
THE
YUKONER
MAGAZINE
• Come to Faro
• Salvation Bill
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• One-Armed Prospector
• Gold in Whitehorse
• Alaska Highway Pin-Up Girls
$4.95
ISSUE
No.19

WHITEHORSE MOTORS

Ford

SALUTES

Originally a nurse from Saskatchewan, Tilly MacDonald spent ten fun-filled years cooking at various establishments in the mining town of Faro, Yukon. She moved from there to Marsh Lake in 1991 and, unable to think about retiring, she (with husband Archie) bought a variety store and since has opened a bake shop, café, and makes the best pizzas you can possibly imagine. She works seven days a week and even runs the local post office.

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Cover: Monica and Larry Otto at their Army Beach cabin, August, 2001. [Dianne Green photo]

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From the Editor

The cover photo for this issue was taken with a digital camera, and as you can see, it didn't make enough dots for the old press. It reminds me of the computerized toaster I bought that either burnt the bread into charcoal or threw it out onto the floor. You can bet for the next issue, we'll go back to a real camera and film.

We've been running a gold nugget draw among those subscribers who receive subscription renewal notices (which you will receive at least 6 weeks before it runs out). We do that hoping to increase the renewal rate but it hasn't seemed to make much difference. But not to worry, we will continue the draw.

Ah, renewals! Like money from home. It is the only part of our production that seems easy: no huge mailing campaign, no database entry, no chasing after new advertisers, and so forth. Since the renewal rate has been about 70 percent, it also means that we must be on the right track with this magazine. Thank you so much for your support and encouragement with all those cheques and letters. Without them, we would have to cease publishing, and so many great stories would be lost forever.

This issue may seem like a big promotion to sell houses in Faro. Indeed, it is a pretty place and a person could be as safe and comfortable there as you could anywhere on earth. The drive to Faro from Whitehorse will take you past Lake Laberge, Fox Lake, Carmacks, and along the Yukon River. The spot where the Columbian sank is marked, as are many other historical sites. On a busy day, you might meet a dozen vehicles on that 200-mile stretch of road.

But living there could have some drawbacks for folks not familiar with the north. It can go down to 50 below zero for 10 days at a time. The price of food and fuel are high, and it's a two-day adventure to go shopping in Whitehorse. Medical facilities are limited but the school there is as modern as any other in the Yukon.

So please check everything out if you are inclined to move to the Yukon and to Faro. It might be a great place to spend summers or to write a book. Besides the regular houses, condominiums and duplex halves can be bought for as little as $10,000.

More people left the Territory this year to look for work in the south. Watson Lake has been especially hard hit. An old friend told me once about a hard winter he spent there some years ago.

"I woke up one morning, Sam, and there were two dead rats on the floor of my shack. And you know what them rats died of?.... Malnutrition."

So long as we keep getting those renewals and stories for the magazine, the rats around here will stay alive and healthy. Including yours truly.

So long for now,
Sam

The Mail Run

Dear Sam,

Thank you for the gold nugget you sent me. I was very surprised to find a gold nugget. As I am a gold prospector, hard rock of course, (northern Saskatchewan). I was very pleased to have the gold come to me instead of going looking for it. I have seen many visible gold pieces in the North. One day I hope to find mother lode but so far no luck. I thank you once again. I will wear it on my neck chain as it may bring me luck as I am 69 years old, I need all the luck I can get.

John Naylor
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Dear Friends Sam and Dianne,

Maybe you can use this little story in that wonderful little Yukoner. I never did get the typewriter fixed, so I hope my printing and writing is legible to you. My hands are shaky and each day my eyes go a bit dimmer but otherwise Mom and I are in pretty good shape. If we hang on until October 17th we will have been married 70 years, mostly good ones!

Everybody would like *The Yukoner* more often but maybe that would spoil its attraction. I will say the North isn't what it was 26 years ago when I started trapping at Finlayson Lake. It's still the best though. In the last Yukoner, you had my address as Teslin instead of Box 24 Ross River. No great deal, though; letters still get to me, even ones marked Yukon, Alaska. I get nearly as many marked Tin as Tensley. Best of everything to you both.

.....I'll never forget a fishing trip into northern Ontario with my son and eight-year-old grandson. We set up our tent on a small rocky island in a fairly large lake and of course we chose the lowest spot as we found out later that night when it rained and we woke up rather wet. Lucky the next day was hot and dry.

Matt was always curious about everything. A colored stone, a rusty bolt, a bent nail, all were treasures to him. After a few days he developed a rather strong odor and we discovered he had a couple of broken seagull eggs in his shirt pocket. Well, a good scrubbing of both shirt and boy in the lake helped clear the air. We noticed his pockets looked pretty full so we had him show us his treasures. It was quite a collection for sure. In it was a Prince Albert tobacco tin and in it was a little garden snake. Well, we convinced him it would die in that can so he let it go with many sorrowful looks on his face.

At that time his fishing success was a couple of brook trout in the six to eight inch range so you can imagine what happened when he hooked onto his first pike about 10 pounds. According to Matt, all the ones that got away from him were five feet long and some really did come close to that.

The Mail Run

After about a week of fishing and camping we took a day's hike along a small stream to another lake. We had fun taking pictures of that beautiful country. On the way back we were tired and hungry and I noticed Matt furtively reaching into his pocket and taking something to his mouth so I said," What have you got in there?" and he said 'Oh! Some fig cookies." Phil and I didn't have much desire for fig bars ever since.

Later on I heard Matt took those moose balls to school and sold them for 10 cents each. I have always said he'd make a good politician. A few days before we came home he fell in the lake and came out several shades lighter in colour. I've often wondered how big and how many were the stories he told in school later to his friends. I'll bet they were interesting. They sure are in memory to me 35 years later.
Tin and Marian Johnson
Ross River, Yukon.

Sir,

Please send me a one-year subscription to your Yukoner Magazine. As a matter of interest for you, my great grandfather, Donald Watson Davis, was a Conservative M. P. in Ottawa for Alberta from 1887 to 1896. Then he was the first Collector of Customs at Dawson City during the Gold Rush 1896 - 1902.
W. L. Davis
Surrey, B. C.

Hello Sam & Dianne,

Hope you'll have better luck with those tomatoes in 2001. Must confess when the Yukoner Magazine hits my mailbox I enjoy the great collection of stories. The stories come alive. No dull moments in that little magazine. I read it all and really enjoy Yukon's people. My three trips included nearly all of Yukon. Just great. Now, evenwith low vision I persist in enjoying the stories. You do a great job, thanks a million!
Catherine Dobrowski
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Publisher's note: *In our last issue I complained that the Yukon's summer is not long enough to ripen tomatoes, even in a greenhouse. This year wasn't much better. On Labour Day I took my crop of green tomatoes into the house to ripen in a cardboard box. But we did have some small, red tomatoes to munch on throughout the summer. These came from some "Tumbler" tomato plants that I grew in hanging baskets inside the greenhouse.*

The Mail Run

Hi Sam and Dianne!

Hope you still remember two wanderers who showed up at your cabin, unannounced, one evening in the middle of May. After reading your Yukoner Magazine from its first issue in 1996, we just could not resist the opportunity to meet you in person and to see your print shop with our own eyes. As it turned out, it was a great beginning to our wonderful trip through the Yukon and part of Alaska which we had planned for the last thirty years.

And it was mostly the readings in your Yukoner which gave us the final push. We also visited your friends, Obie and Karin, in Burwash Landing, whose wedding pictures we saw in your no. 2 issue, in October 1996.

While Obie was sleeping after a long, hard day in the bush, (collecting burls for his carvings), we had a great time with Karin who is quite a talker and who took us though their BurlBilly Hill shop. We were even lucky to speak with Edith Josie from Old Crow, about whom you wrote in the No.17 issue. We listened to some of her wonderful stories while attending the opening night of the Yukon International Storytelling Festival in Whitehorse.

Unfortunately, one thing we were not able to do, was to travel on the South Canol Road. The late Spring and generally unseasonable weather were against us. We made it all the way to Ross River and talked to an Indian fellow who maintains the road for the government and were told that there was no way we could make it through with our small rental car. Apparently some sections of the road were still snowed in and some were washed out. We still drove to the start of the South Canol at its junction with Campbell Hwy, but were not able to make it even to the sign which said "Road Closed". Too bad!

Still we had our taste of adventure while driving in the snow and rain on the Taylor Hwy from Chicken to Eagle. The road was in places so muddy, that we were lucky to get through. In one place we were not even sure if we drove on a road or in a creek. We sat on the edge of our seats all the way, did not meet one car through all the hours of driving, but made it.

The Top of the World Hwy was in much better shape, though we were lucky because it was opened just a few days before we arrived. So was the ferry which took us across the Yukon River to Dawson City. In fact, travelling out of season and in isolation made us even more aware of the beauty and vastness of the Yukon wilderness. We saw plenty of moose and gophers, a red fox, some black bears, and one grizzly that was so huge, we mistook him for a moose until we got closer. Luckily, we saw all this wildlife from the safety of our car, but still made it a habit to look over our shoulders while pitching our tent.

Some nights, we froze our butts while tenting in the mountain areas,

The Mail Run

but even that was part of the fun! In Dawson and its surrounding goldfields we soaked up the history of the bygone era, though as it looked to us, there still seems to be plenty of gold left around?

And while driving part way up the Dempster Hwy, we stopped at the cabin of old Joe Henry about whom we also heard so much. Unfortunately, that was about as far North as we could go, because it was time to turn back in order to catch our plane home. Now sitting at home and looking at all those pictures we took, our trip is only a memory. Still, the Yukon turned out to be all we dreamed about and more. The scenery, wildlife, and people we met, all made it a very special trip. We are still dreaming, except this time we know for sure that we'll be back.

We also know for sure that the next time we won't miss the South Canol Road.

So Sam and Dianne, keep those issues of Yukoner Magazine rolling off your press. It's great reading and very much appreciated not only by "oldtimers", but also by people in far away places, like us.

Your friends,
Milan and Sue Heran,
Kitchener , Ontario.

Milan & Sue Heran in front of the Yukoner Magazine print shop.

The Town That Wouldn't Die
Faro, Yukon

By Darrell Hookey

The Oldtimers have told me of a Whitehorse I have never met. It is a Whitehorse where folks left their doors unlocked and knew each other by sight. A place where laws were for serious crimes and teenagers were too busy to hang out at malls.

The Whitehorse of the mid -20th Century was populated by people who loved it, loved the lifestyle and loved having nature at their very back door.

But, just last month, I have seen this Whitehorse. It is now a one-hour drive north of the Yukon's capital and two more hours to the east.

It is a harbour of quiet where every home has a mountain view.

It is called Faro. A 32-year-old mining town with no mine and no mining jobs. What is left are all the facilities you would ever need and people who love this quirky and spunky little town.

How quirky? These people have built a golf course that runs right through the middle of it. I don't mean between Residential Neighbourhood "A" and Industrial Park "B". I mean the third tee is at the arena and the hole is behind the library. The fifth tee is on Bell Avenue and the hole is on Ladue Drive.

How spunky? Long-time resident Herbie Croteau invented, produced and marketed Midnight Sun Plant Food from his basement. Pallet after pallet will be shipped to Home Hardware, Walmart, Canadian Tire, True Value and Fred Meyer stores across North America.

I've always felt sorry for Faro. It was an isolated town that boomed with high mineral prices and went bust when the world detected a glut on the market.

Four years after the last mining company packed it in, I made my first

visit. I didn't see the journeymen miners who made this town an economic force in the territory. They had all moved on to where there were jobs waiting for their special skills.

Instead, I drove past northerners who like their towns small and quiet. They each waved to me even though I was a stranger.

I remember looking down into one heavily treed valley between streets and was instantly transformed into an eight-year-old boy again. I badly wanted to jump onto my banana seat bike and explore its many paths and afterward dip my toes in the cool stream that tumbled busily through it. Perhaps not just my toes, maybe a fishing line, too.

Back to reality, my bald spot returned, I began to listen to my fathering instincts that ached to move my family here. It is safe, it is clean, it is interesting.

And the houses are selling for the price of a pickup truck.

This is exactly what Faroites want people to discover. The more people who visit Faro, the more who will fall in love with it and want to move here.

I came to Faro to meet the people who are trying to sell the empty houses in the town. The latest member of the team is Mike Brine, a Whitehorse real estate agent who decided on a whim to show the town of Faro to a banker and biologist from Switzerland.

Although neither were thinking of buying a house, they both bought. Brine was two for two.

Brine immediately recognized in Faro something he has been searching for all his life. He bought a house and "escapes" to it on as many weekends as he can.

A lifetime of examining spirituality and visiting areas of the world mired in violence, Brine sees Faro as a place of "old values and gentleness" where the children are healthy, happy and still play outdoors.

When you calculate the commission on a $30,000 sale, you know there has to another reason he has added Faro to an already busy real estate business in Whitehorse. Especially when he can earn five times as much on a sale with as much work.

He explains that Faro will always attract the hunters and entrepreneurs who want to tap into the barely scratched opportunities in winter tourism. Brine wants to attract others who are open to "alternative thinking" to be his neighbours.

But Brine has detected some anxiety among the townsfolk as he tries to "sell" Faro.

Yet over a welcoming lunch at Hoang's Restaurant, usually with Faro Real Estate manager Murray Hampton, Brine knows the friendly, upbeat banter of the locals impresses his prospective clients. It is an encouraging sound that convinces those who will be just as committed to Faro.

Hampton, who had been left with the glut of houses when the population dropped to 250 from 3,000, decided to team up with Dawn Kostelnik. She had energy, enthusiasm and world-wide connections through Coldwell Banker.

Kostelnik was made the listing agent and she hit the ground running with promotional programs and pursuing initiatives from Vancouver to Anchorage to Inuvik.

One successful promotion was giving away Hampton's own house for the publicity it would bring.

Working closely with the community, she helped spread the word that Faro was home for those who like the gentle pace of a northern town.

Kostelnik believes that selling Faro as a community is the first priority. With 30 sales this past year and the population up to 320, Faro is setting an example for the rest of the territory, says Kostelnik.

"Nobody is sitting on their hands waiting for handouts," she says. "The ones who are left are the committed ones ... the ones who love it here."

Already, the town has arranged for fuel facilities at the airport so that charters can reach Faro and gas up for the return flight.

Faro residents have high-speed Internet access now.

And they are pushing for a proposed railway to Alaska to be diverted through its back yard. This mineral-rich region would burst with mining activity with that kind of service, not to mention the potential for tourism.

As well, the local college campus can be marketed to bring youths to Faro, away from distractions of home, to learn trades. Faro is a miracle waiting to happen.

It has been a long time since I felt a sense of community. Towns and cities have always been something to endure. That's where the jobs are and the schools and the shopping. So you put up with the high prices and congestion. Don't make eye contact and get in line.

No wonder people are choosing to retire in Faro. They can sell their condo in the city and buy a house outright and still have enough money left over to buy a monster recreational vehicle.

Faro has all the best the Yukon has to offer: Wildlife, clean lakes, history and the nicest folk anywhere.

I have often told people the Yukon is Canada's Canada. Well, now I tell them Faro is the Yukon's Yukon.

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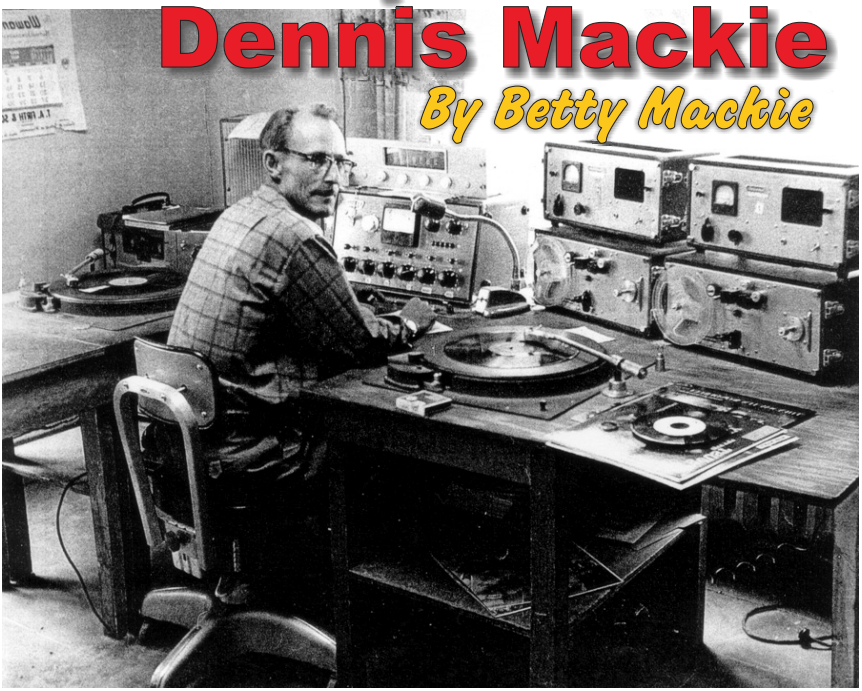
The view from Faro.

Dawson City Radio Pioneer
Dennis Mackie

By Betty Mackie



When Dennis Mackie arrived in Dawson City in the late 1940s, the volunteer radio station had just opened up shop, thanks to a couple of men stationed there with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. The men just dropped a line out a window in the Pearl Harbour Hotel. With no call letters, it had a range in Dawson City only, not out to the creeks.

Dennis had always wanted to be a radio announcer, so he immediately became involved. As a teenager, he went to one of the radio stations in Vancouver and asked if he could audition for work. He thought he was on the air when they gave him a script to read. Afterwards, they said, "Fine, but our advice is—finish school and then go to radio school." While his dream did not materialize then, he did not lose sight of it, and CFYT, as the call letters became, gave him the opportunity.

Dennis volunteered as an announcer-operator and also became active on the executive. The station obtained the RCA record service and every Christmas after 1952 we were treated to shows like Amos & Andy, Jack Benny, Three Wise Guys, The Counterfeit Santa and The Cricket and The Hearth.

Moved from the Pearl Harbour Hotel, to the Army Signal station, to the old government liquor store, the little radio station finally came to rest in a corner of the Federal Government's administration building in a room next to the Post Office, where Dennis was Postmaster.

Now live broadcasts originated from the studio. Dennis hosted one

of these live broadcasts, "21 or Bust." He owned a reel-to-reel recorder to tape live events to replay over CFYT. He took his portable tape recorder to a corner of the Northern Commercial grocery store for children to come in and record a message to Santa. Once he arranged for all school children up to Grade 4 to record their messages, if they so wished. The children delighted in hearing them broadcast to Santa in the North Pole. This helped to make up for the disappointment when the Christmas concert had to be cancelled due to the extremely cold weather, when it was impossible to heat the Community Hall (the old Arctic Brotherhood Hall).

At the annual Christmas Concert, Dennis often took on the role of Santa Claus, wearing a mask so the children would not recognize him. It always amazed the children that he knew each of them intimately. Our daughter marvelled at him asking about her new baby brother.

The station had something for everyone in its audience. There was all the local news, and messages from the old-timers in town were recorded and rebroadcast weekly to the old-timers out on the Creeks. A "breaking news" item would give the location and seriousness of fires and appeal for fire fighters or, in the case of spring flooding, appeal for help with sandbagging. Townsfolk received vital information such as bulletins on road conditions, plane schedules, club meetings, funeral announcements, weather forecasts. We even had kindergarten of the air, very popular with our five young children.

Most of the programs in those early days came from stacks of American Armed Forces Radio programming, which was on sixteen-inch disks and ran about half an hour each. There were also lots of 78 rpms with music. The station subscribed to the Master Works record series, the "very best in listening entertainment." Dennis delighted in all of this and usually chose light classical music during his volunteer time on the air.

Announcers' copy was varied and funny. Dennis's gregarious, outgoing personality shone through in his on-air announcements. He had a great sense of humor, and even children found him amusing. Our youngest daughter would dance around to the music he played and when he came on the air, she would say, "Oh, Daddy, you're so funny!" The morning rush in households would hear frequent time announcements with admonishments to children to eat their porridge and dress warmly. Children always listened carefully at 8 p.m. in the cold winter months. If the temperature fell to forty degrees below Fahrenheit, the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Hulland, would phone in and announce cancellation of school the next day. One of our faithful volunteers would open the mike at 8 p.m. and announce—Mr. Hulland jis' phoned and he sez, there ain't gonna' be no school tomorra'.

In November of 1958, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation assumed the operation of CFYT, formerly known as the little 100-watt station with 50 volunteer announcers. Dennis was manager of the station, so he invited those involved in the handover to come to our home for an official picture-taking. The public meeting that he chaired the next day decided that CFYT's funds should be distributed to purchase radios for the hospital, and as donations to the Students' Association and the swimming pool.

The official takeover took place at midnight on November 12, 1958, and the official opening of the station the next day was taped, with CBC dignitaries, Dawson's mayor, our Territorial Councillor, and Dennis Mackie. Shortly after the takeover, Dennis resigned as Postmaster to accept a position with the CBC-CFYT.

His on-air style was friendly and humorous. My women friends thought he had a bedroom voice! I thought of him as being much like Lorne Greene, the Canadian who started out in radio and became a TV personality in Bonanza. For a comparison today, he was similar to Lloyd Robertson's style when he reads the CTV news. He was a natural, and excellent in timing, diction and pronunciation. He worked hard at this, especially at taking out all the 'ums and 'ahs. Not for him redundant phrases such as, "now we will continue on" or "this recording is off of." His resonant, sonorous voice invited one to listen, and he frequently acted as chairman of events. In the summer months, his readings of the Shooting of Dan McGrew every Saturday evening for the volunteer Klondike Tourist Association, were legendary.

The CBC renovated the studio next door to the Post Office and installed new furnishings in the spring of 1959. A window from the hallway allowed people to view the station in operation. Dennis was in his element, his dream had come true.

His slight, wiry 5' 8" frame looked very professional at the mike. The tortoise shell glasses and slightly balding head only enhanced this image. He was neatly turned out in a flannel shirt and khaki pants. On those occasions requiring more formal attire, he wore a white shirt with Windsor collar and French cuffs with a two-piece suit. With the French cuffs he wore his Alaska black diamond cuff links trimmed with small gold nuggets. With his neatly trimmed mustache, and the scent of Old Spice blended with tobacco, he was the epitome of 1950's northern style.

Seated at the console, he always had a very large glass ashtray close by. It had to be large enough to hold the cigarette ash and butts from at least two packs of Export A. The ever-present large mug of coffee always ready, sweetened with three teaspoons of sugar, sat close-by. Fueled by caffeine, nicotine, and sugar, Dennis had the vibrant energy to give his all to the popular music show, the teen show, the kiddies show, the news, or any of the other shows he hosted. He was a versatile and dynamic broadcaster.

When Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip made a Royal Tour of Canada in the summer of 1959, the Queen stayed over in Whitehorse while Prince Philip came to Dawson. Dennis received a citation from the President of the CBC "in recognition of the very special contribution" he made "to national broadcasting on the occasion of the Royal visit."

In November of the same year, the CBC's radio-tv magazine ran a station sketch of CBC-CFYT with a picture of Dennis in the control room.

Broadcast services were more sophisticated now. CBC-CFYT had hour-long sports and other scheduled programs, a special service beamed at the north. News from Outside could now be picked up from Sackville NB and rebroadcast locally at one o'clock and six o'clock.

Dawson would never be the same now that we knew first-hand what was going on in the world Outside our little sphere.

Shortly after Dennis was taken on-stream, the Director of the Northern Service for CBC, Andrew Cowan, decided to get the stories of the old-timers on tape and preserved for posterity. This special assignment fell to Dennis. Thanks to his experience in the Post Office, he knew all these old-timers very well. He knew their stories and personalities and because of his easy-going style could make them feel comfortable. He was the ideal person for the task, and eagerly approached the assignment. Dennis arranged to have Art Fry, a pioneer working his own successful placer gold mining claim, talk with these old-timers.

The 1960 Awards sponsored by the Institute for Education by Radio-Television of the Ohio State University of Columbus announced that the CBC won 18 out of 23 firsts and honourable mentions, in competition with leading American stations. Of these, two firsts and one honourable mention were won by the Yukon stations, as reported by the Klondike Korner newsletter. A first prize went to the interview Dennis made of Art Fry talking with Monty Velge.

Monty, who had a claim on Brewer Creek, had quite a story to tell about being mauled by a bear while working his claim. The bear tore off some of his scalp, but he fought off the animal, slapped the piece of scalp back onto his head, and looked after it himself. When I met Monty on the street after the award was announced, he smiled broadly and said he was

At the hand over of CFYT to CBC. (Left to right, back row: CBC personnel Lloyd Moore, Ross McIntyre, Jack Craine. Left to right, front row: DennisMackie, Mayor Comadina, Bill Anderson (veteran CFYT radio man).

glad he had lived to tell the tale, but he credited the excellence of the interview to the way Dennis coached him and Art Fry with their dialogue.

I tried to locate these tapes, talking with some of Dennis's colleagues, to the area manager in Whitehorse, to the CBC Archives in eastern Canada, to the Archives in Whitehorse, and finally appealing to the President of the CBC. No one seems to know what happened to these tapes. So much for Mr. Cowan's noble effort to have the stories recorded for posterity.

Dennis had a keen appreciation of northern outdoor life, and so he identified with the old-timers such as Monty on that level as well. Our family vacations often meant loading the five children into a vehicle with a week's supply of groceries, and a case of beer which would cool in one of the creeks. Dennis would stand on the banks of the Klondike River with his two sons for hours on end, all of them fishing, his wicker fishing basket lined with fresh grass would gradually be filled with silver grayling. He also managed to keep the woodshed stocked with frozen caribou and moose from his hunting trips. He liked to cook, and would cook up the most amazing meals of sweet and sour meatballs made with highly seasoned ground meat from these animals. The old-timers on the creeks ate wild meat and local fish almost exclusively, and knew just how to cook these delicacies. Dennis enjoyed sharing ideas with them about the best methods of preparing various dishes.

In 1960, when the August 17 celebrations took place in Dawson's Minto Park, Dennis was Master of Ceremonies and broadcast the event by land line to the radio station. The official opening of the land line connecting Dawson by telephone with the rest of Canada made this possible. The highlight of the event was a phone call from the speaker's booth at Minto Park, with the Mayor, on behalf of the Pioneers, sending greetings to Prime Minister Diefenbaker in Ottawa. The Prime Minister expressed his faith in the north and sent his greetings to the people of Dawson.

The Whitehorse Star of October 13, 1960, ran an article headed "Dawson Protest Heard over CBC." The Star reported on the request CBC made to the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) to have a Yukon network connected by land line to the Whitehorse studios and to install new relay transmitters at Elsa, Mayo and Dawson City. This new service would reach about two-thirds of Yukon residents. A relay transmitter at Dawson would mean the radio station staff would be transferred. Probably out of concern for the dwindling population, several Dawson people wrote letters to the CBC and BBG asking that the present staff be kept there.

In spite of the pleas, October 13, 1960 found us on our way to Edmonton enroute to Fort Smith and Dennis's appointment as announcer-in-charge of the CBC radio station. *The Whitehorse Star* of October 27, 1960, gave a report of our time in Dawson submitted by Athol Retallack. The local newsletter said "we shall miss the whole family for they were always helpful in community affairs. We wish them the best of everything in their new venture." (*Klondike Korner,* October 19, 1960)

Fort Smith was the administrative centre for the Northwest Territories when we were there. Unlike Dawson City, it was almost completely

devoid of any kind of community spirit. Perhaps this was because the government people, who came mostly from Ottawa and made up the majority of the working people in the town, thought of themselves as being northerners when it came to salaries and benefits but did not participate in the life of the community in the way we were accustomed.

So we joined the Legion and had great fun at their fairly regular dances. The dances and the movie theater became our entertainment for the two years of our stay. Dennis was popular with the government people and the townsfolk alike who appreciated the inimitable northern flair he gave to his radio work.

After Dennis's two year assignment, the station became a relay transmitter. We were transferred to Yellowknife where he was the Area Manager for the Mackenzie district of northern Canada with five relay transmitter stations on the network. A lively place, we involved ourselves in the many and varied community organizations and events. The station broadcast some of these events, and Dennis often acted as the Master of Ceremonies. The program, 'Issues and Questions' (IQ), originated at Sir John Franklin federal school, and was recorded for later broadcast. This involved two teams of four students from Sir John Franklin School and four students from St. Patrick's Catholic school. At an elocution contest in which our daughter placed third, Dennis was one of the judges. She received a small medal which she still treasures.

Yellowknife had the distinction of operating the only full-time school for retarded children in the North. As Publicity Chairman for the Yellowknife Association for Retarded Children, Dennis sparked the idea of a Klondike Night as part of a fund-raising drive. This event alone raised $340 for the association. The staff of CBC-CFYK aided in a campaign for membership in the Association for Retarded Children, resulting in two hundred new members and over a thousand dollars in donations.

In the first week of May, 1963, the Mackenzie River experienced ice jams, overflowed its banks and flooded Hay River and Fort Simpson. Residents had to be evacuated. Of course the CBC wanted on-the-spot news complete with pictures, including movie pictures if possible. Dennis enlisted the assistance of the owner of the building which the CBC leased. This man had his own plane, was a charter pilot for Pacific Western Airlines and an amateur photographer as well.

The mission in Hay River was accomplished with on-the-spot news reports and movie pictures, but before the men could get away from the Hay River airport, the plane had to be diverted to Pine Point on a mercy flight to bring in a man whose leg was badly cut with a power saw. Radio contact was made with Yellowknife to hold the southbound DC-6 so that the film and the stretcher patient could be put aboard.

Once back at CFYK, preparations were made for the station to remain on the air all night to relay emergency messages. The high water took out the radio transmitter and all the power at Hay River and with it all communications between Hay River, Fort Smith, Uranium and Yellowknife.

Women and children were airlifted out to Yellowknife and Fort Smith.

Canadian National Telegraphs (CNT) worked diligently to restore facilities so that messages could be relayed. The radio station continued to remain on air around the clock relaying messages. A second charter flight had to be made into the flooded area to have CFYK's engineer install a spare transmitter. Dennis, the pilot and the engineer all had to have typhoid innoculations on this trip, as Hay River was declared a quarantine area. With this done, an Army helicopter flew them to the transmitter site.

When the people from Hay River and Fort Simpson returned, they had a big task ahead of them getting settled again. The rebuilding of Hay River resulted in a more attractive town. The townsfolk there will long remember that spring week in May of 1963. Dennis certainly did.

Our two-year period in Yellowknife was followed by a transfer to Whitehorse for one year, much to the delight of Dennis's Yukon fans. His program "Mackie in the morning" was very popular.

His last assignment in radio began in January of 1966 at the Vancouver station of the CBC. Dennis had left his job in a Vancouver foundry, went north as a young man with a grade eight education, and established himself as a successful broadcaster. The sixteen years in northern radio were pivotal years in his life. He was back in his home town only a few blocks from his childhood home in Kitsilano, enjoying the action of the big city media and the vibrant west coast city life.

Dennis died while on his annual fishing trip in Chase, BC on July 27, 1972, at the age of 53 years.

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Unattended horses along the Dempster Highway, northeast of Dawson, February 1977 (SH photo).

The Ballad of Salvation Bill

By Les McLaughlin

"T'was in the bleary middle of the Arctic night
I was lonesome as a loon, so if you can,
Imagine my emotions of amazement and delight
When I bumped into the missionary man."
—from The Ballad of Salvation Bill by Robert W. Service

He wasn't a missionary man. He was a trapper. That fact aside, the story of a crazed chap who cut raw tobacco from a hardened plug and rolled the stuff in magazine paper is true. Robert Service, the bard of the Yukon, used literary license to paint a vivid portrait of an addict trapped without his drug in the middle of nowhere. The poem is called The Ballad of Salvation Bill.

The story began in the spring of 1911. Service had spent the previous winter "outside." The Yukon poet had travelled to Toronto and then to New York the preceding fall to hand deliver the manuscript of his first novel called "The Trail of '98." His first two books of poems had been so successful that Service could almost name his price for the publication rights. He decided to negociate with his publishers in person.

He also wanted a break from the monotonous life in Dawson City. In 1909, he had resigned from the Bank of Commerce to devote his efforts to writing. His first two books of poems, *Songs of a Sourdough* and *Ballads of a Cheechako*, had brought him significant wealth in a relatively short time. Now, somewhat well to do, he yearned to travel. And travel he did during the winter of 1910-11 journeying as far afield as New Orleans and then to Cuba.

When he returned to Canada, he spent the remainder of the winter of 1911-12 living with his parents on a farm near Vegreville, Alberta. It was a delightful time. His mother Emily doted over her eldest son whom she had not seen in years. Service had swiftly become a writer of international literary renown and the family was rightly proud of him.

However, with spring came a longing to return to the Yukon. He also craved adventure of the kind he had written about in *Songs of a Sourdough* and *Ballads of a Cheechako* but rarely experienced. He decided to return to Dawson City via the infamous Edmonton route to the Klondike.

Back in 1898, this was a highly publicized and promoted "all Canadian route" to the gold fields. In reality it was the killer route. More than two

thousand would-be miners embraced the Edmonton route challenge during the great gold rush. The merchants of Edmonton enthusiastically promoted their city as the gateway to the north. They claimed they were well equipped with businesses familiar with the wilderness. Relentless, they sought to sell complete kits to the eager yet naive Klondikers.

On the Chilkoot Pass, the Mounties ordered anyone entering Canada to carry one thousand pounds of supplies. The Edmonton route carried with it no such rule. Harsh as the Chilkoot rule appeared, it was the prudent strategy. For as little as two hundred and fifty dollars in Edmonton, a miner could buy all the food, hardware and clothes he could possibly need for the trip, including ground ginger, caulking irons and two suits of heavy woolen underwear. That amount of gear did little to aid the Edmonton gold seekers who took the "all Canadian route."

When the poet said he did not have any, Skilly threatened him with an axe.

Only a handful made it to Dawson City. Most gave up. Some died en route including the then Mayor of Hamilton, Ontario. One, a Seattle dentist who was caught up in the propaganda that appeared in newspaper ads placed by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, took two years to reach the Klondike. Like the others, his trip was filled with hardship and futility.

The general direction from Edmonton was northwest by north via the Athabaska River system to a point near the delta of the MacKenzie River and then southwest over the high mountain divide to the Yukon River and finally on to Dawson City. It was a two thousand-mile journey through largely uncharted, an exceedingly difficult terrain.

For Robert Service in 1912, the trip began with a two day overland wagon expedition to Athabasca Landing. Then by small boat and, sometimes, hitching rides on Hudson's Bay Company steamers via the Athabasca River to Great Slave Lake. At Fort Simpson, Service bought a little birch bark canoe he named the Couquette.

It was to be his home on the river on the long, but remarkably peaceful trip to Fort MacPherson at the junction of the MacKenzie and Peel Rivers. At Fort McPherson, he learned of a scow called the Ophelia that was going his way, en route to Dawson. On board the Ophelia, along with Captain McTosh and his wife, was a quarrelsome, heavily addicted smoker named Jake Skilly. He was one of those characters who lived alone too long and eked out a meager living trapping white fox around the delta.

The half-ton *Ophelia h*ad to be hauled part of the way over the high mountain divide. It was to some extent a trip from hell. Jake and McTosh quarreled frequently and Jake was quickly going stark raving mad because his cache of rolling paper for cigarettes was nearly depleted.

The poet turned adventurer decided to risk the rest of the journey down the Bell River alone in his canoe. This, recalled Service, was the most idyllic part of the entire trip. However, near Rampart House on the Porcupine River, Service ran into Jake Skilly again. Skilly was now out of cigarette paper. Crazy Jake demanded paper from Service. When the poet said he did not have any, Skilly threatened him with an axe.

Service was able to calm Skilly with the assurance that they would soon reach Rampart House, a Hudson's Bay post, where cigarette papers would surely be available. It was not to be. The Mounties would not allow the pair to come ashore because of a raging smallpox epidemic in the village. Luckily for Service they discovered a small, abandoned sternwheeler stuck on the shore near the beleaguered settlement. There were papers on board. The addict had his smokes and the poet had his life.

Service continued the trip to Dawson alone. When he arrived back in his beloved Klondike hometown, he was welcomed as a celebrity who had not only written about hardship, but experienced it first hand.

Two years later, Service heard a bit of news that did not surprise him. The NWMP had discovered the body of Jake Skilly in a small cabin in the MacKenzie Delta. Plug tobacco was strewn about, but there were no papers to be found.

Service wrote his third book of northern poems. *Rhymes of a Rolling Stone* was written in Dawson, but most of the material and the stories came from his MacKenzie River journey. It is an Arctic book.

As the result, he added to the list of characters Eddie Malone who had a Grammyphone at Fond du Lac, Athabasca Dick, Barbed Wire Bill, Happy Jack the Lunger and Flap-Jack Billy. It is from the MacKenzie River journey that we learn of "the cow juice cure," and the deep contentment of camping in "Song of the Campfire." And of course there is the little known but remarkable poem, "The Ballad of Salvation Bill" which appeared in a later volume of verse published in 1940.

The lengthy poem is a retelling of the Jake Skilly episode, with poetic license thrown in for good measure and meter. Skilly of course was not a missionary man. The two were not trapped in an isolated trapper's cabin as is the case in the rambunctious ballad. Still, the poet again displayed his skill of being able to select a real life situation and transform it into a masterpiece of storytelling and rhyme.

Service finished writing *Rhymes of a Rolling Stone* in the spring of 1912, spent a peaceful summer in his little cabin high on a hill overlooking the Klondike Valley, caught the last steamer out in the fall, and never returned to Dawson City.

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The Ballad of Salvation Bill
By Robert W. Service

'Twas in the bleary middle of the hard-boiled Arctic night,
I was lonesome as a loon, so if you can,
Imagine my emotions of amazement and delight
When I bumped into that Missionary Man.
He was lying lost and dying in the moon's unholy leer,
And frozen from his toes to finger-tips.
The famished wolf-pack ringed him; but he didn't seem to fear,
As he pressed his ice-bond Bible to his lips.

'Twas the limit of my trap-line, with the cabin miles away,
And every step was like a stab of pain;
But I packed him like a baby, and I nursed him night and day,
Till I got him back to health and strength again.
So there we were, benighted in the shadow of the Pole,
And he might have proved a priceless little pard,
If he hadn't got to worrying about my blessed soul,
And a-quotin' me his Bible by the yard.

Now there was I, a husky guy, whose god was Nicotine,
With a "coffin-nail" a fixture in my mug;
I rolled them in the pages of a pulpwood magazine,
And hacked them with my jack-knife from the plug.
For, Oh to know the bliss and glow that good tobacco means,
Just live among the everlasting ice , So judge my horror when I found my stock of magazines
Was chewed into a chowder by the mice.

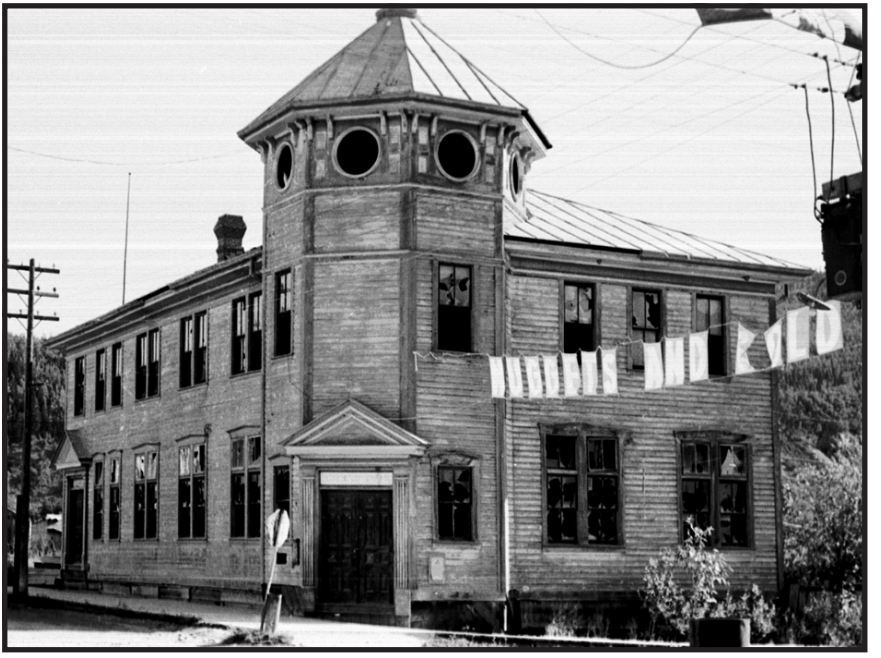
A woeful week went by and not a single pill I had,
Me that would smoke my forty in a day;
I sighed, I swore, I strode the floor; I felt I would go mad:
The gospel-plugger watched me with dismay.
My brow was wet, my teeth were set, my nerves were rasping raw;
And yet that preacher couldn't understand:
So with despair I wrestled there - when suddenly I saw
The volume he was holding in his hand.

Then something snapped inside my brain, and with an evil start
The wolf-man in me woke to rabid rage.
"I saved your lousy life," says I; "so show you have a heart,
And tear me out a solitary page."
He shrank and shrivelled at my words; his face went pewter white;
'Twas just as if I'd handed him a blow:

And then . . . and then he seemed to swell, and grow to Heaven's height,
And in a voice that rang he answered: "No!"

I grabbed my loaded rifle and I jabbed it to his chest:
"Come on, you shrimp, give me that Book," says I.
Well sir, he was a parson, but he stacked up with the best,
And for grit I got to hand it to the guy.
"If I should let you desecrate this Holy Word," he said,
"My soul would be eternally accurst;
So go on, Bill, I'm ready. You can pump me full of lead
And take it, but - you've got to kill me first."

Now I'm no foul assassin, though I'm full of sinful ways,
And I knew right there the fellow had me beat;
For I felt a yellow mongrel in the glory of his gaze,
And I flung my foolish firearm at his feet,
Then wearily I turned away, and dropped upon my bunk,
And there I lay and blubbered like a kid.
"Forgive me, pard," says I at last, "for acting like a skunk,
But hide the blasted rifle..." Which he did.
And he also hid his Bible, which was maybe just as well,
For the sight of all that paper gave me pain;
And there were crimson moments when I felt I'd go to hell



The Dawson City Post Office in 1974, now restored by Parks Canada.

To have a single cigarette again.
And so I lay day after day, and brooded dark and deep,
Until one night I thought I'd end it all;
Then rough I roused the preacher, where he stretched pretending sleep,
With his map of horror turned towards the wall.

"See here, my pious pal," says I, "I've stood it long enough...
Behold! I've mixed some strychnine in a cup;
Enough to kill a dozen me—believe me it's no bluff;
Now watch me, for I'm gonna drink it up.
You've seen me bludgeoned by despair through bitter days and nights,
And now you'll see me squirming as I die.
You're not to blame, you've played the game according to your lights...
But how would Christ have played it?—Well, good-bye..."

With that I raised the deadly drink and laid it to my lips,
But he was on me with a tiger-bound;
And as we locked and reeled and rocked with wild and wicked grips,
The poison cup went crashing to the ground.
"Don't do it, Bill," he madly shrieked. "Maybe I acted wrong.
See, here's my Bible—use it as you will;
But promise me—you'll read a little as you go along...
You do! Then take it, Brother; smoke your fill."

And so I did. I smoked and smoked from Genesis to Job,
And as I smoked I read each blessed word;
While in the shadow of his bunk I heard him sigh and sob,
And then . . . a most peculiar thing occurred.
I got to reading more and more, and smoking less and less,
Till just about the day his heart was broke,
Says I: "Here, take it back, me lad. I've had enough I guess.
Your paper makes a mighty rotten smoke."

So then and there with plea and prayer he wrestled for my soul,
And I was racked and ravaged by regrets.
But God was good, for lo! next day there came the police patrol,
With paper for a thousand cigarettes. . .
So now I'm called Salvation Bill; I teach the Living Law,
And Bally-hoo the Bible with the best;
And if a guy won't listen - why, I sock him on the jaw,
And preach the Gospel sitting on his chest.

Pictures from the Trapline

Stuart and Doris Macalister
Winter, 2001

A passel of marten skins.

Stu Macalister

Photos from their trapline near the Arctic Circle, Yukon, accessible by snowmobile from the Dempster Highway or by air.

Doris Macalister

Doris and Stuart lived in this tent until they built their cabin.

Food and fur cache, built to keep animals out.

Hunting Gold in Whitehorse

By Darrell Hookey

There they were, 12 specks of glorious light shining from the bottom of the gold pan. If I were Yosemite Sam I would draw a six shooter from each hip and fire them off into the air as I whooped and hollered "gold, gold!".

But even Yosemite Sam wouldn't fire off his pistols in this situation since we were still within Whitehorse city limits. In fact, we were only seven minutes from downtown on McIntyre Creek, a spitting distance from the Alaska Highway.

And that was a disappointment.

You see, when I learned I was to review a book — *To Seek For Eldorado: How to Hunt For Gold In The Yukon* — and that I was to go gold panning with author Sam Holloway, I figured I was in for an all-expenses paid trip to Dawson City.

But apparently there's gold in them thar creeks and rivers of Whitehorse.

"How much is it worth, Sam?" I asked breathlessly, Gold Fever constricting my chest and fogging my mind.

"Not even a dime," came the shocking cure to my Gold Fever. Thoughts of quitting my job were temporarily shelved as my brain tried to get around the idea gold could be practically worthless.

Holloway explains that panning is a technique to find a deposit of placer gold. If you find a nugget in a creek, you try again further upstream until the nuggets get larger and more plentiful and then you find nothing at all. You then pan your way back downstream until you pick up the beginning of the "trail" of nuggets again and you stake your claim to start hacking your way down to bedrock hoping you find a placer deposit.

So if we panned further up McIntyre Creek we might find a bonanza?

"Nope," came the next disappointment. Holloway is a Yukoner's Yukoner. Seen-it-all eyes look at you square from his weathered face and you instinctively know that when he says "nope" he means "nope".

He patiently explains that what we have found is called "flour gold". It has been battered down to a speck from a journey so long it would be impossible to find the vein from which it escaped.

Back in his Dodge van, we go hunting for another likely spot to find gold. We mentally do the calculations and figure that it would take one thousand hours to earn $500 with 12 "colours" in each pan.

I look at his book again. It's pocket sized and has useful tables of infor-

mation on the inside covers. If you skip over the introduction, table of contents and the Edgar Allan Poe poem, "Eldorado", you only have to read the next seven pages and you are well on your way to panning for gold.

But no where does it say you can get rich panning for gold. I get at least two emails a day telling me I can get rich with one scheme or another, you would think a book about hunting for gold would make the same claim.

Holloway isn't like that. He says tourists are buying his book from Mac's Fireweed and Canadian Tire just for the fun and experience of panning for gold in the Yukon.

Many people go catch and release fishing. Why not try panning? It is just as exciting.

We find another likely spot. Holloway likes our chances here as he expertly sizes up the river. The water hasn't risen so high here that we can't get at the gravel bottom. We choose a spot on the inside of a bend where the water slows down dropping its precious hitch hikers.

If we had hip waders, we would have tried going out to the upstream end of a sand bar. Some years back two teenagers earned enough from a sand bar to buy a car by the end of the summer. That sand bar was just off the old Kwanlin Dun village on the Yukon River.

Just 100 kilometres north of Whitehorse they are finding three-ounce nuggets regularly. The Stewart River downstream from Mayo is another good stretch.

I dig out my supplies: Rubber gloves in case the water is too cold, rubber boots and film canisters to put my gold in. I read that Skookum Jim filled a shot gun cartridge with nuggets from Rabbit Creek ... so I brought two film canisters just in case.

"Why did you buy that?" asked Holloway, glaring at my traditional steel gold pan, purchased at Canadian Tire.

He's a good-natured fellow, but I felt chastised in deference to his Yukon pedigree.

"It's what the old timers used," I replied in defence, not mentioning I was afraid he would laugh at me if I had bought one of those modern plastic jobs with the riffles his book recommends for beginners.

Photo of Sam Holloway by Yukon News reporter Jillian Rogers, August, 2000.

But that is the kind he uses.

At least I baked it first to get rid of the oil film they are shipped with (just like it says on Page 10). But not enough, says Holloway, adding I should drop some ashes from his corn cob pipe into the water to break up the surface tension. Bio-degradable soap is good, too.

Holloway explains that gold is the densest thing in the gravel we are shovelling into our pans. If we shake the gold down to the bottom of the pan and gently allow the water to sweep away the rest, we will be left with black sand (iron) and gold.

As we squat on the bank and swish and swosh away with our pans, Holloway casually mentions we are breaking the law. By picking up the gravel and washing it back into the river, we are in contravention of the Yukon Waters Act and the Federal Fisheries Act and could be fined up to $100,000.

But Dave Latoski says recreational gold panners don't have much to worry about.

He is the regional manager of the mining inspection division of the Mineral Resources Directorate for Indian and Northern Affair's Yukon region, and his mining inspectors use their discretion when enforcing the act. If there isn't a significant disturbance to the river, you will only get a friendly wave.

It's confusing because unlike BC and Alaska, the Yukon doesn't have a recreational gold mining policy for our tourists to enjoy.

Sam Holloway (left) and partner Prospector Jim White, hand mining in the rain on Glacier Creek. Summer, 1986.

Holloway has seen many other strange things done in the midnight sun in his 22 years of prospecting on and off in the Yukon.

He first caught Gold Fever when he took over a lapsed claim from a hermit. The hermit brought an ounce of gold into Mayo once a week until he died. Holloway got to the Mining Recorder's office before anyone else and found five nuggets in his first dig ... and nothing more.

Too late, he had been bitten by the bug and had quit his job.

At that time, there were a lot of older prospectors who wanted to pass along all they knew about gold.

These characters he met along the way contributed the many stories found in The Yukoner Magazine that he edits and prints from his Marsh Lake home. His partner, Dianne Green, is the publisher.

But it was the information and his prospecting experience that went into the book. It actually began as a photo copy booklet of his techniques a local store sold for him after he was barraged with questions. It sold so well, that he put it into book form and published it himself, selling 2800 copies. He then sold the rights to a "real" publisher (Outcrop) who kept it in print for 15 years.

Holloway has just recently recovered the rights to the book, put the best information up front and printed it himself on the old press at his Marsh Lake cabin.

Are people surprised to learn there is gold in Whitehorse?

Holloway says tourists aren't. They expect to find gold as soon as they cross the border. But most Whitehorse residents these days would be surprised.

In the old days, everyone knew the gravel for the roads came from river bottoms. If they check their vehicle's air filter they would likely find some gold.

Today, we need to buy Holloway's book and a ten-dollar gold pan. In the Whitehorse area it will only take you 36 hours to recoup your costs ... oh but what fun you'll have.

Sam and Floyd Bart operating a suction dredge on the just-thawing Mayo river. Spring, 1980.

Andy Anderson: Lessons in Courage

By Jane Gaffin

Every winter afternoon the in-domitable one-armed prospector would walk from his home on Black Street to the Travelodge to drink coffee, read his mining newspapers, jot notes or chat with friends.

The late Andy Anderson had experienced 22 skin-of-the-teeth incidents in his 69 years. And one afternoon in February, 1976, he generously shared some of those anecdotal misadventures which otherwise would have died in the dustbin of antiquity.

Although his passion for rocks and prospecting dated back to his youth, he never caught the fever for gold or any mineral. "I just want to know how minerals exist in relation to other minerals around them," he began.

"Prospecting places me in the environment to learn about life and our relation to the earth and universe. I find something interesting everyday in the field. I'm building theories all the time. I have lots of fun."

Anderson talked about minerals and metals in an industrial context like other mining people, of course. But he also viewed the earth's bounty as a source of vital nutrients essential to a healthy body.

Humans and other animals need daily intakes of various proportions of such minerals as calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, iron, copper, molybdenum, manganese, zinc, chromium, selenium, nickel and vanadium and the earth provides these, he maintained.

Since the 1930s, Anderson had prospected many parts of Canada and eked out a good living finding significant mineral showings and selling properties.

He once staked a fluorspar property in northern British Columbia and sold it for cash to Conwest Explorations in 1954. "If the deposit goes into production, I'm entitled to nothing more," he added.

A year previously, he had sold a nickel-copper property over the phone in three minutes to a buyer he knew. "The next morning $4,000 was in the bank."

A deposit must be big and rich to pay to be a mine, he noted. "If you've got a mine, maybe you'll get paid earlier. There's several ways to get paid off. Cash, stocks, royalties."

To Anderson, cash was king. He wouldn't deal with stock. "It could be

10 years before stock is released. Many things can happen to you in that time.

Anderson looked forward to the snow vanishing in the spring so he could work his three copper-zinc-silver claims he'd staked in the Whitehorse mining district.

He also toyed with the idea of hunting for tin in the Dawson City area, where he had once mined $900 worth of gold in a year when the precious yellow metal was worth only $36 an ounce.

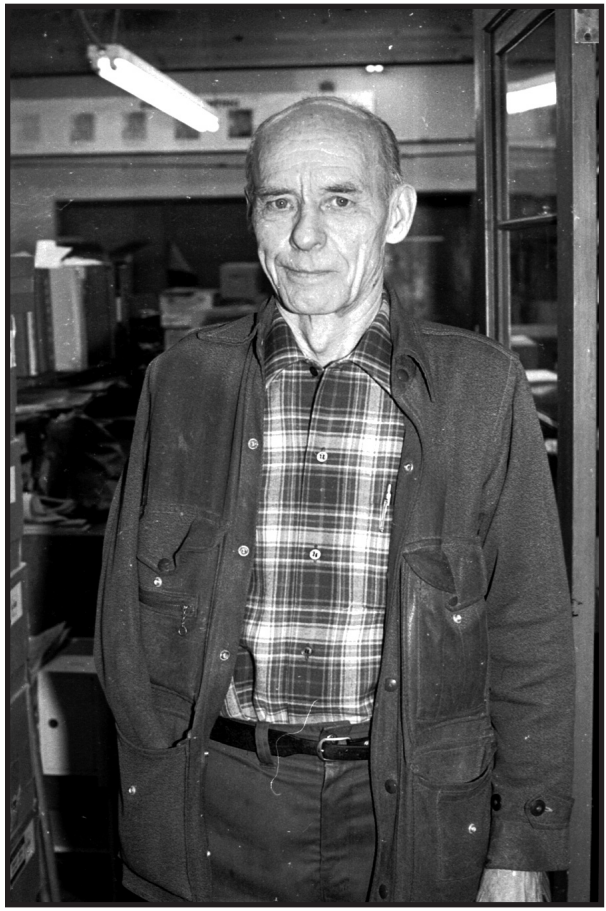
Despite his accident that left him without an arm, Anderson preferred going to the bush alone. He had his own ways of doing things, regardless that it might take all day to dig a hole on a placer prospect instead of an hour.

Anderson never liked discussing details of the fateful day when his right arm was severed at the shoulder. He was 54 years old then and had taken full responsibility for what happened. He had continued his lifestyle with stubborn determination.

On July 22, 1961, he had arrived back in Whitehorse after a bush outing with the late Larry Patnode. The engine of the Cessna 180 was still running as pilot Jim Thatcher guided the float plane into the dock on the Yukon River near the White Pass depot.

Friends described Anderson as a "busy-busy, go-go fellow, always impatient to get where he was going and to get things done." He had unlatched the passenger door and was treading along the float toward the nose of the plane.

His intention was to grab the rope used to pull the aircraft into the dock.



Andy Anderson

He moved too far forward and walked into the invisible whirr of the propeller. It hurled him into the river.

Patnode, whose car was parked at the dock, hurried to the hospital on the other side of the river to summons Dr. Jack Hibbard and the ambulance.

In a few minutes, the doctor was on the scene where Thatcher was holding a pressure point to keep blood from pumping out with every heartbeat.

"Gee, Larry," Anderson addressed his mining pal. "That was a stupid thing to do. Give me a cigarette."

"There was no better time to learn to use my left hand,"

The next day, propped up in a hospital bed, Anderson wrote a full-page letter to his parents. "There was no better time to learn to use my left hand," he said.

After the accident, he left the territory temporarily. He wanted to try new things to prove to himself he could still function with only one arm. He did fine. It just took longer to accomplish a project with one arm than when he had two.

He did have to make one change. In June 1968, he discovered he was not cut out to be a southpaw shooter. It took several shots to bring down a grizzly bear that refused to be deterred by a warning shot. The animal fell at Anderson's feet. He sold the handgun and bought a rifle, which was easier to handle and shoot with accuracy.

Only once did he recall being really distressed by circumstances. Some years after losing his arm, he was a passenger in a vehicle that sped off the road at 70 miles per hour. Anderson escaped with a broken left wrist.

"Things got discouraging with no right arm and no use of my left wrist. I had to cook for myself, get dressed and get into and out of bed. But I made it," said Anderson, whose given names were Theodore Henrik.

He was named for the United States President of the day, Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt. Henrik was for his father, a Norwegian born on a Minnesota farm. His mother was born near Oslo, Norway.

The parents had immigrated in a covered wagon to homestead in Alberta where young Anderson was born in 1907. He had two older sisters and a younger one.

When he was eight years old, Anderson found an 1898 book titled Klondike in an old building being demolished on the homestead. After reading the vintage book, he repeatedly announced to his mother he was going to the Yukon.

True to his word, the 17-year-old began working his way north, experiencing a freezing boxcar ride from Edmonton to Vancouver in May of 1924

Following a 1927 road-building job near Prince George, British Columbia, he hopped a boat at Prince Rupert up the coast to Alaska. From Skagway, he prospected his way for a week over the White Pass. He entered the Yukon on May 1, 1927.

Over the years, he had lots of prospecting adventures that were interrupted occasionally to take jobs for wages to support his rockhounding habit

But Anderson was too independent and private to accept the federal government's offer to subsidize prospectors for up to $900 a year.

"I don't like assistance," he stressed. "You have to honestly state everything you do. Information becomes accessible to other prospectors and mining companies. I couldn't be dishonest about what I write. It doesn't suit me to reveal business. Therefore, I foot my own bills."

In the early 1930s, the Carmacks area, 100 miles north of Whitehorse, attracted his attention. Only a dog team kept him company while he searched for mineralization around Mt. Freegold.

One cold winter day, coming out of Carmacks, he gave an elderly fellow a ride on the toboggan pulled behind the dog sled.

Bill Langham, about 75, had a bedroll and supplies. But he was not physically well. A while later, he went missing while going for more supplies. A lengthy search failed to find any trace of him. His disappearance is one of those unsolved mysteries of the Yukon.

On December 29, 1946, Anderson was mushing his dogs from the south fork of the Stewart River into the Mayo district. It was cold.

Without a thermometer, he didn't know until he reached town on January 19th of the next year that the temperature had plummeted to around a record low.

(The official record-breaker of minus 80 degrees F. was set a few weeks later on February 3, 1947. See *The Yukoner Magazine,* Issue No. 17.)

"I had to break trail all the way to Mayo for my dogs because the snow was too deep for them to pull through. I'd go out about 10 miles on snowshoes, stop for tea, then go back for the dogs. I kept this up for three weeks when normally it would have been a week's trip in."

Anderson did a stint with the Army Engineers in construction and road building then returned to Mayo to run the Silver King Hotel from 1948 to 1949. For about a year, he was manager, bartender, cook, and housekeeper.

"I did everything for four people," he reminisced. 'I was tied to the hotel and dying on my feet from lack of fresh air. All that dust in the rooms. I had to quit. It was suicide. And I don't believe in any kind of suicide."

On the first day of 1950, his replacement took over and Anderson flew to Whitehorse to outfit.

He liked freelance prospecting better than anything else. But, like all people who try to do things on their own, they eventually find out what Anderson did.

"Sometimes you have to work for wages or starve to death."

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The Gift of a Piano

From a book by Sheila Rose

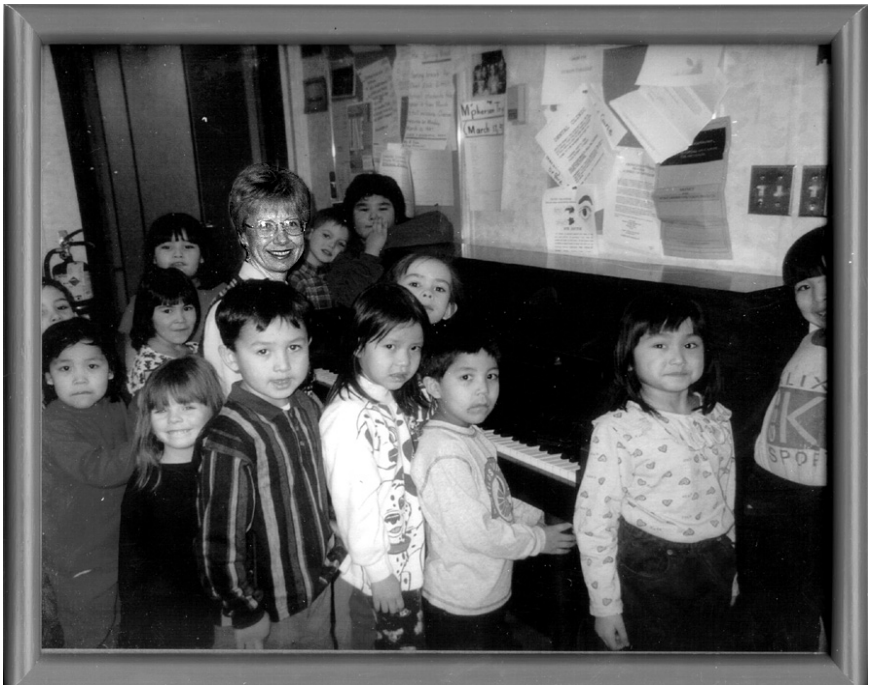
"The gift of the piano possessed a magnetic force that drew together many people of good will."

In my office there is a photograph in a red metal frame. It shows the kindergarten class from the school in Old Crow, Yukon, their beaming teacher Miss West and their piano.

Anyone who has faced a crisis knows that each holds within it the opportunity for a community to come together and lift everyone - individually and collectively - to a higher plane. The story of how this piano got to Old Crow is further testimony to this fact.

On January 28, 1997 the school in Old Crow burned to the ground. Smoke was spotted coming up through the floor and the 68 kindergarten to grade nine students were evacuated to the nursing station. Many of the students were in their stocking feet, on a day when the temperature had plunged to -40 degrees Celsius.

In the darkness of a northern Yukon winter the community's volunteer fire department fought valiantly to save the school and the teacherages. But in two short hours all was lost - books, desks, the students' and teachers' outer clothing, the teachers' personal belongings, student backpacks, and mementos.



By 5:30 that evening outer clothing and boots were being dropped off at the Department of Education in Whitehorse. People simply hurried home from work, grabbed clothing out of their closets, and brought it to the education building.

Early the next morning an Air North DC-3 loaded with donated supplies slowly and carefully descended through the smoke, ice-fog, and glowing embers onto the landing strip at Old Crow. The challenge of re-building both the school and learning in Old Crow was under way.

On the evening of the fire I was talking with one of the Old Crow teachers who said, "You know, of course, that we have lost our piano." I mentioned this on an early morning radio broadcast the next day. At noon a woman in Whitehorse called to say that her mother had died two years before and that her mother's piano was still in storage. The caller wished to remain anonymous but asked if the school would be interested in having the piano.

The gift of the piano possessed a magnetic force that drew together many people of good will. A piano tuner offered a free tuning and examination of the piano. She pronounced it of superior quality. A storage company offered to properly pack the piano for shipping and to transport it to the Whitehorse airport. The Canadian Armed Forces volunteered a Hercules transport airplane and crew to ship equipment and supplies to Old Crow. And so, on February 24, the ground crew carefully loaded the piano onto the plane for transport to its new home in Miss West's kindergarten class.

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I Married the North

More Tales of a Mountie's Wife

1945-'53

By Elizabeth Reid

The Green Horn

"You know, you shouldn't be too critical of a green horn; after all, everyone has to learn sometime."

These were my very own words as I sat at the kitchen table drinking coffee with two old trappers - good friends of my husband; and I had a lot of respect for them too.

By the time I finished the word 'sometime', Andy dropped his spoon and as it landed on the floor he left it there and sailed into me with this reminder:

"Hey, what about that new game warden just out from the prairies. Now there was a good example of a mess a fellow could get into just because he thought he knew better. He wouldn't listen to any advice. Remember what happened to him. He nearly cashed in."

Well, I did remember. This chaps name was Vic, a rancher straight from the farm. He had landed a job as a game warden and with his new position he was the proud recipient of a large scow, complete with heavy duty motors, new camping gear and a high powered rifle.

Eager to show his brother his new equipment, he left Fort Simpson and arrived at his brother's home which was next door to us.

That evening all the men came to our place to get acquainted and, on leaving, Vic said they were going next door to play cards - probably all night. They had a lot of catching up to do. Vic assured them it wouldn't bother him to lose a little sleep.

"I'll just curl up in the bedroll and let the scow drift with the current down river to Simpson."

Both Jim and Jack Sime tried to warn him that the river was treacherous with several small rapids and fallen logs buried just below the surface.

Vic looked like a small boy who had been unjustly chastised and said, "Don't worry boys, I know what to do; it's no problem." And with that he left to spend the night playing poker next door.

Very early next morning Vic took off before we were up. We wondered if he would send a wire back to his brother to let him know he arrived home okay. No word came.

"Oh, well," said his brother. "No news is good news."

About 9:30 that evening—still broad daylight— into our back porch staggered the traveler. What a sight he was: sunburned, fly bitten, clothes badly torn in places and his face swollen so badly his eyes were nearly shut.

"What the heck happened to you?" exclaimed Jim as Vic collapsed on the closest chair.

"I'm exhausted," groaned Vic. "I walked all the way through the bush from across those rapids near Willie's winter cache."

"That's at least 20 miles, maybe more," exclaimed Jim, "and with no trail. What about the scow and all your gear?"

"Well, I guess 1 should have listened to you guys," said Vic, "but I was tired after playing cards all night, so when I left this morning, I curled up in my bedroll and went to sleep. I would have been alright but the darn scow got caught up in a big deadhead and ran up on one side of it, then tipped over and sank. Everything went down with it. I can't swim but I was lucky. I caught a floating log and wrapped my arms around it. By kicking my feet I finally got to shore. From there I walked along the edge of the river through the dense bush, with no trail.

"Believe me, it was rough going. I was soaking wet. Sharp branches tore up my clothes and the flies nearly drove me crazy. I really thought I wouldn't make it back but I'm sure glad to be here."

"Guess you fellows knew what you were talking about but I'll have some tall explaining to the Department when I get back, losing all that expensive equipment."

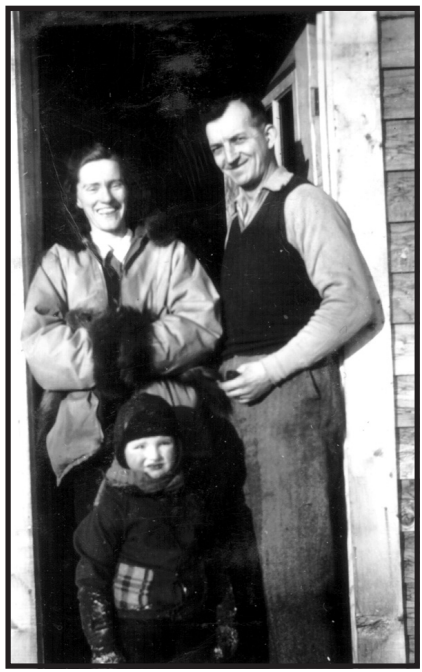
That was a humble admission of one greenhorn. It could have been a tragedy, but this time, anyway, he was spared.

The Garden Attempt

It was a still night, the rafters snapping with the cold like a shotgun going off when all of a sudden our back door flew open and Jack Sime rushed in, quickly shutting the door behind him.

"Do you know it's frosty out there tonight? My thermometer registered 46 below when I left home; halfway here I was wishing I was already back." With that Jack pulled off his toque, parka and mitts, and wrung his hands over our warm camp stove.

"Anything wrong, coming out in this weather?" I asked, now just a bit



Jack Sime, wife Peggy, and daughter Jackie at Fort Liard.

worried that he had something urgent or even worse— bad news—to tell us.

"Oh no, nothing like that, but the wife was writing letters and studying the seed catalogue so I thought I'd take a break. By the way, did you realize you'll have to order your seeds for the next mail plane, otherwise it'll be too late — about five months too late?"

Gosh, we'd never thought of that. "Guess we'd better get an order ready. Good thing you're on the ball; we certainly want to plant a garden. Now, how about a hot chocolate to warm you up?"

Jack's smile was his consent.

After he finished his hot drink, Jack left and Jim and I had a great discussion on what we should plant; what seeds we should order.

I started with the idea that we should have tall flowers for the front of the house and some shorter plants for window boxes.

"Hold it, hold it"! My husband squared around and facing me head on said "We can't eat flowers, short or tall, so vegetables should be our top priority. If we have room we'll include some of your favorite flowers. Let's make a chart where things are to be planted and take it from there."

"Personally, I favor sweet peas," Jim said. "

"Well," I countered, "we can't eat sweet peas but they could be classified as 'tall plants' ." One point for me. And with that I let the subject drop.

Both Jim and I were brought up by parents who inspired us to take an interest in gardening and, now, living so far from a supply of fresh foods, it was imperative we plant a variety of vegetables.

Garden at Fort Liard.

In the North, spring came with impetuous haste and, with the ice in the river rotting from the lengthening, sun soaked days, the river soon cleared and spring itself was not far behind.

The first day of May was warm, the sun shone for nearly the full day and nature burst forth in all her glory. All this translated into one word: work! The garden had to be dug over—no rototillers in those days, just a shovel, a delving fork and a rake and two strong backs—his and mine.

The first crop planted was potatoes, on May 24, with smaller seeds soon following. Our garden was a good size, probably 150 feet in length, extending from the front of the house right to the fence in front of the river.

As we prepared the soil, I said, "I don't see any earth worms here. I read somewhere the plants won't grow well without earthworms to work the ground."

Jim explained that under this surface layer of soil lay the permafrost so worms and snakes couldn't survive. That was great for me; I didn't worry too much about bears or wolves but I'd walk half a mile out of my way to avoid meeting a snake and big earthworms didn't exactly thrill me either.

Jim erected chicken wire between two posts so he could plant his favorite sweetpeas. He never guessed they would reach over six feet and be very, very fragrant.

It wasn't the fragrance of the flowers that attracted the native women to come right into the yard but the many different colors. They came in pairs, never alone, and they admired the varied hues, talking among themselves, pointing to the reds and yellows exclaiming over the different colors. I imagined they had discussed how to copy them and blend them on their own beautiful silk works; what plants and berries would effect the dyes they needed to produce the colors nature had brought forth. How I wish I could have understood their language so that I too could appreciate their enthusiasm.

Every night around eleven o'clock we were blessed with a heavy rain shower that lasted nearly half an hour, then the sun returned for a new sparkling day. The plants just shot up.

On July 6, we dug our first big, clean potatoes. Do you know when we first ordered potato seed I thought we'd get at least a quarter of a potato as seed. Do you know what we received in the mail from the seed place? Well, we got eyes. Little dug out eyes, there must have been one hundred to a box, I was amazed, no, I think I was fractured —here they sent us eyes to plant and expected potatoes from such a tiny thing. I was so upset I didn't say a word; it's a good job I didn't because on July 6, we dug the first potatoes.

Once more I realized I had a lot to learn. Is it possible I was a slow learner?

Nature was good to us. Unfortunately she was good also to the mosquitoes; they multiplied by the second. Whenever you went for a walk you had to carry a branch to ward them off. Even when the wind was so strong that the birds had to walk, the mosquitoes would bite some inaccessible spot you couldn't scratch in public.

The garden produced huge cabbages and a great abundance of carrots. Jim filled a 45-gallon drum with sand and stored it in the little cellar under the kitchen and covered layers of carrots with the sand. They kept well although retrieving them was hard on the fingernails. When I got near the bottom of the barrel I had to be careful as I was short on one end and could go headfirst into the deep drum.

We were careful to keep the cellar door closed so our son couldn't go down where we stored our year's supply of canned goods. We didn't want a similar episode of an event that happened to the family at Nelson Forks. One day their little fellow strayed into their unlocked storage and peeled off all the labels from cases of fruit and vegetables. The poor cook always had to shake the cans before opening and even then it was a fifty-fifty chance — strictly a "guess what we're having for supper."

Northern Designs

How in the world can I make a parka for my two-year-old son without a pattern? I wondered if our interpreter Willie could find out what the native women use when they sew. They certainly produced some lovely winter clothes.

"Willie," I said, "What patterns do the natives use when they make parkas?"

He replied "They don't use patterns, they make the first parka then copy it for the others."

"Yes, I know that but how do they get started on the very first one?"

Willie said, "Oh that, well they take a piece of string and hold it up to the back of the neck, then let it drop down to where the parka should end. Then at that length they make a knot in the string. Using the same string, they put it around the waist and they make another knot. For the sleeves they measure from the tip of the arm to the cuff—another her knot. No need for patterns. All that's needed is a piece of string."

He was so serious I believed him but when I asked a native lady to make a parka for Jim I knew what he was talking about.

The native, Mrs. Thomas came to Jim's office and took Jim's measurements. She kept saying "Duya, Duya" which could mean lovely, awful, big; it was the adverb "very." Willie said she means duya big and when she attempted to put the string around his waist she started to giggle. I could see Jim was getting a little leery about all this measurement stuff but he kept quiet until she was finished. When he asked her if she had enough knots she just laughed.

The parka was ready in two days, it wasn't fancy as it was made to be worn as a windbreak while traveling in the bush - but it was a perfect fit.

Around the hood was a strip of wolverine, cut on the bias so that it would conform to the head. They always used wolverine because it wouldn't frost up as much as other fur; but it was hard to get. If a trapper was unlucky enough to catch a wolverine in his trap the animal would make a mess of it

and everything around it. They were very vicious and very strong. One Indian said he saw one throw the hindquarter of a moose over its back and make off with it. What they couldn't eat they'd urinate on to spoil it for anything else.

The native women made beautiful silk and quill work They'd flatten the quills with their teeth and make intricate patterns for moccasins, parkas, whatever they wanted. They also fashioned water containers out of bark. They could boil water in them, as they were very durable. They called them "rogans."

I watched them make moccasins and learned to make my youngster's footwear. It was interesting to see how they used a third narrow strip of moose hide to strengthen the vamp on the top of the moccasin. But getting all those tucks in the hide required very strong jaws to crimp it and a goodly supply of patience. Both of the latter were in short supply at our house but when they saw my finished product they were very kind and tried to hide their smiles.

We had received a beautiful white bear skin from an old friend and member of the Force, Havelock MacLeod, stationed in the Eastern Arctic. It was tanned and finished with a half head. When the natives came into our house they would carefully walk around it. When they sat down cross-legged on the floor they would sit in a circle around it and were careful not to touch it. It really added a touch of color lying on the green battleship linoleum floor. Our loyalist maple furniture, also done in a green leather finish, really looked colorful and I was proud of our attempt at interior decorating.

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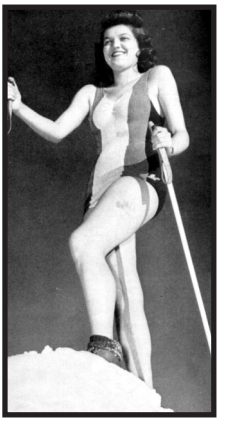
Approaching the village of Arctic Bay in the High Arctic, in a truck driving from the airport near Nanasivik. (SH photo, 1982.)

Alaska Highway Pin-up Girls

From "Truck Tracks" Magazine, February, 1944.
Bottom left: Miss Pamela Carter.
Bottom right: Miss Rosemary Winkels.
Top right: Miss Shirley White.
{Thanks to Jack Johnson for letting me use his Alaska Highway collection. S.H.]



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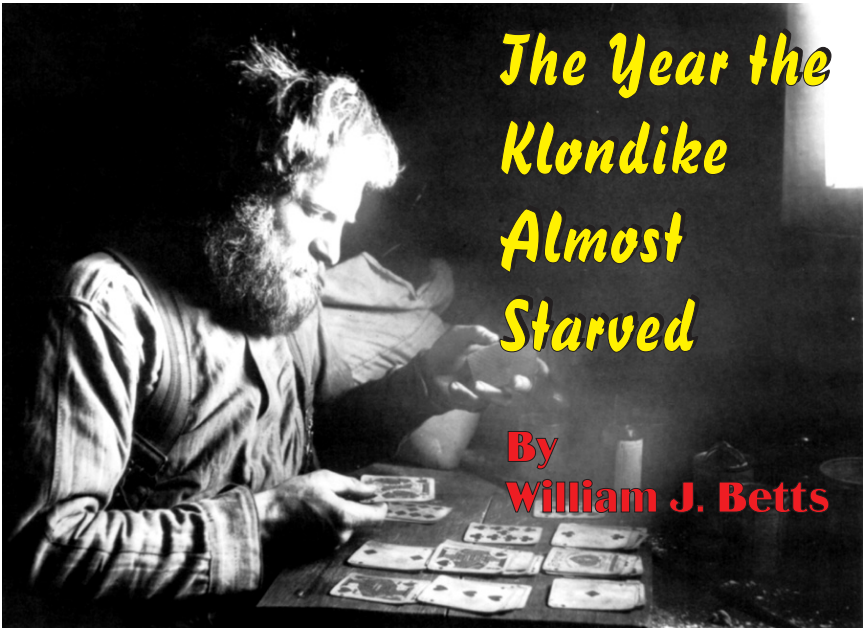
See the full-colour version of this 1947 calendar at Yukon Tire, 107 Industrial Road, in Whitehorse. The proprietor in 1946 was Ernie Lortie; present proprietor is Paul Bubiak.



The Year the Klondike Almost Starved

By William J. Betts

Of the many bizarre happenings during the gold rush to the Klondike in 1896 to '98, one of the strangest was the expedition sent in relief of the "starving" Dawsonites. Called the "Klondyke Relief Expedition," it was the first time in United States history that reindeer were used to transport supplies, and believe it or not, the very need for the supplies had ceased to exist even before the expedition reached Alaska.

To understand the need for such an expedition, we must go back to the beginning of the gold rush to the Klondike country.

Many years before gold was first discovered on one of the many tributaries of the fabulous Klondike River, there were prospectors up and down the Yukon River looking for the yellow metal that would make them rich. As early as the 1860's Hudson's Bay Company officials in Canada's Yukon knew that gold was to be found in the northern streams. However, they never exploited their knowledge as they were much more interested in trapping the fur-bearing animals of the region. Too often in the past gold fever had precipitated a stampede into a country which, often as not, spelled doom to the fur trade.

It wasn't until the Americans became interested in the North as a possible source of gold in the late 1870s and '80s that the banks of the Yukon and its tributaries saw much activity. These early prospectors were the last of the western mountain men, miners of the Old West who always moved ahead of advancing civilization into the new country where their spirits could be free.

It was, of course, only a matter of time before gold was discovered along the mighty Yukon. Gold was found, but not in great quantities, and there had been a small, quiet influx of miners to the Yukon River Valley before the great strike on the Klondike in Canada's Yukon Territory.

Gold had been discovered along the Porcupine River in Alaska and there had been trading posts established at Fort Yukon and at Circle City on the Yukon. First came the trappers and prospectors, followed by the traders who would exchange supplies for the riches of the North Country. It was the traders who felt that the North offered great possibilities, but none of them ever dreamed that the discovery of gold on a tributary stream of the Klondike River would set into motion one of the greatest and craziest gold rushes in history.

On a hot August day in 1896 George Carmack and his two Indian brothers-in-law stopped to rest on a small stream in country that prospectors called "moose pasture." One of the trio decided to pan some gravel from the tiny stream. The panning revealed that the gravel was fabulously rich in gold. On their way to record their discovery, they told all they met of their lucky find. So the rush to the Klondike and the tiny creek, so aptly named Bonanza, had its start.

Word of the discovery quickly swept up and down the Yukon. The miners, as well as the traders, left Circle City, Forty Mile and Fort Yukon for the new diggings. Overnight a new town grew on the marshy banks of the Yukon where the Klondike joined that mighty river. Dawson City was born.

The rush was confined to the north. With no telegraph nor radio and transportation limited to walking or riverboat, word was slow to travel. The trading companies had ample supplies on hand to take care of the men in the North through the winter of 1896-97. Since it took a year for supplies to reach the trading posts on the Yukon, the traders ordered their supplies a year in advance. This they did, but only for the number of men then in the North.

The traders had no way of knowing that the arrival of the *SS Portland* in Seattle would spark a stampede of gold seekers into the Yukon country in the summer of 1897. Unless these miners and would-be miners brought their own food supplies, there would be a shortage.

The first stampeders, hundreds of them, some traveling by foot over the mountain passes, others up the Yukon by steamer, reached Dawson City before the fall freeze-up. These first arrivals brought no food.

Instead, they brought money to buy supplies at Dawson. It would be a simple matter to purchase what they needed in food and mining equipment from the traders, they thought. But there wasn't enough supplies in the North to take care of the great influx of gold seekers.

J. J. Pitts at Fort Selkirk, for instance, reported that he was out of everything but canned milk, which was selling for one dollar a can. He reported that there had been no boats for two years and he didn't know when there would be one.

Constantine, the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory, as early as Au-

gust 11, 1897, had written his government in Ottawa: "The outlook for grub is not assuring for the number of people here-about four thousand crazy or lazy men, chiefly American miners and toughs from the coast towns.

The trading companies were equally concerned with the dwindling supplies in their warehouses. In order to give everyone an equal share of what food there was available, they adopted a dole system of food distribution. They locked their warehouse doors and allowed only one customer to enter at a time. A clerk was stationed at the door. When a customer was served he unlocked the door, let him out and then allowed one more to enter the trading store.

Each "customer" was allowed to purchase enough food to provide meals for a few days only: beans, canned milk, canned beef and perhaps some bacon. No matter how much the miner pleaded for more food he was flatly turned down. Some miners were already rich men from the gold taken out of their claims and they offered to pay ten times more than the usual price of the food, but the traders would only sell them enough food for a few days. Nor did they charge more than normal for the supplies. The roustabout and the millionaire miner paid the same.

Other men, unable to grasp the true picture of Dawson's future, felt that there was no danger or threat in the food shortages. One of these men, Joaquin Miller, the "Poet of the Sierras," had come north as a correspondent for a San Francisco newspaper. He brought no provisions with him, thinking, like many others, that there would be adequate supplies in the north. The portent of the future seemed to be out of his grasp.

This was dramatically demonstrated when Miller stepped down the gangplank from the river steamer to the Dawson waterfront with a raw onion in his hand. Immediately a Dawsonite who had come, like hundreds of others, to greet the steamer confronted him. "I'll give you a dollar for the onion, mister," he told the astonished reporter. When Miller refused this offer the bid immediately went up until someone shouted, "I'll give you five dollars!"

Even then the people of Dawson were starved for any fresh fruits or vegetables. Miller should have seen the future plainly marked in the onion incident, but he didn't. In a letter to his editor he wrote, "No, there will be no starvation. The men who doubt supplies will get here, where gold is waiting by the ton, miscalculate American energy."

Miller was later forced to leave Dawson because of illness due to faulty diet. The writer, like many others, was unable to believe that gold could not buy food even though there was no food to buy. It is said that the most common item abounding in Dawson that winter was gold with nothing to spend it on but whiskey, cards, and women.

There were five steamers headed up the Yukon with supplies for Dawson that summer of 1897. No one knew whether they would arrive before freeze-up. Both the Alaska Commercial Company and the North American Transportation Company had boats on the river.

The Alaska Commercial Company sent Captain J. E. Hansen down the

river by canoe to see if he could find any trace of the riverboats. He did, some 500 miles downstream, near Fort Yukon, where low water had marooned the boats on sandbars. Captain Hansen took one look and knew that there was no chance for them to reach Dawson before freeze-up.

He jumped into his canoe, which was manned by two Indians from Moosehide, and hurried to Dawson to relay the awful news. It looked as though the city faced a winter of starvation.

 undreds of people lined the Dawson waterfront (a lookout had spread the news of their coming) when Hansen and his Indians paddled into town. At first they cheered his coming and then, as they realized the awful portent of his news, they sadly left the waterfront with a deep feeling of doom. What could they do? Where would they get food?

"The only thing to do," Hansen told anyone who would listen, "is to leave Dawson just as soon as you can. Make a dash for the outside, if you don't want to starve here this winter.

The citizens of Dawson were in a quandary. What should they do? Stay? Take a chance that they would pull through the long cold winter? Or should they leave before freeze-up forced them to stay? Partners who were working mines couldn't decide who would stay and who would go. They drew straws to see who would be the lucky ones to leave for the outside.

Fifty small boats left for Fort Yukon soon after Captain Hansen's return to Dawson. Many others were all packed and ready to leave by the river. Still others were getting ready to go overland through the passes to Dyea and Skagway.

One of the strange paradoxes of the gold rush was this stampede in reverse. For instance, one group of miners left Dawson headed up the Yukon on the little steamer *Kienchik* for distant Lynn Canal where they could get passage aboard a steamer bound for Seattle. Their steamboat ran aground some 35 miles above Dawson and the passengers abandoned her for canoes then proceeded on their journey. After weeks of grueling work, they finally arrived at Skagway. They booked passage on the City of Seattle and went aboard her almost immediately. Other men, just as feverishly, were disembarking from the vessel to eagerly begin their trek to the distant Dawson.

Determined men captained the marooned river steamers, the *Portus B. Weare* and the tiny *Bella.* Rather than just sit there, they ordered the passengers to throw anything not needed overboard. This was done and the lightened riverboats negotiated the sandbars of the Yukon Flats only to steam toward a new kind of threat up-river.

At Circle City some 80 miners, disgruntled over the Klondike prospects, had returned to the once abandoned town. There was little in the way of food in the tiny Yukon settlement. The miners of Circle City were angered when steamers passed them, headed for Dawson, earlier in the summer.

They were ready, however, when the *Portus B. Weare* stopped on Sep-

tember 20th. The miners, in the tradition of the Old West, had appointed a committee of six men to meet the steamer to purchase food supplies for the coming winter.

The traders aboard the vessel refused to sell them any supplies. "We intend to stock our warehouses at Dawson City," they told the committee.

The committee of six, rugged prospectors who lived under the code of the miner thought differently. "We intend to buy some of your supplies," they told the traders and left the steamer with a determined air.

In a matter of minutes the committee was back on board the *Portus B. Weare* bristling with rifles and six-guns. There was no negotiating this time; the miners simply helped themselves to the supplies aboard the steamer. They paid for all supplies taken, however. The next day when the steamer left Circle City she was some 30 tons lighter.

When the *Bella* steamed into Circle City on September 25th she met the same fate as the earlier steamer. Again the miners helped themselves to the supplies, paying a reasonable price to the traders for everything taken. A sort of pay as you go piracy.

On board the *Bella* was a captain in the 8th Infantry, U.S. Army, on his way to Dawson City to investigate rumors that Americans faced starvation. Captain Patrick Henry Ray protested vigorously to the miners. He told them that what they were doing was against the law even if they did pay for the goods taken from the ship. "This is an act of piracy, gentlemen," he told them. "According to the law you are all pirates."

"Law! Law, Captain?" one of the miners asked, "the only law is miner's law. Has the government sent a marshal to enforce the law? Where are the judges to interpret the law? There are none! Until there are, the miners of Circle City must make their own law. This we have done!"

When Captain Ray pondered the situation he could see that the miners had a right to act the way they did. They were faced with the prospect of a bleak winter without food and they acted to change the situation. No law was broken; there was no law.

In a later report to the government Captain Ray wrote, "The feature that was most prominent when the *Bella* was held up was the cheerfulness with which the employees of the company, from the agent down, facilitated the work of the miners-and their expressions of approval."

Just as the Yukon was beginning to freeze along the shores, the *Weare* steamed into Dawson. The townspeople lined the waterfront by the hundreds. As the steamer pulled to the shore a cheer went up from the crowd to echo back from the bleak hills above town. The *Weare* answered with a series of whistle blasts. The people thought that there would now be enough food. They wouldn't have to leave the Klondike after all.

But their good spirits turned to black despair when the cargo aboard the *Weare* was unloaded. Nearly all of the tons of supplies carried north by the steamboat was mining equipment and whiskey. There was little food aboard her.

This same sad story was repeated with the arrival of the *Bella*. She,

too, carried tons of mining equipment and case after case of whiskey, but very little food. The populace of Dawson City was faced with a winter of austerity as far as eating was concerned, but it looked like there would be enough to drink for a year or two.

Commissioner Constantine felt a deep responsibility for the welfare of the Dawsonites. He immediately set plans in motion to decrease the number of people in town. He wanted at least a thousand people to leave before freeze-up stranded them in Dawson until the following spring.

When the *Bella* and the *Weare* left Dawson for St. Michael they were loaded to over capacity with passengers fleeing the prospect of a winter of starvation. But even with this exodus of the would-be gold seekers, Constantine still worried. He felt that at best there would be starvation as well as scurvy, which would surely result from shortage of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Scurvy caused by the lack of vitamin C. often looked like leprosy; in fact, during the Middle Ages, it was often mistaken for this dreadful disease. A miner afflicted with it became lax, lazy; his blood thinned out, the body appeared bruised. The heart beat faster, sometimes skipping beats and breathing became difficult.

As the disease advanced the gums became tender and bled, the teeth loosened and dropped out (Jack London suffered from scurvy in Dawson and was forced to leave the Yukon), the breath became putrid, the skin of the face became yellow. The victim got thinner and thinner until he was a walking skeleton. Sometimes he died.

Earlier, in the summer of 1897, Commissioner Constantine had issued a directive that no miner would be allowed to come to the Klondike without bringing with him a year's supply of food and the clothing and equipment he would need in the North. This meant that the stampeder would need to bring to the Klondike a ton of supplies. He would have to carry two thousand pounds over the passes. This slowed the advance of the multitudes seeking the gold filled streams of the fabulous North.

The Northwest Mounted Police set up check points on the trails over the passes as well as on the Yukon River. Any person who was without his ton of supplies was turned back at the border. These tons of food supplies, in the pipeline of the trails to Dawson, would augment the food shortage on the Yukon if arriving before freeze-up. Very few stampeders, with their food, reached the Yukon before freeze-up.

The U. S. government felt an obligation to relieve the plight of the miners because most were Americans. There were debates in Congress as to the best method of sending help. The report of Captain Ray stirred much interest in government circles, but as usual the red tape was too thick to allow a solution to the problem.

As early as 1891, Dr. Seldon Jackson, the general agent of education for Alaska, had successfully brought reindeer in from Siberia in the hopes of establishing domesticated reindeer herds for the Indians and Eskimos of Arctic Alaska.

He now proposed a new plan: why not purchase reindeer, not breeding stock, but geldings broken to harness, to use as pack animals over the difficult terrain in Alaska and the Yukon to Dawson City? Certainly reindeer adapted to a cold climate and able to survive under very adverse conditions would be ideal for packing supplies.

The plan was debated at length in Congress then finally, in December of 1897, a bill was approved and passed appropriating $200,000 for the purpose of purchasing reindeer along with the needed harness, sleds and the supplies for Dawson's relief.

Dr. Jackson was commissioned to go to Norway and Sweden (Lappland) to purchase a herd of reindeer as well as harness and sleds. The project was to be called the "Klondyke Relief Expedition." He was also to negotiate for the services of drivers and herders to take care of the reindeer on their long trek over the Alaska and Yukon terrain. There were to be Lapp herdsmen and their families. They would be hired to stay with the herd from the time they left Norway until they reached their destination at Dawson City.

Dr. Jackson reached Basekop, Lappland, in January, 1898. There he purchased 526 trained reindeer as well as the harness and sleds to be used with them. On February 4th, Dr. Jackson was ready to sail to New York. Along with his herd of reindeer and 68 Lapp drivers, including their families, Dr. Jackson boarded a steamer at Trondhjeim harbor bound for the United States.

The reindeer were quartered in open pens on the deck where they would receive the full force of the midwinter Atlantic storms. The steamer hit heavy weather, with seas running like mountains, for much of the Atlantic crossing. Despite the stormy weather and the open pens, which received the full force of the stormy seas, the reindeer survived the crossing remarkably well. Only one animal died on the voyage to New York harbour.

At New York, the reindeer herd was placed in special trains, and, with the Lapp families, rushed across the continent to the Pacific Coast, the second phase of their journey terminating in Seattle.

In Seattle the reindeer were taken from the cars and herded to the Woodland Park where they would have plenty of room to wait for a steamer to take them to Alaska. Curious crowds gathered about the herd, with the Lapps, in their quaint and colorful clothing, drawing as much interest as the splayfooted reindeer.

Hundreds of sacks of dried reindeer moss had been sent with the herd, but the supply was soon exhausted. The reindeer didn't take to the Woodland Park grass, much preferring the reindeer moss or lichen. The shortage of their natural food was to become a problem to the expedition in the months ahead.

It was virtually impossible to find a steamer that would transport the reindeer herd and supplies to Alaska. The steamship companies were all booked ahead with passengers rushing to the gold fields.

Finally in May of 1898, the Klondyke Relief Expedition reached Haines

Mission on the Lynn Canal some 20 miles south of Skagway. As the expedition was being organized under the leadership of Hedley E. Redmyer, the Norwegian American trail boss, new delays were to plague them. The government had made no provisions for supplying the herd with more reindeer moss and the animals were already suffering from lack of food. Many of them were to die even before the expedition had made its start.

he expedition would follow the Dalton Trail. The year before, Jack Dalton, the intrepid cattleman from central Oregon, had hacked a trail from Pyramid Harbor along the Chilkat River, through low mountain passes to Fort Selkirk on the Stewart River in the Yukon Territory. From Fort Selkirk the route to Dawson was by water. Dalton had successfully herded several hundred head of cattle over the trail, selling the beef in Dawson at an enormous profit.

The Dalton Trail did not traverse high mountain passes such as the Dyea (Chilkoot) Trail and the White Pass Trail. It was a much easier trail to run cattle on and was one of the best routes to the Yukon country, but one mostly overlooked by the stampeders who seemed to think that the other routes, being more direct, were better.

Redmyer believed that this route would bring the expedition to its destination much faster than any other. He knew that Dalton had accomplished his cattle drive with very few losses, and in a matter of months. He felt that reindeer would be more adaptable to the country than the Oregon cattle. In this assumption he was as wrong as Dalton was right.

There was no lichen for reindeer growing in the mountainous section of the trail. There would be none until much later in the trek. Then too, the cattle that had preceded them the year before had eaten much of the browse. Also, the reindeer, living off the country as they traveled north as well as being burdened by packs, would be traveling at a much slower pace than Dalton's cattle.

From the start of the expedition the hardships seemed to grow from day to day. This was far different country for the Lapp herders. They were used to open tundra country and now the hills and mountains seemed to press in on them from all sides. It was hot and the flies bothered both men and animals until conditions seemed unbearable.

The reindeer, encumbered with bulky harness and packs, would repeatedly fall along the trail. Sometimes their harness became entangled in a tree or rock in their fall and before a driver could come to the aid of the unfortunate reindeer it died of strangulation. Other reindeer, weakened by near starvation, became easy prey for the wolves that followed the herd like gray ghosts day after day. As many reindeer died, the remaining animals had their own supplies plus those of the dead reindeer to pack.

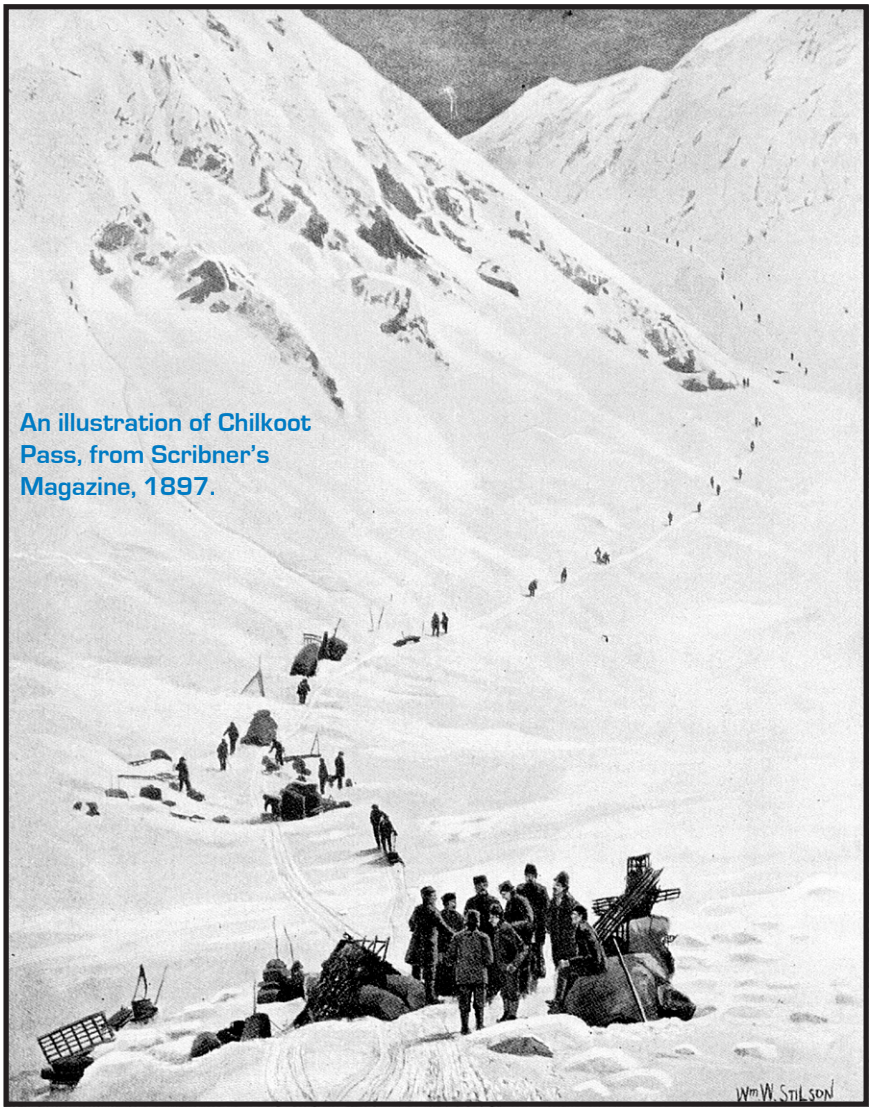
The Lapp herders were finding it equally tough. Their food supplies were running dangerously low. Long before they were half way to their goal they realized that they would need to live off the land as much as possible. The Lapps were excellent hunters, but there must be game to hunt. Hunters went ahead of the slowly moving herd. The larger animals, such as moose

and bear, seemed to elude them, however. Sometimes the hunters killed a porcupine or grouse; and there were geese on the river flats. As often as not the Lapps went hungry.

Once, when Redmyer was talking to his men, Japhet Lindeberg, one of the Lapp drivers, asked him, "Could there be any hell worse than this?"

Redmyer looked wearily at the Lapp who had suffered so much, "No," he said. "I think this is all the hell I want."

As hungry as they were, the members of the expedition felt that they could not use the supplies they were taking to Dawson. Although they could



An illustration of Chilkoot Pass, from Scribner's Magazine, 1897.

not know it, the need for food had passed in Dawson and they could have used all of the supplies. They decided to use only enough to keep them alive.

Once they found a campsite left by some stampeders on the trail ahead of them. "We found this campsite," Redmyer recalled years later, "where some stampeder had made a meal of bacon and beans. They must have made too many 'cause they threw a whole pot full into the fire when they broke camp. You should have seen us beat the dogs from those charred beans! We salvaged every little bean from the ashes of that old campfire. That's how hungry we were on that awful trek to Dawson.

By the time the expedition reached the Yukon River, it was frozen over. So, unlike Dalton's cattle drive, which used scows to transport cattle from Fort Selkirk to Dawson, the Lapps had to push their herd through drifting snows. It was even more difficult for the reindeer to find food.

Finally on January 27, 1899, nine months from the time they left Haines Mission, the remnants of the reindeer herd straggled into Dawson on the Yukon. The Lapps and their families were near exhaustion. Starving, half-sick, they were now joyful that their awful trek was at an end. Two thirds of the reindeer herd had succumbed along the trail. And now the expedition was at long last in Dawson. But where were the starving people? The very people the Klondyke Relief Expedition had travelled so far to "relieve" were now in a position to help the starving members of the expedition.

And Dawson City was very able to give relief. The shortages of food, so dreaded in the winter of 1897-98, had never really materialized. To be sure there was hunger and some scurvy, but not to the extent that Commissioner Constantine had feared. Now in the winter of 1899 a Dawsonite could virtually buy anything his wealthy heart desired, from fresh oranges to lobster Newberg. Dawson was now called the Paris of the North.

So, the Klondyke Relief Expedition came to an end. The reindeer were disposed of and the Lapp herders with their families were free to leave the North for their homes in far away Norway. Many of them did leave, their expenses paid by the government, but some of them stayed in the North, to take jobs as herders in Alaska where the reindeer herds introduced from Siberia needed herders and drivers. Still others became prospectors. One, Japhet Lindeberg, became rich and famous as one of the partners who discovered gold on Anvil Creek near Nome, Alaska, precipitating the new gold rush to Nome.

The suffering of the Lapp herdsmen was soon forgotten in the mad business of extracting millions in gold from the muck of the Klondike streams-Bonanza, Eldorado, Sulpher. But the terrible irony of their suffering for nothing became a humorous story to be repeated about campfires as a sourdough laughingly told some Cheechako about it. We smile, too, at this bit of history in that bigger moment when that mad, zany, crazy,lustful stampede to the fabulous Klondike was in full swing.

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A DOG-PUNCHER ON THE YUKON
1896-1902
By Arthur Treadwell Walden
Part Five

Continued from the last issue. An introduction to Walden and this story appeared in Issue 15.

CHAPTER VI
DAWSON BEFORE THE RUSH

Activity in Dawson now became very great, as more steamboats came up the river bringing more people and more food. These boats were of the old stern-wheel type, but of modern construction; the side-wheeler being unfit for this river. Some of these steamers, the old Bella among them, were able to push barges up in front of them. A barge was never towed, as short cuts were often taken across sand bars and it was apt to get stuck. A draft of four feet was about the limit for all craft that had to get across the shallow Yukon Flats.

Crowds of small boats were pouring into Dawson from the upper river also, bringing women, supplies, horses, and mules, the forerunners of the rush of the coming summer. The town of Dawson was growing by leaps and bounds, and building was going at top speed. It was still a canvas city, but houses were being built around the tents and business went on uninterruptedly. Some of these buildings were probably the largest log structures in the world, often being three stories high and fifty feet by one hundred and fifty feet, the full size of a house-lot.

Dance-halls, saloons, and gambling-halls were running at full blast. Dawson, being in the Canadian Yukon, was under the jurisdiction of the Mounted Police, a new detachment of which had just come in, and this wonderful body of men kept very good order. There was none of the lawless element that came in later. Like Circle City this town never rested, day or night.

Our laundry work was seldom done and to get our clothes washed cost almost as much as new ones. Clothes were not especially high at this time. So it became our custom, if we were in town near the source of supply, to wear our clothes till they were dirty and then throw them away. One day a French Canadian came around with some second-hand shirts that were nice and clean and mended, and sold them to us; but soon a man discovered that he had bought his own shirt, and we made the chap own up that he had been collecting the dirty shirts that had been thrown away, washing them, mending them, and selling them back to us. In most cases I guess he earned his money.

The situation of Dawson offered more natural advantages than that of any other town site on the river. It was in the shape of a flatiron, with the

nose pointing downstream, ending in high bluffs. Along the front was the Yukon; on the other side a range of hills ran back to the Klondike River, which cut across at the heel of this flatiron and flowed into the Yukon.

The Klondike was a clear, swift stream, and, as I remember it, was about a hundred yards wide at its junction with the Yukon. This cross-current coming into the big Yukon made a heavy back eddy all the way down the front of Dawson until it struck the bluff at the end. This made it very convenient for the landing of steamboats and rafts.

Bonanza Creek, on which the mines were, came into the Klondike two miles and a half above its mouth, on the opposite or left bank, which made it necessary to cross the Klondike sooner or later to get to the mines. At first this was done by ferries run by the current, or boats rowed across: later a suspension bridge was thrown over, and of course in winter the river was crossed on the ice.

The Klondike was swift and froze up later than the Yukon. The ice was smooth and black at first, but soon was covered with tufts of frost that looked like miniature frost-trees. These turned the surface of the river to a sheet of white. One morning we saw the track of a man drawing a hand sled down the middle of the river, and then a jagged black hole in the ice which had just frozen over, and no tracks leading out, telling its own story. Who this unfortunate chap was nobody knew.

My best friend, Fred Fay, had a harrowing experience here, though it turned out all right. He borrowed my team of dogs, which he had never driven before, went around the mouth of the Klondike on the thick Yukon ice, and up to the mines. Next day, coming back, he took a short cut and struck the Klondike about ten miles up, intending to follow down the left bank. He was lying on the sled with his feet toward the dogs and leaning on his elbow, when my wolf leader, instead of following the trail along the bank, which was used at this time of year, swerved out onto the newly frozen ice in the middle of the river.

The whole thing was done in an instant, and as my partner couldn't manage my dogs, before he realized what had happened or could check them they were scurrying down the middle of the stream. Once on the smooth ice they struck a tremendous pace. Glancing back he saw the water creeping up behind him over the ice, turning it black, and knew that if he stopped or slackened his pace he would break through. Knowing my dogs were unmanageable, he didn't dare to try and turn them toward the shore.

The dogs traveled ten miles before they swerved off of their own accord to the town of Dawson. He never would drive my dogs again, and said he was so frightened all the way down that he didn't even shift his position on the sled.

This same winter Bolton, the confidential clerk of the gold commissioner, did one of the noblest acts I have ever known of. Men would often bring in the legal papers of claims so late at night that it would be impossible to record them until the next day. As they were too valuable to leave in the office, Bolton would take them home with him to his cabin rather than run

any risk of the men losing their claims, which they would do if the papers were lost before the claims were properly recorded.

His cabin lay across the Klondike River in a small angle named Klondike City. We called it 'Louse Town' because an Indian Village had stood there years before. Starting home one night after dark, evidently thinking the ice was firm enough to hold him, he broke through about halfway across. Knowing something about traveling in that country, he had evidently thrown himself face downward when the ice cracked under him, so he wasn't dragged under, and thus worked his way to the other shore, breaking the ice in front of him until he got into shallow water on the other side.

Here he became exhausted, and being afraid that he would be swept away, threw the papers, along with a picture of his wife, onto the firm ice ahead of him. He was found next day with his head and shoulders out of water, frozen in solid. I think this made more impression on me than any other brave act I ever heard of in Alaska.

This summer, that of '97, I was working for the Alaska Commercial Company as head stevedore. It is rather amusing how I got this job. I was skidding some house-logs down off the steep hills at the back of the town for a friend of mine, and as it was a very rough, hard slope the task called for a good deal of loud language. In that still country my voice must have rung over the whole town site.

Joe Ladue asked who it was, and, on being told, said: ' I would like to have that man work for me. A man who can swear as loud as that ought to be able to do something.' Just then a new superintendent came along inquiring for a foreman, and I was recommended to him, my only recommendation being the strength of my lungs and my language.

As the river steamers came in, it was my job to see them unloaded as quickly as possible, regardless of expense, so that they could get started down-river for another trip. As there were no facilities for unloading, everything had to be carried to the warehouses on men's backs, and so there were two lines of men coming and going all the time, and the pace was a very fast one.

The system of keeping the men's time was unique. Men were hired on the hour and the half-hour, and tabs with their name and the hour they began work were given them. If a man became tired or wanted to stop for a meal, or if he slackened in his work, he was immediately discharged and his quitting time put on the same tab and signed. If he wanted to go to work again later, after eating or resting, a new tab was given him. Very often before the boat left a man would have three or four tabs, which he cashed in at the company's store for gold dust. This method saved ffme, as no books were kept. Wages were 50 cents an hour.

When a boat was nearly unloaded, and it wasn't practicable to let the tired men go and hire new ones, the whole crew were stimulated with free drinks from the company, to get every last ounce out of them. With a large crew we once ran off in this way about eight hundred tons in thirty hours. This was in no way 'rigger-driving.' The men came from every walk of life

and all parts of the world, and were the last men in the world to be driven. Indeed they liked it, as they were free to stop work and begin again whenever they wanted to, and they were well paid.

In spite of all the food that had come in during the summer before navigation closed, the companies saw there would be a scarcity that winter. The river having dropped very low had cut off the last few boats that would have come in over the Yukon Flats. At this juncture I was ordered to go down on one of the boats to Fort Yukon, with a picked crew, and try to get up with a light load of food that had been cached there.

I picked out twenty-six men, the very best. They were chosen for their brawn, their capacity to stand hard work, and their quickness, and, strange to relate, six of them were lawyers. Captain Hanson, the superintendent of the company, went down with us. His purpose in making the trip was to get a rest.

The trip down was uneventful, except for the songs, dances, and story-telling. The Eskimo deck hands were enlisted for these dances, as there were no women on board; but, as it was beneath the dignity of a male Eskimo to impersonate a woman, the white men had to tie bandana handkerchiefs around their heads and be the women. This was rather amusing, as the Eskimos ran from four to five feet high and one of the lawyers was six feet seven inches tall.

I took a case of whiskey down for the crew, when the work of loading should begin. But I soon noticed signs that made me examine my stock, whereupon I discovered that only two bottles were left. These I threw overboard.

Arriving at Fort Yukon, we made a record loading and starting up the river, but after about twenty miles we stuck on a sandbar, as the water had gone down still more. We tried every scheme possible, such as working the boat over with 'sheer legs'; running a cable from a point on an island back onto the capstan; turning and trying to back up with the wheel ahead to fan the channel, which tends to drag water down under the boat and lift it up. But all to no avail.

So with a worn-out crew we ran back a few miles and unloaded half the cargo on an island, where we cached it; then we tried the sandbar again with the same result, as the water had dropped still more. So there was no course left but to run back to the island, unload completely, and try to get back empty. But we stuck again, as the water was steadily falling. Then we went to Fort Yukon to hold a council of war.

Captain Hanson decided to hire Indians to take him the three hundred and eighty miles to Dawson in a birch-bark canoe. He wanted to warn the people of Dawson that no more food could get up the river that fall, and that those who didn't have enough food to last them through the winter would have to leave and go down to Fort Yukon.

Three of my crew owned claims in Dawson and had to get back. These men built a poling boat and in a few days followed Captain Hanson. The rest

of the crew were promised free transportation to 'Frisco, if they would go down the river on our steamboat and catch an ocean steamer at St. Michael's.

That left two of us, another man and I, as free lances, to go up or down or stay where we were, as we liked. As my wages were fifteen dollars a day, regardless of what I was doing, until I got back to Dawson, I decided to stay down there, buy a lot of dogs, and drive back over the ice loaded with provisions as a speculation. But first I would have to go up to the island where we had cached our cargo from the steamboat, and make the cache fit for winter.

The only boat we had for this latter purpose was one of the steamer's lifeboats, built in the shape of a mud turtle and about the most unhandy kind of a craft that ever was taken upstream. It was impossible to pole this boat, so it had to be towed the whole way, and when we struck swift water it reared up in front and took most of the river along with it. It was a great test of temper and we all lost our chance of going to heaven on this trip.

We were at the end of the Yukon Flats, where the river is tremendously wide and is blocked by thousands of long narrow islands. Between these the stream is from a few feet to half a mile wide, and the current is very swift. The islands were heavily wooded for this country. We tracked up the whole way from island to island: that is, we pulled up on one island and towed along until we got to the end of it, and then got in and rowed madly across the stream, drifting fast, until we hit another island about midway, and repeated the process.

By sheer good luck we located the island where our cache had been left. We were tracking up the opposite side of the stream, which was about a quarter of a mile wide, and were preparing to drop down to it, when a wild-looking figure appeared, dancing up and down on the island, making frantic signals for us to come across. We waved back and kept on going, as the island was not a large one and we had to get well above so as to be able to drop back and make it. The figure kept following opposite us till it got to the end of the island, when after a fresh burst of signaling it stopped and watched us, still tracking up the opposite shore.

When we were a sufficient distance upstream—so that we could row across with some chance of making the island, we started over and barely made it. The lone figure meanwhile was tearing down the bank toward us, wading into the water at the end of the island in his eagerness to catch the boat and not have us swept by. At this point we discovered it was Captain Hanson. At the same moment he recognized us, and I think I never saw a man so glad to see his fellow men.

His story was this. The birch-bark canoe in which he had started began to leak badly. The two Indians who were taking him to Dawson decided they would leave him on the island with the cache and go and get another canoe. This seemed all right to Captain Hanson.

But the Indians failed to come back. The poor man had been marooned for four or five days with no axe and no bedding. There were three or four

hundred tons of provisions, but they were mostly in cans. He had made himself a house by piling up packing-boxes and had spent most of his time watching for relief and reading the labels on the boxes. If he had only had an axe he could have made a raft and taken his chance floating down to Fort Yukon.

This little incident changed all my plans, as Captain Hanson decided we should have to take him up to Circle City where he could get another canoe or boat and more Indians to relay him the rest of the way to Dawson. Having him along helped us, as it gave us another man on the tow-line, but even then it was desperate work. Going around some of the riffles where the water was swift, Captain Hanson lugged my pet collie Shirley in his arms so that he would not be swept downstream.

We now had our first snow of the winter, about six inches. This made it much harder walking over the rocky beach, and as it was freezing every night and we were wet through most of the time, it was a very disagreeable trip. But we had the satisfaction at our camps of having a big fire to dry out by. Four days after we left the island, we got to Circle City. This was the very best time we could make, as sixteen miles a day was about our limit.

Here Captain Hanson got another birch-bark canoe with a fresh lot of Indians, and started for Dawson next morning, leaving orders for the two of us to follow him by any means we could. The only canoe that we could buy in Circle City was a birchbark, and it leaked so badly we decided to cover it with canvas. This took us a couple of days, and the river for some unknown reason began to rise. The old-timers then prophesied that another steamboat would get up.

CHAPTER VII

WINTER ON SHORT RATIONS

CONDITIONS at Circle City at this time were as follows. There were only eighty men left in the district, and they were all in the town itself, as the mines had to be closed down for the winter. No food had been left at Circle City by the passing river steamers since the year before. It had all been taken upstream to Dawson, where prices were higher, each boat promising that the next boat would leave provisions. So these eighty men were marooned, with no food, and with the season practically closed. There was no danger of actual starvation, as they could make their way back to Fort Yukon, eighty miles down the river. But if they did that they couldn't work their mines the next summer as it would take them all winter to get their food up to Circle City and the summer to pack it on their backs out to the mines.

The rising of the river gave them some hope that another boat would get up, but whether the boat would leave provisions or not they had no means of knowing. A Miners' Meeting was called, I think the last Miners' Meeting on the Yukon, and it was decided that if another boat came up and stopped' at Circle City, the captain would be asked politely to put eighty

outfits of food ashore. If he refused, the eighty miners would compel him to do it. In case the boat didn't stop, it was to be headed off at 'Fish Camp' where the river narrowed down, a move that could easily be done by shooting a shot or two through the pilot house, as the boats made very slow time at this point.

The food was to be paid for at Dawson prices.

I think it was the next day that the Portius B. Weir came around the bend and headed straight for shore. It reminded me of some large animal approaching a hunter. There was always the chance that at the last moment she would turn and run downstream. Unsuspecting, she pushed her nose into the bank, and a deck hand made her fast with a cable. The gangplank was swung out and the superintendent of the company walked ashore.

He was immediately surrounded and the case was put to him, very politely. Refusing to comply, he turned and ordered the captain to have the line thrown off. A deck-hand, walking up a couple of hundred feet to the place where the hawser was hitched to a stump, to carry out the order, was very much startled when twelve men confronted him with Winchesters over their arms. He walked back with his hands stuffed deep into his pockets, his head high in the air, whistling loudly. One of the pilots, approaching the fore part of the boat with an axe to cut the rope, was warned by the same twelve men and went back in a hurry.

Negotiations were then opened, but instead of giving in with good grace the superintendent refused to allow the men any food on the ground that it was all bonded for the British side. The boat was held three days, every minute of which was valuable because the season was already late and, if the ice once began to run in the river, it would be absolutely impossible for her to get anywhere.

It was eventually settled by the miners themselves going into the hold and unloading eighty outfits of food, which were taken into the company's store and immediately paid for in cash. Each man was paid by the storekeeper for the time he had worked in unloading the boat. I think this was the most decorous hold-up I have ever heard of. It must be understood that the steamboat and the store were under the same company.

I saw an amusing incident while the boat was being held up. A newspaper reporter, together with an artist whose name was Max Newberry, had been sent out by a large New York newspaper. These men had made the trip around by the ocean, coming by water all the way from Seattle. They were looking for local color and had seen nothing but Indians and Eskimos so far. But here was local color with a vengeance for the press-man.

The artist, not to be outdone by his brother in arms, set up his easel on the forward deck of the boat and went to work. He had for his picture the twelve men with rifles, who were relieved by another shift every few hours, the Indians on shore, the Eskimo deck-hands, quite a large proportion of miners, the captain and the superintendent. He even put in half of Shirley.

The artist was a clever one, especially at making portraits. When the picture was almost finished, a miner who was watching made the remark

that he had got in most of the men's portraits pretty accurately. The miner recognized them and called them by name, much to the edification of the artist. Then he went on to criticize the men's faces, saying, 'Don't you think Jim So-and-So would be better looking if you straightened out that broken nose of his?' or, 'The only reason that So-and-So didn't have any whiskers was because he couldn't grow any,' etc.

These remarks went on in the most earnest way, much to the surprise and amusement of the artist, until he suddenly realized that he had made accurate portraits of the ringleaders, and that if any trouble came of this food-requisitioning escapade, these men could be recognized and arrested. He turned pale when he saw the possible scrape he had got himself into. Men, he had heard, were easily lynched in that country. So he hastily rubbed out all the faces and substituted fresh ones, under the supervision of the old-timer.

That night, still looking for local color, the artist wandered into a saloon, and the men seeing they had a Cheechako in their midst, decided among themselves that they would give him what he was looking for. So one man, who pretended to be rushed up, began to shoot the pictures on the wall. The bartender ordered him to stop, pulled a gun from under the bar, and shot up in the air. That was the signal for every one to produce a gun and start shooting, and I should have hated to be on the roof that night. Those were black-powder days and the room was full of smoke.

When two or three men tumbled down to the floor, it looked like the real thing. Not being able to get out, as the crowd was concentrated around the door, the artist chap put on a bold front and stood up, instead of crawling under the bar or behind the table. By so doing he won the admiration of all the men, and before he went up on the boat he was one of the most popular men in town.

When the outfits were finally unloaded and the boat allowed to go, our chance was at hand to be taken up to Dawson. But here we ran across another snag. The superintendent refused to take us because we belonged to the rival company; and considering what he had just been through I don't think I blame him. Our party now consisted of five, having been joined by men from Circle City who wanted to go up, so we boldly walked on board and defied him to put us off, knowing pretty well that the white deck-hands would take our part rather than get the enmity of the whole river. We didn't run any risk, as the Eskimo deck-hands and Indians didn't count either way.

Not wanting any more trouble than we already had on our hands, I had sneaked my dog Shirley into the engine-room when no one was looking. When we had been out about twenty-four hours, the superintendent asked me if I had a dog on board, to which I replied that I had. He then said that it was bad enough to be compelled to take passengers up, but he'd be damned if he would talre a dog, and told me to chuck him overboard.

There is a saying in this country that a man may not fight for his wife, but he'll always fight for his dog. Anyway, I informed the superintendent in my most polite manner that before he chucked the dog overboard he would have to do the same to me, and before he did that there were four of my

companions who would have to go overboard too, and he had better begin because he had quite a job on his hands. With that he flunked and said that if I had to take the dog I should have to pay for his passage. I told him that he could hand his bills in to the Alaska Company because they always paid Shirley's wherever he went.

My seat at the table was at the captain's right. That day at dinner I moved down one peg and put Shirley in my old seat, with a bandanna around his neck as a napkin, and when the superintendent came in I thought he would burst. He didn't say anything, but he looked black.

However, I must say the good heart of the man came out next day when he made friends with Shirley and fed him out of his own plate, though I think that this was partly due to Shirley's ingratiating manner. This little act of the superintendent thawed the ice with all of us, until another complication arose when we overtook the poling boat that had started ahead of us. When the superintendent was informed that they were our friends, he refused to pick them up. However, the Indian pilot of the steamer ran the boat over and picked them up on his own responsibility.

With the exception of stopping to kill a bear, there were no excitements until we reached Dawson, which we did only an hour or so after Captain Hanson arrived. He had made one of the hardest trips on record, traveling literally night and day, to warn the men at Dawson to leave while there was time. It was one of the finest acts I ever saw done in the country. As we came up he was in the middle of an address to the crowd, warning them of the famine and telling them that no boat could possibly come up. He was almost set at naught by our arrival. But this trip bore fruit. A large number of men decided to leave for the lower river, as even our boatload and that of the old Bella, which followed closely on our heels, weren't enough to relieve the famine, for both were loaded very lightly.

The minute the old Bella arrived it was my time to go to work. Not only hours but minutes counted, as the second run of ice had begun to come down the river, and it was only a matter of time till the boat had to seek a place of safety to hole up in. I hired the largest crew I possibly could work. Freight began to come out rapidly, and the men seemed to realize the importance of hurrying. As darkness came on nothing stopped and the speed seemed to increase.

The night was bitterly cold and the water had frozen over lightly between the boat and the shore. A young man from Chicago, who had never seen anything of rough life, was working with the crew. In his hurry to keep ahead of the running stevedores he made a misstep, dropped about eight feet onto the ice below the gangplank, and went through. A young fellow just behind him threw his load off and jumped in after him, just saving him from being swept under the ice.

Now it had always been my policy to give the men a bonus for especially good work. Although this happened in the early evening, I paid the rescuer for an entire night's work, gave him a bottle of whiskey, and sent him home. Another young fellow who had seen this little by-play, watching

his time when no one was looking, picked up a dog, jumped over, and came ashore with the dog in his arms. The fact was that the dog wasn't heavy enough to break through the ice and could have got ashore alone, even if he had fallen in. But when the man appeared before me soaking wet, with the dog (my dog!) in his arms, there was nothing to do but to treat him as I had the other man. Later the boy told me how he had worked me.

Stimulating the men with whiskey was not so bad as it sounds. Every one knew the importance of haste in unloading the boat, and a little stimulant only helped them. The only time it ever went wrong in my experience was when I was unloading my first boat. That day I was trying to work about twenty Eskimo and Indian deck-hands. Not understanding their language or habits, I first got hold of the mate and asked him how to work them. His reply was, 'Sure, boy, never hit one unless you kill him, because he'll knife you later on, or else the whole gang will suddenly disappear. Swear at them all you like, poke them out with long sticks from any corner they may get into, jolly 'em along with a little drink now and then, and when they see you mean business they'll work for you.'

It was a crime to give liquor to an Indian or Eskimo on the lower river, but not up here. All for a good cause I tried this method and it worked splendidly for a little while. I didn't realize, however, how small the capacity of an Eskimo is, having gauged it by that of a white man. The first thing I knew, the entire crowd had gone crazy, dancing, singing, and making all kinds of bird and beast noises. Some of them were really quite wonderful at it. Then one proceeded to jump into the river.

Stopping the entire work and getting together all the white men, we trussed up the Eskimos and Indians by tying a rope around each one, under his arms, with the knot coming between the shoulder blades where he couldn't get at it. Throwing the other end over the beams on the upper deck, we left them with their feet just touching the floor.

I was suggesting to one of the stevedores that we put guy lines on to keep them steady when Captain Hanson, the superintendent, arrived on the scene. It is the only time I have ever seen him show surprise. As far as I was concerned I should rather have seen the devil, as I had been hired only a few hours and wanted to make a good impression. With his hands thrown up, he said, 'Mr. Walden, what in the world is the meaning of this?' and I managed to stammer out, ' I think they must have got hold of some whiskey somewhere.'

To be continued...

From the Publisher

The second Tuesday in September was a perfect day for picking berries in the woods behind Army Beach. Blood red after being nipped by frost several days earlier, the cranberries were ripe and ready for harvest.

Golden aspen trees shimmered in the fall sunlight. Unblemished by clouds or vapor trails, the sky was the deepest, clearest shade of blue. Marsh Lake is normally a windy place but the air was still and completely silent. No waves crashed upon the beach. No planes flew overhead.

Whitehorse is on the flight path of planes travelling between North America and the Orient. Often we'll see or hear flights from distant American cities as they pass through miles above us on their way to Anchorage, Alaska. There they refuel before heading over the Aleutians to the Far Eastern coast of Asia.

On this day, however, all American and Canadian flights were cancelled. Following the air attacks in New York and Washington, American airports were shut down and Canadian airports were taking in already airborne flights that had no other place to go.

At about 11:00 a.m. Yukoners got word that a Korean plane believed to be under hijack would land at the Whitehorse airport within minutes. Quickly, the RCMP gave orders to evacuate all Whitehorse schools and closed the Alaska Highway near the airport. Whitehorse all but shut down as parents left their offices and businesses to be home with their children.

It turned out that the 747 was low on fuel and the distress signal the pilot sent out had been misinterpreted; there was no hijacking. So Whitehorse played host to 200 guests for two nights until the stranded plane was cleared to fly back to Anchorage. It had been on its way to New York from Korea.