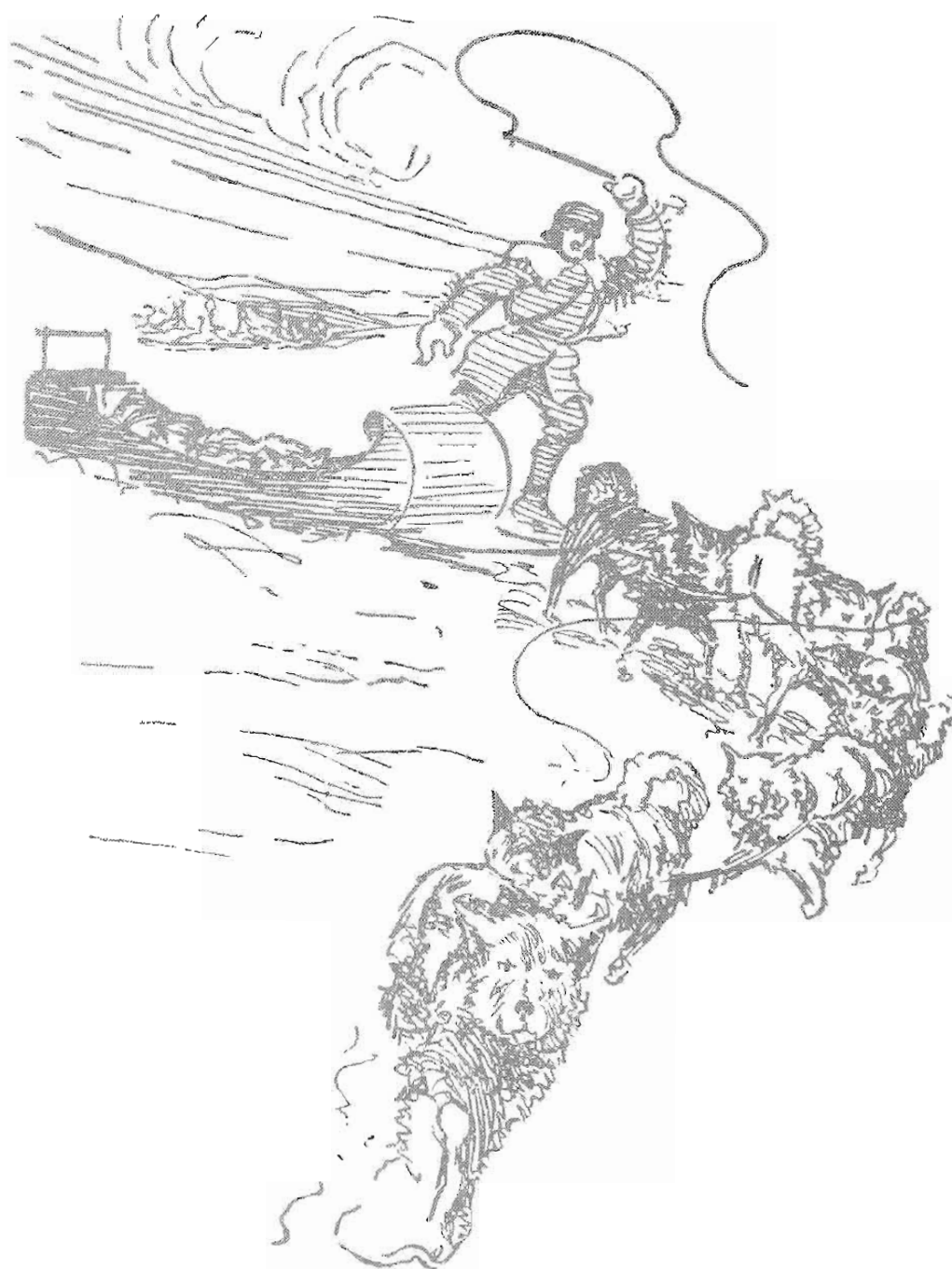


# HAPLESS



# HERO: *Frederick S. Hartman* *and the Winnipeg-to-St. Paul Dog Race*

Merrill E. Jarchow

THE TIME was late January–early February, 1917. The place was Minnesota's capital city. For eight brief days, events sponsored by the Saint Paul Outdoor Sports Carnival Association afforded a wondrous escape from the tragic realities of a war threatening to engulf the world. In this snow-land Camelot, fame came to an intrepid dog-sled driver, twenty-six-year-old Frederick S. Hartman, who later accepted another dangerous challenge across the Atlantic. There, since 1914, the Allies (Great Britain, France, Russia, and others) had been locked in seemingly endless combat with the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria).

By 1917, the sinking of the "Lusitania" and other inflammatory acts had already threatened to involve the United States as a belligerent nation, although Woodrow Wilson had been re-elected to the presidency in 1916 largely on the slogan, "He kept us out

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<sup>1</sup>The 1917 carnival extended from Saturday, January 27, to Saturday, February 3. An estimated quarter of a million people saw the parade on January 27; the marchers took two hours and twenty minutes to pass the reviewing stand. See the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and the *St. Paul Dispatch* for the period, especially the *Pioneer Press* for January 21, 1917.

<sup>2</sup>The longest previous dog-team race on record was the 412-mile Alaskan Sweepstakes from Nome to Candle. See *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg), January 25, 1917, p. 6.

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of war." News of death and destruction on the continent, where many close relatives of Minnesotans still lived, weighed heavily on the carnival celebrants during those frigid winter days. So did the nagging fear that even yet the country would be drawn into the conflict. The carnival was in full swing when Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1. On April 6, the United States would take up arms.

Fighting in Europe would eventually take the lives of some of the revelers at the 1917 St. Paul Winter Carnival, but thoughts of such a prospect—for the moment at least—were pushed into the background. Urged on by another slogan, "Make it a hotter one," St. Paulites and their neighbors threw themselves joyously into the round of diversions and spectacles organized by local committees.<sup>1</sup> Among the high lights were a national ski tournament, world's championship speed-skating races, a curling bonspiel, and pyrotechnic displays. None of these events, however, so captured the imagination and attention of people near and far as did the first Red River-St. Paul Sports Carnival Derby—the longest and most unusual dog-team competition the United States had ever known.<sup>2</sup> Following for 500-odd miles the old Pembina trail from Winnipeg, Manitoba, through North Dakota and Minnesota, the 1917 odyssey manifested all the elements of an epic. Driver Fred Hartman emerged as the hero. Thereafter, he survived duty in the Great War, only to lose his life after the armistice, thus adding elements of tragedy to the tale.

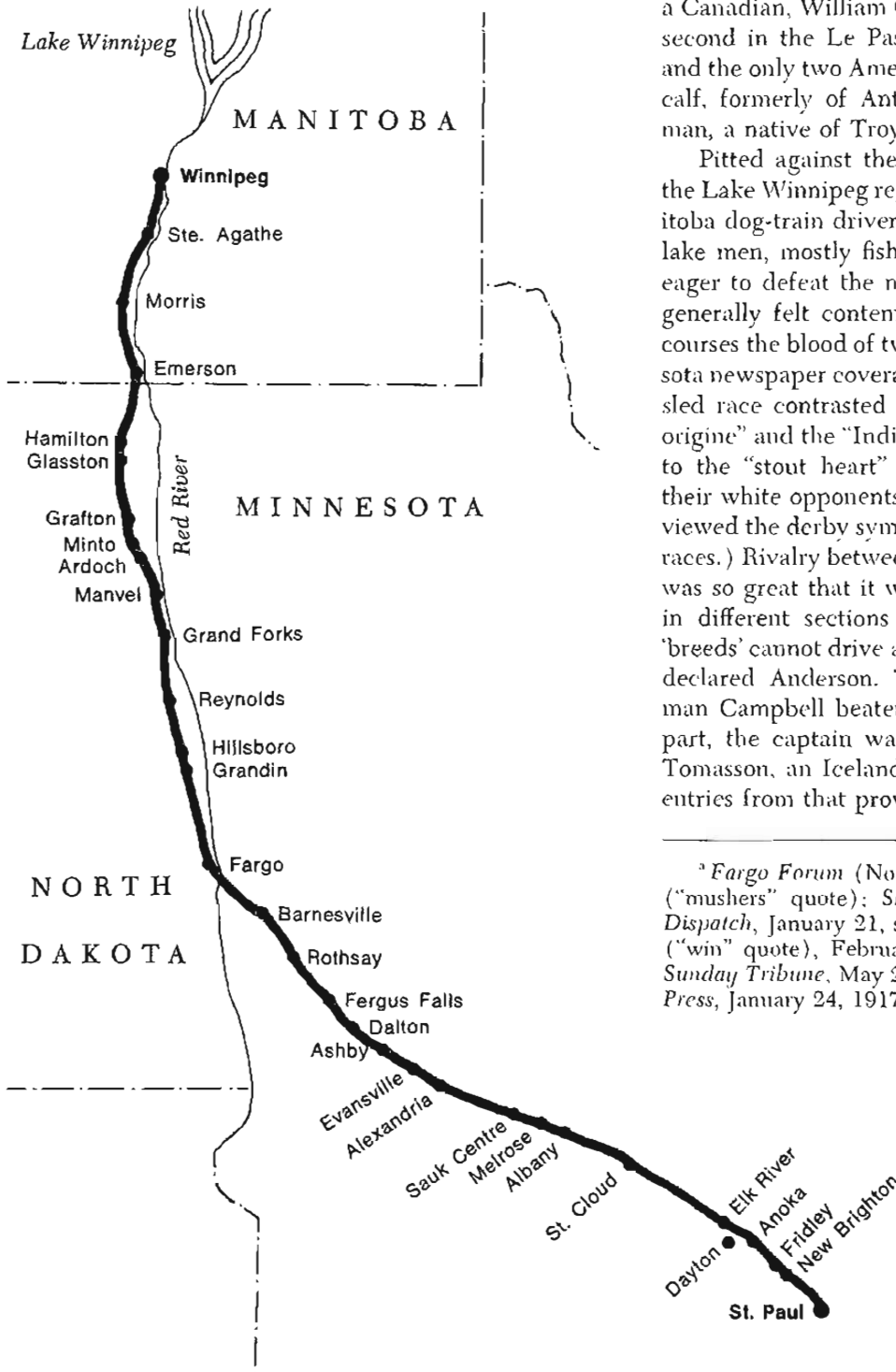
The cast of characters, "the cleverest 'mushers' of which the Northwest territory can boast," was interestingly, even dramatically, diverse. Two of the eleven

drivers, twenty-five-year-old Albert Campbell and his younger brother, Gabriel, were Cree mixed-bloods from the Le Pas (The Pas) district of Manitoba. For these trappers and their dogs, cold, hunger, exhaustion, wolves, and blinding snowstorms were no strangers. Neither was competition. A year earlier, Albert

had won the 150-mile Le Pas dog-team sweepstakes. This time he would attempt to fulfill the final command of his father, recently deceased in a rudely furnished log hut at the Wood Lake post of the Hudson's Bay Company. "Win that race, my boy," had been the elder Campbell's last words. The son remembered the deathbed charge in the long nights to come, and it drove him on. Other participants out of Le Pas were a Canadian, William Grayson, whose dogs had finished second in the Le Pas sweepstakes the previous year, and the only two American citizens entered — Joe Metcalf, formerly of Antigo, Wisconsin, and Fred Hartman, a native of Troy, New York.<sup>3</sup>

Pitted against these contestants were drivers from the Lake Winnipeg region. Recruited by a veteran Manitoba dog-train driver, Captain Baldwin Anderson, the lake men, mostly fishermen by trade, were especially eager to defeat the mixed-bloods. White frontiersmen generally felt contempt for "the man in whose veins courses the blood of two races." (Equally racist, Minnesota newspaper coverage of the "death struggle" or dog-sled race contrasted the "athletic training of the aborigine" and the "Indian craft" of the "small, dark men" to the "stout heart" and "never-say-die qualities" of their white opponents. Certainly some people, at least, viewed the derby symbolically as a contest between the races.) Rivalry between the two sets of drivers allegedly was so great that it was deemed wise to quarter them in different sections of the city of Winnipeg. "The 'breeds' cannot drive a race without beating their dogs," declared Anderson. "That's why I want to see this man Campbell beaten, and by a white man." For his part, the captain was putting his money on Gunnar Tomasson, an Icelander from Hecla, Manitoba. Other entries from that province — mostly Icelanders, too —

<sup>3</sup> *Fargo Forum* (North Dakota), January 24, 1917, p. 1 ("mushers" quote); *St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press and Dispatch*, January 21, sec. 5, p. 4, February 4, sec. 2, p. 2 ("win" quote), February 11, sec. 2, p. 5, 1917; *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, May 20, 1917, sec. 1, p. 5; *Manitoba Free Press*, January 24, 1917, p. 6.



**THE DOG-DERBY ROUTE**  
followed closely the Great Northern tracks and the old Pembina trail from Winnipeg to St. Paul.

were Hyurtur Hanson of Selkirk, Mike Kelly of Hecla, Gunnar Gutterson of Arnes, and Thordur Thordarson of Gimli. Horace West of Kashabowie, Ontario, completed the roster.<sup>4</sup>

Like their drivers, the sturdy sled dogs evidenced a mixture of blood lines. Most common were Alaskan huskies which exhibited a variety of coloring. Those of Albert Campbell were mainly black and white; several driven by his brother were yellow or gray. Gutterson drove collies, the smallest animals in the race. Tomasson's dogs, except for the leader, were yellow-colored crosses between huskies and St. Bernards. Hanson's team consisted of black and white crossbred Russian wolfhounds and huskies. With two exceptions — Grayson's dog Kitchener and Gutterson's Nero — all the gallant beasts had commonplace names like Spot, Prince, Buster, and Fido. The sledges likewise were ordinary in nature, although Albert Campbell's was reportedly decked with "trappings of Indian manufacture" and some of the others were fitted with back handles and sideboards.<sup>5</sup>

ON JANUARY 24, 1917, the drivers and a host of spectators gathered at the starting line in Winnipeg after customs officials had examined the teams so that no delay would take place at the border. Gabriel Campbell, having drawn the number-one position, had the dubious honor of being the pacemaker — and thus trail breaker — in the run to St. Paul, more than 500 snowy, hazard-ridden miles away. At 12:35 P.M., amid cheers from the onlookers, Campbell cracked his whip over the heads of his huskies and was off. The other teams followed at two-minute intervals, each sped on by Mayor R. D. Waugh's firing of the starting gun. Each driver carried a letter from Sir James Aikins, lieutenant governor of Manitoba, to Governor J. A. A. Burnquist of Minnesota. The latter had appointed young Louis W. Hill, Jr., the carnival president's son and railway magnate James J. Hill's grandson, to receive the winner's



**UNDERDOG**  
*Fred Hartman quickly became the race's most popular entrant.*

letter at Como Park, the terminal point of the race, and to deliver the message to the State Capitol.<sup>6</sup>

The race was not only the longest of its kind but also the best publicized, thanks in large measure to arrangements provided by carnival association president Louis W. Hill. He had appointed a dog-race committee in each town along the way and made available facilities of the Great Northern Railway Company, of which he was president. North of Grand Forks, for example — where the dog-derby route and the railroad tracks lay close together — photographers from Universal, Hearst-Pathé, and other studios used a railroad flatcar to shoot movies of the racing teams. They also filmed sequences of the dogs eating meals of frozen fish that had been shipped by the railroad ahead of time.

Newspapers gave prominent space to stories and pictures of the competition, and, at every stop, enthusiastic crowds welcomed the participants — often

<sup>4</sup> *Pioneer Press*, January 23, p. 10, January 28, p. 6 ("blood" and "breeds" quotes), 1917; *Anoka County Union*, February 7, 1917, p. 1 ("dark men" quote); *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 30, 1917, p. 1 (all other quotes); *Fargo Forum*, January 24, p. 1, 10, January 25, p. 1, 8, 1917; *Manitoba Free Press*, January 25, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Fargo Forum*, January 25, 1917, p. 1, 8; *Pioneer Press*, January 21, sec. 5, p. 4, February 4, sec. 2, p. 2, 1917; *Anoka County Union*, February 7, 1917, p. 1 (quote).

<sup>6</sup> *Fargo Forum*, January 24, 1917, p. 1, 10; *Manitoba Free Press*, January 25, 1917, p. 6; *Pioneer Press*, January 21, sec. 5, p. 4, January 24, p. 10, January 25, p. 1, 1917; *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 24, 1917, p. 1; J. A. A. Burnquist to Louis W. Hill, Jr., January 24, 1917, in the possession of Louis W. Hill, Jr.

making it difficult to manage the dogs. At puzzling crossroads, signs provided by Hill pointed the way to St. Paul. In that city itself, a stockade for the dogs was erected in Rice Park where it drew considerable attention. The Canadian government even promised to cable progress reports on the race to its soldiers serving in Europe. Doubtless many people were empathically testing their own skills and endurance on the wind-swept winter landscape where temperatures at times dipped to nearly thirty very miserable degrees below zero.<sup>7</sup>

Despite stretches of wilderness and drifted snow along the trail in Canada, the race proceeded uneventfully at first. On January 25, the first team pulled out of Morris, Manitoba, before 6:00 A.M. and reached Emerson, near the border, by noon. Gutterson was leading then, but only three miles separated him from the driver in tenth place. Teams seven and nine, those of Albert Campbell and Tomasson, were close together and only ten minutes behind the leader. Tomasson was so confident at this stage that he predicted he would race fifteen hours a day at an average speed of six miles an hour and reach St. Paul by Wednesday, January 31. That prophecy was not borne out, however, for Nature was in no mood to yield easily to man or beast. Some drivers had already suffered setbacks, and there would be more — including one to Tomasson himself.<sup>8</sup>

A reverse, in fact, on the first day out brought Fred Hartman considerable trouble as well as public sympathy. His dogs got to fighting among themselves at Ste. Agathe, about twenty-five miles south of Winnipeg, and his black lead dog, Cub, was killed. The death of this key animal greatly reduced Hartman's chances of winning the race. ("Driving a dog team without a leader is similar to driving an automobile without a steering wheel," he later observed.) But the loss turned the unfortunate driver almost immediately into a hero. Left with only four dogs, none of which could be trained as a leader, Hartman was forced to lead his team on foot for much of the race, while his rivals allegedly rode their sledges three-quarters of the time. Although Hartman's dogs were said to be the poorest in the race (one driver told newspapermen he would "club all of them to death, and then trade the sled for a pair of snowshoes"), Hartman struggled on with what was reported as "courage equal to that of the Spartans." Probably because he was not identified with either the Lake Winnipeg or Le Pas groups — as was the other American, Metcalf — Hartman was dubbed "the Yankee" and from then on was far and away the public's favorite in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

The race soon took its toll. Both Gunnar Gutterson, thirty-nine years old, and Thordur Thordarson, twenty-one, were physically incapacitated by the time they

reached Glasston, North Dakota, some ninety-five miles from the race's starting point, and they reluctantly took a train back to Winnipeg. Horace West had withdrawn after racing only two hours because of difficulties with his team, which he had only recently acquired. Thus the field was reduced to eight contestants by the end of the second day.

The remaining Lake Winnipeg drivers — Hanson, Tomasson, and Kelly — spent the night of January 25–26 at Hamilton, North Dakota. Each had already worn out a pair of moccasins on the previous day's seventy-mile lap. In the bitterly cold weather of the following morning, the trio pushed toward Grand Forks, North Dakota. By noon, having averaged four miles an hour, they were in Grafton, North Dakota. It seemed then that one of the three would end up the winner. But there were 400 grueling miles ahead, and the odds would soon change. Unable to reach Grand Forks on the 26th, the leaders stopped at Ardoch, North Dakota, that night. The following morning, January 27, Tomasson awoke with a high fever and was ordered by a local doctor to remain in bed. W. F. Willer, a vacationing rural mail carrier from Oslo, Minnesota, volunteered to serve as a substitute driver and took over the Tomasson team. Because the dogs did not recognize Willer's voice, the inexperienced driver had some trouble getting started, but once under way he did amazingly well. About 10:40 A.M., Willer and Hanson mushed into Grand Forks, where crowds of welcomers lined the main street. Kelly appeared five minutes later. After the dogs had been given a two-hour rest in a livery stable, the threesome moved out again. Early in the evening they stopped for the night at Reynolds, North Dakota, and turned that village of 500 people into a "hotbed of such excitement" as had never before been seen there.<sup>10</sup>

The other five drivers, lagging behind, had spent

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<sup>7</sup> *Fargo Forum*, January 26, 1917, p. 1, 14; *Pioneer Press*, January 22, p. 4, January 23, p. 10, 1917; *St. Cloud Daily Times*, February 2, 1917, p. 1, 5; *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 23, p. 1, January 26, p. 1, 1917.

<sup>8</sup> *Fargo Forum*, January 25, 1917, p. 1, 8; *Pioneer Press*, January 25, 1917, p. 1; *Dispatch*, January 25, p. 1, January 26, p. 1, 1917.

<sup>9</sup> *Pioneer Press*, January 25, p. 1, January 26, p. 1, February 2, p. 1 ("Spartan" quote), February 11, sec. 2, p. 5 ("steering wheel" quote), 1917; *Fargo Forum*, January 25, p. 1, 8, January 26, p. 1, 14, February 5, p. 7 ("snowshoes" quote), 1917; *Manitoba Free Press*, January 25, 1917, p. 6; *Dispatch*, January 26, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 26, p. 3, January 29, p. 1 (quote), 1917; *Dispatch*, January 26, p. 1, January 27, p. 1, 1917; *Fargo Forum*, January 26, 1917, p. 1, 14; *Pioneer Press*, January 27, p. 1, January 28, p. 6, 1917.

Friday night, January 26, at Minto, North Dakota, seven miles north of Ardoch. Shortly before seven o'clock the next evening, Albert Campbell, still confident and hearty, arrived in Grand Forks and was soon joined by Metcalf, Grayson, and Gabriel Campbell. The distance covered that Saturday had been disappointing. Because of a heavy snowstorm south of Manvel, North Dakota, the drivers had lost their way and wandered miles off the old Pembina trail. Hartman, in last place at Ardoch, had passed his Le Pas associates at noon while they halted for lunch. However, later in the day he, too, became lost in the snow and by 9:00 P.M. still had not reached Grand Forks. "I was five hours in traveling thirteen miles to Grand Forks, most of the time in snow to my waist," he later recalled. About 10:30 P.M., weary but safe, Hartman and his dogs trudged into Grand Forks to the accompaniment of a thunderous ovation. With understatement, one reporter concluded: "The situation has become intensely interesting."<sup>11</sup>

Mystery and suspicion of villainy added a new dimension to the picture at Fargo, North Dakota, where Hanson's dogs were reported ill with dysentery — the result of deliberate poisoning in the opinion of Hanson. Concurring in this view were Tomasson, who had re-entered the contest at Hillsboro, North Dakota, and Kelly. The three described — but did not identify — a tall man of about thirty-five years of age, mustached, and dressed in a coonskin coat, who had shown unusual interest in them along the way. He had offered them whisky and asked numerous personal questions, such as, did the drivers sleep with the dogs at night? The supposition was that gamblers had arranged the alleged poisoning. However, as no more was seen of the stranger, the link between the man and the dogs' illness may have been merely a figment of Hanson's active imagination.<sup>12</sup>

The strain of the race was becoming increasingly apparent. Tomasson was still ill, and his team had been reduced to four dogs (Silver, a yellow cross, had been kicked by a horse earlier and left at Hillsboro

after being carried for a time on the sledge). All five of Kelly's animals had sore feet. Nevertheless, the Winnipeg trio left Fargo at 9:00 A.M. on Monday, January 29, and crossed the Red River into the rolling country of Minnesota — the first such terrain the dogs had seen. Passing through Barnesville, Minnesota, at 2:47 P.M., the leaders negotiated the eighteen miles to Rothsay, Minnesota, before turning in for the night, confident that their lead was safe.<sup>13</sup>

The four Le Pas teams had spent Sunday night, January 28, in Grandin, North Dakota, twenty-eight miles north of Fargo. Hartman had stayed at Hillsboro, even farther north. But the Le Pas men were about to make their move. From 4:15 A.M. to 10:08 P.M. on Monday, the Campbells, Metcalf, and Grayson mushed a record 75.9 miles to overtake their unsuspecting rivals who were asleep in Rothsay. Even after so strenuous a day, the men as well as their dogs appeared strong for the final 222 miles remaining to Como Park. The following morning, January 30, the seven drivers were on the trail at 6:35. Four and a half hours later, Albert Campbell led the procession into Fergus Falls, where schools had been dismissed and crowds, "crazed over the idea of seeing such a dog race," had lined the streets since 9:00 A.M. By this time Kelly was carrying a sick animal on his sledge. After a few hours of needed rest, the teams — satisfied to slow the pace temporarily — pushed out. Reaching Dalton, Minnesota, at 5:00 P.M., they settled down for a long night's sleep in preparation for the final pull into St. Paul.<sup>14</sup>

BUT WHERE was Hartman? Well to the rear. He had been unable to reach Rothsay until 11:10 A.M., January 30, several hours after the other drivers had departed. He was in last place, and his dogs were suffering from dysentery, but Hartman seemed to have lost none of his "bull-dog tenacity and endless endurance." Predicting that he would seize the lead by the following day, he staunchly declared: "I am going to win this race." He reached Fergus Falls at 6:20 P.M. and found that a banquet had been prepared for him. Scoffing at pleas to rest, he astonished the townspeople by proclaiming that he still had twenty-eight miles to go before his day would be over. Though outdistanced at this stage, Hartman led his four dogs forward and once again passed his rivals, this time at 1:15 A.M. while they were sleeping in Dalton. Unfortunately, he then lost his way and wandered aimlessly through the night until, at 6:00 A.M., he stumbled into a farmhouse six miles west of Ashby, Minnesota, and only four miles from Dalton. After a brief pause, he followed the Great Northern right-of-way to Ashby and a rousing local reception. Despite his fatigue, he planned

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<sup>11</sup> *Pioneer Press*, January 27, p. 1, January 28, p. 6, February 11, sec. 2, p. 5 ("traveling" quote), 1917; *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 29, 1917, p. 1 ("situation" quote); *Dispatch*, January 27, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 29, 1917, p. 1; *Pioneer Press*, January 29, 1917; *Dispatch*, January 29, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 30, 1917, p. 1; *Pioneer Press*, January 30, 1917, p. 1; *Dispatch*, January 31, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 30, 1917, p. 1 (quote); *Pioneer Press*, January 22, p. 10, January 29, p. 1, January 30, p. 1, January 31, p. 1, 1917.

to resume the journey after a much-needed three-hour rest.<sup>15</sup>

Shortly before Hartman's arrival in Ashby, the other seven teams, well rested, had passed through on their way to Evansville, Minnesota, and beyond. The drivers soon found that Wednesday, January 31, was a difficult day for travel. The temperature stood at twenty-five degrees below zero, and a howling wind drifted the falling snow on the hilly roads winding through the lake region of Douglas County. Travel was so difficult that the drivers switched to the railroad right-of-way, but even there the going was slow. At 7:20 P.M., after mushing only thirty-four miles, Gabriel Campbell reached Alexandria. Within a quarter of an hour, Albert Campbell, Grayson, Metcalf, Tomasson, Hanson, and Kelly drove their dogs between the lines of well-comers to Lund's livery stable where they were bedded for the night. To the amazement of practically everyone, Hartman pulled into Alexandria just after midnight, paused for an hour's rest, and—for the third time—passed his rivals. During his stay he drank bowls of hot coffee and ate eggs and dry bread. He refused butter because he was afraid that its salt would make him thirsty. While he dined, well-wishers rubbed his legs with liniment and offered him new clothes (including neckties and silk underwear), most of which

he refused. Not far from Alexandria late that same night, Hartman narrowly escaped death while following the Great Northern tracks. Numbed by cold and fatigue, he was barely able, with the quick help of two men running with him, to pull his dogs to the side just before a passenger train rounded a bend and flashed by.<sup>16</sup>

When the other racers left Alexandria early Thursday morning, February 1, their number was reduced by one. Hanson, who had wrenched his knee the previous day, developed such a swollen leg that he could not go on. Moreover, before the contestants reached Sauk Centre, the two remaining and once-so-confident Lake Winnipeg entrants had to join Hanson on the sidelines. Kelly had stomach trouble, and Tomasson was again running a high fever. (Unlike the Campbells and Grayson, the three Lake Winnipeg drivers had never raced before, and their dogs were accustomed

<sup>15</sup> *Fargo Forum*, January 31, 1917, p. 1; *Pioneer Press*, January 31, 1917, p. 1; *Dispatch*, January 31, 1917, p. 1; *St. Cloud Daily Times*, January 30, 1917, p. 1 (quotes).

<sup>16</sup> *Alexandria Citizen*, February 1, 1917, p. 1; *Fargo Forum*, January 31, 1917, p. 1; *Pioneer Press*, February 1, p. 1, February 11, sec. 2, p. 5, 1917; *Dispatch*, January 31, p. 1, February 1, p. 1, 1917.

GABRIEL CAMPBELL, trapper from Le Pas, posed for photographers with his team of hardy husky crosses.



to lying on the ice all day while their masters fished.) "Wearied, footsore and sick at heart," the fishermen boarded a Great Northern train with their dogs and sledges and arrived in St. Paul that evening. From the depot the dogs were driven to the stockade in Rice Park, so spent that they dropped asleep at each stop along the way. They became objects of great curiosity in the park.<sup>17</sup>

With the goal drawing ever nearer, the field was now pared to five drivers — the two Campbells, Metcalf, Grayson, and Hartman, clearly the underdog and the sentimental favorite, whom one newspaper described as "a fur-swathed, hundred-weight of unadulterated American courage." His chances of victory became of great popular concern, and Louis Hill promised him \$1,000 if he could finish the race. Towns along the trail also raised purses for him. Traveling almost continuously after leaving Ashby at 2:00 P.M. on January 31, Hartman arrived at Sauk Centre — 117 miles from the finish line — at 10:15 A.M. on February 1. Professing to feel fine, he regretted that the same could not be said for his dogs. "They won't go today," he concluded sadly. The other drivers, fresh after a long night's sleep, rapidly closed the gap behind Hartman, entered Sauk Centre by 11:20 A.M., and tied up for dinner. Metcalf and Albert Campbell appeared particularly strong. "I have made 150 miles a day and can do it again," declared the wiry Cree. Acknowledging that each Le Pas driver was now out for himself, Campbell announced, "From here to St. Paul we race every foot."<sup>18</sup>

That afternoon, February 1, the journey was resumed. At Melrose, Hartman's substitute lead dog dropped from sheer exhaustion, and the other drivers, eager for victory, urged their associate to quit the race. Albert Campbell probably worked some time-honored psychology when he prophesied: "If Hartman lives until he gets to St. Paul, he will not live much longer." Unswayed, Hartman rested for a time in the baggage room of the Melrose depot. Then he placed his prostrate dog on his toboggan and set out again, leading the other three dogs. Helping him break trail were two nineteen-year-old Sauk Centre lads, Earl Nor-

gren and Francis J. Gallagher, who had become deeply impressed by their hero's nerve, integrity, and determination.<sup>19</sup>

When the four leaders arrived in Albany, Minnesota, at 6:55 P.M., they were convinced that the Yankee Hartman must have given up. Hoping to give these rivals a false sense of security, local Hartman boosters agreed that such must have been the case. A pilot was then sent out to lead the struggling driver secretly into town, but Hartman's presence quickly leaked out. The Campbells, Metcalf, and Grayson hastily departed at 8:30 P.M., fifteen minutes after Hartman's arrival. By 3:00 A.M., as the thermometer registered nearly thirty degrees below zero, they rushed into St. Cloud where a crowd generously estimated at 3,000 was out to greet them. Meanwhile, Hartman, after snatching a desperately needed rest, stirred himself and left Albany at 12:30 A.M. with all four dogs again in harness. After a rough twenty-mile trip, he reached St. Cloud — seven hours behind his rivals and close to exhaustion.<sup>20</sup>

At 10:38 that Friday morning, February 2, Albert Campbell led his fellow trappers out of the Granite City. The dogs, all wearing canvas shoes on their forefeet, looked healthy and well able to travel the distance to Anoka where the men planned to stop for the last night on the trail. Campbell observed that the racers' entering St. Paul the next day — Saturday, February 3 — would give the people "a better chance to get out and see the excitement." As for Hartman, he felt much stronger after sleeping a few hours. With a throng of supporters following, he and his dogs headed down the Great Northern tracks out of St. Cloud at about 11:00 A.M. That he was still in the race evoked considerable surprise, and many observers speculated about his ability to complete the course.<sup>21</sup>

Friday was extremely cold (at least twenty-five degrees below zero), and the going proved more difficult than had been expected, so it was 9:35 P.M. before all five of the remaining contestants reached Elk River, a dozen miles short of Anoka. It was then decided to make a stop until 3:00 A.M. Hartman, however, knowing that his only hope of winning lay in beating his rivals to the punch (his team's maximum speed was four miles an hour while Albert Campbell's was seven), arose and left an hour earlier. But the other four sleeping drivers were soon told of his ploy by someone who had "not a drop of sporting blood in his veins." According to the *St. Paul Dispatch*, the "plucky" Hartman was thus "robbed . . . of his last chance to outwit his opponents who had every advantage over him." Taking off in pursuit, Hartman's competitors passed him a few miles below Dayton, halfway to Anoka.

Arriving in Anoka about 6:00 A.M., the four were met by Captain Baldwin Anderson (who apparently

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<sup>17</sup> *Dispatch*, February 1, p. 1, February 2, p. 1, 2, 1917; *Pioneer Press*, February 2, 1917, p. 1 (quote).

<sup>18</sup> *Pioneer Press*, February 2, 1917, p. 1; *Dispatch*, February 3, p. 1 ("fur-swathed" quote), February 1, p. 1 (other quotes), 1917.

<sup>19</sup> *St. Cloud Daily Times*, February 2, 1917, p. 1, 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Dispatch*, February 2, p. 1, February 3, p. 1, 2, 1917; *St. Cloud Daily Times*, February 2, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *St. Cloud Daily Times*, February 2, 1917, p. 1, 5 (quote).





LE PAS DRIVERS and their teams bunched together near Elk River as the temperature dropped to twenty-five degrees below zero.<sup>24</sup>

had reconciled himself to the defeat of his Lake Winnipeg protégés and the probable victory of a “breed”), along with Canadian dog men and race officials who planned to accompany, by sleigh, the drivers on the remaining twenty-eight miles to Como Park. After enjoying a hot breakfast at Anoka’s Jackson Hotel, the Le Pas trappers chatted, wandered about in a leisurely manner, and posed while movie men took their picture “by flashlight.” The Anoka newspaper noted that, despite rumors about the Campbells’ “ignorance of the English language,” they were “able to talk rather well and Gabriel Campbell was seen in the lobby reading a newspaper.” Their dogs, oblivious to the gaze of curious onlookers, spent most of the break in deep slumber at W. H. Merrill’s livery stable. While the others were still breakfasting, a bone-weary Hartman stumbled into town and had to be assisted into the hotel by two bystanders. He was examined by a physician, forsook food, and retired for an all-too-brief hour of sleep. Thought to have been down and out several times previously, he had, in the words of a reporter, “clung to the race with an endurance that is uncanny.”<sup>22</sup>

Shortly before 8:30 A.M. on Saturday, February 3, the Campbells, Metcalf, and Grayson left Anoka for the final run of the memorable contest, which a St. Paul newspaper termed “the most thrilling test of human and animal endurance the annals of sport can supply.” Three-quarters of an hour later, the tired but still determined Hartman emerged from the hotel and received a heartening ovation. The dull eyes of his dogs, one of which was limping badly, testified to their extreme fatigue and made it clear that only a miracle could push them across the finish line as winners. Even so, their master had not given up hope of winning.<sup>23</sup>

The route to the finish line followed the electric streetcar tracks to Fridley and then turned across country for twelve miles to New Brighton. On this stretch snow had accumulated to a depth of up to five feet, and roads were blocked. It would be among the roughest

legs of any on the entire course. From New Brighton, the teams were to travel the New Brighton and Lake Johanna roads to Crossley Road, cut across to Lexington Avenue, and take that thoroughfare to the north end of Lake Como.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond Anoka, Hartman steadily lost ground. Finally convinced that he could not win, he rested for a time and ate dinner at the home of one Julius Reidel. Meanwhile, the other racers, despite the snow and the discomfort made worse by the most severe cold spell of the winter, moved steadily forward. At forty-five minutes past noon, Albert Campbell, “standing erect on his sled,” swept across the line as the winner. Grayson took second place a few minutes later; Metcalf was third and the younger Campbell fourth. Hartman, “whose nerve, endurance and hard luck have come to be almost the sole topic of local conversation,” staggered into Como Park over four hours behind his nearest rival and collapsed in the arms of one of the judges. In spite of the sub-zero cold, a crowd of 5,000 people, including hundreds of women, had stayed to see him and his team. “For gameness, endurance and true sportsmanship,” proclaimed James Hickey, St. Paul attorney who had officiated at many national contests of various kinds, “Fred Hartman stands alone.”<sup>25</sup>

The warmth of the reception given Hartman and the other drivers must have softened the rigors of the

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<sup>22</sup> *St. Cloud Daily Times*, February 3, 1917, p. 5; *Dispatch*, February 2, p. 1, February 3, p. 1, 2, 5 (“robbed” quote), 1917; *Anoka County Union*, February 7, 1917, p. 1 (“flashlight” and “newspaper” quotes); *Fargo Forum*, February 5, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Dispatch*, February 3, 1917, p. 1; *Anoka County Union*, February 7, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Pioneer Press*, February 3, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Anoka County Union*, February 7, 1917, p. 1; *Pioneer Press*, February 4, 1917, p. 1 (quotes); *Dispatch*, February 3, 1917, p. 1, 2; *Manitoba Free Press*, January 24, 1917, p. 6.

ST. PAUL, MINN., SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1917

HARTMAN, IN SEMI-CONSCIOUS CONDITION, FINISHES DOG RACE

CITY'S GREATEST FETE HAS TRIUMPHAL CLOSE; 1,000 DANCE IN STREET

Carnival Pageant Draws 10,000 to the Auditorium; Princess Is Found; Boreas Abdicates His Throne.

DOG DRIVERS ARE CHERED; 1918 DERBY IS PROMISED

The dog race which was held at the Auditorium last night... The crowd was estimated at 10,000...

DOG DRIVERS WILL PICK 'THE QUEEN' AT BENEFIT TODAY

Receipts of Auditorium Performance Will Go to Derby Purposes—\$175 Already in the Fund.

DANCES IN STREET

The city's greatest fete... The dancing in the street was a grand success...

WILL CHOOSE QUEEN

The dog drivers will pick the queen at a benefit today... The fund for the 1918 derby is now \$175.

FUND ALREADY STARTED

The fund for the 1918 derby is already started... The dog drivers are being cheered for their efforts.

ACKNOWLEDGES NEW RUND

The dog drivers acknowledge the new fund... The 1918 derby is now a reality.

DOG RACERS CHERED

The dog racers are being cheered... The crowd loved the performance.

MAY BE SEEN TOMORROW

The dog racers may be seen tomorrow... The 1918 derby is the highlight of the season.

BEYOND CARNIVAL CROWDS

The dog racers drew beyond carnival crowds... The 1918 derby is a triumph.

FRED HARTMAN, HERO OF THE DERBY, FINISHING RACE

Photo of Fred Hartman finishing the race.



PAIR, COLDER TODAY, WEATHER MAN SAYS

The weather man says it will be a pair, colder today... Snow falls in St. Paul with Mercury 7 Below—Trains Continue Delayed.

Coats Off Over Broiled Chicken

Hotel Drivers in Suspense and Guests of Minnesota Club at Dinner.

GOING TO CROOKSTON

St. Paul Dispatch Will Attend Dog Race Meeting.

INSTRUCTIONS ON BREAK SENT TO GERMAN CONSUL

Instructions on break sent to German consul... The dog race is a success.

DERBY HERO COLLAPSES AS HE CROSSES THE LINE; 5,000 SHOUT WELCOME

Derby hero collapses as he crosses the line... 5,000 shout welcome.

Hundreds of Women at Como to Pay Tribute to American 'All I Need Is Rest,' He Says at Louis W. Hill Home Clothes Frozen to Body.

Hundreds of women at Como to pay tribute to American... Clothes frozen to body.

AMAZED AT INTEREST SHOWN; GETS OFFERS IN VAUDEVILLE

Amazed at interest shown; gets offers in vaudeville... The dog race is a triumph.

WONDERS OF WOMEN STAY FOR VICTIM

Wonders of women stay for victim... The dog race is a success.

FINISHES IN GREAT CONDENSE STATE

Finishes in great condensed state... The dog race is a triumph.

WANTON'S COMES IN ON DOG RACE

Wanton's comes in on dog race... The dog race is a success.

PROFESSOR FURNISHED ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

Professor furnished attempted suicide... The dog race is a triumph.

THOUSANDS CALL PIONEER PRESS AND DISPATCH REGARDING DOG DERBY

Thousands call Pioneer Press and Dispatch regarding dog derby... The dog race is a success.

THANKS WELL FOR HIS WELCOME

Thanks well for his welcome... The dog race is a triumph.

IS ALUMNUS OF BOSTON TECH.

Is alumnus of Boston Tech... The dog race is a success.

DOG CLUB OFFERS FUND

Dog club offers fund... The dog race is a triumph.

Sunday Pioneer Press Contents. Includes sections like: GOING TO CROOKSTON, INSTRUCTIONS ON BREAK SENT TO GERMAN CONSUL, PHONES DELUGED BY RACE QUERIES, THOUSANDS CALL PIONEER PRESS AND DISPATCH REGARDING DOG DERBY, THANKS WELL FOR HIS WELCOME, IS ALUMNUS OF BOSTON TECH., DOG CLUB OFFERS FUND.

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previous ten days. An hour before Albert Campbell came in first, factory whistles blew in all parts of the city to alert the populace to the pending conclusion of the race. Hundreds of persons traveled out in autos, on horses, or on foot to meet the teams and escort them to Como Park (Louis Hill cleared the way on horseback for Campbell). A crowd conservatively estimated at 15,000 witnessed the finish. Campbell and his dogs were taken downtown by auto, but Grayson and Metcalf gave spectators a thrill by driving their animals to carnival headquarters at Minnesota and Fourth streets. All of the first finishers were in remarkably good physical condition and were thus able to enjoy fully the attention heaped upon them.<sup>26</sup>

The modest and slightly bewildered trappers were cheered and feted wherever they went, although crowds still felt a marked partiality for Hartman. (In a column in the *St. Paul Dispatch*, E. R. Hocking charged that only Hartman deserved "glory" because he had "done his best while his competitors have not exerted themselves.") When Gabriel Campbell brought his brother's dogs into the Minnesota Club, usually staid business and professional men gave him a college yell. Warm smiles and nods of approval greeted Metcalf and Grayson at the same exclusive establishment when they committed a breach of normal etiquette by dining in their shirt sleeves with suspenders showing. At the final pageant of the carnival on Saturday evening in the St. Paul Auditorium, the crowd of 10,000 people gave the drivers an even greater round of applause than it did the new Boreas Rex.

The following afternoon, a fund-raising show — arranged in fourteen hours — was staged before a packed house in the auditorium. When Hartman, still suffering from snow blindness, was presented, "the applause became a din. Arms were waved and hats thrown in the air." The proceeds from the event went to the eight drivers, who, along with their dogs, were introduced. The drivers and their dogs also appeared at the Strand Theatre for a week. Finally, on February 10, the University of Minnesota's school of agriculture gave the racers a reception, after which President George E. Vincent and the farm school principal entertained the visitors at a luncheon. A local reporter apparently did not exaggerate when he wrote: "The interest in the nerve-wracking contest . . . completely overshadowed even so serious a matter as the possibility of the nation being plunged into war." More than 20,000 calls about the outcome of the race were answered by operators of the *Pioneer Press* switchboard.<sup>27</sup>

The hero of the hour, of course, was Hartman, who received the greatest adoration as well as most of the headlines. Crossing the finish line to a tremendous ovation, he had been rushed to a waiting limousine by

Louis W. Hill and others. Attempting to shake the Yankee's hand, men and women had jumped on the running board and nearly torn the auto's door from its hinges. The details of what took place for the next half hour or so are not clear. According to one account, Hartman appeared to be dazed for about fifteen minutes, during which time he was unable to speak. When he was able to talk, the report continued, he first expressed concern for his dogs. Told that they were being taken to the same place that he was — the Hill mansion on Summit Avenue — the weary traveler relaxed and "rambled on like a happy boy." He expressed both surprise and gratitude for the kindness shown him and recalled, "The thing I remember most in this whole race is the fact that I wondered day after day if I could finish alive or be sent home in a box. The words 'sent home in a box' kept recurring to me."<sup>28</sup>

Hartman's own version of events following his being seated in the limousine was somewhat different from the newspaper's account. "When I regained consciousness," he remembered, "I was in a massive brass bed in the most sumptuously furnished bed chamber I had ever seen. I raised myself on the pillow rather weakly and rubbed my eyes, trying to get a clearer vision. It seemed like a dream. Louis W. Hill, whom I recognized, stood smiling at the bedside. I asked where my dogs were and he said he had them in his stable and that they were well cared for." The following day, after ten hours of sleep, Hartman weighed in at 128 pounds; before the race he had weighed 160 pounds. However, he said he felt fine and apparently had suffered no permanent ill effects from his ten-day struggle to reach St. Paul.<sup>29</sup>

Now Hartman could turn his attention to local appearances and to the telegrams that poured in offering him vaudeville engagements and the like. Back in St. Cloud he had already been approached by a vaudeville agent but, according to newspaper reports, was "in a semi-comatose condition" at the time and "in no condition to discuss anything." A "deluge of letters," mostly from women and girls, descended upon Hartman at the Hill house and also at the Strand Theatre. Lionized wherever he went, he was also a special favorite of the

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<sup>26</sup> *Pioneer Press*, February 3, p. 1, February 4, p. 1, 1917; *Dispatch*, February 3, 1917, p. 1, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Dispatch*, February 3, p. 1 ("war" quote), p. 5 ("glory" quote), February 5, p. 6, 1917; *Pioneer Press*, February 4, p. 1 ("applause" quote), February 5, p. 4, February 10, p. 10, February 11, sec. 2, p. 5, 1917.

<sup>28</sup> *Pioneer Press*, February 4, p. 1 (quotes), February 6, p. 11, 1917.

<sup>29</sup> *Pioneer Press*, February 4, p. 1, February 6, p. 11, February 11, sec. 2, p. 5 (quote), 1917; *Fargo Forum*, February 5, 1917, p. 7.

Hill children. For well over a year after the dog derby, he corresponded with Louis W. Hill, Jr. He also found time to get to St. Joseph's Hospital to visit a dying high school lad who had begged for news of the race and cheered for Hartman throughout his illness.<sup>30</sup>

MOST OF THE DETAILS of Hartman's life before he became the object of public adulation and curiosity are at best sketchy. He was born in Troy, New York,

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<sup>30</sup> *Dispatch*, February 2, 1917, p. 1 ("condition" quotes); *Pioneer Press*, February 10, 1917, p. 1.

**BALDY ANDERSON** (right), a demihero of the dog derby, was one of the personages featured on picture post cards circulated at the time of the carnival. This post card is from the collection of Louis W. Hill, Jr. Note the misspelling of Winnipeg.



**ALBERT CAMPBELL**, driven by his father's deathbed charge, finished first in the exhausting run.

**EVER-PRESENT** movie cameramen photographed Hartman's enervated dogs.



probably on April 12, 1890. In 1911–12 and again in 1913–14, he was a student at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, but records there disclose no other facts about him. Although in February, 1913, he was admitted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, that school has no record of his grades, so he may have failed to enroll or to complete a semester's work. In an interview in St. Paul he disclosed that he had gone to a gold mining region near Le Pas, Manitoba, at the age of twenty-one to seek his fortune. He had hoped to accumulate sufficient money "to start myself in laboratory industrial research work," but his pursuit of the "golden rainbow" had been attended by misfortune.

When he heard about the carnival dog derby, he glimpsed another chance to acquire the stake that so far had eluded him. This time, although he did not win the race, matters turned out favorably. From prizes, gifts, and theatrical engagements, Hartman probably made several thousand dollars. "After digging in the earth five years for gold," he declared, "I found it at the end of a 522-mile dog race. I shall bid farewell to the Frozen North, return to Boston and establish a laboratory wherein I shall spend my time in industrial research. My dream is realized."<sup>31</sup>

But like Gunnar Tomasson, who never finished the race, Fred Hartman proved a poor prophet. When the United States became a belligerent in World War I, Hartman, as might have been predicted, neither shirked duty nor sought a safe assignment. In May, 1917, he was in Chicago awaiting orders to start training as an army aviator. Eleven months later, Lieutenant Hartman wrote Louis W. Hill, Jr., from Wichita Falls, Texas, that he was leaving for Wilbur Wright Field in Fairfield, Ohio. From Boston in September, 1918, Hartman wrote that he had orders to report to Hoboken, New Jersey — "how glad I am after awaiting the time for so long" — and that he would sail for France sometime in October. On October 27 Hill received a card from a place Hartman facetiously called "a concentration

camp for flyers" in the heart of France — a site where Napoleon had once trained his officers. Hartman had had "an adventurous trip at sea" because of encounters with submarines, but he had "slept through the excitement." Five days before the armistice was signed, he wrote Louis: "By the time you get this I shall probably be flying daily over the enemy lines — in a Liberty — the peerless ship at altitudes over 10,000 ft." After several less than enthusiastic comments regarding a number of French customs, he signed off with "Heartily, Fred."<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, only five months of life remained for the intrepid dog driver turned aviator. On April 7, 1919, following a two-week leave of absence and only eight days prior to his expected release from military duty with the 354th Aero Squadron of the Second Army, Hartman and an observer took off in a Liberty plane from Congoult Air Field in Toul, France. After narrowly missing a hangar, the plane stalled at 300 feet and went into a spinning nose dive. Despite Hartman's efforts to right the ship, the plane crashed within sight of his horrified associates. Both occupants were killed instantly.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Mary H. Murray, assistant registrar, University of Saskatchewan, to Donald H. Klinefelter, registrar, Carleton College, May 10, 1971; W. D. Wells, registrar, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to Klinefelter, May 3, 1971; *Pioneer Press*, February 4, p. 1, February 11, sec. 2, p. 5 (quotes), 1917.

<sup>32</sup> *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, May 20, 1917, sec. 1, p. 5; Hartman to Louis W. Hill, Jr., May 21, 1917, June 14, 1918, September 25, 1918, October 27, 1918, November 6, 1918, in the possession of Louis W. Hill, Jr.

<sup>33</sup> *Pioneer Press*, April 21, 1919, p. 1; *Dispatch*, April 24, 1919, p. 14.

THE DRAWING on page 282 and the picture of Campbell on page 293 are from the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, January 21, and February 4, 1917, respectively. All other photographs are from the society's collection.



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