

Hazelet's Journal: Travel Edition: A Riveting Alaska Gold Rush Saga

George Cheever Hazelet

J. H. Clark, Editor

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This is the inspiring nineteenth-century account of a gritty, determined man whose Alaskan adventures epitomized the "can-do" attitude that transformed a nation.

Edited by his great-grandson John Clark, *Hazelet's Journal* is an enhanced record of George Cheever Hazelet's epic efforts to locate and establish a gold-mining operation in Copper River Country during the Klondike Gold Rush, beginning in 1898.

After his chicory company failed, Hazelet left his wife and two young sons in Nebraska to mine for gold in the wilds of Alaska. A plucky man, he struggled in pursuing his goal, surmounting obstacles and life-threatening conditions. He walked across mountains, glaciers, and frozen lakes, and he survived storm-tossed seas, raging rivers, forest fires, and earthquakes amid subzero temperatures. He also studied mineral geology, the law, and the formation of corporations. While his hopes of success in gold mining proved elusive, he succeeded in other ways that left a lasting impact on Alaska.

Hazelet's narrative voice is engaging—indomitable, understated, and kind. It helps in understanding how he earned the respect of others. He discusses building rafts to ferry supplies up raging rivers, snowshoeing hundreds of miles, and digging out of several feet of snow so that his horses could graze. He also writes about losing horses and supplies when they plunged through the surface of icy rivers and were swept away.

Clark supplements Hazelet's original journal with maps, photographs (some from Hazelet's collection, others from Alaska museums), contextual information, and an index. His modern perspective enriches Hazelet's story, highlighting its continuing relevance. The book's historical and biographical notes couch Hazelet as an uncommon entrepreneur in an era when many earned their livings in pioneering ways. An affable, methodical college-educated man, he'd been a teacher and a principal before heading to Alaska; he'd pursued lucrative real estate ventures that made him a leader in his small Nebraska town. Within his journal entries, Hazelet chronicles the arduous travails he undertook in the inhospitable climate of Alaska's untamed wilderness to provide for his family. He also befriended titans of industry, finance, and government; played a key role in bringing the railroad to Alaska; and had a hand in the oil business. His is a narrative of the American dream, in which resolve and hard work win out.

Packaged with a nod to Hazelet's era, as with a photograph that conveys the magnitude of the space that he traversed, *Hazelet's Journal* is the inspiring nineteenth-century account of a gritty, determined man whose Alaskan adventures epitomized the "can-do" attitude that transformed a nation.

WENDY HINMAN (November 9, 2022)

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