

Samuel Hall Young<sup>1</sup>, Explorer and Missionary

Samuel Hall Young was born September 12, 1847, in Butler, Pennsylvania, the seventh child of Loyal and Margaret Johnston Young. The infant was so "puny" that his mother during the next two decades met more trouble rearing him than she had in rearing all her other children.

In childhood measles left him cross-eyed; the effects of vaccination for smallpox proved to be as severe as the disease itself; dysentery, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, nervous headaches ravaged the boy's body. Two times he enrolled in primary school and two times he left school because the thrashings meted out to other students sent him into hysterics. The instruction given him at home by his family made him ready for Witherspoon Academy, founded by his Presbyterian clergyman father in Butler, before two of his older brothers could qualify and the instruction in cooking and housekeeping during the years at home in childhood helped when he later needed the skills in the Alaskan wilderness.

At age seventeen Hall Young passed a teacher's examination; he taught a term in a country school near Butler before going with two brothers to homestead in Michigan. He taught a term of school in Michigan, worked at logging, and found when he returned to Butler in 1868 that his father, after 35 years as a Presbyterian minister in Butler, had decided to move his family to French Creek in the new state of West Virginia where Loyal Young had spent his youth. Having suffered what he termed "snow-blindness" in Michigan, Hall Young during the move stopped off in Pittsburgh to consult an oculist. The doctor told him that he could become totally blind.<sup>2</sup>

In French Creek Hall Young attended school in the French Creek Academy under the tutelage of Myra Brooks, one of the best teachers he met in his years of schooling. "Dear old French Creek!" he wrote when he was in his seventies, "It seems to me, looking back from these later and wiser years, that this country community at whose old-fashioned ways I used to laugh, and which with the egotism of twenty I used to criticize and try to despise, yet exerted a stronger and healthier influence upon my life than all other places combined in which I have lived. The purity, strict temperance, sturdy faith, wide range of reading, and, above all, the high ideals and warm hearts of my relatives in French Creek and Upshur County shaped my life. . ."<sup>3</sup>

Young taught school at Buckhannon, Rock Cave, and Philippi; spent most of two summers in a darkened room because of his eye difficulty; and pursuing his favorite pastime of breaking colts, one summer dislocated his left shoulder and the next summer dislocated his right shoulder. He entered the University of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio, in the spring of 1871 and after dropping out for a year and a half because of illness, graduated from the Wooster school in 1875. Then followed a year in the seminary at Princeton University and two years at Western Seminary in Allegheny, Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

Toward the end of Young's last year in Western Seminary, Sheldon Jackson, editor of The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian and a Western pioneer, came to the school to recruit candidates to go to Alaska as missionaries.<sup>5</sup> Young had already been turned down as a missionary in foreign countries because of his health. He was determined to go to Alaska in the "home" mission field. Everyone advised him against going except the country physician at French Creek who stuttered: "W-w-well, it m-m-may k-k-kill you, but it m-m-may m-m-make a m-m-man of you."

The doctor was right. Young was ordained in Buckhannon in the spring of 1878, caught a train for Portland, Oregon, on June 10, 1878, arrived at Fort Wrangell, Alaska, on July 10, 1878, and never again was bothered by a headache or any other physical disability except for his weak shoulders. Young said that he managed to live "at a poor dying rate" with never a really well day until roughing it in Alaska at age 30.<sup>6</sup>

Alaska was primitive. The United States military forces which had been sent in at the time Russia formally turned over Alaska to the United States on October 18, 1867, had been withdrawn in the spring of 1877. No civil officers, except for three or four customs collectors, or courts for the protection of life and for the settlement of grievances had been established. Gambling, drunkenness, witchcraft, debauchery, warfare between tribes of Indians were rife. The first missionaries from churches in the United States, Presbyterian Reverend Sheldon Jackson and Mrs. A. R. MacFarland, arrived at Fort Wrangell on August 10, 1877. Jackson saw such need that he departed on the next steamer headed south to solicit money and workers in the States thus making Mrs. MacFarland for seven months the only Protestant missionary in Alaska.<sup>7</sup>

Hall Young was welcomed by Mrs. MacFarland "who hurled her two hundred pounds of good nature out onto the wharf with surprising agility and by John Vanderbilt, a cultured gentleman from New York City, representing the wholesale merchants of Portland. . ." When the steamer on which he had arrived left for Sitka two hours later, Hall Young was on it: his ticket was paid to Sitka and besides he wanted to meet the two Presbyterian missionaries who arrived there four months earlier. Fannie Kellogg, one of the missionaries and a teacher in the school in Sitka, came back to Wrangell with Young because she had earlier agreed to spend the month "between steamers" with Mrs. MacFarland. In August 1878 Young and Miss Kellogg were betrothed; in December 1878 they were married.<sup>8</sup>

Mrs. MacFarland reported to the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church on September 3, 1878: "Rev. Mr. Young has been very busy since his arrival last month. He has made a very favorable impression both on the whites and the natives. We all like him very much. Last Sabbath he was called upon to attend the funeral of an old woman who died on Saturday. When we went to the house we were shocked to see the dead body of another woman wrapped in a blanket and lying on the floor. We were still more shocked to find that she had hung herself but a short time before. It was the effect of witchcraft. . . I have turned the responsibility of the school over to Mr. Young and felt as if a great load has been taken off my shoulders. . . Mr. Young is very busy securing what funds he can here toward the erection of a church." Mrs. MacFarland reported to the New York office of the church February 11, 1879: "I hope a teacher may come soon as Mr. Young is burdened with the school in addition to all his other labors. It was a good providence that sent him to this mission."<sup>9</sup>

1. An individual who is compiling a book on burial sites of prominent people wrote the Harrison County Historical Society in the fall of 1977 asking for information on Samuel Hall Young who died in Clarksburg September 2, 1927. The research required to answer the inquiry revealed that Dr. Young's grandfather had settled in 1811 at French Creek near Buckhannon, W. Va.; that Dr. Young's father had walked in the late 1820's from French Creek to Canonsburg, Pa., to attend Jefferson College because Reverend Asa Brooks, who is buried under the first Presbyterian Church in Clarksburg, had urged him to go; that Dr. Young was on the way in 1927 to Upshur County to attend a reunion of the descendants of French Creek settlers when his death occurred.

2. Samuel Hall Young, Hall Young of Alaska, pp. 20, 47, 49-51, 55.

3. Ibid., p. 57

4. Ibid., pp. 56-60, Allegheny, part of the City of Pittsburgh in 1978, lay north of the Point, where the Allegheny River meets the Monongahela River to form the Ohio River.

5. Sheldon Jackson, Alaska, and Missions on the North Pacific Coast, p. 144

6. Young, Hall Young of Alaska, pp. 48, 66-68.

7. Jackson, pp. 40, 129, 140-7.

8. Young, Hall Young of Alaska, pp. 77, 79-80.

9. Jackson, pp. 184-6, 225.

Young learned that his work could never follow a strict routine and he decided that no one should go into the mission field without instruction in the rudiments of medicine and dentistry. Soon after he landed at Wrangell he hastily turned the leaves of a book on surgery which his uncle, a doctor, had given him so that, with the help of two white men whose aid he solicited, he could set the broken leg of a native carried into the mission. "I found that two qualities were requisite to any medicine in order that the natives should have any faith in it: First, the medicine must be nasty, and second, it must be dark. Any colourless or tasteless medicine they refuse to take." Young rescued slaves about to be put to death; he cut loose victims accused of witchcraft who had been bound and thrown into dark holes; he joined native councils which might last four or five days; he rescued girls who came for help after having been sold by parents.<sup>10</sup>

The once-a-month steamer from the States on July 14, 1879, brought three leaders of the Presbyterian Church, the wives of the three, and a carpenter to superintend the building of a church for Wrangell. On the same boat was the naturalist John Muir who, unannounced, had arrived to study glaciers. For a holiday during the month a river steamer was chartered to take the Presbyterian missionaries and their guests, John Muir, and the Vanderbilts up the Stickeen River. At Glenora, when descending the river, the captain announced that because of danger from the wind which blew from the east on a sunny day like the one they were experiencing, he would tie up until morning. Muir and Young managed to get the visitors interested in conversing, through the interpreter, with some Indians and then the two men slipped out to climb the mountain nearby. They crossed the glacier, began to climb, and were within forty or fifty feet of the top of the eight-thousand-foot mountain when they came onto a fissure:

It was only four or five feet across, and I could easily have leaped it had I not been so tired. But a rock the size of my head projected from the slippery stream of gravel. In my haste to overtake Muir I did not stop to make sure this stone was part of the cliff, but stepped with springing force upon it to cross the fissure. Instantly the stone melted away beneath my feet, and I shot with it down towards the precipice. With my peril sharp upon me I cried out as I whirled on my face, and struck out both hands to grasp the rock on either side. Falling forward hard, my hands struck the walls of the chasm, my arms twisted behind me, and instantly both shoulders were dislocated. With my paralyzed arms flopping helplessly above my head, I slid swiftly down the narrow chasm. Instinctively I flattened down on the sliding gravel, digging my chin and toes into it to check my descent; but not until my feet hung out over the edge of the cliff did I feel that I had stopped. Even then I dared not breathe or stir, so precarious was my hold on that treacherous shale. Every moment I seemed to be slipping inch by inch to the point when all would give way and I would go whirling down to the glacier. The gravel was rattling past me and piling up against my head. The jar of a little rock and all would be over. The situation was too desperate for actual fear. Dull wonder as to how long I would be in the air, and the hope that death would be instant-- that was all. Then came the wish that Muir would come before I fell and take a message to my wife. Suddenly I heard his voice right above me. "My God!" he cried. Then he added, "Grab that rock, man, just by your right hand."

I gurgled from my throat, not daring to inflate my lungs. "My arms are out."

There was a pause. Then his voice rang again, cheery, confident, unexcited. "Hold fast; I'm going to get you out of this. I can't get to you on this side; the rock is sheer. I'll have to leave you now and cross the rift high up and come down to you on the other side by which we came..."

[In] about ten minutes he got back to me. By that time I hung so far over the edge of the precipice that it seemed impossible that I could last another second. Now I heard Muir's voice, low and steady, close to me, and it seemed a little below. "Hold steady," he said. "I'll have to swing you out over the cliff."

Then I felt a careful hand on my back, fumbling with the waistband of my pants, my vest and shirt, gathering all in a firm grip. I could see only with one eye and that looked upon but a foot or two of gravel on the other side. "Now!" he said, and I slid out of the cleft with a rattling shower of stones and gravel. My head swung down, my impotent arms dangling, and I stared straight at the glacier, a thousand feet below. Then my feet came against the cliff.

"Work downwards with your feet." I obeyed. He drew me close to him by crooking his arm and as my head came up past his level he caught me by the collar with his teeth! My feet struck the little two-inch shelf on which he was standing, and I could see Muir, flattened against the face of the rock and facing it, his right hand stretched up and clasping a little spur, his left holding me with an iron grip, his head bent sideways as my weight drew it. I felt alert and cool as he.

"I've got to let go of you," he hissed through his clenched teeth. "I need both hands here. Climb upward with your feet."

How he did it, I know not. The miracle grows as I ponder it. The wall was almost perpendicular and smooth. My weight on his jaws dragged him outwards. And yet, holding me by his teeth as a panther her cub, and clinging like a squirrel to a tree, he climbed with me straight up ten or twelve feet, with only the help of my iron-shod feet scrambling on the rock. It was utterly impossible, yet he did it...

[Muir failed in attempts to set Young's shoulders while the two were on the mountain.]

It must have been near midnight when we left the foot of the cliff and started down the mountain. We had ten hard miles to go...Muir sat down on the gravel; I sat against him with my feet on either side and my arms over his shoulder. Then he began to hitch and kick and presently we were sliding at great speed in a cloud of dust.

A full half mile we flew and were almost buried when we reached the bottom of the slide. It was half past seven o'clock [a.m.] when we descended the last slope and found the path to Glenora.[1]

Because a medical doctor and a teacher recruited by the Presbyterian Church for Wrangell could look after the affairs at the mission, the officials of the church ordered Young to be their explorer, to investigate the state of various tribes of Indians in the Alexandria Archipelago. The assignment fitted Muir's plan to seek out glaciers. So Muir decided to make short exploratory forays until Young could formally organize his church (August 2-3, 1879)<sup>12</sup>, be with his wife when she delivered her first child (September 19, 1879)<sup>13</sup>, and preach the first sermon in the new church building (October 5, 1879)<sup>14</sup>. Muir and Young, with four Indians as helpers, left Wrangell in a thirty-six-foot, red cedar canoe on October 14, 1879.

The only chart of the Alexandria Archipelago with its 1100 islands and its treacherous waterways in existence in 1879 was the one made by George Vancouver shortly after 1800. "... the living glacier stream was breaking off bergs so fast that the resultant bays were lengthening a mile or more each year. Where Vancouver saw only a great crystal wall across the sea, we were to paddle for days up a long and sinuous fiord and where he saw one glacier, we were to find a dozen. My mission in the proposed voyage of discovery was to locate and visit the tribes and villages of Thlingets to the north and west of Wrangell, to take their census, confer with their chiefs and report upon their condition with a view to establishing schools and churches among them. . . In many respects

10. Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, pp. 109, 145-56.

11. Samuel Hall Young, *Alaska Days with John Muir*, pp. 38-45, 47-50.

12. Jackson, pp. 230-33.

13. Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, p. 182.

14. Jackson, p. 240.

[Muir and I] were most congenial companions. We both loved the same poets and could repeat, verse about, many poems of Tennyson, Keats, Shelley and Burns. He took with him a volume of Thoreau, and I, one of Emerson, and we enjoyed them together. I had my printed Bible with me, and he had his in his head---the result of a Scotch father's discipline."<sup>15</sup> The two men charted waterways <sup>16</sup>, and visited tribes of Indians.<sup>17</sup> Young took the census by asking a chief to set aside one of the three different colored beans Young carried to designate men, women, and children in each tribe; he picked sites for future mission buildings; kept at base camp with shoulders too weak for climbing, he cooked<sup>18</sup> and wrote while Muir explored glaciers, one of which is "Muir Glacier" in Glacier Bay.

The two explorers were back in Wrangell by the end of November and Muir returned to California, but not for long. August 8, 1880, Muir landed on the wharf in Wrangell with: "Man, have you forgotten? Don't you know we lost a glacier last fall? . . . Get your crew and canoe and let us be off."<sup>19</sup>

Young had not been idle while Muir was in California: "I had made two long voyages of discovery and mission, one in the spring of four hundred fifty miles around Prince of Wales Island, visiting the five towns of Hydah Indians and the three villages of the Hanaga tribe of Thlingets; another in the summer down the coast to the Cape Fox and Tongass tribes of Thlingets, and across Dixon entrance to Fort Simpson, where there was a mission among the Tsimpeans. . .<sup>20</sup>

Before he left Wrangell with Young, Muir wrote his wife that he would be delayed in returning to California because Mr. Young needed to take an Indian boy to his parents at Chilcat, thus extending the distance Muir had planned to travel. The trip might take six weeks.<sup>21</sup> Just before embarking on the seven-hundred-mile journey, Young placed in the canoe his young dog Stickeen. The dog soon won over Muir, who had objected to taking the animal along, by showing a preference for the naturalist. Stickeen was the inspiration for one of the best-loved animal stories in English literature <sup>22</sup>

Young tells with humor what happened to the piece of ice he was given while exploring: "Without consulting me Muir named this 'Young Glacier', and right proud was I to see that name on the charts for the next ten years or more, for we mapped Endicott Arm and the other arm of Sumdum Bay as we had Glacier Bay; but later maps have a different name. Some ambitious young ensign on a surveying vessel, perhaps, stole my glacier, and later charts give it the name of Dawes. I have not found in the Alaskan statute books any penalty attached to the crime of stealing a glacier, but certainly it ought to be ranked as a felony of the first magnitude, the grandest of grand larcenies."<sup>23</sup>

Young and Muir met up with Dick Harris and Joe Juneau camping in the wilderness where the prospectors would find gold in such quantity that the next year Young was back at the same spot to help build a church in a new town and to work in politics: "During all these days we had been besieging the government, through the newspapers and by personal appeals, to give us some sort of civil government for Alaska to replace anarchy with law. Our efforts that year culminated in our first territorial convention. This was held August 16, 1881, at the new raw camp of Juneau, then called Harrisburg. There were only a few white settlements, but we had a delegation of fifteen men. Our meetings were held in a tent. Mr. W.B. Robertson, Jr., was chosen president and I, secretary. Present at our meeting was Governor Newell of the Territory of Washington, who was making a tour with his family, and addressed our meeting. We drew up a memorial to Congress pleading for the establishment of civil government. It was my duty as secretary to set forth conditions in Alaska and our needs. . . The following year when I visited the East, I had a two hours' talk with Benjamin Harrison, then United States Senator from Indiana, and afterwards President of the United States. He was an elder of the First Church of Indianapolis, which I was addressing."<sup>24</sup> Senator Harrison was chairman of the committee which framed the organic act which designated Alaska a district and provided for civil officers. The act was passed by Congress in 1884.

On the boat carrying him to Alaska in 1878, Hall Young had been advised by an oldtimer wise in Alaskan ways: "Don't become an Indian." Young had followed a strict standard of conduct which "while showing kindness and friendship, would draw a plainly marked line between our home and the life of the natives." But after ten years of preaching in the native tongues, Young felt he was deteriorating mentally and spiritually and that his habits of study were breaking down. He feared that inadvertently he was becoming an Indian. He resigned his post in 1888 and moved to California where for two years he was pastor of the little churches of Long Beach and Wilmington. Then he spent six months with his father in Butler before Loyal Young died there in October 1890 and a year supplying churches in Chicago and Cabery, Illinois; and from 1892- 1895 as minister in Cedar Falls, Iowa. In 1895 he returned to his Alma Mater in Wooster, Ohio, as professor of Biblical History and as pastor of the college church.

In 1897 excitement in the Klondike became a stampede for gold. Hall Young was homesick for Alaska. He knew President McKinley was considering him for Governor of Alaska but an "outdoor boy from the first", he liked far better another offer: A church layman would finance a worker in the Klondike if the man assigned were Hall Young. Young left his family in Wooster and set out for Alaska.<sup>25</sup>

Young struggled through Chilcoot Pass, shot the rapids of the Yukon River and landed at Dawson where he said one was more apt to find slim young boys, soft-handed lawyers, and doctors than horny-handed farmers and mechanics because the gold rush challenged the spirit of such men; it was "men who fell down, got up, joked about their predicament and tried it once more who succeeded."

Young had spent \$400 on the trail; he had left \$160. The only shelter he could find in Dawson was a tiny log cabin priced at \$800. A saloon keeper whom he had known at Wrangell said to him: "A man was asking about you this morning. He says he knew you in West Virginia."

Young was introduced to a slim man, long-necked and very brown, with a thick mustache:

"Aren't you Hall Young?"

"That is my name."

"Well, I am Bill Liggett who used to live at Canaan in Upshur County, West Virginia. I went

15. Young, *Alaska Days with John Muir*, pp. 65-7.

16. "From Muir's notes and our estimate of distances by our rate of sailing, and of directions from observations of our little compass, we drew a rough map of Glacier Bay. This was sent on to Washington... For six or seven years it was the only sailing chart of Glacier Bay, and two or three steamers were wrecked, groping their way in these uncharted passages, before surveying vessels began to make accurate maps." *Ibid.*, p. 196.

17. The Alaskan Hootznahoo (Hoochinoo) Indians consumed so much alcohol made from imported molasses in "Hoochinoo" stills that the word "Hooch" for "alcoholic liquor esp. when inferior or illicitly made" was coined.

18. A typical menu: clam chowder, fried porpoise, bacon and beans, "savory meat" made of mountain kid with potatoes, onions, rice and curry, camp biscuit and coffee, with a dessert of wild strawberries and condensed milk. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

19. William F. Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir*, Vol. 2, pp. 149-50.

20. Young, *Alaska Days with John Muir*, p. 127.

21. Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir*, Vol. 2, pp. 155-6.

22. John Muir, *Stickeen*, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909.

23. Young, *Alaska Days with John Muir*, Vol. 2, p. 147. An island was named for Young and a butterfly, a specimen of which he sent from Alaska to the Smithsonian Institution; John A. Marquis in Introduction to Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, p. 7.

24. Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, pp. 258-9.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 312-17.

to school to your brotner and worked on your father's farm at French Creek. . . I have a lot of [gold] dust I can't use until spring and I am willing to let you have what you want without interest until you can pay me back next summer."

With Liggett's help Young bought the cabin for his residence and managed to let our rooms on the second floor of a building under construction for enough to rent the structure and use the first floor for a meeting house. He assisted a priest who had just opened a hospital. He learned "That a minister who joins a stampede. . . should be able to do whatever there is to do, with hands, head and heart. He ought to know how to build his own church or his own house, if he has to do that; to mush along the trail with his dogs or alone when it is sixty below and like it and keep comfortable. He should know how to make a cozy camp in the woods during severe cold weather without suffering or grumbling. He should be able to cook for himself month after month with scanty and monotonous fare without committing suicide. If he cannot do these physical things and observe this mental attitude, he has no business in the Northland, and the people of that land will do no business with him."<sup>26</sup>

In the fall of 1898 Young was back in New York. He moved his family to Brooklyn, opened an office in rooms of the Board of Missions, averaged "more than a lecture a day all winter besides answering hundreds of letters...asking for lecture dates." In early spring of 1899 he returned to Alaska, inspected the work of Presbyterians at Dawson<sup>27</sup> and left Dawson with a fellow traveler in May 1899 to float 1200 miles in an open boat "camping, fishing, packing, and boating" down the Yukon River to Rampart, Alaska, where they arrived in the middle of August. When it tied up at the wharf in Rampart, the steamboat on which Young had booked passage to St. Michael was already filled with miners headed for Nome. Recognizing Young, the purser told the missionary: "You can spread your blankets on the floor of my office." At St. Michael while he searched for a way to Nome, Young set up his tent on the beach "for I was near the end of my money, and could not pay the high prices charged at the hotels. I got into my camp kit and did my own cooking, protecting my food as best I could against the thievish Eskimo dogs." At length a tub-like, side-wheel steamboat arrived at a wharf a mile and a half away. Young found an abandoned rowboat, which he repaired, and worked all night: "It took three trips to transfer my outfit and while I was rowing back and forth somebody carried off my most valuable war-bag containing most of my footwear and underclothes." Young's two and one half days of seasickness on choppy seas ended when the dory he boarded offshore at Nome overturned and "drenched and battered, we crawled to land." First night in Nome Young paid \$1.50 for space to sleep on the floor and \$1.50 for beans and flap-jacks in a boarding house. Next day he had 25¢ of the \$1000 he had had on leaving Dawson.<sup>28</sup>

Young found the climate in Nome more hostile than the climate in the Klondike: "In the Klondike you have the light, dry, hot air of summer; the light, dry, cold air of winter. There are long periods when the sky is cloudless. In the summer of unbroken day the land drowns, bathed in the warm sunshine and humming with insect life, no breath of air shaking the aspens; in winter of almost unbroken but luminous night, the Spirit of the north broods. . . [In Nome] the snow falls to great depth, and never lies still in one place. It drifts, and will cover your house completely under in one night, and pack so hard that the Eskimo can drive his reindeer team over your roof in the morning. The air becomes so full of the flying particles that you cannot see the lead-dog of your team. Men have lost their way in the streets of Nome and wandered out on the tundra to their death. There is considerable sunshine in the summer, and some comparatively still days, but there is much rain, and mossy swamps are everywhere."<sup>29</sup>

Part of Young's work was to solicit money to send to the "outside" sick miners, many of whom, before coming to Nome, had joined fruitless stampedes, or hoaxes, sponsored by steamship companies, trading companies, and wildcat mining companies. Young would say to a saloon keeper: ". . . this old-timer has blown in all his dust for booze; and it's up to you who have got it from him to take care of him now." Bunch-Grass Bill, a saloon keeper said to have "the blood of more than one man on his hands", joined Young to help the needy sick. He would pay his share for passage outside and solicit the rest of the funds from the other nine saloon keepers in the camp. When typhoid fever broke out, Young, the only clergyman in the town, nursed the sick and one week conducted eleven funerals. Bunch-Grass Bill looked after digging graves and making coffins: "I was raising the money to send out on the steamboat four or five men who must leave the country or die. . . I was also preparing another warehouse-hospital. So great was the demand for space for the care of the sick that I had felt compelled to take into my own ten-by-twelve tent three men sick with the disease. So crowded was the tent that I had to sleep under the bed of one of them. . . Billy brought me his remaining Apollinaris water that I might not have to drink the impure seepage of the tundra."<sup>30</sup>

Young contracted typhoid fever and was carried to a cabin to be cared for by a woman whose husband was recuperating from the disease: "I was in a little, cold shanty, twelve feet square, crowded and unhealthy. Two people besides myself must live in that tiny room--- sleep there, cook there. The savage arctic winter raged against us, howling his vengeance upon our impudence in thus braving him, unprepared. He made every nail-head inside the house a knob of frost. When my blankets, damp with the steam of cooking, touched the wall, he clamped them so tight one must tear the fabric in pulling it free. He made my clothing, stowed under the cot, a solid lump of ice. He asphyxiated us with foul gases when the door was closed, and filled the room instantly with fine snow from the condensation of the moisture when it was opened. . . [the thermometer went] down, down, down---ten below zero, twenty, thirty when it stormed, and forty, fifty, sixty below when it was still. . ."<sup>31</sup> Friends cut packed snow into bricks and built an igloo-like wall around the shanty. "Billy, with his soft, low voice and gentle manner, hovered over me, sitting for hours at my bedside, lifting me in his two big hands with infinite care and deftness."

At the end of seven weeks of high fever, Young had sold most of his possessions to pay his board bill. He weighed sixty pounds. The doctor told Billy: "I don't think Dr. Young can last much longer." Bunch-Grass Bill said to the man who owned the only cow in Nome: "Your cow's givin' too darned much milk. Now this man I want it for is my father, an' he's got enough microbes in him already." Billy added that everyone knew tundra water was poured into the milk, but, "I'm goin' to keep tab on you, an' if you dope my milk---well, you know me!" For three months Billy went each day to superintend the milking of the cow. Sometimes he paid three dollars for the pint of milk he carried to Hall Young. Young later wrote of Billy: "Wherever he is, I pray that God may bless and save the Irish saloon-keeper, who loved me and saved my life."<sup>32</sup>

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 330-1, 343-8, 373.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 385

28. Samuel Hall Young, *Adventures in Alaska*, pp. 13, 15-6, 25-8.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 52, 56-8.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-5.

Young recuperated in New York during the winter of 1900-01 and in the spring of 1901 was appointed General Missionary for Alaska and assigned to visit all the points he could cover and report on conditions at missions to the board. He visited Nome, the Aleutians, and Southeastern Alaska missions, returned to report his findings and fill speaking engagements before moving his family, household goods, and library in 1902 to his headquarters at Skagway, Alaska. He joined the Fairbanks stampede in 1904, where he found hundreds of old friends and a much higher proportion of experienced miners than in the two earlier stampedes. "I lost no time in securing a site for a church and a manse.... my wife came from Skagway and we lived in a little shack for two years." Young wrote editorials for the first newspaper established in Fairbanks, "The Times of which Mr. Robert McChesney, now [ 1927 ] my son-in-law, was editor. Together we managed the Russo-Japanese war and brought it to a successful conclusion."<sup>33</sup>

It was probably while stationed at Fairbanks that Young: "traveled with my dogs between two and three thousand miles in preaching and exploring trips. Magazines, papers and books sent me by churches...I found three hundred miles from my central reading room, in miners' and trappers' cabins and in roadhouses to which I had sent them." He was called "The Mushing Parson"<sup>34</sup>, an accolade so pleasing to Young that he used it as the subtitle of his autobiography.

In the spring of 1906 Young suffered the catastrophe of losing his 1500 volume library, documents, notes and letters when the river steamer on which they were being shipped to the coast wrecked. In the fall of 1910 he was called back to work in the offices in New York or as he put it, to "prowl the canyons of dismal unrest."<sup>35</sup> Fortunately in 1911 he could not find a man to send to two new camps in Alaska and so he had an excuse to go himself. In March 1912 when he was sixty-five years old, Young traveled with dog team and a companion 520 miles from Iditarod to Seward and then 200 miles by steamboat to Cordova to attend the Presbytery of Yukon. The three weeks he was on the road with dog team he averaged twenty miles a day much of it on foot to guide dogs around barriers or to reduce the weight of the sled on inclines. He spent nights at roadhouses along the trail: "I would rather take a trip through that beautiful wilderness, with my dogs, than travel luxuriously around the world on palatial steamboats... Oh, boys, you'll never know the real joy of living till you take a winter trip with dogsled in Alaska."<sup>36</sup>

Ordered to return to New York in 1913 Young was given a four months' vacation before beginning work in the fall. So in the summer of 1913 "to have a big hunt and a grand rest", Young accepted an invitation to join five hunters, a movie cameraman, and two taxidermists sailing on the schooner *P. J. Abler* for 6000 miles northward into the Arctic ice-pack to within sixteen degrees of the Pole. "We had four months of a royal good time --- along the Asiatic Coast and Bering Sea with the bird and seal rookeries, and pursuing polar bear amid the ice-floes of the Arctic Ocean." The climax of the trip was four days spent among the walrus herds of the Northern Siberian Coast. Young described the scene in the Siberian village where the ship landed to distribute meat from the hunt: "The moving-picture man and the camera fiends moved about 'taking' the crowd. The men with old ivory ornaments, white ivory implements, and other curios to sell besieged the white men. In all the houses cooking was going on, and many were chewing on raw blubber. It was a day of days to these poor people, and for the first time on our voyage of pleasure we felt ourselves benefactors to the human race. 'The calendar of these Eskimos will date from today,' said the only American white man who lives in East Cape village. 'They will count time all winter from the day of the big feed of walrus meat.' "<sup>37</sup>

In 1921 Young returned to Alaska for two years to gather material for his books and to represent the missionary board. During this time he was named chaplain of the senate at the meeting of the Territorial legislature. In the fall of 1924 he established a home in Seattle, Washington. <sup>38</sup>

Dr. R. B. Linger, 87, who lives in Clarksburg, W. Va., in 1978, remembers Hall Young as a visitor in the home of the father of Dr. Linger in French Creek.<sup>39</sup> Dr. Young in August 1916 preached a sermon "The Second Mile" in the Presbyterian Church at French Creek during the observation of the centennial of the arrival of Asa Brooks in French Creek <sup>40</sup> and in August 1919 at the centennial of the organization of the Presbyterian Church at French Creek preached from the same pulpit which his father had occupied fifty years before when Loyal Young delivered the semi-centennial sermon. <sup>41</sup>

Dr. Young finished a series of lectures at Chautauqua, New York, in August 1927 and started in an automobile with his niece for a reunion of the descendants of French Creek settlers. In Morgantown he transferred to the automobile driven by his cousin Stanley Fiedler.<sup>42</sup> The two cars stopped at Ziesing (Spelter in 1978) in Harrison County because of a puncture in a tire of the Fiedler car. The aged missionary got out of the vehicle to walk around while the tire was being repaired. As the street car, going toward Fairmont, neared the Ziesing stop at 12:25 in the afternoon, the minister, who was deaf, turned around and started across the track. The interurban knocked him over an embankment.<sup>43</sup> He died five hours later in the Saint Mary's Hospital in Clarksburg. A memorial service was held at French Creek on Sunday, September 4, after which his body was sent to Syracuse, New York, for interment beside the remains of his wife.<sup>44</sup>

Hall Young once wrote that he was "an optimist of the optimists."<sup>45</sup> This characteristic was attested to by a cohort. John Marquis wrote, "For a half-dozen years I saw him [Hall Young] in the office of the Board in New York. He was one of the most buoyant and loyal spirits it has been my good fortune to know ...I never saw him despondent or discouraged...In the summer of 1919 I went to Northern Alaska and at Nome I met many old miners who knew him and at the mention of his name tears would come to their hardened eyes as they thought back over the many deeds of kindness he had done for them when they were down and out...In some respects he embodied Alaska." <sup>46</sup> A poem on which Hall Young was working at the time of his death was found among his papers:

33. Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, pp. 409-11.

34. mush: short for "mush on", a corruption of "marchons", the cry of French voyagers to their dogs.

35. Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, pp. 413, 417.

36. Young, *Adventures in Alaska*, pp. 77, 80-1, 136, 140.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-9, 180-1.

38. Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, pp. 433-4.

39. R.B. Linger, M.D., in a letter to Dorothy Davis, December 1977.

40. W.B. Cutright, *The History of Upshur County, West Virginia*, p. 217, Harry W. Vance, comp., *Souvenir of the French Creek Home-Coming, August 4th-6th, 1916*.

41. Harry Vance, comp. and ed., *Memorial of the Centenary Celebration of the French Creek Presbyterian Church, August 23-24, 1919*.

42. The early French Creek settlers by the name spelled it "Fidler" or "Fiddler". Stanley Fiedler, through research, found the original spelling to be "Fiedler". He changed the spelling of his name from "Fidler" to "Fiedler". Virginia Hoover in an interview with Dorothy Davis, January 16, 1978.

43. *Clarksburg Telegram*, Clarksburg, West Virginia, September 2, 1927.

44. *Ibid.*, September 3, 1927.

45. Young, *Hall Young of Alaska*, p. 27.

46. John A. Marquis, "Dr. S. Hall Young", *The Pioneer Fifth Annual Report of the Descendants of the French Creek Pioneers, August 1928*, pp.5-6.

Let me die, working  
 Still tackling plans unfinished, tasks dndone!  
 Clean to its end, swift may my race be run.  
 No laggard steps, no faltering, no shirking;  
 Let me die, working!

Let me die, thinking.  
 Let me fare forth still with an open mind,  
 Fresh secrets to unfold, new truths to find,  
 My soul undimmed, alert, no question blinking;

Let me die laughing.  
 No sighing o'er past sins; they are forgiven.  
 Spilled on this earth are all the joys of Heaven.  
 The wine of life, the cup of mirth still quaffing;  
 Let me die laughing!

Let me die, giving.

Let me die, aspiring.<sup>47</sup>

47. Young, Hall Young of Alaska, p. 9.

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Harrison County  
WEST VIRGINIA  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**NEWSLETTER**

Fall 1978

ANNUAL TOUR

The bus carrying members of the Harrison County Historical Society and guests of members on the annual tour of the Society Sunday, September 17, 1978, will travel over roads well known by travelers from Harrison County to the East before the Northwestern Turnpike opened in 1838. Even light carriages between 1800 and 1838 could travel a route that ran through Pruntytown, via Gladesville to Dunkard's Bottom (Kingwood) and on through present Terra Alta to the East.

Tour members will stop at Grimes Tavern and the Americana Museum (Teets) in Terra Alta before traveling to Alpine Lake for dinner after which the bus will return to the Vance House.

The tour will leave Vance House at 12:01 p.m. on September 17. Please use the form at the bottom of page 2 to make reservations before the September 9, 1978, closing date for refunds and reservations.

CORRECTION

Historical sketch No. 12 "Samuel Hall Young, Explorer and Missionary", which was part of Harrison County Historical Society Newsletter Spring 1978, contains two errors. On page 5 of the sketch is the statement: "A memorial service was held at French Creek on Sunday, September 4 [1927], after which his body [Dr. Young] was sent to Syracuse, New York, for interment." The source for the statement was Clarksburg Telegram, September 3, 1927.

A granddaughter of Dr. Young stated in a letter, received by the Society after the newsletter had gone to press, that Dr. Hall Young was interred in Butler, Pennsylvania.

During further research a book was found in the library of a member of Dr. Young's church in Butler with the following title: Through Succeeding Years: A History of the First Presbyterian Church, Butler, Pennsylvania, 1813-1938. Butler, Pa. : Miller-Mickley Printing Co., n.d. In the book are these statements: "In 1852 a new cemetery was laid out on the beautiful hill north of town. It was later to be the resting place of many of the church's honored dead, including .... Reverend Loyal Young and his famous missionary son, S. Hall Young, and other members of his family. [ page 23]. Many members remember him [Dr. Samuel Hall Young] on his frequent visits to the Butler church he loved so well and his instructive talks on Alaska. A vivid scene comes to mind of him showing pictures of polar bears and their young to the children of the Sabbath School, with whom he was a great favorite. It was with a great thrill of joy that we as a church unveiled a bronze tablet to his memory on September 16, 1928. A headstone was set at his grave by the congregation in the spring of 1938." ( page 26).

On page 6 of historical sketch No. 12 one line of the poem written by Dr. Young is omitted. Stanza 2 should read:

My soul undimmed, alert, no question blinking;

Let me die thinking!