



Report of the Exploration of the lower Koyan River  
 Head Quarters Northern District  
 Asiatic Division U. S. A.  
 Karkova May <sup>4</sup>/<sub>16</sub> 1866.

Major I. Hara

Sir

I have the honor to report that, in accordance with your instructions I left Ghijgha the 18 April, accompanied by Lieut. L. H. Aaroe, for this place Karkova.

Shortly after starting, I found, that our dogs were almost entirely worn out by their long journeys during the winter, and though we were favored with good roads and fine weather, we could not reach Soel until the morning of Friday, 20 April, a distance I should estimate, of 125 Versts from Ghijgha.

We arrived at Soel, just in time to escape a severe "purga", which detained us that day and all the next.

110/ I here learned, that the drivers had brought no dog food with them from Ghijgha, expecting to procure some here, but there was so little, that they could obtain only one night's food.

Sunday the wind subsided, and we pushed on early, hoping to reach Shistakwa that night, but the roads were bad, and we were obliged to stop at Morkina. Here I made another effort to obtain dog food, but did not succeed, though I was told there was an abundance in the place.

111/ I find these Penjinsk Gull Husaks, a very independent, independent race of people, but they will probably become more civilized, when work is commenced on that portion of the line. They are without a cowardly race, and should it be deemed necessary, one severe lesson would moderate them greatly and make them the most peaceable tribe we will have to deal with.

120/ Here we were obliged to borrow one night's food from a fellow-traveller, and made an early start for Shistakwa the next morning, where we looked to procure sufficient food to carry us to Penkhina. We were kindly

received by the Shetalkwa Kossak, and obtained the desired food, after which we pushed on and camped upon a small stream, 10 versts south of the Akkan river, having made about 60 versts during the day. The next night we camped at the foot of Cascarina. "Caret" and started at 4 o'clock A.M., intending to reach Penzhina that night, but towards evening were caught in a severe snowstorm and wandered about in the dark until 2 o'clock A.M.

Thursday <sup>14</sup>/<sub>26</sub>, when we were welcomed by the breaking of days, and found ourselves, in a short time, well sheltered from the furious storm, that we had been obliged to face during the night.

(10) Here I found Isaram, and the marts, that had been sent in advance with stores.

Our dogs were exhausted, and there were only 150 fish to be procured in the place, and as I was told, that the snow was deep on the Akkan river, I was afraid, that we would be obliged to abandon our project of exploring the lower Akkan for the present.

Afterwards, I obtained a fresh mart, and sending all our baggage with the former, two teams direct to Markova, started off with 3 light marts, taking the 150 fish and intending to find some Wandering Kossak, that were said to be East of the Headwaters of the Akkan, from whom I expected to purchase deer meat sufficient, to carry us through.

(20) Saturday, Nov <sup>16</sup>/<sub>27</sub> we left Penzhina at 6 o'clock A.M. pursuing the same course as Lieut. Linnan did in his exploration of the Upper Akkan, and camped for the night in the valley of the Akkan, which is, at this point, about 50 versts wide. It is entirely bare of trees of any kind, and seems to be ill adapted to telegraph purposes. During the day, we crossed the Slavtina River, the banks of which are wooded and though of an inferior quality, I think it would furnish poles sufficient, to supply a line along its banks. This stream is a tributary of the Penzhina river, and has its source in a range of hills, which separate it, and its tributaries from the Akkan, at a point on the latter, about 40 versts below where we struck it.

(30) The Akkan is also said to be hindered up to that point, and from all,

that I could judge, should it be decided to build the line upon the Ho yan, that would be the place to leave it and cross the divide, which I think would not be over 20 versts to the timber of the Slavatina, from which place downward, poles can be obtained where needed, and the expense and trouble of transportation avoided.

(10) From the Ho yan, we took a S. E. course, across the valley, heading for a high prominent mountain called by the natives "Polgol", just south of which we struck the Polgol River, upon which we travelled about 20 versts, when we struck a fresh Kooak trail, going north, which we followed until night, and were obliged to camp in a shallow basin upon the top of the hills, without finding them.

There was so little vegetation of any kind, that we had to send out a man upon the neighbouring hills to gather enough dry sticks to cook supper with. The next morning, Monday, April 30, a S. E. wind began to blow, and the snow to drift, but I sent out two men to find the Kooaks and bring four deer for dog food, also to obtain what dry food they could, as it is much lighter.

(20) We estimated that a deer weighing 40 lbs would feed a team of 10 dogs 2 days, while 20 lbs of dry fish would abundantly supply them for the same length of time. In the evening the men returned, bringing, not only the deer, but some fish and seal meat, so that we had no fear of our supply giving out, before we reached breakfast.

(30) Seven Kooaks brought the meat for them upon their sleds. I gave a "Papovka" of tobacco for each deer and made them each a present of a handfull besides, and Lieutenant Auerer gave them each two needles, when they were perfectly satisfied. After treating them to tea, of which all the natives are very fond, we retired to an old, worn out "Islog", we borrowed from one of the men, as the "Poozga" was now at its height. The next day, it continued with such fury, that we could not make a fire, so were obliged to go without eating until 3 o'clock A. M. Wednesday morning, when it subsided a little and we made tea and boiled some meat for breakfast.

After breakfast we pushed on, taking a northerly course over the hills, expecting



to strike, either the Koyan, or one of its tributaries, as none of us knew anything of the route before us, the storm began to rage again, but the wind, fortunately, had changed to the South, so that we had it against our backs, accompanied by a fall of wet snow, which made it hard travelling for the day.

After going 10 versts we struck quite a large tributary of the Koyan, which, I have since learned, Saint Lennan called the Return River. It was near this stream we found the Kossaks, I believe.

(10) These reindeer Kossaks are an entirely different class of people from the settled Kossaks on the Bering Gulf. They are very generous and hospitable, and will be of great service, in the future, in supplying deer, either for food or to assist in the construction of the line. We camped for the night upon the Return River, and started at 3.30 A.M. the next morning, following it to its junction with the Koyan, where we arrived at 10 o'clock A.M. Both streams are timbered at this point with Populus, Alnus, etc, but no Birch.

From this place, Dallenward learned, we followed the same route, that Saint Lennan did, until we arrived at the mouth of the Orlofka, where he left the Koyan and took a direct course for Karkwa.

(20) We estimated the distance, from the mouth of the Return River to the Orlofka, at about 45 versts. The route is well adapted to telegraph purposes, and is well protected from strong winds, by ranges of hills on each side. We were favoured with clear weather, but the sun shone so hot, that it was almost impossible to travel for 3 or 4 hours in the heat of the day, as the dogs and man's sank too deep in the snow. It is customary to travel nights, this season of the year, but as our object was to explore the country, we had to choose daylight in preference.

We arrived at the Orlofka river at 7.30 P.M. Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup> May 4<sup>th</sup>.

I had been breaking a road through the soft snow for some time, on snow shoes, and found, that as we advanced, the travelling became more difficult, so decided to cross to the E. bank of the river, where I expected to find an open strand, or a more compact.

(30) At the mouth of the Orlofka we found groves of Birch and scattering trees of Birch, which are much promised well for the river below.



We had been told, that the Olgon. river, which Sicut Macrae and Arnold descended with the Tchutchus, was near the Orulka, and as there was a large plain on the E. bank, we expected to strike it soon. As I expected, we found a large tundra and good travelling. After travelling a few versts, our eyes were greeted with groves of Birch or Tamarack, exactly suited to our purpose. We encamped at 10 P. M.

(10) The next morning we pushed on, taking an almost easterly course to avoid the trees, as the snow was harder, where the winds had swept over it, but after going a few versts were checked by a long line of dense wood, extending from the S. E., which we supposed to be the Olgon river. With difficulty we penetrated it, and as the drivers had to take care of their dogs, I broke a road for them. At length we struck a large stream, larger than the Olgon we had been descending, and which Sicut Macrae said, was not the Olgon.

We called this main stream the Olgon, and took upon ourselves the responsibility of calling the other large stream, we had been descending, the "Abaca" river, after our energetic chief, to which Sir, we sincerely hope, you will not object.

When we struck the bed of this river, we found a fresh trail, going South, and coming evidently from Markova or Orskost.

(20) I thought, at first, that it was some of the inhabitants going to the Kooaks or Tchutchus for deer meat, but our drivers said, they never come this way, as they can get it much nearer.

I then thought you had arrived at Markova, and sent warts to meet us, but the fact of their going up this stream, instead of Abaca River, as you would not send warts, without some one, that knew the country, satisfied me, that such was not the case.

I have since learned, they ascended this river only a short distance and then crossed the tundra to Abaca River to avoid. (platoke, and timber.

Finally I concluded, that you had come this way on your return to Thijiga, expecting to meet us, and had taken the wrong branch of the stream.

(30) I would have turned back to overtake you, but knew that it would be impossible with our worn out dogs, and besides, there was no time to be lost, as our

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Logford would hardly carry us through to Karkava, unless it grew cold again, and the snow became hard.

We followed the trail north on the river, about 5 versts, when we passed the mouth of Hasee river.

(10) We camped at 9.30 P. M., having made only 30 versts during the day, as the snow was soft and saturated with water. The river had already commenced opening, and bears had left their winter quarters, the tracks of which, we saw on all sides. Larch grows in abundance on both banks of the stream, and from soundings I made through the ice, I have no doubt there will be water sufficient for rafting purposes.

Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup> - May 6<sup>th</sup>.

It rained all night and in the morning we found it impossible to travel upon the river, so left the old trail and travelled upon the left bank, through a fine forest of Larch.

At 10 P. M. we reached a point, where a bold cliff terminates abruptly on the river, where we stopped to rest the dogs, and cook dinner.

I climbed the cliff to take bearings of different prominent landmarks, and to obtain a better idea of the country we were traversing.

(20) The valley of the Koyan at this point, is about 40 versts wide, and the whole surface seemed to be a continued forest of Larch trees.

My eyes had become so accustomed to the barren tundras we had been traversing, that it was hard to realize, that I was in this portion of Siberia. After dinner the men dropped on snow shoes, and we travelled until dark, having made however, only 35 versts during the day. The next morning at 3 P. M. just as we were about to start, we heard a noise back, and soon saw Samoyed marks approaching. They were the marks you had sent to meet us, but we had passed each other between Koyan and Hasee Rivers. I was much gratified to find, that you were still in Karkava, and that I was mistaken in thinking we had passed each other.

(30) These men confirmed our ideas as to the main stream.

I immediately put the fresh dogs to our work, and sent the old team in

advance with empty warts, to break a road.

We waited two hours to let the dogs and drivers rest and eat, as they had been going constantly, night and day, to overtake us, since they discovered, that we had passed each other.

Five warts from camp we reached a point, where another high bluff terminates upon the river, which is here very narrow. This is the most suitable place for carrying a wire over, that I have yet seen. Larch grows in abundance on all sides. A wart below, we reached the mouth of the Olgon, about 40 warts below, where we expected to find it. It is a large, well wooded stream, flowing from the S.E.

(10)

Near by is an old warte, somewhat out of repair, but it could be made serviceable in a short time.

At this point we left the river direct for borepass, as we had given our last dog food to these warts, just arrived, but from the hills we traversed I could see the river to the point. Lieut. Lemmon struck it, in his exploration of the country.

Below the Olgon River, Larch ceases to grow, but between the Orbulka and Olgon Rivers, there is sufficient to supply the route from Behring's Sea to Ikhigka, and keep it in repair for any length of time.

(20)

It seems to be Providential foresight, that this one river, out of such a great number, in this section of the world, is timbered suitably for the performance of man's efforts.

We travelled all night, and arrived at borepass at 5 o'clock A.M. Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> April 26<sup>th</sup>, just as the sun was rising.

I immediately ordered a fresh wart, and came on to Mark River, leaving Lieut. Macrae to come with the other warts as soon as the dogs were a little rested.

The Noyan River, for the purpose desired, far exceeded my anticipations, and seems to be the natural route for the line.

(30)

I would propose, that the line be carried on the E. side of the River, as far as the Olgon, where cross at the bluff I have mentioned to the W. side and up the Noyan and Noyan rivers to near the mouth of the



Return, where it can be carried, without difficulty, over the hill to the Shawtoia,  
and down the Shawtoia to the Penchima.

It will be the shortest and most practicable route, and far less expen-  
sive, than any other.

I enclose a sketch of the country traversed by us, in our explorations,  
which may be of some service, in giving you an idea of the proposed route.

I hope this Report will meet with your approbation

I remain Sir

Your Obedt. Servt

(Signed) Richd. D. Bush

Sept. 11. 1811.

Report  
R. D. Bush  
Exploration of Lower Shawtoia

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