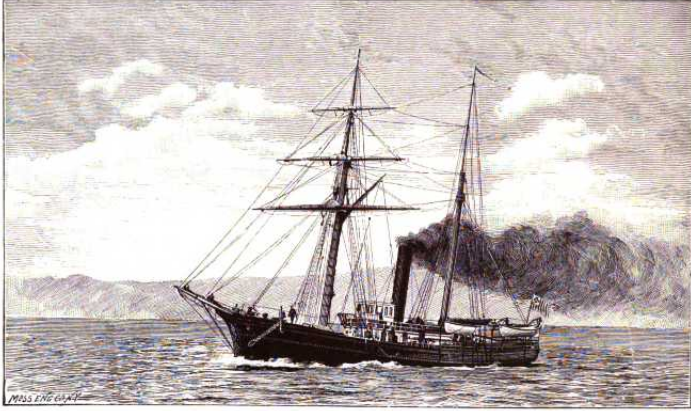
BY

CAPT. M. A. HEALY, U. S. R. M.,  
COMMANDER

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U. S. REVENUE CUTTER "CORWIN." DEPARTURE FOR ALASKA.



COONALASKA.

REPORT  
OF THE  
CRUISE OF THE STEAMER CORWIN.

U. S. REVENUE MARINE STEAMER CORWIN,  
*San Francisco, Cal.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of the Alaskan and Arctic cruise of the U. S. Revenue Marine steamer *Corwin*, under my command, during the summer of 1885.

The *Corwin* left San Francisco, Cal., on the afternoon of April 29, and arrived at Ounalaska May 9, having made the passage in ten and one-quarter days.

The voyage, aside from the rough weather usually experienced on a trip of this kind, was devoid of any incident worthy of particular mention until the last day. About 2 o'clock in the morning of the 9th of May, Francis McCauley, the seaman on lookout, was suddenly thrown overboard by the motion of the vessel, which was rolling deep in the trough of the sea. The engine was immediately stopped and reversed, a life-buoy thrown overboard, and two boats promptly lowered to rescue him, but all without avail. We remained in the vicinity of the accident, our boats pulling to and fro, for four and one-half hours, and then steamed ahead for Ounalaska, where we arrived at 9 o'clock that evening. The deceased bore a most excellent reputation, and his tragic and sad death cast a gloom over our ship for many days.

A few days after our arrival at Ounalaska, the bark *Atlantic* was sighted outside, endeavoring to enter the harbor. There being no pilots in the vicinity, and knowing that the captain was unacquainted with those waters, I went to his assistance and piloted the *Atlantic* into Ounalaska Harbor. She had been injured by the ice and was then leaking badly, and was obliged to enter port to make repairs. While in port we lent every aid to expedite the work of repairing, and members of our crew assisted in blacksmithing and carpentry.

At Ounalaska we took on board a supply of coal and water, and left on the morning of the 14th of May, intending to visit the island of Attou, the westernmost of the Aleutian group, and on our return to stop at the settlements between Attou and Ounalaska.

When we were off Cape Cheerful it was found that the engine worked very badly. The vessel was put under sail and the engine stopped and uncoupled, and a preliminary examination disclosed a crack in the crank-pin, compelling us to work back to Ounalaska under sail. After arriving in port, a careful and thorough examination was made by the chief engineer, who reported the crank-pin broken in a dangerous manner, and that it would be necessary to have it repaired before continuing our cruise north. After much reflection and with a great deal of regret, we started back to San Francisco to make repairs, leaving Lieutenant Cantwell and two seamen at Ounalaska with instructions to take passage on the steamer *St. Paul* to Otter Island, there to protect seal life during the absence of the vessel.

We arrived in San Francisco May 28, and on the following day, acting under telegraphic instructions from the Department, I awarded the contract for repairs to the Risdon Iron Works of San Francisco, the work to be completed in not more than eight days. The company's employes labored night and day, and finished the work in one week, in such a workmanlike manner that it has given entire satisfaction since.

The repairs having been completed on the 4th of June, we left San Francisco at 10 o'clock that evening, and again started for the Aleutian Islands.

We arrived at Unalaska June 17, coaled and watered ship, and received on board one *bidarka* (skin boat) for the use of the expedition up the Noatak River.

The volcano of Bogosloff was visited June 18. The general appearance of the volcano is not changed from that of a year ago, but its activity is somewhat lessened. The height of the lower peak of New Bogosloff was ascertained to be four hundred and fifty feet above the sea-level, and that of the higher peak estimated about seventy-five feet more, both peaks being inaccessible on account of the steam and the fumes of sulphurous oxide in which they are enveloped.

Cruising northward from Bogosloff, we touched at St. George's and St. Paul's Islands on June 20, and at the latter place Second Lieutenant Benham was detailed for duty on Otter Island to relieve Third Lieutenant Cantwell.

Mr. C. H. Townsend, naturalist of the Smithsonian Institution, who was at St. Paul's Island, requested that he be taken on board the *Corwin* for passage to the Arctic, to enable him to make ichthyological and ornithological collections in that country. As that part of the country was an entirely new field for a naturalist, and believing that Mr. Townsend's labors would be of great value to science and of much interest to the public, I received him on board to accompany Lieutenant Cantwell on his expedition up the Kowak River.

We consulted with the Government agents on the islands and learned that no marauding vessels had been seen in the vicinity up to that time. They also stated that the seals had commenced to haul up on the islands, without any perceptible diminution from previous years.

We remained in the vicinity of the seal islands for several days; then continued our cruise to the northward and eastward, touching at St. Michael's and Golwin Bay.

At St. Michael's we took on board an Indian interpreter to accompany Lieutenant Cantwell's expedition. Nothing had transpired at St. Michael's since last year which would require our interference. The health of the white people was excellent, and the Indians were peaceable and friendly.

At Golwin Bay First Lieutenant Hall and Surgeon Yemans were dispatched to visit the mining camp to ascertain the condition of the white men and Indians there, and to render medical aid if such was required. Lieutenant Hall found but one man at the mine, Mr. Mackey, who had remained there all winter in order to make good the claim of the Golwin Bay Mining Company. Mr. Mackey visited the vessel, and reported that the natives were peaceful and that he had experienced no difficulty in getting along with them. He also reported the mines as very rich, with an inexhaustible quantity of ore. The specimens which have been assayed prove very rich, but the result cannot as yet be foreseen. The company have been to considerable expense in working the mine, and have lost two vessels thus far. A more thoroughly organized company, consisting of fifteen miners and superintendent, with suitable supplies and equipments for one year, arrived at the mine the day of our departure, and from them better results are anticipated. The great distance of the mine from civilization is a very decided disadvantage. The mine is situated on the Fish River, about thirty miles from the mouth, and the shallowness of the water makes it a matter of no little difficulty to convey the ore from the mine to the vessel, which takes it to San Francisco for smelting.

There are those who prophesy that the Indians will eventually molest the miners in their operations. If any such difficulty does occur, it will, I think, be brought about by some overt act on their part, as the Indians are generally well-behaved and peaceable, and not unaccustomed to mingling with white men. If there is any trouble it will be caused by the introduction of liquor among the Indians or the total disregard of their personal family rights, which, in all Indian territory, the whites seem to ignore.

After leaving Golwin Bay we touched at Sledge Island and King's Island, and on June 27 anchored off our coaling station at Point Spencer.

At Point Spencer we found the bark *Wanderer* and the schooner *Page*, both whaling vessels, and also the schooner *James A. Garfield*, which brings supplies to a portion of the Arctic whaling fleet.





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GROUP OF NATIVES AND UP-COUNTRY INDIANS, ST. MICHAELS.

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MYUNIK (INTERPRETER).