



*The BEAR joining the surviving whaling vessels at Point Barrow on 28 July 1898.*

As time went on, the weather got colder and more fierce. The days were short, visibility was often so poor that they came near plunging over cliffs in blizzards.

While Lt. Jarvis and company were enroute north, unknown to them, a mate Tilton had struggled south from the whaling fleet to tell the world of the whalers fate. When he reached St. Michaels he heard of the mission to drive reindeer north and termed it as "impossible".

Many times the hospitality was poor but they managed to keep the expedition members alive and pushing onward.

Upon reaching Cape Prince of Whales, about 500 miles north of St. Michael, Lt. Jarvis succeeded in persuading a missionary, W. T. Lopp and the eskimo "Charlie" (Artisarlook), to lend them their most valued 400 reindeer to the expedition and to move them onward toward Point Barrow 800 miles to the north. This part of the journey imposed grave fatigue on all members of the expedition. Bitter weather, blowing snow, blizzards, rough terrain, and short days turned the expedition into a nightmarish ordeal. However, Jarvis remained as determined as ever. As Lt. Jarvis related in his journal:

"A philosophical common sense is a great help in living in the Arctic, as elsewhere. If you are subjected to miserable discomforts, or even if you suffer, it must be regarded as all right and simply a part of the life, and like sailors, you must never dwell too much on the dangers or suffering."

After some 1500 miles and 100 days, 26 March 1898, The Relief Expedition sighted one of the marooned vessels, the Belvedere which was partially hidden by banked snow. As Lt. Jarvis again relates in his journal:

"We drew up alongside at 4 P.M., and going aboard announced ourselves and our mission, but it was some time before the first astonishment and incredulosity could wear off and a welcome be extended to us."

Lt. Jarvis found outbreaks of scurvy, poor living conditions, very poor morale, and critical food shortage among the starving marooned whalers. It was clear that the whalers had been through hell and that they were waiting for inevitable death.

The arrival of fresh meat soon helped cure the scurvy and Lt. Jarvis set about to improve the living conditions and morale by organizing the victims and building more adequate quarters ashore using parts of the icebound vessels. New sanitation facilities were constructed, cleanliness was enforced and medical help was administered.

Lt. Jarvis became the sole arbiter and settled disputes where necessary. He dispensed supplies equitably and prudently. Baseball games were organized in an attempt to bring the victims out of their depression, and provide much needed exercise.