Explorers Wild: The Hubbards in Labrador

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Abstract
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‘How would you like to go to Labrador, Wallace?’ was the question posed in November 1901 while Hubbard and his friend were tramping through the snow in the Shawangunk Mountains of southern New York State. ‘Labrador!’, Dillon Wallace is supposed to have exclaimed, ‘Now where in the world is Labrador?’ Hubbard pencilled an outline: ‘Think of it Wallace! A great unknown land right near home, as wild and primitive today as it has always been! I want to get into a really wild country and have some of the experience of the old fellows who explored and opened up the country where we are now’. A year later, Hubbard’s plans were made: ‘It will be a big thing, Wallace, it ought to make my reputation’.

Well, it did, but not in the way he imagined. It would be his friend who would write a best-seller on their trip and become known as a significant author on the great outdoors. Dillon Wallace wrote *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* in 1905. It was not a tale of happy adventure but of endurance, love and tragedy. For the expedition compounded its mistakes and there were errors of judgement. Hubbard lost his life. Wallace was found within a day or so of the same fate and he owed his rescue to the durability of the third member of the party. This was George Elson, described (in the language of the times) as a ‘half-breed’ Cree Indian.

The main purpose here is to review the problems of the expedition and to explore the personal relationship between Hubbard and Wallace. Wallace’s first book went to eleven editions by 1913. The promise made by Wallace to Hubbard to complete the work in Labrador led to a second work by Wallace: *The Long Labrador Trail* (1906). Hubbard and Wallace pitted their wits against a very hostile and unrelenting environment. With the coast of Labrador familiar to European fishermen since the early sixteenth century, little was known about the interior until the nineteenth. The indigenous peoples, long-
established but few in number and widely-scattered, consisted of both Inuit ('Eskimos') and 'Indians'. Along with more of mixed blood (the 'Breeds'), many were trappers and hunters for the long-established Hudson's Bay Company. The HBC posts were scattered peripherally between Ungava Bay, the Labrador coast and Lake Melville. Because of the sea ice, Labrador could not be approached until late spring-early summer. Expeditions could only be mounted in summer if the aim be to study rocks and ecology. Any expedition overtaken by winter had to exchange canoe and tent for komatik and snowshoes. Dog teams could offer rapid travel, but they were only fully effective beyond the forest zone in the north and along the barren, fjord-like eastern fringe.

In the southern interior, Labrador's own Niagara, the Grand Falls of the Hamilton, were first seen by a European in 1839. The 1880's and 90's brought new knowledge through the work of the Canadian geologist A.P. Low. He explored the Hamilton and major tributaries as well as the lakes from which they were fed. Important in the tale of Hubbard, these waters included the vast sheet, over 90 miles long and up to 25 miles wide, called Michikamau.

Michikamau (Big Water) featured as Hubbard's first goal. Its treacherous and potentially deadly surface had been first crossed in the winter of 1838 when frozen. Hubbard would search for it in summer, his motives being scientific (he would make known the geography of the interior) and romantic (he would have a good tale to tell). By going up the Naskaupi River rather than the more travelled Hamilton or Grand, he was deliberately plunging into a region where no European footsteps would be found to guide him.

While he was planning his expedition in New York, Hubbard's first mistake was to rely upon Low's maps. Low's summary (Map 1) showed the Hamilton system well, but it represented Grand Lake merely as an elongated widening out of the large river called the Northwest, which flowed from Lake Michikamau to Grosewater Bay after being joined about 20 miles above Grand Lake by the Naskaupi. Hubbard's plan was to prove these streams to their source. He would reach the Northwest River Post early in summer, ascend the Naskaupi and Northwest Rivers to Lake Michikamau and then, from the northern end of the lake, cross the drainage divide to the north-flowing George River. His overall plan was even more ambitious, for it involved choosing alternative ways out, one, a winter journey of several hundred miles by komatik to a harbour in southern Labrador, the other by arduous snowshoe travel to the St. Lawrence.

Hubbard's second mistake was to rely upon the coastal boat schedules of the Reid Newfoundland Company whose Virginia Lake had left St. John's, Newfoundland, for Labrador and was days late in returning. Thereby, his expedition failed to reach Labrador at the earliest opportunity. When the vessel's second spring trip brought
them to Labrador uncomfortably (there were many ‘stationers’ aboard, fishermen who came to Labrador each season) Hubbard could not wait for the Reid vessel to visit Nain before returning south to Rigolet, so he disembarked at Indian Harbour at the entrance of Hamilton Inlet, up which he must go.

The captain told him that Dr. Simpson’s little steamer (the Julia Sheridan of Grenfell’s Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen) would arrive the same afternoon to go to Rigolet and Northwest River Post with the mails. Simpson arrived the following day to say he would not go down the inlet until after the return of the Virginia Lake from the north. With every hour precious, Hubbard hired a young ‘livyere’ to take his team and equipment 50 miles by small boat. A ragged sail and hard sculling took them only 35 miles before the Virginia Lake caught them up. A pantomime activity delayed them next. Simpson arrived, but as he had forgotten the mail for Northwest River that the Lake had left at Indian Harbour, he had to return at once: ‘Dr. Simpson not being permitted by his principles to run his boat on Sunday ... we were told not to expect the Julia Sheridan back from Indian Harbour until Monday noon’. At Rigolet, ‘Skipper’ Tom Blake told Hubbard that Grand Lake offered good canoeing to its upper end where the Naskaupi would offer more paddling for 18 or 20 miles to the shallow Red River. Blake’s son Donald confirmed that the had sailed his boat as far as the Red and he had heard from the Indians that the Naskaupi came from Lake Michikamau. This convinced the Americans that the Naskaupi was the river that A.P. Low had mapped as the Northwest.

The delays meant that a further 9 days were consumed in reaching the take-off point. The trio left the Northwest River Post on July 15 and, reaching the upper end of Grand Lake, they paddled straight to the obvious extremity where they found a wide stream which they took to be the Naskaupi. Indeed, why not? Low’s map showed but one river flowing into Grand Lake. Hubbard was never to know that he spent the next several weeks ascending the wrong river:

‘we were mistaken. We had passed the Naskaupi five miles below, where it empties into a deep bay extending northward from Grand Lake. At its mouth the Naskaupi is divided by an island ... so thickly covered with trees ... that when we crossed along in front of the bay no break ... was perceptible. Perhaps it will be said that we should have explored the bay’.10

They did not because Hubbard was already driven by the fear that he would be beaten by the short summer. The river they began to ascend was the Susan. They worked their way with painful slowness, each carrying loads of 100 lbs or more suspended by headbands. But great bonhomnie was always expressed in front of a bright fire. “‘Boys”, said Hubbard, after we had made a good supper of trout ... “this pays for all the hard work”’. Aboard ship, Hubbard had heard the
Newfoundlanders address each other as ‘B’y’ and this stuck, even to the very end. Hubbard entertained his good companions with quotations from his favourite author, Kipling, while they puffed on their pipes. One verse seemed so appropriate to their position:

When first under fire, if you’re wishful to duck,
Don’t look or take heed of the man that is struck;
Be thankful you’re living and trust to your luck,
And march to your front like a soldier

Hubbard might be living out a *Boys’ Own* adventure, but by riverbed, swamp and gully the going got tougher as they progressed up the Susan, which they thought was the Naskaupi. Days began at a cool 33 degrees, but rose to 92. Nothing could protect them from the flies and they had to sacrifice food and gear. Scouting with a broken compass, Wallace got lost, emerging from the bush 18 miles below their last camp. Hubbard became depressed at their slow progress and a pattern of feeding emerged which persisted even until there was little left. If the day went well (miles covered, partridge shot, trout caught) they celebrated success; if it went badly, they cheered themselves up from their depleting stores.

On day 13 out of Northwest River the rhythm and the solitude began to play upon the minds of the Americans, each admitting that they felt they were the only people left in the world. But what of the ‘English-Indian’ George Elson who was born at Rupert’s House (the HBC Post on James Bay)? Wallace recognised that to him their feelings must seem ‘highly artificial, if not affected’. They told themselves they would find caribou on the moss-covered barrens to the north. But a new problem emerged which must be reckoned Hubbard’s third mistake: neither of the Americans had a change of footwear. Their mocassins began to break up when they had travelled only 80 miles. Wallace confided to his readers that already he dreaded the prospect of being required to retrace their steps. But they came across a new branch where the rotten poles of a wigwam were quickly accepted by Hubbard as a sign that they were on the aboriginal route to Michikamau.

From ‘Mountaineer Lake’ they portaged to ‘Lake Elson’ and found a new riverbed which Wallace, at the end of it all, was to know as the Beaver. Their labours, and their diet, seem already to have disoriented them; both Hubbard and Elson got lost, like Wallace before. Again, however, trials by day are contrasted with the comfort of spruce boughs before a roaring fire with the Northern Lights sweeping in fantastic shapes across the sky. And from Hubbard, more of his favourite verses:

Now the Four-Way Lodge is opened, now the Hunting Winds are loose -
Now the Smokes of Spring go up to clear the brain;
Now the Young Men’s hearts are troubled for the whisper of the Trues,
Now the Red Gods make their medicine again!
As the Red Gods called Hubbard, Wallace built on his romanticism to convey an image of the younger man as sensitive, steadfast and vulnerable. Kipling is recalled to shape their adventure even as we begin to detect Hubbard’s difficulty in coming to terms with the harsh realities. When Wallace and Elson climb high to find the way, the Imperial imprint is to be left upon the face of Labrador:

the mountains we estimated rose about 2,500 feet above the country ... ice and snow glistened in the sunshine. Barren almost to their base ... they presented a scene of desolate grandeur placed there to guard the land beyond. As I gazed upon them, some lines from Kipling’s *Explorer* that I had often heard Hubbard repeat were brought forcibly to my mind:

'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges – Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!

Let us call these ranges the Kipling Mountains’

This while they lived off trout – but not enough – until Hubbard and Wallace brought down a big stag (inexpertly: George was the best shot). Incredibly, it was the only caribou they were able to kill on the whole journey. Only George thought they might need to eat its skin, which he carried as part of his load from Day 30 to Day 42. Geese, trout and ptarmigan saw them over the Kipling Mountains, but they could find no way forward:

'Do you remember’ asked Hubbard, ‘the slogan of the old Pike’s Peakers? – “Pike’s peak or Bust”’.  
'Yes’, said I, ‘and very often they busted’.  
'Well’, said Hubbard, ‘we’ll adopt it and change it to our needs. “Michikamau or Bust” will be our watchword now’.

Now the terrain became even rougher and they met a maze of water. On ‘Lake Hope’ they believed they could connect directly with Lake Michikamau. But because they ascended the wrong rivers they were many miles from the Big Water. They paddled into ‘Lost Trail Lake’, then into ‘Lake Disappointment’, where in three days they covered 60 fruitless miles. Hubbard now decided that since he was not, after all, on the Naskaupi-Northwest system which would lead to the Big Lake, they must portage north to find it and, if they could not, turn west where then it must be.

This was Day 44 (August 27). A careful reconstruction of the expedition’s progress, rations carried, fishing and shooting and the terrain crossed, indicates that they had already passed the last point of safe return. Hubbard was ill, their footwear had failed, their trousers hung in strips, the venison was going, their flour almost gone. Winter would probably overtake them before they could descend the George River; there might be little more game. Wallace knew, too, that were
they to turn around, they did not have provisions to take them half way to Northwest River Post. But none wanted to be first to admit failure: Hubbard could not give up his dream, Wallace could not be disloyal to the friend with whom he had shared so much and Elson could only go whither they went.

That they still went on – ‘Michikamau or bust!’ – was madness, but at the same time powerful confirmation of goodwill undimmed between fast friends who had agreed to test their manliness together. Hubbard, we are told, ached for the company of Mina as his body began to fail him. The older man had by this time been a widower for three years. As both men slowly starved, Hubbard told Wallace a private tale of his marriage day, not shared before because it was so personal and because it had happened ‘before he and Wallace had shared camp together in the great outdoors’. How far did this homosocial context provoke homosexual tensions? In his book, Wallace underlined Hubbard’s sense of blood brother linkage between men who both saw nothing but adventure in the search for Kipling’s ‘Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting ...’ There is no doubt that the unseen bonds which united them were strong and genuine, reaching beyond the grave. But Mina Hubbard took no pleasure either in the portrayal of her husband in The Lure of the Labrador Wild or in the presentation of his bonds with Wallace. The book was dedicated to ‘L.H. Here, b’y, is the issue of our plighted troth. Why I am the scribe and not you, God knows: and you have His secret’. And when Wallace wrote his second Labrador book he began it by quoting Hubbard:

It’s always the way, Wallace! When a fellow starts on the long trail, he’s never willing to quit. It’ll be the same with you if you go with me to Labrador. When you come home, you’ll hear the voice of the wilderness calling you to return, and it will lure you back again.16

If these two were white Americans of the brotherhood of the wilderness, city clubmen yearning for the camp fire and intoxicated with the pure forest air laden with the scent of firs, what of George Elson, the ‘English-Indian’ who knew only the lands of the Cree? He was second choice, recruited at arm’s length by the HBC agent at Missanabie, Ontario. George had never seen a city before he entrained for Hubbard’s office in New York and he had never seen Labrador. He owed nothing to the Americans other than his agreement to be woodsman and cook. Yet they were all fully aware that in going on they were taking a long chance. Earlier described as impetuous, Hubbard was now described as ‘nervously active’ and haunted by the spectre of an early winter. Their fate would be sealed if they met with more delays; they would be too late for the caribou migration and, therefore, too late for the Indians at their hunting. Every camp conversation turned to food: restaurant meals in Manhattan, domestic
cook-ups at Congers, burnt cakes once thrown away. To Wallace (but not to George) Hubbard confessed to strong contrary thoughts which were testing his will. On the last of August he admitted he would be glad to get to Michikamau and leave: 'I'm afraid', he added slowly, 'I've been a little homesick today'. A few days later he was ashamed that he looked like a walking skeleton. But even the first snowfall would not deflect him because he felt that if he did not reach the caribou grounds he would not have enough material for a story.

We can believe that by now the balance of Hubbard’s mind was disturbed. In ‘marching to the front like a soldier’ he was risking death for glory. Amazingly, Wallace thought the two could still hide the true extent of Hubbard’s condition from George. Having portaged another 40 miles, on Day 56 they reached a great lake backed by a great grey mountain to which they paddled. The next day Hubbard and George succeeded in climbing ‘Mount Hubbard’ from which they gained their first and last sight of Michikamau.17 Windsqualls then kept them on a little island with only berries to eat for four days. To Wallace (but not to Hubbard) George now told stories of Indians who had starved to death. If this was his way of influencing decisions, Wallace was only interested in trying to dissect the condition of a personality (as we might say) split by genes: ‘Apparently two natures were at war within him. One – the Indian – was haunted by superstitious fears; the other – the white man – rejected these fears and invariably conquered them’.18

If George was perceived as a white man, Wallace was more sensitive to the changes wrought in Hubbard: ‘he was only a young fellow, you know, with a gentle, affectionate nature that gripped him tight to the persons and objects he loved’. And still the gales howled through the trees. On September 16, for the first time Hubbard heard George’s stories of Indians that starved. After contemplating the still lowering skies that hid the way to Michikamau, he turned to the camp fire: ‘Boys, what do you say to turning back?’.19 It was Day 64 from Northwest River, Day 88 from New York.

Hubbard’s natural optimism persuaded him that good fishing and shooting would see them through. Not only that, but he repeated ‘Plan B’:

If we kill some caribou I think we’d better turn to and build a log shack, cure the meat, make toboggans and snowshoes, wait for things to freeze up ... We can get some dogs at the post, and we’ll be in good shape to push right on without delay to the St. Lawrence. It’ll make a bully trip, and we’ll have lots of grub.20

This was, of course, quite unreal. While the gales continued to tie them down, Hubbard extolled the virtues of his marriage; now he was bothered that he had given too much attention to glory. On Day 72 a goose provided giblets, entrails and broth; the next day it provided wings and feet, and the morning after they scorchd and ate the
bones. Each saw his companions now as scarecrows with eyes deep in sockets. Wallace still maintained that Hubbard remained bright and stable; in his book, we might say, it would not serve him to report otherwise and only George Elson could tell differently. Over one camp fire, Hubbard was reconfirmed at the centre of their partnership:

Thanksgiving, he said, must be our reunion day always... We must never drift apart. We were brothers, comrades – more than brothers. We had endured the greatest hardships together, had fought our way through that awful country together, had starved together; and never had there been a misunderstanding, never a word of dissension.21

As Hubbard became weaker, we are told, his spirit grew brighter and the more he suffered. On Sunday September 27 he was studied closely yet secretly:

As he sat there in the red glow... I took note of his emaciated form and his features so haggard and drawn. I seemed for the first time to realise the condition to which the boy had been brought by his sufferings. And while I stood there, still unobserved, I heard him softly humming to himself:
'Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee'22

They recrossed the Kipling Mountains but were still 150 miles from Northwest River. They regained Camp Caribou and knew they must choose between the 'big river' (the Beaver) or abandon the canoe to follow the Susan on foot. Wallace and Elson favoured the 'big river' (which all thought must enter Goose Bay rather than Grand Lake; see Map) because by canoe they would move faster. Hubbard favoured the way they had come because they had left food behind (a little flour, powdered milk, lard) and knew where the trappers cabins were. George now told of his dream that the 'big river' led directly to Grand Lake and safety (another example of George giving his leader veiled advice?).

With Hubbard hopeful and the others fearful, they began to struggle down the Susan River. It was Hubbard’s last big mistake. They were nourished by so little now they were beginning to feel indifference. The Bible replaced Kipling and Hubbard was completely worn out ‘but with all a great hero, never complaining’. His condition was pitiable ‘but he bears himself like the hero that he is... How can we save him!’23

There could only be one way: for Wallace and Elson to reach the abandoned flour 25 miles downriver, for Wallace to return with some for Hubbard while Elson went on another 30 miles to reach Donald Blake’s hunting "tilt. Wallace tells that Hubbard requested him to write up the story of the trip and to place his diary in Mina’s hands. Wallace and Elson wrote last notes. All embraced and Wallace turned to embrace again. It was Day 96, Sunday October 18.
Down the trail, Wallace and Elson ate raw partridge; the mouldy flour was found and divided, George to go on, Wallace to go back through the deep snow. By October 24 he thought he had gone too far. Smoke-blinded and starving, he made his fire within 200 yards of Hubbard’s camp, although he was unaware of it. Near his end, he staggered on stockinged feet, suffered delusions, listened to his dead wife. Meanwhile George Elson took seven days to reach Grand Lake where he found a house newly-built by Donald Blake. Blake, his young brother Gilbert (Bert), Allen Goudie and Duncan McLean found Wallace by sniffing the remains of his night fire on the morning of October 30.24 Hubbard had not left the tent; he died ten days before George Elson could raise the alarm.

There was no quick way out for Wallace, who turned down the last trip of the year by the Virginia Lake to bring out Hubbard’s body. With Elson, he embarked on the Aurora (Capt. Abraham Kean) for St. John’s, May 14 and arrived in Brooklyn on the Sylvia May 27. They carried the diaries from Hubbard’s last tent, including Hubbard’s last words (which Wallace cannot quote; they belong to Mina Hubbard). Wallace noted:

Your hand was firm when you wrote, b’y speaking eloquently of that which most of all was you. ‘It is a man’s game’, you said one day, in referring to our desperate struggle to reach those we loved. You played it to the limit, b’y, and it was a man’s death25

This was Wallace’s last confirmation of faith in his friend’s code of masculinity as found in Kipling.

Hubbard yearned to become one of a select new group of explorer media heroes, whose adventures were eagerly awaited by a huge new American public.26 But when his end was known, newspaper critics said he was fool-hardy and ill-prepared. Wallace would have his readers believe that Hubbard had consulted the best authorities (in the United States) and it was a bad year; the old men of the country (Labrador) had never known game to be scarcer. Hubbard was not just ambitious for success as a writer on the great outdoors, he was the most conscientious man Wallace ever knew. But even from Hubbard’s tale as revealed by Wallace, we can see that he arrived late, would not be dissuaded by the best authorities in Labrador, did not employ a local trapper to take them into the Naskaupi, could not live off the land with rod and gun, did not know when to admit defeat, went too far and endangered all their lives. We can see that Hubbard seriously underestimated the unyielding nature of Labrador. He undertook to explore its bleak interior because he was aware that the American Empire was explored, filled out, settled. ‘Manifest Destiny’ had been achieved and Frederick Jackson Turner would tell of the closing of the American frontier. Hubbard sought the northern wilderness to relive
the old colonial experience of his forebears, but was arrogant to reject
the contemporary, and still colonial, voices of those who knew
Labrador better.

Men who have shared great danger on the battlefield, upon the high
seas or in captivity will so often experience deep and lasting feelings for
their comrades. There is no doubt that Hubbard and Wallace shared
very special feelings for each other which were heightened by their
dependence in isolation. Wallace made no secret of their bonding.
Echoing words given to Hubbard earlier, he wrote that ‘Only men that
have camped together in a lonely, uninhabited country can in any
degree comprehend the bond of affection and love that drew Hubbard
and me ever closer to each other as the Labrador Wild lured us on and
on’. Yet, as O’Flaherty suggested, Hubbard’s sentiment seems out of
place in Labrador: ‘There is nothing pretty or gentle or “nice” about this
“frayed edge” of the North American continent. The land and ocean
here have been through history intolerant of weakness and
miscalculation ... Hubbard’s adventure reminds us of this, and thus the
haunting story of his encounter with the Labrador hinterland is a
parable of enduring significance’.27

Can distance and hindsight give this parable another slant, if not a
different ending? Hubbard was branded a hero by the magazine of the
Alumni Association of his alma mater: ‘the man who is born with the
insatiable desire to do something, to see what other men have not seen
... belongs, however great his success or complete his failure, to that
minority which has from the first kept the world moving on ...’28
Sentiments of masculinity like this were not unusual in a period which
saw so much unendurable privation experience in polar exploration.
But we also have Hubbard Canonized. An ‘unknown friend’ wrote that
‘To dare and die so divinely and leave such a record is to be transfixed
on a mountain top, a master symbol to all men of cloud-robed human
victory, angel-attended by reverence and peace ...’, while another
wrote that ‘Mr. Hubbard ... failed, but God spelled “Success” of
“Failure” ... The life given up in the wilds of Labrador was not in
vain’.29 If these comments seem mawkish today, they were
conventional at the beginning of the century and attractive to those in
such as Congers and Poughkeepsie who selected the Sunday School
prizes. We may constantly redefine heroism, yet many will still believe
there is no quicker way to become a hero than to expire as victory
dawns (Wolfe at Quebec; Nelson at Trafalgar). Hubbard of Labrador
died, like Scott of the Antarctic later, as failure dawned. It was clearly
Wallace’s aim to persuade his readers that this circumstance could
uplift even while it destroyed.

At the last we must turn to Mina Hubbard who would take nothing
offered by Wallace. Mina last saw her husband at Battle Harbour on
July 5, 1903; in New York, his death was not confirmed until January
22, 1904. Her determination to redeem his reputation led to her own expedition to Labrador in 1905 with four young assistants, including Wallace’s rescuer Bert Blake, and George Elson. She would not combine with Wallace, for whom she had developed the most virulent antipathy. At the same time Wallace launched an expedition to accomplish Hubbard’s original plan. Both expeditions left Northwest River on the same day (June 27, 1905). Mina’s party reached Michikamau August 2 and Ungava Bay August 27. With Wallace’s group left behind, the press claimed that ‘Mrs. Hubbard’s party won the race’; but Wallace (with one companion) journeyed on through the winter by dog-sled journeys of a kind Hubbard would have approved.

Mina Hubbard’s book, A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador, included an account of the last days of her husband’s ill-fated expedition by George Elson. Wallace’s The Long Labrador Trail came to press nearly two years earlier. This made no reference to Mina or her parallel expedition or to George Elson; and Mina made no reference to Wallace. A fictionalized account focussed on the Hubbards, called Great Heart, written by James West Davidson and John Rugge in 1988, is to become an American-made, feature-length movie partly shot in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1996. After Great Heart, it is probable that while the memory of Hubbard still stands in one corner, it is the diminutive yet determined, 35-year old Canadian woman from Bewdley, Ontario, and the ‘English-Indian’, George Elson, who will occupy the others.

Real-life endings are seldom tidy. In 1913, with Bert Blake and a Connecticut Judge, Wallace reached the place where his friend had died in the ‘wrong’ valley. He cut a loving inscription into the boulder which had reflected Hubbard’s last campfire and withdrew. Wallace wrote further books on Labrador, including stories for children. He died in 1939. Mina Hubbard moved to England in 1907 and, marrying into a wealthy family, her subsequent life included work with the Suffragettes. In 1956, when she was 86, Mina wandered into the path of a speeding train.

NOTES

4. A.P. Low, Report on Explorations in the Labrador peninsula, Canada

5. John McLean, Notes of a Twenty-Five Years Service in the Hudson’s Bay Territory (London: Hudson’s Bay Company, 1849). An HBC agent, McLean made a cross-country dash with Amerindians from Fort Chimo to Northwest River. It is not clear which way he took, but like Peary in the Arctic, his party ate their dogs to save themselves.

6. The vessel’s timetable was at the mercy of sea conditions on the Labrador ice shelf. Ice dispersal differs considerably from year to year. An earlier modern survey of the problem is Pierre Biays, Le courant du Labrador et quelques-unes des consequences geographiques, Cahiers de Geographie de Quebec, 8 (Avril-Septembre 1960), pp. 237-301.

7. A livyere was a settler on the coast of Labrador as opposed to a migratory summer fisherman from Newfoundland, the stationer, who came each season by the coastal boat, and the floater who came as crew aboard a fishing vessel.


9. Ibid., p. 47.

10. Ibid., p. 55.

11. Ibid., p. 63.

12. Ibid., p. 82.


15. Ibid., p. 105.


18. Ibid., p. 131.

19. Ibid., p. 138. The pages of The Lure leading to these words are included in Peter Neary and Patrick O’Flaherty eds., By Great Waters: A Newfoundland and Labrador Anthology (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1974), pp. 123-132.


22. Ibid., p. 158.

23. Ibid., p. 195.

24. Bert Blake told the tale to Elizabeth Goudie, who wrote Woman of Labrador (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1973) (edited with an Introduction by David Zimmerly). Elizabeth was Bert’s niece. She explains that the Goudies and Blakes intermarried. Bert married a McLean and they named their first daughter Mina Benson after Hubbard’s wife. Bert met all the participants linked with the Hubbards in their Labrador expeditions; in great old age, he lived in Happy Valley, Labrador.


