

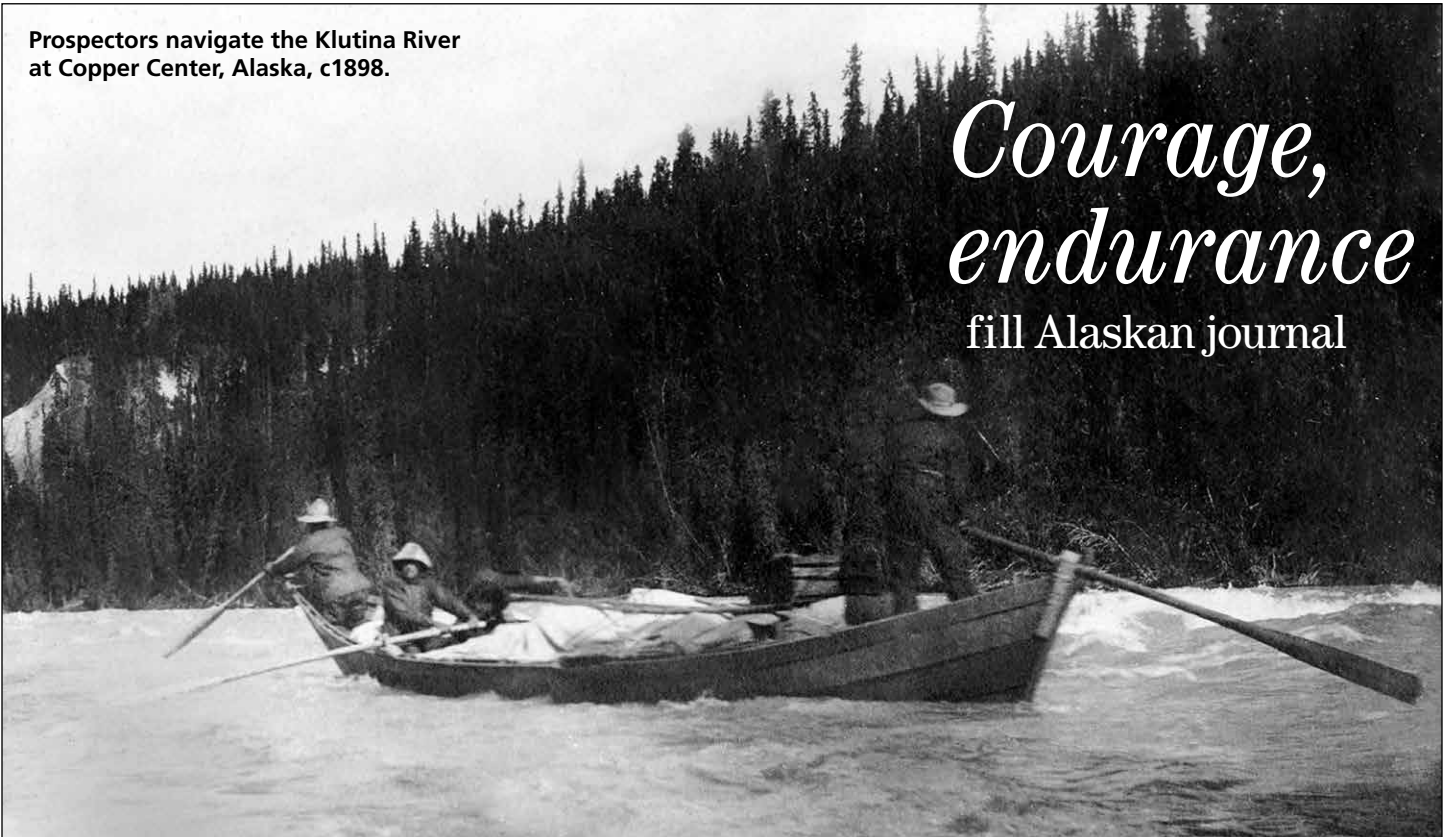
The Courier-Journal

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BOOKS

Prospectors navigate the Klutina River at Copper Center, Alaska, c1898.



*Courage,
endurance*
fill Alaskan journal

By Orme Wilson

Special to The Courier-Journal

What drove a 37-year-old Nebraskan to say goodbye to his beloved wife and two young sons and head to Alaska in 1898? Dreams of gold, financial security and self-redemption spurred George Cheever Hazelet to join the Klondike Gold Rush. A former teacher, elected official and entrepreneur, Hazelet left his home after hard times had busted his chicory-coffee business. Accompanied by Jack Meals, a veteran of California's goldfields, Hazelet spent much of the next five years prospecting in Alaska's Copper River region.

Hazelet kept an intimate diary of his quest. To our good fortune, his great-grandson, Louisvillian John H. Clark, has recently published "Hazelet's Journal," Hazelet's own account of his search

TALKS ON HAZELET

Editor and publisher John H. Clark will discuss George Cheever Hazelet at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the St. Matthews library branch, 3940 Grandview Ave. Clark also will appear at 7 p.m. Friday at Carmichael's bookstore, 2720 Frankfort Ave.

for gold. With a lively prologue by Louisville author and historian L. Douglas Keeney and dozens of photographs, this compelling book offers a remarkable and unvarnished look at the challenges prospectors faced in Alaska.

Before they could start to mine, Hazelet, Meals and their men had to move tons of supplies and equipment inland. They used horses, sleds, wagons, boats and their own backs. They climbed glaciers, broke trails, built bridges and ran deadly, ice-choked rivers. Homesick-

Hazelet's Journal

By George Cheever Hazelet, edited and published by John H. Clark, Old Stone Press, 277 pp./\$29.95

ness, past failures and his struggle to find gold weighed on Hazelet. He confided to his journal, "I'm a poor excuse for a man," but urged himself to have hope and to "work, work, work."

Although Hazelet did not strike it rich in the goldfields, he ultimately moved his family to Alaska, invested in real estate and oil, became mayor of Cordova and enjoyed considerable prosperity. Thanks to Clark, we can now share in Hazelet's authentic tale of courage, endurance and adventure.

Orme Wilson is a director of the Louisville Free Public Library Foundation and a director and immediate past president of The Filson Historical Society.