
THE
YUKONER
MAGAZINE
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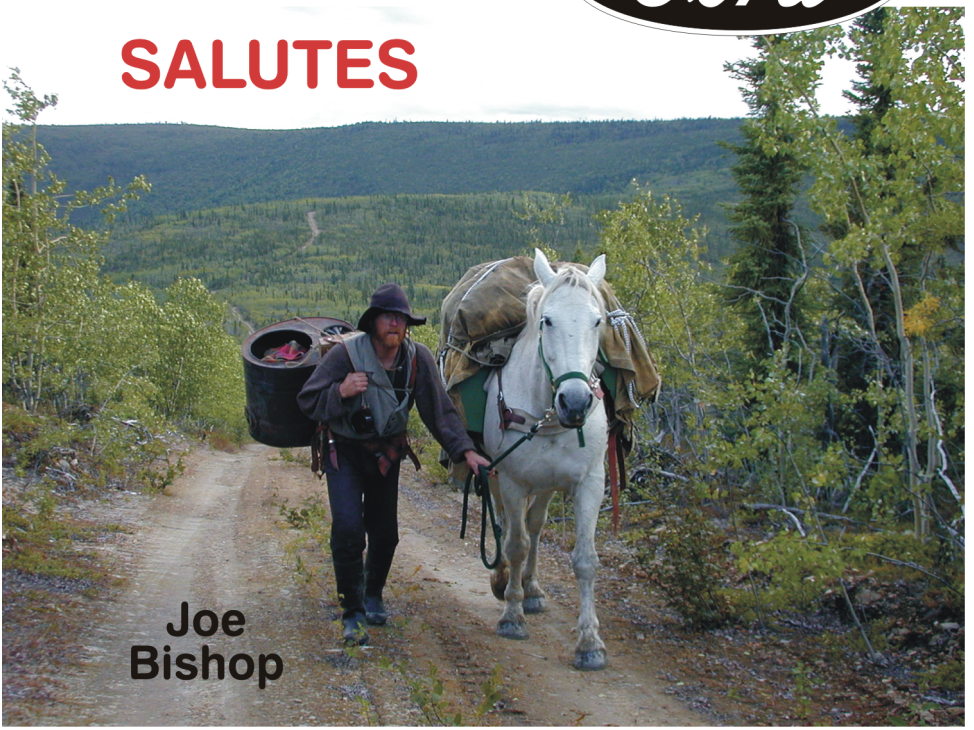
Special Feature:
History of the
Whitehorse
Copper Belt
By Dick McKenna
• Ben-My-Chree
• The Neil Wright Story
• A Doctor on the Chilkoot
• The Tale of a Donkey
• They Moiled for Copper
ISSUE
No.24



Joe Bishop came to the Yukon from Yellowknife, N.W.T., in 1989. Since then he has worked on a gold claim in the Livingstone area, on commercial fishing boats in Alaska, as a wildlife technician in Kluane Park and bicycled from the Yukon to Mexico. He was co-owner of a horse logging operation in Haines Junction, spent 11 summers as a canoe and sea kayak guide and for the past ten years has cut firewood to make extra money. He has been a dog handler in the Yukon Quest, among many other adventures but is best known in the Yukon as a singer/songwriter.

The above photos show him as a Stampeder in Frantic Films epic saga, Klondike: Quest for Gold. (S.H. photos)

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Cover: Andria Bellon, standing in a pool of rainwater at Dawson City, August, 2001. Andria climbed the Chilkoot and floated down the Yukon River as one of the Stampeders in the film, *Klondike: Quest for Gold*, produced by Frantic Films and shown on History Television. [S.H. photo]

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Publisher: Dianne Green Editor: Sam Holloway

From the Editor

Well, I am still off the tobacco, mostly on account of the picture you see on the right.

Some of you saw on TV last winter a series called "Klondike: Quest for Gold," presented on the History Television Network. Copies of the show can be purchased from their website.

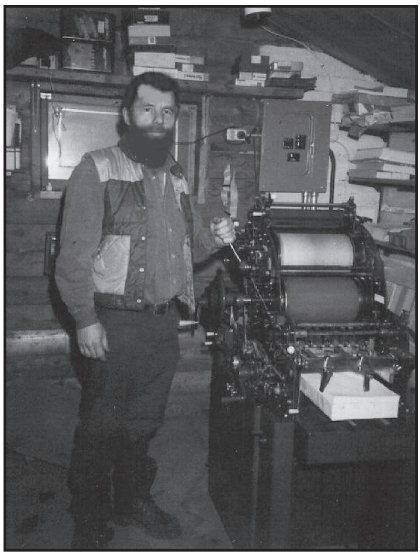
My job for Frantic Films was to find a place where the Stampeders could dig for gold. It had to have gold on it and look like a real Klondike claim. They also wanted a wilderness route to it.

I ran into an old friend, Lee Olynyk, who owns a mile of claims on Last Chance Creek near Dawson. I found a great spot along there, but how would the Stampeders get down to it from the mountain range to the east? Was there even a trail up there from Dawson?

There was only one way to find out. I shouldered a pack, slung my old shotgun, and set out on foot, straight up the mountainside. There hadn't been anyone up that way since the Gold Rush.

In pouring rain and fog I set out, stumbling over fallen willows and deadfalls, hacking my way through the brush. With every step, my feet sank into a layer of deep, water-logged moss. I kept going up, stopping to rest every five minutes or so. Actually, it wasn't rest. These were spells of hacking, coughing, wheezing, rattling, as my tortured lungs tried to draw enough air to keep going. I had been smoking cigarettes and the pipe for 40 years.

I promised myself that if I made it to the top—and found a trail there—that I would quit smoking.



At last the steep climb flattened out and I stumbled onto the trail, well-packed, about a mile above the creek. My clothes and pack had gained ten pounds of water. A mist surrounded me so thick I had to guess which way to go back down the mountain. I came out right beside old Dodgie and had a smoke.

It turned out that the crew didn't use my trail but decided to take a different route. They didn't show up for 30 hours as you saw in the film. And I have been off the poison weed most of the time since last September.

So long for now,
Sam

The Mail Run

Dear Editor,

While visiting with friends last spring the conversation came around to travels in Canada and places we would like to visit. 1 mentioned that the Yukon was one place my husband and 1 would like to visit and 1 related to them the story of having read about Johnny Friend in the *National Geographic's* article Alaska Highway. I had regretted that he had died prior to the printing of the article, having learned this fact when I wrote to him following the printing and receiving a letter back from his lawyer, so informing me.

Your magazine, *"The Yukoner,"* was soon brought out, and much to my surprise, one of the dinner guests said, "Here is a story about Johnny Friend. I didn't realize his name was Friend. I thought you meant he was your 'friend.'" We had quite a laugh about that.

However it was true, Johnny was a friend of my family. My father was in the army as a carpenter engineer at the POW camp in Lethbridge and met Johnny at that time. My older sister tells me he had been overseas in France before coming to Lethbridge. My twin sister Gaye and 1 were born in Jan /44, so we have no real memory of Johnny, just pictures, but my parents and three teenage sisters knew him fairly well, and he was a quest at dinner many times. His generosity was evident even in those days. Note the Easter eggs we are so pleased with in the photo. After Johnny moved to the Yukon, he sent all of the girls in the family a piece of jewellery containing a gold nugget. Gaye and 1 still have the totem pole spoon pin with nugget and my other sisters still have their ivory pendant with nugget. The family lost contact with him a few years later, but my parents were happy to read about him in November 1991.

Johnny Friend in Lethbridge, Alberta, Easter, 1946.

1 thought you might enjoy seeing a picture of Johnny before his life in the Yukon, and if we ever get there, we will be sure to stop in Watson Lake for a tour of the town.

Yours truly,
Faye McMillan
Athabasca, Alberta

The Mail Run

Dear Sam,

A note to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading your publication, *Yukoner Magazine*. I do not know who has arranged for me to receive it, and I thank you very much for it.

I was fortunate to have spent two happy, busy years as Director of Nursing at the Mayo Hospital, 1967 – 1968. I met and married Ed Kunze and we left the Yukon and came to my home country, Australia. We had 27 years happily together, traveled extensively in Australia by caravan and elsewhere. Ed died in 1995 at 94 years of age. My son, Ian Podger, visited Mayo and worked at United Keno Hill one summer and also at Clinton Creek. Your articles on those places we found most interesting.

Betty Kunze,
Mt Martha, Australia

Editor's note: We have no record of who sent you the gift subscription. Perhaps one of our readers can help.

Hello to you in the North,

I can hardly wait for each copy of the Yukoner to arrive at my home here in Ontario. After we've read and reread it, we send it on to our son in Nova Scotia. He loves it too and sends it to Newfoundland. While reading your stories one almost feels like you are right there in the Yukon. Haven't been since 1991. In the late 1960s my sister, Alice (Kerr) Arter, was a nurse in Whitehorse Hospital. She has since passed away. I wonder if there is anyone who may have worked with her at that time, and may still live in the area and would correspond with me about their life and work at that time. I realize this is a long shot but thought it worth a try.

Jacqueline Hughes
Bath, Ontario

Dear Dianne,

I have been to your beautiful Yukon and NWT twice, each time by truck and camper. If I was a young man again the Yukon is where I would be. I can relate to a lot of the stories about hunting and trapping as I was raised in northern Saskatchewan during the Depression years. Keep up the great stories and I'll keep reading them as long as I'm able to.

Howard Andrews
Candle Lake, Saskatchewan

Publisher's Note:
The gold nugget winner this time (for renewals) is E.M. Wiltshire of Burnaby, B.C.

THE MAIL RUN

Hi Sam,

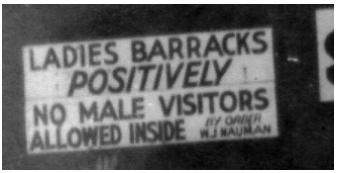
Just to let you know I received the gold nugget for subscription renewal. I enjoy your magazine very much. We have been to the Yukon five times as of June this year. Really like the north country. Been up to Inuvik twice, also Skagway, Haines, Chicken and Eagle and all over. Who knows, might get back again, I hope.

Thomas Watson
Hinton, Alberta

To: dianne@Yukoner.com
via e-mail

I received a copy of issue #23 from Tensley Johnston. He is a pen pal and he had two articles in the same issue. I am sorry I can't name the gals in that picture which was taken the winter of 1943-44 at Mac Rae. I was working for the Metcalfe, Hamilton, Kansas City Bridge Company, one of the construction companies helping to build the Alcan Highway. The barracks in the background was living quarters and YES, no men were allowed inside. We even had a "house Mother," who made sure we ate in the Mess Hall with all the men from the company working on the highway. The girls were all office staff, stenos, payroll clerks, etc and I worked in the heavy equipment department. I believe the girls in the picture were American but a few Canadian girls who worked in Edmonton were transferred to Whitehorse. My girl friend and I were among the few. At that time no Canadian was allowed to go to Alaska, as it was during WWII. We could go to Whitehorse, though, and a few of the areas like Carcross, Kluane Lake, etc. I remember the garbage dump, our first sight of bears, wasn't that exciting?? I have more information if you would like me to send you photocopies of that

Grace Merkel and Jean Edwards (Young) at MaCrae in 1943.



particular time. A theatre was built in a Quonset Hut and it was named "TITA."

The magazine photo certainly brought back many memories and I have sent a photocopy of the picture to my friend who lives in Broadview Sask. to see if she remembers any of the girls' names.

Jean Edwards,
Kelowna, B.C.

Editor's Note: Jean kindly sent us a package of photos, clippings and memorabilia from her days in the Yukon during WWII. You will see some of them in the next issue when we will be printing some articles about the Alaska Highway when it first opened to the public.

Dear Editor,

We were introduced to *The Yukoner* by Bill and Wanda Barrett whom we met this past summer at Wann River on Tagish Lake My wife and I had just come over the Telegraph Trail from Telegraph Creek to Atlin and were telling the Barretts our experience with weather and trail conditions. …We saw our first person 16 days after leaving Telegraph and saw just one airplane. My wife's insistence on a satellite phone was wise. Besides a safety device, we used it to call John Reed from downtown Nahlin and got some very useful advice. We stood behind a main line cabin at Nahlin that housed a two-man crew that maintained the Telegraph Line just 60 years ago and made a crystal clear telephone call using a satellite hookup. What an example of the rapidly changing world! Wow! Certainly the country is less populated than it was 100 years ago. If you don't mind mud, bugs and bush it is a "must do" trek. We started out fairly trim and ended up 20 days later down-right skinny. Who needs Jenny Craig? Also, if you wonder about the strength of your relationship, the trail may test that too. My wife, Sheila, is the best trail companion one could have. After the hike we enjoyed meeting John and Linda Reed and Mike and Doreen Strange in Atlin. We toured around Tagish and Atlin Lakes and spent time at Brooklands with Jim and Marion. After the lakes we took a driving, camping loop through a part of the Yukon and Alaska. The North is such a wonderful place populated with genuine folk. We look forward to our next visit. If anyone is looking for advice on good campsites, etc. I would be pleased to share what I know.

Dennis Hemus
Box 127
Windermere, B C V0B 2L0

The Mail Run

Dear Sam and Dianne,

About 20 years ago my older sister went to see the sights of the Yukon and never came back. I miss her a lot but have been fortunate enough to visit her in the Yukon three times over the years. Each time I return home knowing I've left a piece of my heart there. Thank you for bringing the Yukon to me in the pictures and stories of the Yukoner Magazine.

Bill Barnes
Prince George, B C

Hi Sam,

Read most of your issues (hand-me downs), now I am a subscriber. My father in-law, Reverend John Bryne, was an Anglican minister around 1926 in Dawson. There's a story there if you're interested.

Norm Caukill
Kaslo, B. C.

Good Day to You,

Enclosed is a cheque for a one-year subscription. At 95 years, goodness knows where I'll be next year!

My maternal grandparents, Hans and Lena Thomsen, migrated from Denmark to Kansas in spring 1886 and were the first homesteaders on that piece of land after Kansas entered the Union. Lena's three brothers, surnamed Lassen, left Seattle and walked all the way to the gold fields of the Yukon. It took three years.

Did they get rich? Legend has it that gold diggers spent their time gambling. However they paid $1,000 for a pair of white husky dogs. One of the brothers, Maurice, presented his nephews with a gold nugget tie pin. Lena got a three-nugget broach. This has become a heritage gift from oldest daughter to oldest daughter. I have three generations to pass it on to.

One Lassen brother lost his life in the Yukon when his gun went off while he was scrambling through bushes. One brother fought in the American-Philipine War. Maurice settled in Seattle and ran a saloon. He married and had a daughter with whom I have corresponded. My parents came to Alberta in 1904 to homestead.

Mrs. Dora (Chaffin) Lloyd
Red Deer, Alberta

THERE IS A SENSE of unreality for most at the journey's end—at Ben-My-Chree. A thousand miles they have come up the indented coast to Skagway. In the climbing train they have surmounted spectacular White Pass, where the only sound is of the roar of cataracts that are draped like fluttering gauze over the rocky ledges. They have coasted Lake Bennett, on which once were the boats and rafts of the gold-seekers going into the exciting north and on which now are only the rufflings of the winds like a hand over velvet. On the steamer Tutshi out of Carcross they have seen that further wilderness of dwarfed spruce trees with blue bloom on them, the time-bitten mountain ranges with glaciers in their high crannies and, at the and of West Taku Arm—after close upon a hundred miles of churning through that loneliness and grandeur of Lake Tagish—have had the surprise of a garden with the summer sunlight in it.

Once upon a time, to meet them there, were Otto and Kate Partridge, who made that garden, host and hostess unexcelled. This is their story, the story of Ben-My-Chree:

Otto Partridge was born in Hertfordshire, England, in 1855, and when he was but a boy his people removed to the Isle of Man. The college at which he was educated was the well-known King William's which is about a mile from Castletown near the south end of the island, and ten miles from Douglas, facing the bay. From the headlands there one can see the deep-sea steamers that have come through the North Channel, rounding the Calf of Man, lurching an their way to Liverpool, or heading for the Atlantic, outward bound. He was not the first King William's bay to hear the call of the sea and respond. In many an engine room and on many a ship's bridge over the seven seas are old King William scholars.

At fourteen years of age he was apprenticed in the mercantile marine and when nineteen he sailed, with a younger brother to San Francisco, having heard from an elder brother at that time resident there of an opportunity in a schooner trading to the Ferallones and coast ports. Arrived at San Francisco they found that their wandering elder brother was off and away

to New Orleans. There was at that time trouble between the States and Mexico, and what had these two young men to do but join a sloop of war under Commander John Phillips, special dispensation being granted them from Washington to sign on for three years.

That little flutter out into the world over, they returned to England. Mr. Partridge then fell heir to a legacy, married the woman who was to share thereafter all his romantic life, and set sail for California again. In the Santa Clara valley they set up their home on a fruit-farm, and there it was that Otto Partridge's interest in horticulture began. That's understandable. There he would see the whole valley when the white foam of spring broke upon it, and would know the view from Mount Hamilton looking over to Los Gatos when the prune orchards were in blossom.

In the year 1897 all the West was excited over the gold discoveries in the far north. Everybody was saying, "Klondike, Klondike..." It was like a refrain. One heard it on trains and one heard it in hotel-rotundas and in the clubs. It was in vaudeville songs: the Klondike. Skippers of ships putting into west coast ports could not let the seamen ashore because of the lure of it. If but one of the sailors were allowed to scull a boat to a wharf on some business, the boat did not come back. French leave was the vogue then. The Klondike, the Klondike...

A friend of Otto Partridge's in Victoria wrote him a plea for his partnership on an adventure into that mysterious north, and in 1897 he was off. Those were wild days on the new frontier. Soapy Smith was very much alive in Skagway with his gang of desperadoes.

Otto Partridge was carrying with him $20,000 in currency and the stories of Soapy Smith did not sound good to him, so he got permission from the skipper to pay a secret visit to the hold. Among his gear on the voyage was a bale of oakum—for shipbuilding was in his mind as one of the means of making good in the north. Transport, he realised, would be wanted there. Into that bale he put his ready cash. Soapy Smith's gang did some desperate things but the looting of cargo was not among them. Arrived safely up the trail at Bennett, Otto undid his bale of oakum and had his $20,000.00 again. With a little group of men looking for opportunities he floated the Bennett Lake and Klondike Navigation Company. The Ore, the Flora, the Nora —three of the first steamers an the Yukon—were Bennett Lake and Klondike Navigation boats.

Mrs. Partridge had come only as for as Victoria with him from the flower-scented Santa Clara valley, and was waiting there while he went on to spy out the land. But the following year she "went in" after him—over the famous Trail of '98, the old scar of which you see today from the train as it twines up the spectacular White Pass. Few were the women then in the land. In the old souvenir volumes of photographs of those days a woman in any of the groups is a rarity. She went over that trail on foot.

The White Pass Railway was being built and with its completion along the shores of Lake Bennett from the town of Bennett to Canyon City (which are now little more than names by the track-side) the Navigation Compa-

ny's activities there came to an end. Further into the north went Otto Partridge and his wife. He took over a sawmill at Milhaven, a little to the south of Carcross, where today you go aboard the stern-wheel steamer for Ben-My-Chree. For a home, Mr. Partridge built a house-boat an the lake.

There is no greater mistake than to imagine that those who live at what we call the ends of the earth are untouched by the culture of their time. There is sophistication and there is civilization. The former, a dubious veneer, may easily be chipped off when one is away from the sophisticated coteries. Civilization is more sincere. It can endure. Of those whom one sees when visiting the north, many are there but by reason of their restlessness that has sent them wandering the world over. They have known the great cities of the world, and its lonely places. They may have seen Pavlova dance as well as the dance of their winter blizzards. They know the sound the geese make when migrating, flying over, and the call of the bull moose in June they know, but also in their minds may be snatches of opera heard in New York or Paris-or the sound the wind makes rattling the palms of South Sea islands. It is a mistake to imagine that those one meets on the last frontier are all what's called hicks, with parochial minds.

With the history of the north the lives of the Partridges are blended. Bishop Bompas was then in the Yukon on missionary work among the Indians, and it happened that an old-country friend of Mrs. Partridge—Miss Dalton—came out from London to assist him in his labours. Finding Mrs.

Otto and Kate Partridge in the famous garden at Ben-My-Chree.
[Yukon Archives photo, MacBride Museum Collection]

Partridge there on the houseboat she decided instead of going in for missionary work, to join the Partridge menage and keep her friend Kate company. It was at this period that they began their expeditions into the hardly known wilderness through which the waterways twine in their lonely fashion. Even today, from the train, you will feel the strange invitation of these regions. The vastness allures. It is an appeal very intriguing—a little terrible, a little fearsome. There are those who, feeling it, become enthralled. There are those who think it would be wise to be gone before it has them in thrall, as in Kipling's lines:

"Go softly by that river-side or, when you would depart,
You'll find its every winding tied and knotted round your heart."

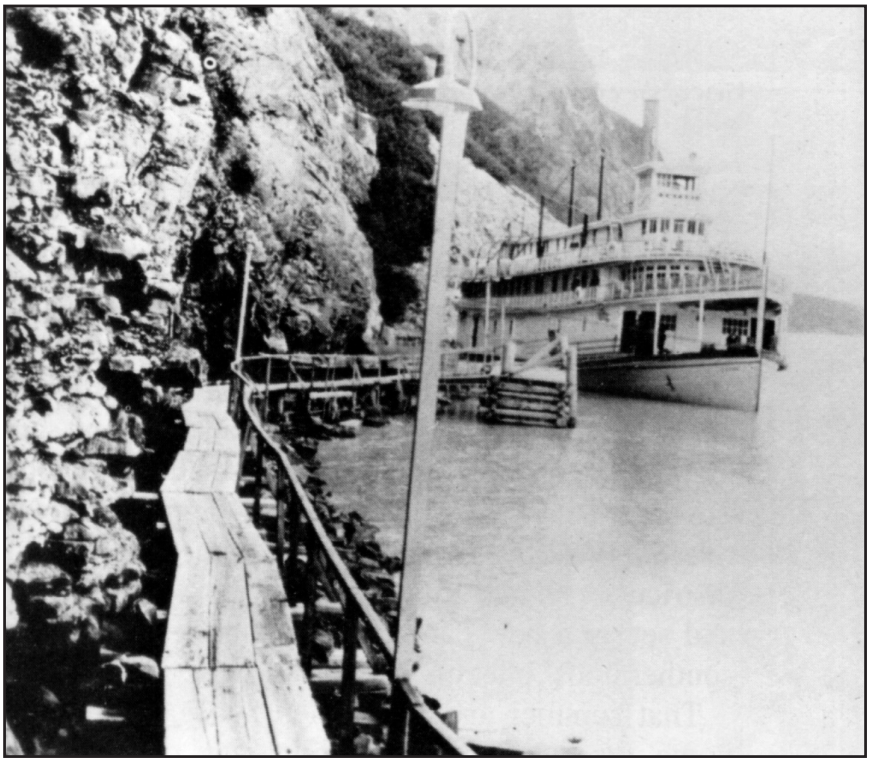
They did not flee from it. It had its way with them. Mr. Partridge built a yacht for the navigation of these waters, which he christened Ben-My-Chree, Manx for Girl of my Heart. All through his life was this romance of his love for his wife and devotion to her, a devotion reciprocated. They were always together. They knew the life of settled lands but the invitation of these wild and secret regions was in their hearts. One does not know the call of the wilderness thinks it is all a call to come and rifle the gold out of its sands and racks. There is something else. Even the seemingly hardened or hardboiled old prospector who works for a grub-stake and then is off into the hinterlands in search for precious mineral often in talk divulges something else holding him there. It is not only the eternal hope of vast wealth come at in a few days that lures him—the Golconda dream, the Quivira dream, the dream of the golden crock at the rainbow's end. There are items of the wilderness life that even those who most keenly are enraptured by them hesitate to speak of. To do so, they feel, would be like wearing the heart on the sleeve. As soon as one begins to speak of such things a sense of embarrassment comes to him in some circles. He is reticent lest he be derided if he tell of his ectasy in such things as the fanning end of a mountain torrent flowing in liquid amber over the stones, the blue bloom on the spruce, the cry of the loon across the waters that tells him he has escaped from the trammels of the world that is clamped down under pavingstones. His secret might be foolishness to another—that's the idea, the deterring thought. Were you to ask, "What makes you stay away out there in that lonely world?" such a one might reply, if sure you would understand and not mock: the smell of woodsmoke, the hurrying voice of rivers in idle remoteness, the sigh of wind in pines and that extraordinary silence that follows after, that hush in which one has rumor of eternity.

The yacht careened with them over Lakes Bennett, Tagish, and Marsh. They went upon hunting expeditions into the further recesses, getting meat for their winter supply. It was in those days that a prospector, Stanley McLellan, came to Mr. Partridge with news of a gold discovery at the end of West Taku Arm. He had found gold and silver in the rocks, but had none in his pocket. He had to be grubstaked, and Partridge grub-staked him. Not only that but, with his yacht, he helped in the transportation of supplies. It happened that just then Lord Egerton arrived from England, looking for a

virgin hunting country. Otto Partridge was a man after his own heart. They shared that love of the remote. The camp beside the lost lake, the aurora shaking the sky with its plumes, the sense of escape—these they shared.

One day they climbed to the prospect away above the high cliffs, and Lord Egerton became excited over it all. The scene is impressive in its austerity and, for those who can be moved by wilderness as well as formal garden, unforgettable. But not only the grandeur of the scene excited Lord Egerton. The mineral showings, unearthed by Stanley McLellan, he felt, warranted financial backing for development work. All that was needed was capital. So Lord Egerton, Mr. Partridge, and Miss Dalton (who all this while had been accompanying the Partridges on their expeditions) pooled a sum of money to allow of the working of the property. The house-boat was towed all the way from Milhaven. Cabins were built ashore for a mining crew, and the work began in earnest. Lord Egerton went home to England and all was going well when old Nature took matters in hand.

One spring, when the thaws came, an avalanche began to slip on that mountain and in its progress started a rock-slide. The timbers of the trestle-towers of the gravity tramway that had been built up the steep slope were snapped like matches, the mine workings were buried under tons of



The 'Tutshi' at the dock at Ben-My-Chree. [Alaska Historical Society photo]

debris, and several members of the crew were overtaken and killed. Did you ever see a rock-slide? That is no little run of scree for a few yards. The rocks, big as houses, are undermined by the melting of the snows. The slide comes down and thrusts its weight against them. There is cataclysm, havoc.

There is a roar as of the tipping of a thousand trucks of steel rails. The boulders roll down and roll not straight, being not, of course, complete and polished spheres but monstrous and jagged things. They roll a little way in a straight line and then, endowed with individual and erratic life, leap sideways. Cannoning into other rocks they send these trundling arid bouncing downwards. With the most apalling divagations they descend, and in the

Otto, upper left, Kate, centre (from photo on previous page).

momentum they may roll on uncertainly across the flats at base of the mountain from which they have been loosened. Avalanche and rockslide are among the terrible manifestations of Nature.

That disastrous slide stopped the mining labours at the head of West Taku Arm. One might think that it would have put a period even to the occupancy, that they would have left the place to Nature then. But no. In the course of all these labours they had come by an affection for the land. They were identified with it; it was theirs. And besides, Mr. Partridge was not of the sort to accept defeat.

They left the house-boat that had been their home. They went ashore and began the building of the cabins one sees there today. To open up the mine again may have been in Mr. Partridge's mind all the while; but in the making of the home he worked on. He made of it a place fit for a woman of culture to live. He laid out vegetable gardens and flower gardens. They had gone softly by these river-sides; their every winding was indeed tied and knotted round their hearts. Talk of the desert and the sown! In that wilderness they built their home and tended their gardens, The sweet-peas, the tall delphiniums, the enormous pansies of the long northern summer days, the columbines were strange contrast to the hard, the implacable cliffs. And that they might not be cut off from the outer world Mr. Partridge approached the transport company (the White Pass and Yukon Route) and asked them, when the steamer came up the lake to the Engineer mine, some miles below, to send it on to Ben-My-Chree. When people inquired of them if they did not feel cut off there, why no! they said, not they. There is such a thing as the international postal service, and they had many correspondents. Among these, by the way, was Theodore Roosevelt. They had their books; they had, in winter, their dog-team and their sledge should there be any call to "go out," they had the beauty of winter —a beauty as great as that of summer — and with the winter's cold they knew how to cope. It was not loneliness they felt then; it was a sense of seclusion. The frost drew its white flowers on the pane, lovely as these summer flowers flaming in the garden.

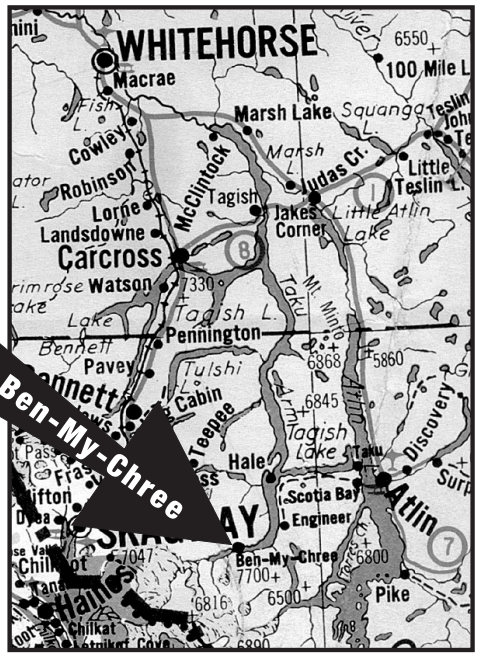
The home Otto Partridge made, he called by the name of that yacht he had built to explore these waters, Ben-My-Chree, Girl of my Heart. Twice a week through the summer the steamer churned to the very end of that twisting inland fiord and tied up to the cliffs. The passengers went ashore, wondering what there was to see. There were the mountains — they were obvious. They stared down in their austere and eternal fashion. In their high creases wore the glaciers. There was the ambient silence, that silence in which all the north is held as if waiting for something, something mysterious that some day will have its avatar. And then round a bend the garden blazed at them—and there was Miss Dalton waiting to receive them at the gate, and Mrs. Partridge at the door. And there was Mr. Partridge to conduct them round and show them the flower-beds and the produce of the glass-house too, and load them away to the beaver meadows.

The unexpectedness of it, when one seemed to have come to the end of all things, had a strange effect on most. The quality of unreality clung to the visit. It was more like a dream than an incident of the actual day. Indoors,

refreshment awaited the guests. The Partridge home was yours while the boat tarried. As a story-teller Otto Partridge was enthralling, a gifted raconteur. Ask him of the old days of the north and the yarns would come forth, extraordinary, whimsical wild.

Here was an experience that, for most, would befall but once in a lifetime. That he might not take all the attention — though all were eager to have him go on — he would set them a-singing. No haste to be gone. The day lasts long in summer in these high latitudes. Your watch might tell you it was nine of the evening but the light belied it. Day was still golden in the sky overhead and clinging to the long fiord. And there was so much to see — from the beavers at work in their colony to the glass-houses where the Partridges had their vegetables in season. Yes, and mushrooms in February, he would say, and show the visitors how. On board again, the steamer thrashing its stern-wheel on the way back, and the wavewashed loneliness on either hand, and night at last welling up along the ranges and turning them into high walls with ragged tops, it was indeed as though Ben-My-Chree was a dream.

What, one wonders, will happen to the old harmonium in a corner beside the stairs It was brought in half a lifetime ago. It is an old-timer, too. Its voice fails; it is cracked; it is more a souvenir now than a musical instrument; but in the old days it led the singing, Mrs. Partridge playing, when the guests from outside, loath to go, lingered on. The cards left on the big tray at the table's end by these transient guests before going back to the other world, and the visitors' book, let us know of those who have been there through the years. The Mesdames Nordica Schumann-Heink, Alma Gluck; Charles Wakefield Cadman—these and many others well known have been there. Queer to remember that lonely water where the moose come down to drink and the house in that surprise of a garden, and how when one strolled alone up the slopes to get an impression of the scene the clumps of trees wore as wicker nuts to catch the quiet. Queer to remember all that in the midst of the bustle of affairs in the world's centres.



His life had made Otto Partridge what's called a broad-guage, man. The old days of the north (when all races jostled on

that desperate trail of 1898, and in the camps were men from all ranks of society) had no doubt its effect on his outlook. There, are many today, the "great war" over, who think as he thought then, who feel hurt when they hear expressions of international hatred or envy or malice. But long before that lesson of the war it was a dream of Otto Partridge's to work toward the elimination of such really primitive acrimony. On one wall of the large living-room of that home in the wilds, so close to where the boundaries run of American and British possessions, he had the flags of Britain and of America hanging side by side. All were welcome, whatever their nationality.

Those who visited them in those days tell that to see Mr. and Mrs. Partridge together was to be aware of the harmony of their minds and outlook. Each was the complement of the other. Their devotion was palpable without parade. We live in an age of triangle stories—at least in fiction—but all the world loves a lover. And that is one reason why the Partridges are remembered in the north and why, gone from these scenes, the memory of them endures. We cherish the stories of the great lovers of the world, and do so without shame. We think tenderly of Orpheus and Euridice, of Romeo and Juliet. There is something in the stories of these that stands to us as symbolic of the love that endures. Modern men and women, in modern clothes, building their homes, talking over where to plant the cabbages and the dahlias conferring over the bank's balance note at the month's end, opening tins of canned goods, washing up the dishes together—they also have their romance. In the most ancient love-stories it was dragons the hero subdued. Other dragons are fought today. Indeed, are not the dragons of the old myths but symbolic? That is one reason why the story of these two, as time passes, becomes a treasured legend of the north. Their happiness in their romance was not a selfish quality but one that was overflowing and that those who came in contact with them shared.

This place at the back of beyond became famous. All the world over were travellers who, when in the mood of remembering, would be back in spirit there.

The voice of their host would be again in their cars. His personality, his easy friendliness, they would recall. Early in 1930, just when navigation opened on the lakes, he was suddenly taken ill. Years of clambering in that upended country had told upon his heart. They got him out to White Horse and there, shortly after his arrival, he passed away. To his wife there was but one duty left, one labour—a labour of love and remembering; there she remained, keeping open house as he had done, for all who came. But with all her charm one had the feeling that she had another wish, unspoken, the wish to be with him again. It was at the back of her eyes, despite her kindly attention to her guests. Her friends thought it would be better if, for the next winter, she "came out," so, with the last boat, before the winter claimed the lakes, she left for White Horse and there, worn despite her rare spirit, and with her secret loneliness, the end came. Otto Partridge had not long to wait for the company of his life's companion in the further travels of the spirit.

Miss Dalton, who had some time earlier gone back to England, expressed a view shared by many — one may say shared by all in the north who know these two: that the old place might not be left to nature to obliterate. It had become a paint of pilgrimage during their lives. Why, just because they were not to be seen there in the flesh, should it be forsaken?

For those who have not yet been there, Ben-My-Chree — when they know its story — must have a quality as of these other places to which people make pilgrimage for the sake of a dream that has been beautifully lived. If any ghosts haunt that room where the flags—the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack—are draped side by side on the well in evidence of amity between the nations who share the north-land, be sure they are kindly ghosts. And round that lonely house in the heart of the hushed wilderness, for these two whom oven death kept but a little while from each other, is the garden that they loved, for a memorial.

Editor's Notes on Ben-My-Chree:

The author of the previous story is unknown, but he wrote another description of Kate managing Ben_My-Chree on her own, which would have been in the summer of 1931. That story, called, "Lady of the Wilderness," was written in the present tense, while Kate was still living. This means the

Ben-My-Chree during the 1920s. Swanson River in foreground.
[Yukon Archives photo, MacBride Museum Collection}

author made at least two trips to Ben-My-Chree and wrote these descriptions in 1931.

Otto Partridge's original prospecting partner was Ludwig Swanson.

In the avalanche described by the writer, Stanley McLellan and his wife were killed. They were peeling potatoes in their cabin and it was said that when they were found, one held a knife and the other a potato.

Otto Partridge was 75 when he died. Kate followed him five months later, in January, 1931. After they were were buried in Whitehorse, the White Pass & Yukon Route (WP&RR) company bought the land and buildings from the B.C. government, even though the Partridges had never gained title to it. Ludwig Swanson stayed on at Ben-My-Chree and White Pass hired people to look after the gardens and to greet visitors. The *S.S. Tutshi* made its final voyage to the site in 1955 when the company shut down its lake voyages. New, all-weather roads made the sternwheelers uncompetetive for freight and passengers, as they would make the famous railroad to Skagway redundant 30 years later.

The *S.S. Tutshi* burned at Carcross in 1990. Some say she was set afire by vandals; others think Parks Canada employees left paint-soaked rags in a pail on the deck. The *Tutshi,* besides hauling passengers and freight to Ben-My-Chree and the Engineer Mine, also connected to Atlin Lake via a small railway. Another lake boat then carried on to Atlin.

To feed the steam engines on the two boats and in the locomotive for almost 40 years, almost every tree in the district was cut down for fuel. The forest has since grown back more lush than before.

A small lake has been named after Lord Egerton. The glacier-fed river

One of the buildings remaining at Ben-My-Chree. Photo taken in 1999 by Rob Cummings of Whitehorse.

that flows past Ben-My-Chree has been named after Ludwig Swanson and there is a small creek running into the west arm of Bennett Lake named Partridge Creek.

The Ben-My-Chree property is privately owned now, although the owner is said to allow visitors who don't linger too long. Some of the old buildings survive but deteriorate with the passing seasons. It is difficult to get into the property by boat because the harbour is almost filled in by silt.

The harmonium Kate Partridge loved to play is in the MacBride Museum in Whitehorse.

Sources:

-An article in *Beaver Magazine*, Spring, 1984, by Leslie Cole

-A typed manuscript from the 1930s, author unknown, about Kate Partridge

-Photos and descriptions from Rob Cummings in Whitehorse

-Eric Ervine of Atlin, B.C. You can find colour photos and an excellent article on Ben-My-Chree at his website:
http://www.atlinhistory.com

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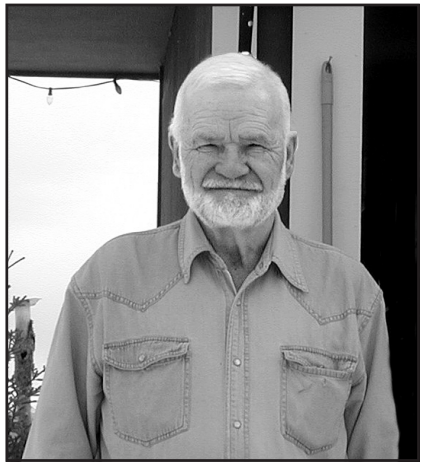
Visitors to Ben-My-Chree, probably in the late 1920s or in the summer of 1930. Otto and Kate are seated slightly to the right of the centre of the crowd. [Yukon Archives photo, Brooks Collection]

Neil Wright: A Right On Yukoner

By Mike Craigen



Neil Wright

Neil Wright likes the line, "Get living or get dying," from the movie Shawshank Redemption. Wright's life has centered on the "Get living."

Wright, in his 70's, bears a striking resemblance to Ernest Hemingway. He is calm, reflective, loves to read and rolls out a warm laugh in recounting a life of railroading, soldiering, engineering and living in The Yukon for 50 years.

"I started railroading as a redcap (a baggage handler). I was very young, " states Wright. He was 16.

A job in the Regina train yards progressed to a wiper (cleaning engines in the round house) and then to a fireman. "Nobody wanted to stay in the yards," says Wright. Being a man of action, he soon moved aboard trains and worked throughout Saskatchewan. "Yes, I met a lot of high speed characters on the prairies," states Wright. Railroading on the flatlands was much faster and exciting than the slow winding track through the Rocky Mountains.

The winters, especially blizzards, were more severe in Saskatchewan than anything Wright experienced in The Yukon. "When the double tracked plows, pushed by three 195,000 pound engines, hit a snow drift, the whole train would just tremble," remembers Wright. Huge sheets of canvas covered the engines and the coal tender to keep out the snow. Communication was a series of whistles. Wright was no stranger to work. He often shovelled between seven to eight tons of coal during a shift.

"When you have a meet (two trains approaching each other), it can be scary. I remember standing in the doorway ready to jump," recounts Wright. Amazingly enough, he has never been in a railroad accident. There were several near misses as cars raced trains to see who would be first over a crossing.

On the lighter side, Wright, with a broad smile on his face, talks about Regina Beach. On Sundays, a special train took passengers to this favourite summer attraction. As a crewmember on the train, " We got to look at all the pretty girls. The crew spent all day out there."

"Them were the days," says Wright, "And then I joined the military. I don't know why I joined, something different I guess."

During the early 1940's, it was common for Wright to see as many as seven sections (trains) each day transporting Canadian soldiers across the prairies. These trains were heading to Halifax, the major Canadian Atlantic port used for ships sailing overseas to England. Soon enough, Wright was among those soldiers heading off to war.

Arriving in Nova Scotia in 1943, Wright was too young to go overseas and had to wait for written permission from his parents. He sailed on the New Amsterdam along with 9,000 other soldiers. Working in the kitchen, Wright helped serve meals to 6,000 men, the other 3,000 being too seasick to eat. "You can imagine what the bathrooms looked like," exclaims Wright.

"Oddly enough," says Wright, "the Prairie boys never got sick."

In January, he and his shipmates landed in Greenwich, Scotland during a snowstorm and "the ladies served us tea," Wright fondly remembers. Because of his previous experience, Wright was attached to the Royal Engineers Railroad Detachment. Soon, he was sent to Belgium and then on to Germany.

"Soldiers do what they do best, but I won't go there," says Wright. War in Europe was pretty well over by the time Wright arrived on the continent.

"The devastation was just like you see in the movies," remarks Wright. He served as part of the Army of Occupation, alongside German engineers who were just "ordinary fellows." Wright worked on various reconstruction projects in Germany.

In 1974, Wright returned to Europe with his wife and was absolutely

Neil and Florence Wright at their Marsh Lake home. [SH photo]

amazed at the reconstruction of the towns. He even stayed at some of the same hotels, where he had been during his war service.

"I think the army was a good thing. I was at the right age. A little discipline is a good thing, especially when you are 17 years old," says Wright.

Returning across the Atlantic aboard a luxury liner pressed into service during the war as a soldier transport ship, Wright eventually arrived in Halifax. He took a train to Regina, where he was discharged on June 26, 1946. "There were no parades. I got my pay and went back to work for Canadian Pacific," states Wright.

Things had changed on the railroad with "brand spanking new General Electric Diesels replacing the coal-fired engines," Wright remembers. "There were still firemen, but they had nothing to do but look out the window."

In Regina, in 1951, Wright stayed in the same rooming house as John Watt, another long time Yukoner, who had just returned from The Yukon.

John said, "Neil, it might be a good idea to change residence." In November 1951, Wright recounts, "I drove a convertible, if you please, up the Alaska Highway." His wife Florence, whom he was destined to meet in Whitehorse, remembers, "The convertible was a pretty thing." It was an Austin A90 with twin carbs. Driving the Alaska Highway was an amazing feat considering the road was less than eight years old and not straight or black topped as it is today.

Wright, on arriving in Whitehorse, found lodging at the Whitehorse Inn.

"I thought I would get a job on the railroad, "said Wright. After a visit to the Whitehorse Legion to find out "the news of the day," Wright decided to apply for a job at the airbase. He started working in the heating plant as a 3rd class engineer. This job lead to work on heating systems in smaller communities such as Snag, Aishihik and Canyon Creek. He remembers delivering the all important movie films from community to community. This was before television and videos.

"When the Air Force left, everybody said Whitehorse was doomed," states Wright. "We are still here."

A man of many talents, Wright turned his hand to running a sawmill at Two Horse Creek. While on the job, he fell into the rotating saw. By the time he arrived at the hospital,

he had "a boot full of blood" and required 45 stitches to repair the damage to his back and right arm.

Wright then went on to employment with the Ministry of Transport fixing boilers and furnaces. During this time he traveled again to different communities in the Yukon. The only place he hasn't been to is Keno City. This still is on his agenda of things to do.

Pursuing more challenges and careers, Wright secured a job with the White Pass Petroleum Division Tank Farm on the night shift. This facility, (now no longer in existence) was located in Hillcrest. The complex housed 24 huge tanks each capable of holding 1,600,00 litres of various fuels. These huge tanks were bolted together and filled to a height of seven meters.

Wright started out as the third man at the tank farm. Within six months, he found himself in the position of "Headman." The boss retired and second in charge went trucking. This lifestyle appealed to Wright and he stayed with White Pass (along with his little black dog, Sam) for 17 years from 1968 to 1985.

While at the tank farm, Wright had to monitor the flow of fuels coming in through the pipeline from Skagway, Alaska. He recorded the number of barrels flowing into the tanks (usually about 100 barrels an hour) and phoned the information to Skagway on an hourly basis. There was always fuel in

Taken at Rhiene, Germany, late 1944-early 1945, just outside our shops. I am the guy on the left. The engineer's name was Blackburn, came from some place down east. Our main job was hauling supplies and troop trains going in or coming out. We were the 2nd Canadian Railway Operating Co. attached to the 3rd Canadian Division.

the four-inch line. When identifying different fuels for various tanks the specific gravity was extremely helpful. Each liquid from diesel, furnace oil, gasoline etc. had a distinct specific gravity. When the approximate number of gallons of a particular fuel had passed through the pipe, sample tests were done. Fuels then were diverted to their respective tanks.

When not at the tank farm, Wright was somewhere along the 85 miles of pipeline stretching from the tank farm to the White Pass. In fact, he walked the whole line a couple of times as part of periodic inspections. Packing a revolver to scare off bears and to signal a rail motorcar driver for pickup in the evening, he would walk all day.

"I was looking for dents," states Wright. The pipeline ran right beside the track and as a caterpillar cleared the line after big snowstorms, the blade often came into contact with the pipeline.

"Sometimes the pipe was cracked," remembers Wright.

"The best one was when we had a break at Lake Bennet and we had to dig holes every ten feet trying to find the leak. The boss promised a bottle of whisky to the person who found the leak," remembers Wright. When the leak was found, a large amount of fuel had flowed into Lake Bennet under the ice and formed into a thick mass. The only solution to the problem was to "set the lake on fire" with a tiger torch.

"It burned with such a roar and with clouds of black smoke, not even in the war did I see such a sight," exclaims Wright. "I think there is a picture of the fire in the Environmental Office in Whitehorse." On that day, the temperature was -55 degrees Fahrenheit.

In warmer weather, the cleanup of spilled fuel was done by putting out booms on the water and collecting the oil. Wright took courses dealing with such situations.

Repairs were often temporary; a 4-inch clamp was installed at the break and left on all winter until the next summer. Wright also recalls doing pressure tests on the line along the White Pass Skagway docks leading to the tanks on shore. The fuels were pumped up to the summit and from there they flowed downhill to Whitehorse.

Accidents were rare, but Wright remembers one close call. He was drilling through the pipeline looking for a frozen section. After pulling out the bit, a stream of oil at 400 psi (pounds per square inch) exploded out the hole and went under his finger nail and up into his wrist and arm. Wright drove himself back to the hospital in Whitehorse. Dr. Johnson said to Wright, "If I cut off your finger, you will receive $2000 compensation and if I just fix it, you will get $500."

Wright replied, "Fix it, it's my trigger finger."

Another close call, of sorts, happened when Wright and a colleague were riding a rail motorcar. They stopped to enjoy the scenery and Wright decided to give a few moose calls. Soon a huge bull moose charged up to the car and reared up on his hind legs. "I think he was in love with the red motorcar," recalls Wright.

In addition to Skagway, there were four camps housing section crews. These were located at White Pass, Bennett, Log Cabin, and Pennington.

Wright chuckles as he remembers Bennet, "We ate steak and the tourists ate stew."

Railroad section crews sometimes had petty arguments. There was a crack in the rail line right in front of the train station in Carcross and two crews argued about whose responsibility it was to fix it. "I think it is still there today," says Wright.

"The bleakest camp along the whole line was at White Pass high in the mountains. Five guys stayed up there in a seven-meter trailer for a month. "It was like working on the moon with the meanest weather in the world. We were tough then. We had good food all the time, sent up from Bennet," reminisces Wright.

Thinking back about former snowstorms in Saskatchewan, Wright draws a comparison to the Yukon. One evening, he hitched a ride on a train with seven engines and 44 ore cars down to Skagway. He recollects how the engines, cars and caboose would give an earth-shattering jar when hitting huge snowdrifts.

Wright remembers Paul Cyr (his father came to the Yukon during the Gold Rush of '98) who was a cat operator on the tracks during the winter.

Replacing pipeline on the Fraser River bridge, two miles south of the Canadian Customs at Fraser, 1974. We replaced a lot of pipe that summer: it was the year we had to test the pipeline so we could put the automatic pump station at White Pass on the line. The line had to hold 1700 lbs. for 24 hours; it was a hydrostatic test. During the testing we broke the pipeline 17 times, replaced lots of pipe. The guys in the picture are Murray Lintick, Bud Twigge & Red Hull. [Neil Wright photo]

Paul, with nerves of steel, drove the cat equipped with a snow blade across a 200-foot high trestle bridge in order to clear the snow. Sometimes he did this in blinding snowstorms. An almost phantom co-worker walking in blizzard conditions a few feet ahead of the cat guided him. "Paul Cyr was a great cat operator," declares Wright.

There were good times, memorable times and fun times. There were lots of parties and fights when section crews socialized after hours. Wright reaches back into his memory bank and recalls one evening when a "bunch of the boys were whooping it up" at the Caribou Hotel. These energetic young men were staying at the hotel and unwinding after a hard day of work. The proprietor threatened to throw them out if they didn't settle down.

The rowdies in fact turned the tables and threw the young proprietor out of his own hotel. They locked the door and said, "We will let you back in if you're good!" They eventually unlocked the door. The proprietor went on to become a very successful businessman in the Yukon and now sits as a recently elected member in The Yukon Legislative Assembly.

As well as leading a busy life on the job, Wright takes a great deal of satisfaction in the personal side of his life. Wright married Florence and together they raised three children. The Wrights have satisfying memories of building a log house at Mile 909 along the Alaska Highway near McCrae. "We just built it," recalls Wright. "There wasn't any paper work then." He remembers a heavy snowstorm in September when he was building the house. Friends came out and helped him and Florence put on the roof.

"These were great times, it was nice to be young," sighs Wright.

In 1962, the Wrights moved to another home (now the site of Whitehorse Travel) in downtown Whitehorse. "We loved it there," they agreed. Everything was close, including the Post Office, (today, the Elijah Smith Federal Building) Whitehorse Elementary School for the kids, Taylor and Drury, Northern Commercial, Foodfair, the Jim Light Arena (now the site of Sport Yukon and Whitehorse Recreation Department)

Wright's workday started early at the White Pass. He would be home at 3:00 pm. He often made supper for his family and wife. Evenings were quality family time often centered around the rink.

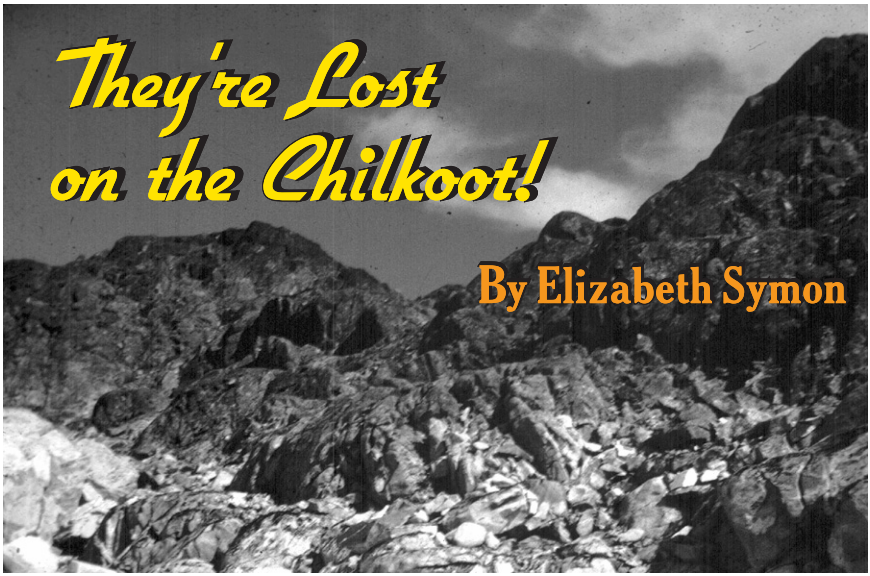
A few years ago, Wright retired at age 63. He has wonderful memories of every aspect of his life and in particular of the years lived in the Yukon.

"They were all good years, especially with White Pass," exclaims Wright. "The pipeline was the best job in the world."

"Wasn't it nice to ride that train from Whitehorse to Skagway," joins in his wife Florence.

Wright now lives at Army Beach, on the shores of Marsh Lake. He enjoys wonderful sunrises, sunsets and northern lights. A variety of birds make their home in the many birdhouses and feeders on the property. Wright continues to read. He hikes daily with his wife. A keen competitor, Wright is a medal winner at the Seniors' Games.

With such an active lifestyle, Wright is still very much in pursuit of the "Get living."



They're Lost on the Chilkoot!

By Elizabeth Symon

Editor's Note:
In the last issue (No. 23) we published a story called "Climbing the Chilkoot—the Wrong Way, by the well-known Canadian writer, Jim Lotz. Here is another account of the same trip, by the wife of one of the climbers.

When my husband Hamish (Jim) Symon told me he was going to hike over the Chilkoot I was only vaguely aware of what lay ahead of him and his three companions till I read of the difficulties and dangers encountered by those who climbed the hazardous Trail in '98, 1898, that is. The hike was being planned in the summer of 1963, long before we had to clarify to which '98 we referred.

Hiking, mountaineering, skiing, boating, fishing, swimming, all appealed to Hamish. This trip would be the ultimate challenge. At that time our children were too young to participate in such activities, but later they did, and still do. I was the stay-at-home Mum, straight out from England to the Yukon by way of New Brunswick, as I've already mentioned in "Posted to Whitehorse," published in Issue #20.

After drawing up his lists and packing, Hamish was ready to join his companions, kitted out with suitable clothing, food, and other necessities, including his recorder, mouth organ, surgical needles and sutures, and his trusty 303 rifle.

"Back on Sunday!" they told me. They'd return by rail after the successful climb. In those days there was no road and the train ran all the way back to Whitehorse from Skagway with a stop at Lake Bennett.

I remembered the magnificent lunch at Lake Bennett when the children and I had taken the round trip by train earlier that summer, with the moosemeat and other Northern delicacies and those homemade berry pies.

I was sure the menfolk would welcome the generous helpings of real food after their tinned and dehydrated camp supplies.

While Hamish was away, life went on as usual on Dieppe Drive till the day he was due back from the trip. Everything stood in readiness for the Welcome Home: lashings of hot water for showers, clean clothes, and supper waiting. Our car, the export model Austin A-40 was gassed up to meet the train at the depot downtown. But no weary footsore hikers were among the descending passengers.

Instead of the ignition I hit the panic button.

Where were they? Remember, there were no cell phones then. No one went hiking the Trail as they do now. What dangers had the men encountered? Bears and other wild animals roamed the mountains. There was also the strong possibility of accidents. (In Jim Lotz' story, Hamish slid down a glacier and hit a boulder, and his three companions thought he'd broken both legs.)

In my imagination the hikers were all incapacitated, lying helpless in some crevas, with bears salivating above them and vultures hovering overhead. Or had they been overcome by heat and subsequent thirst?

"They're lost on the Chilkoot!"

When I voiced my fears to the Colonel I knew the Army would be ready to go into action. They had all the necessary equipment to hand and were well trained in rescue procedures. RCAF reconnaissance planes were available at Hillcrest. In peace time emergencies are a welcome change from routine.

And in Service families there is a strong bond of sisterhood. My neighbours Eyla, Vera and Bea rallied round and a babysitter was provided for my two young children and I was lured down into the basement next-door. During the long cold Yukon winter this basement was put to good use for wine production. I was invited, no, pressurized, to sample all the varieties of wine, made from dried fruits and red and white grapes. Try this one, they urged, and this, as more and more generous samples were bestowed upon me. "Where is Hamish?" no longer seemed an issue, as I was gradually losing all sense of reality, and thus anaesthetised I no longer had a care in the world.

The kind ladies then took me

home and made sure the children and I were fed and tucked up for the night and quietly slipped away.

And out in the wilds the four men who had missed the train they had planned to catch (the only one of the day) camped out overnight and rode back the next afternoon, to be met by the reception committee (with me, now happily sober), relieved to see them back all in one piece.

I should add Hamish's way of descending a mountain on the seat of his pants served him well on Ben Nevis (in Scotland) and on our local slopes here on Vancouver Island, as his hiking shorts bore witness.

And I am still a stay-at-home, who writes rather than participates in these adventures. If there are any inaccuracies in this account, it's because I am relying on memories of some 40 years ago.

P.S. Our Camp Takhini reporter Harry Fell noted that when 'Doc' sewed up the tear for Jim Lotz the latter was too grateful to hurt his feelings by telling him he'd sewn his pants to his underwear. Hamish was called "The Flying Doctor" as he had just returned from his tour of duty at Alert on Ellesmere Island in the Northwest Territories before setting off on this latest adventure.

On the Chilkoot Trail, August, 1963. L-R: Jim Lotz (with the torn pants), Dr. Dave Kinloch, Rod Crook. Inset above: Hamish Symon with his beloved (and unregistered) 3:03 rifle. [Hamish Symon photo]

Doctoring in the Yukon And N.W.T. 1963-64

By "Jim" Hamish Lovat Symon

I spent two years in the Yukon as an Army doctor in the days when the Northwest Highway System came under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Armed Forces.

In early 1962 1 was working at the large Army base at Gagetown, New Brunswick, on the east coast of Canada when I received a posting to proceed to Whitehorse with my family and effects.

The medical staffing of the Military Hospital there then consisted of a surgeon, an anaesthetist, and myself. There were other doctors for the civilian and native population of Whitehorse. I looked after the servicemen's sick parade, the health of their dependents, and delivered the babies born to the Army and Air Force wives. It was a pleasure to work in the well-equipped new 110 bed facility situated on the outskirts of town, and we shared emergency duties, so that there were always two doctors on call at all times.

People in the Takhini Army camp were friendly and welcomed us "cheechakos," but I was puzzled by the way they referred to the rest of Canada as "The Outside," till we experienced the isolation felt during the long cold Yukon winters.

Most of the emergencies seen were common elsewhere, but I have chosen ones to show the kind we had to deal with. One thing in our favour was that all service men and their wives and dependents had to pass stiff medical tests before they were posted to the Yukon and they were essentially a healthy lot.

With the children, the common illnesses encountered were upper respiratory infections and many of them were due to viruses. I got my first experience of an acute laryngo-tracheo-bronchitis and was amazed to find how rapidly this condition came on and progressed to the stage where a tracheotomy was required. Central heating may have had something to do with the high occurrence of croup, considering the vast differential in temperature indoors and out in the winter.

I was fortunate in that all emergency calls to the hospital at night brought a chauffeur-driven heated car for me door to door. I didn't have to deal with a dead battery, "square" tires or gears frozen into the position they'd been left the day before.

On one unforgettable occasion we had a sub-dural haemorrhage to cope with. An Army sergeant had tripped on his own doorstep and injured his head. The skull X-ray showed a hairline fracture and it was soon evident that there was internal bleeding, as he became unconscious with unequal pupils, a slowing pulse and mounting blood pressure. Due to this deteriorating condition he required surgical intervention. The doctor who would have

to operate on him was a general surgeon with no experience of brain surgery but what else could we do? The nearest large hospital with such facilities was located in Vancouver or Edmonton, 1500 miles away, and the patient would not have survived the journey.

At any rate it was decided to operate and fortunately the bleeding vessel was located with the second burr hole. I was assisting at the operation and won't forget the immediate change in the man's condition once the intracranial pressure was relieved. The patient, I'm glad to say, made a complete recovery except for some deafness on the affected side.

According to Army rules, any increase in one's family meant an increase in the free luggage allowance on the way out to a new posting with one's souvenirs of the North. Perhaps this accounted in part for the number of babies I helped to deliver.

On the medical side there was an interesting case of starvation and survival of a Dew line worker and his passenger who were rescued after over a month in the wilderness under severe winter weather conditions, with scant food supplies and limited shelter. I saw them brought to hospital,

Whitehorse Military Hospital staff. Front row centre: Dr. Tim Carey, Dr. Owen Randall, Dr. "Jim" Hamish Symon. Others unidentified.

battered and frost-bitten, both having lost some 50 pounds in weight, but as the girl said, 'Never mind that, we're alive!' It was a miracle they had survived. They were not my patients, but I was working at the hospital, as I mentioned, when they were there.

All too soon it was time to leave the Yukon and go to the most northerly inhabited place in the world, Alert, NWT, reached by a Hercules aircraft of Transport Command, flying two days north of Edmonton and several hundred miles north of the magnetic pole. I was there to attend to the Army Signal corps men stationed there.

Everything on the base had had to be airlifted in, including the diesel generators. At this latitude there are no trees, shrubs or bushes, just dwarf grasses and lichens. In spite of this, the area in the brief summer there is carpeted with wild flowers and there is an abundance of wild animals. I saw a lot of arctic foxes and also a herd of musk ox.

The main medical problems at this base were provision of clean drinking water and disposal of waste. One would imagine that water reservoirs at this latitude would be uncontaminated but that was not so. The drinking water had a high coliform count and had to be chlorinated.

Alert had been used as a base camp for several expeditions to the North Pole, including the successful one of Admiral Peary in 1909.

There was little medical work to do and I spent my free time looking at relics of camps of the Arctic explorers, and in the library searching for information on the subject. Many of the early maps of the Canadian North were produced by the British Admiralty, as they tried many times to reach the North Pole. They tried to do this on foot, pulling sledges over the pack ice—a Herculean effort.

After two weeks' stay on Ellesmere Island I was glad to be on my way south again.

The two places to me were a great contrast, Alert being cold, stark and desolate, and the Yukon, friendly and beautiful. Of the two, I preferred the Yukon and was sorry when it was time to leave at the end of my tour of duty.

The Yukon can be hard and challenging but it tends to bring out the best in people and like Robert Service, I'd highlight the freshness, the freedom, the farness, yes, I was stuck on it all!

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Editor's Note:
Elizabeth Symon edited her late husband's notes to complete this memoir.

Stories My Father Told Me

By Edward R. Olive

THE CAMPING TRIP

My Grandfather, W.H.T. Olive, went north and up the White Pass in the year of I898. He did not go for gold, but to build three steam ships on Lake Bennett. He did do that job, under some very harsh conditions. Later he wrote a book that he called "The Trail Of 98". There are copies in the archives in Victoria, B.C., as well as one in Atlin, B.C. He brought his family up to Atlin where they lived for several years. The stories that I have written here are partly taken from the book and as well as stories my father told me about his experiences in that wild country.

THE CAMPING TRIP

I could hardly believe it! I was packing to go on a one- week camping trip with my Dad and some of his friends. Not only that, we were going to pan for gold and try our luck in several of the creeks that we would be exploring. We would be travelling some very dangerous country, but I was fully prepared, as I had been on several day trips and a couple of over nighters with Dad. I had full confidence in my Dad. My mother never had that same amount of confidence, so it took a lot of convincing to get mother to give her permission for me to go with Dad. His will finally prevailed, but just barely. The big reason that I was chosen to go on this trip is that, I was one of the only human beings that "Hector" our pack mule liked. It was more like loved. Many cold, snowy, winter nights I crept out of our house and put a large blanket over Hector, and would snuggle up with him for the night. It, in the long run, was warmer with Hector than in my own bed. So some of these things, like rubdowns, sugar, and his favourite—carrots truly endeared me to him. It was well known in the area that Hector would follow me anywhere that I asked him, even to hell some said.

Our travelling companions were named Harry, and Max. They were both ex-employees of my Dad's when he was the manager of "The Bennett Lake and Klondyke Navigation Co." The company built and launched three steamboats on Lake Bennett back in '98 during the height of the gold rush. Having been on the trail together so many times and climbing over the "Chilcoot-White Pass" both in winter and summer and having faced all the hardships could be imagined, they, all three of them, became fast and close friends, although Dad was always known as the boss!

Having helped to get Hector loaded, I made sure that the load was evenly distributed; otherwise he would not move one step until it was balanced. We took all the basics, a small tent stove, food, and panning equipment, which

we needed to fulfill the purpose of our trip. My mother Sarah put in a change of clothes for me and several changes of underwear. As she always told us boys, "What if you get killed! Do you want the doctor to see your dirty underwear?" My mother was a good basic person, practical as can be, and so full of love for us children that it made us feel good just to be around her.

We left Atlin Lake at around five in the morning, hoping to make it to our first campsite before it got dark. As I look back, I could still see mom and my brother, Trew, waving one last goodbye to us. Trew is my older brother by two years and he felt strongly that it should have been him that was going on this trip. Trew and I were very good friends but I must admit that he was a bit of a buffoon. As an example, not long ago, we were building a tree house. He was trying to remove a branch while he sat on the wrong side of it while proceeding to saw it off. Of coarse he fell to the ground and which was about 20 feet below. He was hurt quite badly.

We travelled at a good pace all day, even though it was mostly up hill, and some small snow storms did not slow us down. Dad wanted to stop early so we would have the camp well prepared before it got too dark. Max and I had our camp well along to being ready so Dad and Harry grabbed their gold pans and headed for the creek to try their luck. Dad and Harry did get some colour but nothing to write home about. After we had all finished a good supper and I had done the dishes, Dad and his friends started telling stories about their adventures in Skaguay and on their trips over the White Pass. One story that Dad told was about the time he had to go into Skaguay to pick up the payroll for his crew. He went to the Bank of Montreal who were holding the money for him. After picking up the cash, he noticed that two of Soapy Smith's men were following him around town and they, of course, knew that he had a great deal of money on his person. So Dad devised a plan to get out of town without these crooks knowing that he was gone. Harry, who happened to be in town on other business, would give him a hand. Dad pretended to go to bed early—the two crooks were fooled by that ploy. Harry came to the room and told Dad that "all was clear, the crooks are sitting in the bar, drinking the night away." So Dad, fully dressed and prepared for the trail, gun at the ready, set out for Lake Bennett.

Father felt that he was not safe, even though he had eluded the two in Skaguay. Knowing how Soapy worked, always hedging his bet, father, as he hurried along the trail, kept an eye out for trouble and his pistol ready to take out and fire in a moment. For some time he felt as though someone was close behind him. To test that feeling, he stopped behind a tree, and waited for a few minutes. Shortly, a rather large man came up the trail at a fast pace. Dad yelled at him "who goes there, and what is your business!" With that the stranger drew a pistol and fired a shot. Seeing that Dad was already behind a tree, the bullet smacked harmlessly into it. My father being a deadly shot, fired and saw the man's arm go limp and his gun drop to the ground. The stranger then turned and ran down the trail as fast as he could go. Carrying on to Lake Bennett, without further incident and the money all accounted for, he paid all his men their full wages. Father added

at the end of his story, "I could have shot that crook right between the eyes if I so wished, but it is not my way to kill, if I can avoid it at all." With the end of the story, we all went to bed.

On the fourth day of our trip, we were climbing a very steep grade and on a very narrow trail. I was in the lead, Hector was right behind me, and I had a good grip on his lead rope, in case he started to act up on this dangerous part of the climb. Just as I rounded a corner on the trail, Hector stopped dead in his tracks. Harry was the first to speak. "Hey kid! Get that mule moving, you are holding everything up." All the begging and pulling that I could do would not get him to move even one inch.

While I was standing there trying to figure out my next move, we all heard a thunderous noise and it seemed like one half of the mountain was coming down in front of us. Just as the slide struck, a large rock headed right for me. Hector took two steps backward quickly, which pulled me almost clear of the slide. One rock slightly grazed my leg though, which removed some skin, and left a slight injury on my knee. Harry came up to us later and said, "I am sorry, Hector, and you too, kid! Both of you saved all our lives back there." Both Max and Dad thanked us as well. After we made camp that night, Dad told us some stories of how animals, have a sort of a sixth sense of a coming disaster, and more than once have saved human lives.

We mostly travelled and panned the creeks. On our route we tried Spruce, Birch, Ruby, St. Mary's and McGee Creeks, just to name a few. All would yield some gold, but nothing very large, not like I had dreamed of, finding big nuggets and becoming rich. That same dream, I am sure is what motivated all those thousands of people to face all the many hardships that they did to get that gold in I897-98.

After travelling for some time we came to Pine Creek. This is where a fellow by the name of Miller made his original discovery and began the gold rush to the Atlin area in I899. The gold that he took out of there was a lot more pure than the stuff taken from around Dawson and the Yukon River creeks. Miller had discovered this gold bearing stream some years earlier but never said much about it because he was not convinced that it was a big deal; also he was prone to keeping things to himself.

It was Dad and Harry's turn to set up camp so Max and I went down to the creek and began to do a little panning before it got dark. I had been testing the creek bed for about one-half an hour, when I decided to take a few shovels full of dirt out of a nearby bank. On the second pan that I tested I could not believe my eyes. NUGGETS. LARGE GOLD NUGGETS!!!—the very thing that I had been dreaming about. I yelled as loud as I could, "Max, Dad, Harry come quick I have found the mother lode" They all came running up to where I was and wanted to know if I was hurt or what. Dad was the first to spot the large nuggets in my pan and in awhile got me to settle down a bit. In all there were seven large nuggets found that day. We dug into the bank until after dark but never found any more gold. It was my lucky day!

At breakfast the next morning, Dad noticed that I was limping quite badly and said to me, “Come over here son and let me look at that leg.” Dad looked very concerned and said to everyone “We will be cutting our trip short; the boy’s leg is quite infected, and we must head for home.” We had about $I200 worth of fine gold as well as the seven nuggets that I found, which was worth an estimated $700 so we put it all in my leather pouch and headed for home.

Dad insisted that I ride on Hector’s back all the way home as he did not want me to use my infected leg unnecessarily. As we arrived at the point on the trail where we parted company, I took the gold pouch off my belt so I could share up with friends. My heart almost stopped. Except for my nuggets, the pouch was empty. From what we figured out, the gold pouch kept rubbing on Hector’s back and wore a hole in it so all the fine gold gradually fell out, but left the nuggets inside. Dad and I talked it over and we both felt it was only fair that we give Max and Harry the nuggets. With a sad heart I handed them over. They both refused at first, but when they realized that I was serious, they took them and left.

Several weeks later Max and Harry knocked on our door and asked us to come outside. Max came up to us and said, “We had these little mementos made to remind us of our trip to the gold creeks.” With that they gave Dad and I a necklace made of the gold nuggets that I had given them—they even had a small one for Hector. They also gave me a ring that was made from two of the nuggets melted down. As they headed up the road, my Dad watched them go and said “Only in the north county can you know people of that calibre and witness such love and respect from your fellow man.”

A miner's cabin on a creek near Atlin, ca 1930s. [Art Smith collection]

They Moiled for Copper

By Dick McKenna

Dick McKenna, author of this story, was born in Whitehorse. As a teenager growing up in Hillcrest during the late 1960s and later in the Copper King area, he (and sometimes his brothers) explored the hinterland—known as the "Copperbelt"—surrounding these small subdivisions.

As Dick said later, "Way too much happened here—the relics, the rotting cabins and mine timbers, the rusty iron and compressors, the long forgotten, overgrown roads.... I started researching in the Yukon Archives and among old Whitehorse Star newspapers and wow, what a story came to unfold."

From his explorations on foot and by vehicle and his later research, Dick probably knows more about the people, the minerals, the mines, the history and general layout of the Copperbelt than anyone. Here is the first draft of his story, which will be expanded into a book later this year. **S.H.**

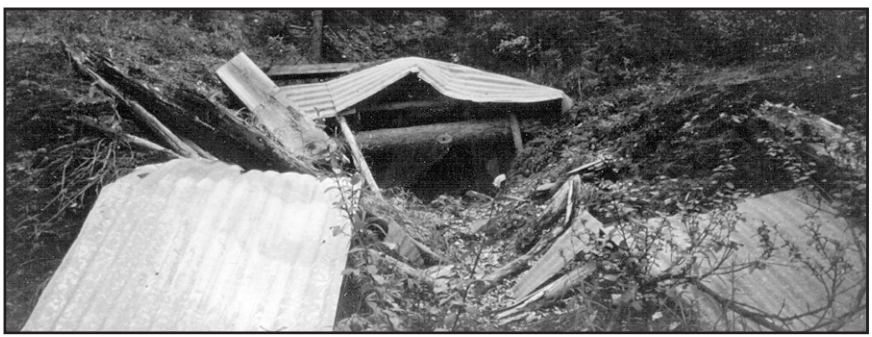
Above: Miners on a smoke break at the Pueblo Mine, ca. 1913. [MacBride Museum photo]

The history of the mining of copper ore in the Whitehorse Copper belt predates that of the city itself. In the fall of 1897, prospectors who were lucky enough to get in early over the coastal passes in the great stampede to Dawson discovered ledges of almost pure copper while hunting in the vicinity of the White Horse Rapids. But, with "rivers of gold" just some 460 miles of easy sailing downstream, who would stake a measly copper claim? None did.

However, the following year, in July of 1898, Pembroke, Ontario native, John McIntyre, and Kentuckian, William Preston Grainger, would take the honour. Both men were already pioneers in the true sense of the word of the remote Northwest. McIntyre, had been employed in the mines around San Bernardino, California, before embarking in 1895 on a steamer from San Francisco to St. Michael, Alaska, at the mouth of the Yukon River. He then worked and prospected his way up river ending up in '97 at Circle, Alaska, the pre-Dawson metropolis of the north. Grainger had prospected the Wheaton District of the Yukon as far back as 1895. Ironically, while thousands of "tenderfeet" were frantically making their way down the Yukon River in search of gold, these two northern pioneers were poling their way up the same river, past these gold-seekers to the wooded hills west of the rapids in search of a copper claim.

Once there, McIntyre and Grainger set out into the thick spruce forest and tangled underbrush to search these "ledges." It wasn't long before McIntyre spotted a rich outcrop of copper "oxide" on a limestone bluff overlooking a creek. This he would stake and he would call it the "Copper King." Grainger tied a claim on to the north calling his the "Copper Queen." The date was July 14th 1898. After a more thorough investigation of the claims, McIntyre's Copper King turned out to be the most promising and Grainger bought half interest for $1,000. Shortly thereafter, the two boarded a returning boat down the coast where they would spend a good portion of the winter at the Badminton Hotel in Vancouver, B.C. While there they had a grand old time, this being the first time the two had been "outside" in some years.

In the spring of 1899, after a healthy rest and the purchase of supplies, dynamite and hard rock mining implements, McIntyre and Grainger returned to the Copper King and proceeded to explore the lode. This was done by sinking a shaft at the top of the cliff and several hundred feet east of the face. While the duo were boring into the outcrop with hand steels, a newly-formed company called "The White Pass & Yukon Route Railway" was boring through the rugged coast mountains with jacklegs and pneumatics building a railway to the foot of the White Horse Rapids, four miles from the Copper King!



Caved-in adit at the Pueblo Mine. Many adits and shafts in similar condition dot the 100-square-mile "Copperbelt." [Dick McKenna photo, 1995]

This new development proved handy. By the time White Pass laid the final rail to the new town of White Horse, in July of 1900, Grainger and McIntyre had wrestled nine tons of high-grade bornite four and a half miles out of the hills where it awaited shipment. This would be the first shipment of hard-rock copper ore out of the territory. The Copper King, the first hard rock mine. The returns were impressive: 46 per cent copper with both gold and silver values, which would net the pair $776 after transport and smelter charges. Not bad in a day when a new tweed suit could be had for $10, a meal for 25 cents and a miner's pay was $6 a day. This was also in a day when a paying copper mine on the continent averaged five per cent copper ore.

What followed was "The Great Copper Rush of 1899 - 1900, a staking frenzy for hard rock that the Yukon in its infancy had never before witnessed, nor would it witness again, at least not until the famous Keno Hill silver-lead discoveries some 20 years later. Bankers, brokers, lawyers, teamsters, doctors, trappers, traders, merchants, and many more individuals with no less diverse background including cop and thief, scoured the hills in search of a copper claim of similar promise. This event can aptly be described as a sort of a mini- Klondike. Some, in fact most, of the participants of the event, were disgruntled "would be Klondikers," who were filtering back from Dawson after discovering that all the ground for miles around Dawson had been staked. Still others, upon reaching the foot of the rapids and hearing of the dire conditions in Dawson, dropped their golden dreams and headed into the wooded hills west of White Horse in search of a copper claim as consolation.

Most of the stakers wouldn't know what to do with a copper claim had

The remnants of a miner's home dug into the hillside. [Dick McKenna photo, 1995]

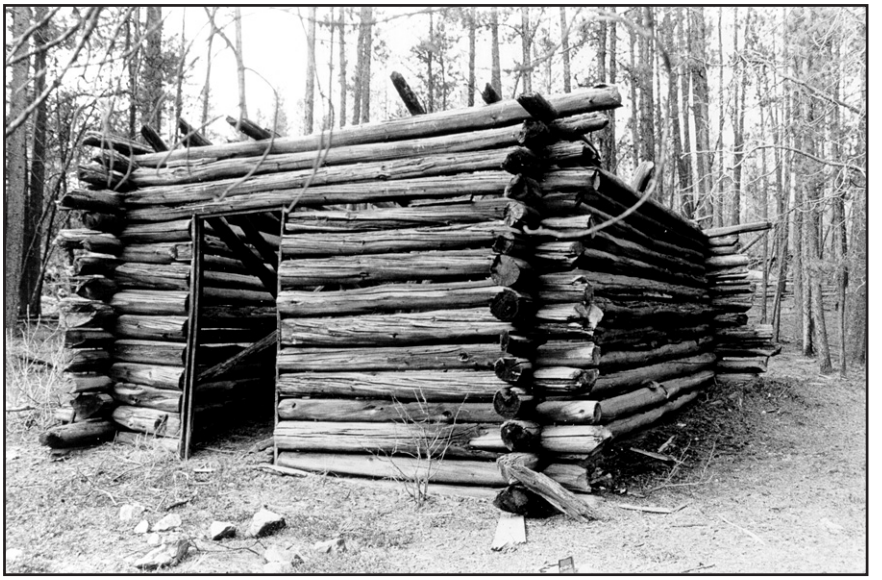
it dropped from the sky and to their feet. Most of the claims reflected this, being staked upon thickly forested expanses or bushy meadows with not a hint of copper showing and hundreds of feet to bedrock. Some, as their names would indicate, were chosen strictly for their view. Peacock Sunrise, Mountain Meadow and Lakeview being a few. Others had names reflecting hope, like the Rabbit's Foot and the Best Chance. Ah, the names, gotta love 'em. Names reflecting power and dominance like the War Eagle, the Iron Horse, the Big Chief and the Copper King. Names borrowed from loved ones left behind - the Elsa, the Ida, the Dorothy or the Valerie. Or names borrowed from homelands left behind - the Nevada, the Colorado, the Ontario, the Michigan. And still more with just nice names, like the Pueblo, the Blue Bird, the Blue Bell, the Spring Creek, the Keewenaw, the Anaconda, the Tamarack the Carlyle and the Empress of India. Anyway, when all the fun and games or rather fun and names, was over this country too was staked tighter than the proverbial pickle jar in a frozen snow bank, having over 1,000 claims registered by the fall of 1900. And, be it due, perhaps, to fate or luck or even some common sense, more rich ledges would be discovered.

Now for the ledges, the winners, the ones that actually got up and running and shipping copper ore. Starting in the south is the Keewenaw and Brown Cub staked by Carl Mienze and Andrew Naughtingham in late 1899, and moving steadily northwest the Valerie staked in August of 1899 by Gustave Gervias. Next to that is the Little Chief, one of the early ones staked in '98 by Andrew Oleson. About a half mile again northwest is the Arctic

Sleeping cabins (tent frames) at the Spring Creek claim. These were built over 100 years ago and are still intact. This and other smaller operations, far from the beaten track, have avoided the historian's worst enemies—vandals and log snatchers. [Dick McKenna photo, 2000]

Chief staked in '99 by flamboyant steamboat captain, businessman/politician Captain John Irving and another half mile, more north than northwest, the Grafter staked in '99 by William Woodney. After about four miles of country hopelessly buried beneath hundreds of feet of overburden outcrops, the Pueblo, and what would later be termed the "Great Pueblo Lode." This claim was staked by Chicagoite and longtime prospector H.E. Porter in 1899 and almost immediately handed over to a company called the British American Corporation for an unprecedented one million dollar bond. Porter then moved on to the Wheaton River country in Southwest Yukon to make more important discoveries, including finding the fabled lost Corwin gold mine in 1906, sparking a prospecting rush to that district.

Moving north about another mile past the Pueblo is the War Eagle staked in 1899 by a William Sam McGee. The same Sam McGee immortalized in northern balladeer Robert Service's yarn, "The Cremation of Sam McGee." Service was working as a clerk at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Whitehorse when he met the man, in 1905, and thus borrowed his name for the piece. In fact Service, who would later become the most prolific poet of his time, wrote his first works, not about Dawson and the gold mines, but about Whitehorse and the copper mines. One of his first pieces was titled, "Bob Smart's Dream." Smart was the chief assay officer in town. The poem provides an almost Nostradamus-like premonition of what was to be.



A cabin at the Rabbit's Foot Mine. It was probably built around the turn of the century by the original staker, Ole Dickson. This is the last standing structure from the old copper mining days. [Dick McKenna photo, 2000]

Moving down the line, about a half a mile due east of the War Eagle, lies the Anaconda staked in '98 by roadhouse magnate, W.A. Puckett, and adjoining the south end, the Rabbit's Foot staked in '99 by Ole Dickson. About a half mile due southeast of these is the Copper King and bordering the Copper King on the east, finally, the Carlyle. Both of these properties would have the distinction of providing the highest grade of ores shipped from the district. The Copper King averaging 15 per cent copper and the Carlyle 23 per cent.

By following a line from the Brown Cub in the south of the district and carrying on due north - northwest to the Pueblo and from there east to the War Eagle and again due south to the Copper King-Carlyle, is an apparent belt of mineralization that could be traced for some 20 miles from north to south. This would become known as the Whitehorse Copper Belt. These "ledges" or mineral occurrences are of contact metisomatic (the inclusion of groundwater) in origin, and are the result of granitic intrusions upon cretaceous limestone (primary ores), as well as due to the weathering of the resultant primary sulphides (secondary ores). These "skarn" types of deposits provided over 175,000 tons of high-grade, hand-cobbed ore during the first phase of mining (1900-1920), and a further 10 million tons of lower grade ore during its second phase (1966-1982). The total value in 1982 dollars was almost $500 million.

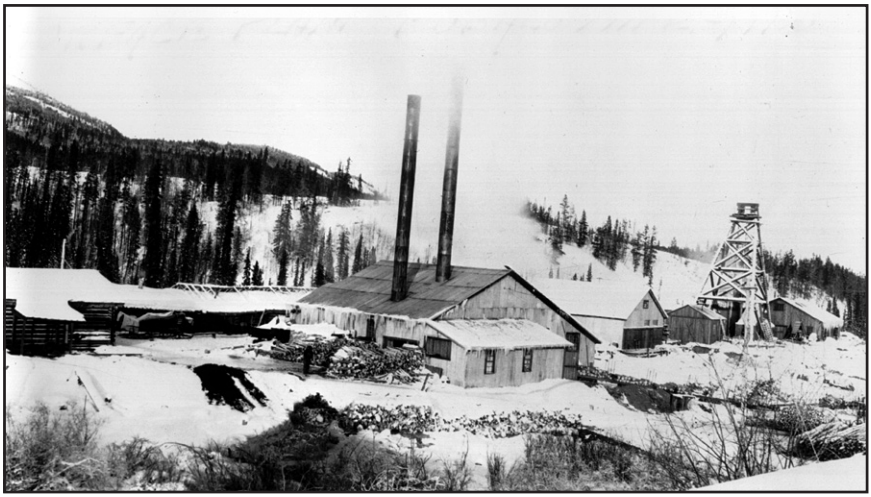
Of the ore types: First and present at all the mines as shipping ores, with the exception of the Pueblo, are the primary sulphides-bornite (64 per

The lower adit at the Empress of India claim. Presently occupied by a porcupine and her brood. [Dick McKenna photo, 2000]

cent copper) and chalcopyrite (34 per cent copper). Containing considerable gold and silver along with small bunches of the rich copper sulphide chalcocite (88 per cent copper). Most of these ore bodies were associated with large magnetite masses as well as guange or host minerals garnet, augite, tremolite, actinolite, epidote, calcite, clinichlore, serpentine, and minor quartz. In all, 55 different mineral types are known to occur in association with the ore bodies.

The Pueblo was unique in the fact that the shipping ores from this mine were not of the primary sulphides, but of secondary origin. The Great Pueblo Lode was a huge mass of cuperiferous hematite extending some 300 feet by 30 by some 60 feet on surface, the ore minerals present at the Pueblo being the carbonates azurite (55 per cent) and malachite (57 per cent), the silicate chrysocolla (34 per cent) and the copper oxides-cuprite and melaconite, the cuprite being associated at times with native copper. Pretty impressive actually for a mine nestled off in the far north. To top things off, the Pueblo clobbered all of the other early producers in ore shipments by shipping over 140,000 tons of ore compared to less than 40,000 tons total for all of the other mines combined!

Most of the ore came from the glory hole, however in search of deeper, richer ore bodies, miners shafted some 600 feet underground by 1917. That year a disastrous cave in occurred, trapping nine miners between the three and 400-foot levels. After rescuers drilled through 86 feet of granite in an heroic 72 hours, to reach the men, three were pulled to safety, but, due to continuing weight bearing upon the timbers in the notoriously "wet" mine, further attempts at rescue were ordered stopped by management. The mine

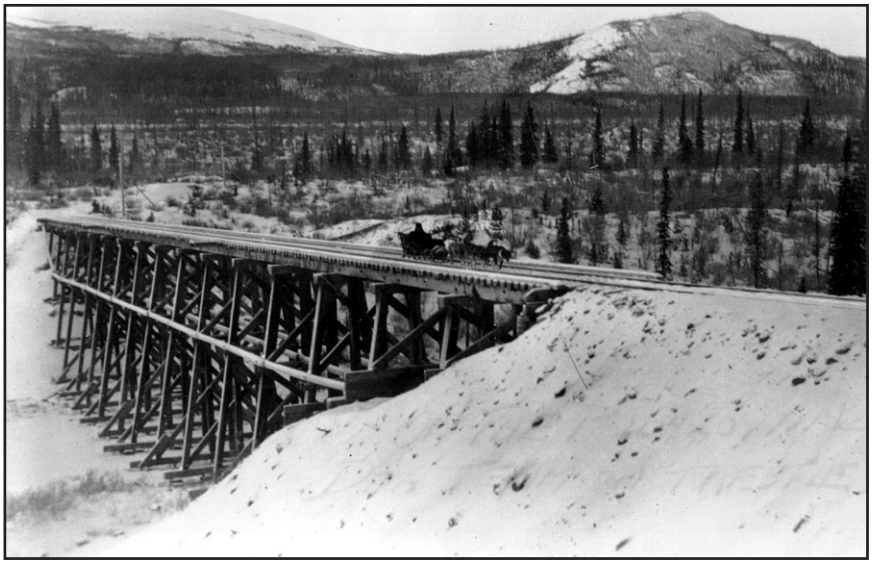


Pueblo Mine in 1912, boiler house centre, headframe and shafthouse, right. Many a woodcutter had a job supplying the Pueblo's boilers with up to 3000 cords of wood per season. [Yukon Archives photo, MacBride Museum collection]

was abandoned and allowed to fill completely with water. The bones of the six miners to this day lie in the dark, icy abyss of the Pueblo. These would be the last, but not the first deaths at the mine, which had by this time become known as a very dangerous place to work. First there were the two Swedes who blew themselves up in 1914 while sinking a shaft to the 400-foot level. Then there were the three "shafties" who, between 1914 and 1916 lost their lives, not due to cave-ins or explosions, but due to falling down shafts after being hit on the head with a blunt instrument! In all three separate cases, at the resulting inquiry, all blame was lifted from the staff and management of the mine. And last, there would be the two railroad engineers, who were scalded to death by the steam boiler when the train they were driving derailed at the property in 1916. This brings the total of lives lost at the Pueblo to 13 with scratches, bruises, gashes and broken bones becoming the rule rather than the exception.

In 1916, during its peak of early activity, the Whitehorse Copperbelt supported eight underground mines. In addition to the Pueblo, there was the Rabbit's Foot and Anaconda, being worked jointly, the War Eagle, the Copper King and Carlyle, the Arctic Chief and the Grafter. The Pueblo employed in excess of 150 miners and shipped up to 300 tons a day and the remaining mines provided work for an additional 80 to 90 men with shipments smaller in size but of higher grade material.

Two government-funded wagon roads built in 1902 facilitated haulage. Four- and six-horse teams pulling sleighs and wagons, depending on the season, were used to transport the ore to town. The ore was hand sorted

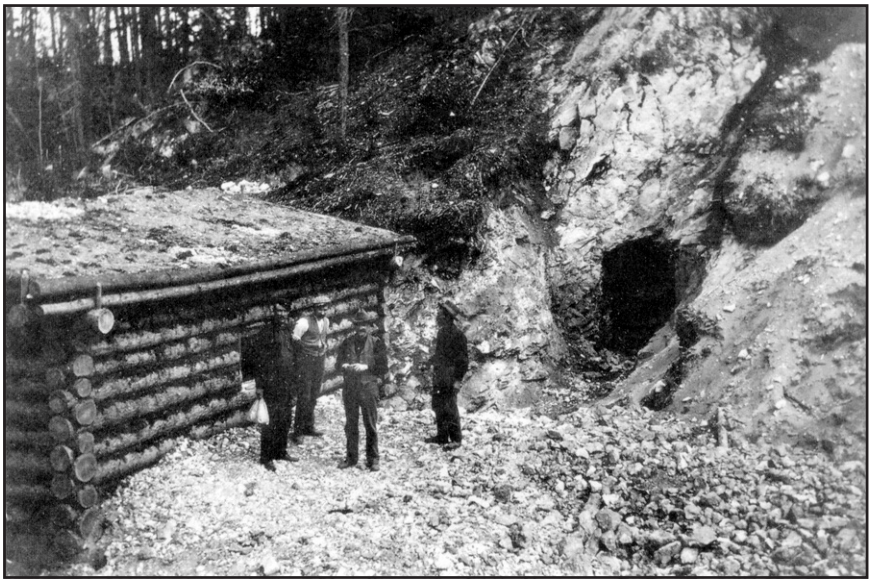


A portion of the 12-mile railway spur from McCrae to the mines, 1912. Of the many bridges, some as long as 400 feet, not a trace remains today. [Yukon Archives photo, MacBride collection]

and sewn into 100 lb. burlap sacks with 280 sacks or about 14 tons being the usual haul. By 1904, the Copper King had shipped almost 500 tons of high grade and was running around the clock. The shaft by then reaching 175 feet into the earth with seven tons per shift or 21 tons being hoisted to surface every 24 hours. At the Grafter Mine the five-by-seven-foot shaft was reported to have intersected eight feet of solid ore with free gold visible to the naked eye! Soon shipments of 30 tons per week were leaving the Grafter. Gustave Gervias had four men working his Valerie Mine with 40 tons of 22 per cent copper ore being shipped before water flooded the workings forcing the mine to shut down until pumping facilities could be obtained. Captain John Irving sent four men out to his Arctic Chief Claim to establish a camp and by the end of 1905 they had driven an adit several hundred feet into the rock face, intercepting at times sizable shoots of shipping ore, 170 tons being shipped to smelter by the year's end.

By 1901, British American Corporation had spent some $20,000 on the Pueblo completing 235 feet of sinking and drifting on what later proved to be the leanest portion of the load before going into receivership, giving up the $1 million bond.

Then, in 1906, mining man and "millionaire," Byron White of Spokane, Washington, almost by accident bought up the Pueblo and Carlyle properties at a British North American receivership sale for a reported $10,000. White immediately came north to examine his new acquisitions, soon exclaiming to all who would listen, "For the Pueblo is not really a mine but a vast quarry of ore!" Boasting or not, G.S.C geologist R.G. McConnell, who examined the district that year, tended to agree. He calculated the visible



Copper King Mine, early 1900s. Grainger is the man rolling a smoke, others unknown. [Geological Survey of Canada photo]

tonnage of ore at the Pueblo to be about 500,000 tons. White soon had a gang of men blasting out ore from the surface and by the close of the year some 600 tons had been shipped off to smelter. At which time White reported that the mines had completely paid for themselves and provided him a healthy profit. One, 100-ton shipment from the Carlyle graded an incredible 41 per cent copper!

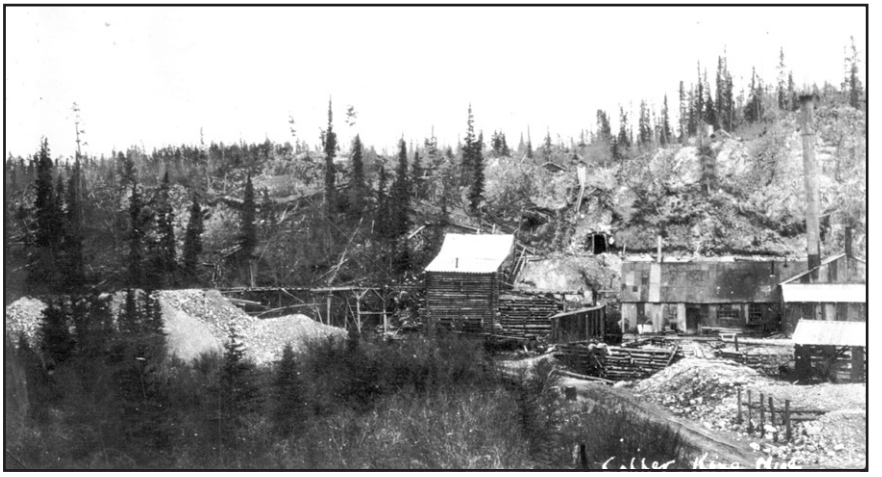
Things were looking so good in the mines that in 1907 the White Pass & Yukon Route Railway decided to build a rail spur to the mines. The project would employ up to 200 men, and take three years to complete. Costing, including bunkers in Skagway, close to $1 million. the twelve-mile rail line started at the new construction town of McRae and snaked through the mineral belt passing close by the Valerie and Little Chief, the Arctic Chief, Grafter the Empress of India, the Pueblo and ending at the War Eagle in the northern-most reaches. The first four miles alone required 12 bridges, the longest being 535 feet in length, forty feet high and crescent shaped. While the others were from 60 to 200 feet long and ten to 30 feet in height. During the peak of construction up to 110 railway workers were being fed at the Grafter mess house, while nearby forty "rock men" were blasting through a huge outcrop of granite. Because of cost, however, the line neglected to pass by the Copper King and Carlisle, the Rabbit's Foot & Anaconda and a host of other potential mines.

In the area around White Horse, the aroma of copper was in the air and could apparently be smelled for some distance. Mining men, hot shots, and "millionaires" from as far off as Pennsylvania, California and Washington, had flocked to the area to take a look and subsequently bought up properties, took up options on others, formed syndicates and even a publicly-funded company listed on the Seattle Stock Exchange. The Atlas Mining Co., with head office in Spokane, Wash., mined the Pueblo, the Carlyle and in a minor way, the Grafter. A Mr. Elmindorf, also from Spokane, headed a syndicate to mine the Arctic Chief and, in 1907, the Copper King was taken over by a Pennsylvanian Syndicate lead by a Colonel Thomas. Consideration was reported to be for $210,000 with ten percent going to the owners outright.

However, local entrapreneurs, men who early decided to make Whitehorse their home, backed the mines with money, and supplies and even political influence. J.P. Whitney and Robert Lowe were two of these men. Whitney, a grocery and hardware merchant, originally from Pennsylvania, arrived in Whitehorse in 1899 and made this place his home until his death in 1934. By providing much-needed groceries and supplies to the miners for an interest in the claims, Whitney soon acquired a large interest in the Copper King, the Rabbit's Foot & Anaconda, the Corvette, the Iron Horse and a multitude of other undeveloped claims. Whitney's acquisition of the latest mining equipment from San Francisco in 1902, enabled the Copper King to mine and ship almost 500 tons of high grade before the end of 1905. In 1912, Whitney became the first car dealer in the north, selling model A Fords and four-gallon cans of gasoline for $1 a gallon. The price may seem a

little steep for 1912, however at least half went for White Pass freight charges! After the copper boom subsided, Whitney became interested in fox farming, having two such farms in town in the 1920s and '30s. "Old man" Whitney died of pneumonia in 1934 among friends and family at the ripe old age of 81, still holding his copper belt interests.

Robert Lowe, was born in Brampton Ontario and, upon arriving at the foot of the Whitehorse Rapids in 1899, was heard to say: "Let those who will, rush on to the Klondike—this place is good enough for me!" Lowe quickly became involved in the new community of White Horse, becoming the President of the Whitehorse Board of Trade in 1900. This was a coalition that rallied relentlessly for a reduction in the freight charged by the White Pass & Yukon Route Railway. By 1902, Lowe had been elected by an overwhelming majority to represent White Horse at the Territorial Council in Dawson the then Capitol of the Yukon. Lowe's freighting and "draying" business was often kept busy hauling freight to and from the mines and by 1907, Lowe had controlling interest in the Grafter and the War Eagle. In 1909, Lowe was elected speaker of the Legislature, a position that he held until his resignation in 1920. Lowe still found time to keep his mines going when copper prices were high. The Grafter became the second largest shipper from the district shipping close to 15,000 tons before 1918 at which time the mines' ore reserves were declared exhausted and the plant and most of the machinery were dismantled and shipped south. The Grafter was unique for



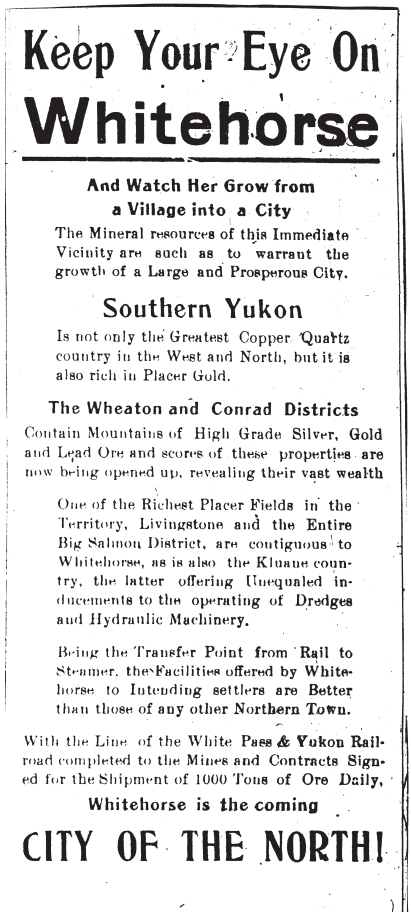
The Copper King Mine, 1912. The Copper King was the first claim staked in the copper belt and produced high grade ore from 1900 until 1920. The large compressor house at right burned to the ground in 1919. A good portion of the log structure in the centre could still be seen in the 1970s and the adit (right) could be entered as recently as the early 1990s, when it was purposely caved in for safety reasons. Today the remains of several large compressors occupy the site. [Yukon Archives photo, MacBride Museum collection]

the fact that the mine possessed an elevated tram. The setup being quite the outfit, for the ore was hoisted from the depths and immediately hauled down the hill on a gravity-fed tram to a loading platform located immediately adjacent to the spur off the main line of the White Pass Railway.

Captain John Irving, staker of the Arctic Chief Mine, was said to be as skilled at river navigation as he was eccentric in personality, handling his steamer as if it were a "spirited mare and he an accomplished rider." Nothing seemed to give the flamboyant and energetic Irving more pleasure than to charge at full speed at some object in the river and then, just in the nick of time, crank the wheel in an extremely accurate calculated measure of avoidance. Irving, the son of a steam boat Captain, had been steam boating since the early 1880s where he waged and won a war with Captain William Moore over control of trade on the Fraser River in B.C. In 1898, Irving made the best time ever recorded for the St. Michael-to-Dawson run when with constant male body servant by his side, he performed the 1500-mile up river journey in 24 days. The delivery of the cargo was of apparent urgency, consisting mostly of wines and spirits and having a passenger list composed almost entirely of theatrical people, dance hall girls and gamblers! Upon his return trip to St. Michael, perhaps attributed to a little too much spirits, Irving miscalculated his charge towards the docks "reducing it to match sticks" before unloading his crippled steamboat, "*The Yukoner*" onto an enterprising Klondiker for $45,000.

Later, Irving simmered down a bit and was elected to represent the Bennett district of British Columbia in parliament in Victoria. Afterwards he became more interested in mining and mining promotion. As well as being majority owner in the Arctic Chief Mine, Irving held mining interests in the Kluane and Livingstone goldfields and in the Windy Arm gold-silver mines.

Life as a miner though was slightly less glamorous. In fact, it was dark, dirty, wet and labourious work. On the smaller operations, hand



steels were used to attack the hard rock. The process, or double jacking, included one man holding a long drill bit to the rock face while the other slammed it with a twelve-pound sledge at just the precise time the other twisted it. (Pity the one holding the steel if the other suffered a hangover). Hand cranks were also used to haul up ore at these crude installations. The Rabbit's Foot & Anaconda were two such operations. More substantial operations such as the Pueblo, Copper King, Grafter, Carlyle and the Valerie Mines had tall head frames and boiler plants that powered hoists and compressors used to fire the pumps and rock drills. The mines were sunk from 200 to 600 feet below surface and usually every 100 feet a drift would be made from which ore would be stopped out and hoisted to surface.

Miners were paid $6 for an eight hour shift underground and when not mining were often raising hoopla at one of White Horse's drinking establishments such as the Commercial Hotel, which was referred to in those days as the "bucket of blood" because of the number of fights that broke out on any given Saturday night. Many miners, especially those from the Pueblo, were rather a "motley crew" sually of Italian, Slavian or other Southern European origin and thus stuck close together in their own groups. Racial prejudice was rampant, especially at the Pueblo. Due to the dangerous working conditions in an underground mine in those days the average life expectancy of a miner was 36 years.

In 1910, as soon as construction of the railway to the mines was completed, ore trains loaded with as much as 300 tons were leaving the Pueblo daily. The mine now had been taken over by Atlas Mining Company of Spokane for a reported $500,000. Terms were $200,000 cold hard cash and another $300,000 due upon production. The company sent Wilbur D. Greenough of Spokane up to White Horse to live and manage the mine. Greenough held the position until the mine's closing in 1917. Described by the press as an educated mining engineer and of course "millionaire", Wilbur it seems had rather the look of an early "gangster" with the broad-brimmed hat, trench coat, buckskin boots and ever-present pipe. And with him was the usual entourage of "body guards." Never finding much time to mingle with the local folks, Greenough rather preferred the company of other "millionaire" mining men like Colonel John Howard Conrad of Montana. Conrad was fast developing the Windy Arm gold-silver mines located in the Southern Yukon during the same period.

By 1913 the Pueblo was quite the outfit. In fact, it was one of the largest copper mines on the North American continent. To get an idea of the size and sprawl of the place one can picture this: In addition to its massive steam plant was the head frame and shaft house, a fully-equipped machine shop, various additional shops and storage sheds, ore bunkers as well as two, two-storey bunkhouses, a mess house, stables for 24 horses, an assay office, a company store, a mine manager's house, and six three-bedroom houses used by higher level mine personnel and their families. Amenities included hot water heating, electricity, running water and even a telephone.

The water was supplied ingeniously from a reservoir set on the hill at the back of the mine. And scattered about the hills were cabins that miners had built in an attempt to find privacy and relief from the never-ending noise and bustle! Some were but cubbies measuring a mere four feet by eight to crawl into at the end of a hard day's work at the mine. A private store competing with the company one was located down the road just off company property and operated by a Mr. McGuire. A person could even take a cab from town to the mine and be there in 20 minutes, courtesy of Cam Smith's Taxi Service!

Interestingly enough, between the completion of the rail spur to the "mines" in 1910 and the commencement of WWI in 1914, not one of the other "mines" would ship a single gram of ore by train. Due to a war measures act, other mines were allowed fair transport of ore to market. Thus the Grafter, the Valerie, the Copper King, the Rabbit's Foot & Anaconda, and the War Eagle Mines flourished during these years.

The Copper King was described by one observer as having more the appearance of a mine than a small town. The site even included a water wheel used to generate electricity for the "town" set in McIntyre Creek. The Grafter was a lot like the Pueblo only smaller. The Valerie too possessed at least as much of an installation as at the Grafter. Both of these mines had 50 horse boilers used to fire the rock drills and pumps, as well as the usual mess and bunkhouses, and again the smattering of little "cubbies" littering the woods about the place. The other mines, the War Eagle, the Arctic Chief, The Empress - Spring Creek, and The Rabbit's Foot & Anaconda were slightly less substantial.

In 1907, Dawson businessman, Arthur B. Palmer, acquired the Valerie Mine. Along with brother, Russell, Palmer held mining interests stretching from Dawson to Kluane, to Whitehorse and back again. Between 1915 and 1919, the Valerie's 265-foot depths were mined for high-grade producing in excess of 6,000 tons of chalco-bornite ore. After the Pueblo and the Grafter, it placed third among the early shippers in ore output. Although a drilling program in 1919 indicated more high grade, the mine shut down that fall never to be worked again.

The War Eagle operated for a short duration during the first few years of the 20th century and then again in a larger way between 1916 and 1917 when Charles Hayes and M. Hayden mined close to 2000 tons, operating under lease from the owners. At the Rabbit's Foot & Anaconda, miners John Bozanva, Fred McGlashen and Wm. Cernic pulled out almost 500 tons between 1915 and 1917, again operating under lease. The Arctic Chief operated in a small way, intermittently between 1904 and 1909 by John Irving & Associates, and the Empress of India shipped a 30-ton-lot in 1916. The Empress was owned at this time by a Constable Kate Ryan. This burly gal had the distinction of being the only female member of the R.N.W.M.P force. Her job was to reduce the illegal smuggling of gold into American Territory.by frisking all female passengers leaving the Yukon on the White Pass train

During the years of active operation, the mines played an important role in boosting the White Horse economy, which, in the early days, was fuelled mainly by the transportation and ship-building industries, or, in a word, White Pass. For instance, in 1916, the Pueblo's three massive 150-horse Ingersoll Rand steam powered boilers consumed a whopping 3,000 cords of wood a season keeping up to 20 compressor powered rock drills and three huge water pumps going. The entire town of White Horse consumed 2,000 cords the same season! Many a woodcutter had a job keeping the Pueblo's and the other mine's hungry boilers going. One of these woodcutters was a somewhat comical, very inventive and equally determined fellow by the name of James Richards, more affectionately referred to as "Buzzsaw Jimmy."

Having come up to the Yukon in the days of '98, Richards spent his first years employed as a miner and handyman in Dawson, before securing employment on the riverboats. Tiring of riverboat life, Jimmy settled in Whitehorse in 1910. Putting his experience and ingenuity to the test he built the curious contraption for which he is known. "Big Blue," as he affectionately referred to his contraption, was a big clunky-looking mass of twisted steel, welded iron, nuts, bolts, wheels and levers and attached to it and driven by a coughing, choking gas-powered engine was a gigantic spinning, wheezing blade. Buzzsaw, the old fellow, soon acquired the entire town's heartfelt affection and oftentimes sympathy. He was frequently seen happily buzzing through the cordwood in some of the most adverse conditions, Big Blue happily coughing and wheezing, just as fine as ever. Cam Smith's driver,

Bigshot day at the Pueblo Mine in 1912. Third from left is D. Greenaugh, manager and co-owner of the Pueblo. Fifth from left: Colonel John Howard Conrad, owner of the Windy Arm Mines. Ninth from left: William B. Close, major shareholder of the White Pass Railway. [Yukon Archives photo, MacBride Museum collection]

Richard Thompson, was witness to one hair-raising feat when the duo performed: "While backing the rig off of the flatcar at the Pueblo Mine" Thompson exclaimed "and just before the feat was an accomplished fact, one of the wheels of the thing slipped off of the siding and to the ground", thereby sending "Big Blue" with Buzzsaw firmly attached, ass over teakettle down the embankment in 360 degree fashion, only to land once again on Blue's wheels! Saucer eyed Thompson, sure that the both had finally met their end or at least suffered major injury, was astonished to see not a scratch on either of them. As Thompson was leaving the mine a short while later, both were at it again, Jimmy just a working and a sweating and Blue just a coughing and wheezing as usual.

Apparently, Jimmy ran out of luck in 1912, when he cut off his first digit—his middle finger! Well, that didn't seem to fizz him and in no time he was back on Big Blue pulling levers and changing gears just as good as ever, until his next serious accident. Apparently the weight differential caused by the loss of his finger eventually caused him to lose balance while attempting to pull one of Blue's levers and although Jimmy narrowly escaped Blue's wheezing blade he slammed himself hard against the drive train and other moving parts before finally hitting the ground! He didn't get up. This time he suffered a fractured pelvis, a ruptured spleen, two cracked ribs and various additional cuts and bruises.

Well, the sympathetic towns folk figured that Jimmy was down for the count now but after a few months in the hospital there was jimmy back on Big Blue attempting to rule the woodpile again. To make a long story short, Jimmie slipped again but this time he didn't miss the blade. It sliced his left leg clean off! Of course the towns folk figured that this would be the last slice that old fool would be making, but after a few months there was old Jimmy again on Blue ruling the woodpile in a bloody peg-leg! And thus the unstoppable Buzz Saw Jimmy continued to slice his way through the woodpile and into Yukoners' hearts well into the 1950s.

Unfortunately, along with the prosperity and the likable characters, Whitehorse was also beginning to receive its fair share of unsavoury types. Of these, Alexander Gagoff was definitely the worst. Gagoff, a Russian, had apparently arrived in Whitehorse in the spring of 1914 along with some 40 fellow countrymen. They set out to build boats and prospect along the lower river, which they did. Shortly afterward, Gagoff left Dawson and returned to Whitehorse where he stayed all winter, finally finding work in the spring under Pat Kinslow on the White Pass section crew. After several weeks of employment on the crew, in which Gagoff, who spoke limited English, often imagined that the others were making "sport" of him, he voluntarily quit and went to Vancouver, B.C.

Prior to Gagoff's departure though, he was under surveillance by the Mounties as his "actions were such as to doubt his sanity", but other than establishing the fact that Gagoff had a great dislike for a fellow by the name of "fighting Mike" Rinnet, and made no secret of it, the Mounties found no

reason to arrest Gagoff or pay concern to his threats. Rinnet was not in town and Gagoff was on his way outside too.

In the fall, Gagoff returned, and on the afternoon of September 30th, 1915, he showed up on the railroad three miles south of town, armed with a high-powered 30-30 rifle. He was aiming to do business with the section crew, who were all sitting around the handcar having their lunch break. Moments and 50 plus rounds of ammunition later, three of the five unarmed men would be dead, a forth, mortally wounded.

Following the unthinkable act, Gagoff promptly procured the section crew's trolley, rode it to town and proceeded to go about his business paying his bills, rifle in hand and all the while telling everyone that he had just wiped out the section crew. At this point, Gagoff was arrested by the Mounties and taken into police custody. During the trial, some fuss was made about his sanity, on the grounds that no man in his right mind would commit such an act as to kill in cold blood four unarmed and defenseless men. However, after pleading guilty on October 29th, Gagoff was promptly sentenced to death by hanging. The execution was to take place on March 10th, 1916 at the Whitehorse N.W.M.P. barracks. After receiving the sentence, Gagoff requested that he be shot the following day, and was denied. He then asked that he be taken to Vancouver for execution and was again denied.

In an interesting turn of events, during the trial and while Gagoff was in jail awaiting execution, Thomas Gagoff, Alex's cousin, tried to do the deed

After copper mining ceased, some of the mines became popular destinations for picnics and bicycle excursions. Here the Carslyle Mine is visited by some leading ladies of Whitehorse, ca. 1920s. [Yukon Archives photo, MacBride Museum collection]

himself, and arrived on the scene not once but twice, armed and determined to do the honourable thing, insisting that "No Cossack dies by hanging!" Thomas Gagoff was subsequently sentenced to three months of hard labour and following his release, was promptly escorted to the border and deported.

On March 10th, 1916, on schedule, Alex Gagoff was led to the gallows and "launched into eternity." Official Hangman Ellis fully cloaked in black, travelling all the way from Ottawa to do the work. After a period of about 14 minutes, at which time Gagoff's pulse ceased, the body was cut down and buried beneath the scaffold. The temperature was 36 below zero, and other than those whose duty required their presence, there were six witnesses. One of the Mounties involved in the initial investigation had secretly procured a sum of money that he had found sewn into the clothing of one of the deceased, and he was subsequently convicted and sentenced to three years in the New Westminster Penitentiary!

By the time World War I ended and industrial demand for copper and precious metals had slumped, all of the mines but one were closed. Contrary to popular belief, following the cave-in, Atlas Mining did re-enter the Pueblo, pumping the mine free of water for three and a half months! Atlas then hauled up several thousand tons of already mined, already sacked ore, a very soggy government diamond drill and again left the Pueblo to fill with water. By the fall of 1917, the Pueblo was again an icy abyss. The last mine to close was, in fact, the first one to open, the Copper King. On September 2nd, 1920, the Copper King shut its doors and depths for good. The reason for closing: "depletion of ore reserves".

Byron White, "millionaire" mining man from Spokane died in 1912. But Byron had a son who as a little one used to tag along with him to his various mining properties scattered all over the northwest. By 1926 John White was a man, and still following in his father's footsteps by becoming a big shot mining man, as well as heir to the Pueblo.

The year his father died, John White organized a company calling it the "Richmond Yukon Mining Company." This was a public company (non personal liability) listed on the Seattle Stock Exchange and was capitalized at $$1.25 million divided into 2,500,000 shares of a par value of 50 cents each. The company's goal was to drill the Pueblo and Carlyle and the War Eagle - Leroy properties to see if sufficient ore was in sight to justify building a concentrator. Well, they pumped and de-iced the Pueblo, sent some diamond drills down as well as preform surface core drill programs at various parts of the property. They built a new head frame and compressor plant at the Carlyle, sent core drills down there, and actually mined 2,000 tons of high grade. At the War Eagle they basically rebuilt the place, new bunk and mess house and the likes, and commenced a deep drilling program there.

According to the *Northwest Mining Journal,* a paper published by a subsidiary of the company, things were going great. *The White Horse Star*, which was always willing to gamble when other peoples money was at stake,

thought so too. Headlines like "Everything smells of prosperity", "The work going on has been of a very encouraging nature", "The ore struck at the Carlyle is of a very high grade", were soaked up by investors and by White Horse citizens longing for a return to the old copper mining days. The War Eagle was heralded as "one of the great mines of the entire northwest", the Carlyle a "mint" This carried on for two years. Stocks went up and like everything that goes up, they came down, and on the way down on September 14, 1928, Richmond Yukon announced "quietly" in the back pages of the Star, "That the ore found at the properties was insufficient in size and grade" to justify them to carry out their plans, and that they were discontinuing all operations on the copper belt. By 1934, the War Eagle, "one of the great mines of the entire northwest", could be had by any interested party for $64.35. The amount owed in back taxes.

As for the impact these mines made, both financially and on the metal markets, the following can be observed: The Pueblo's 140,000 tons of 3.5 per cent copper ore produced 9.8 million pounds of copper metal, 744 ounces of gold and some 150,000 ounces of silver. The value in 1917 dollars was $2,057,000. The Grafter's 15,700 tons of 5.4 per cent, produced 1,712,000 pounds of copper metal, 1,085 ounces of gold and 20,225 ounces of silver valued at $375,202. The Copper King's some 6,000 tons of 15 per cent, - 1,524,000 pounds of copper, 141 ounces of gold and 2,748 ounces of silver valued at $309,157. The Valerie's some 6,000 tons of 7 per cent, 779,800 pounds of copper, 397 ounces of gold and 5,692 ounces of silver. Worth $167,029. And lastly, all of the other operations combined some 4,000 tons of 6.5 per cent average. 499,000 pounds of copper, 378 ounces of gold and 7,861 ounces of silver valued at $115,000, again all in 1917 dollars. In fact if all of this ore were to be hauled on the S.S. Klondike, the largest steamer to ply the Yukon River, it would be filled to capacity 600 times!

So, for more than 20 years the mines sat idle and glaciated. Then in 1947, Noranda, the giant eastern exploration company, became interested in the potential of the area and after setting up camp at McRae, staked 88 claims along the mineral belt, including the Big & Little Chief, the Keewenaw and Valerie properties which had by then lapsed. They also took out an option on the Pueblo and drilled two holes there, five at the Keewenaw, and seven on the Big Chief. Noranda then lost interest due to low grades struck on the properties, and pulled up camp. In 1950 another giant, Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting, head office Winnipeg Manitoba, became interested and staked 22 claims in the southern, least explored portion of the copper belt. Hudson Bay, too, conducted a drilling program on their properties and they, too, became disinterested due to low grades.

Then in 1954, Aubrey Simmons, Yukon Member of Parliament became "interested" and incorporated a company calling it Imperial Mines and Metals Limited. After a slow start and a name change to New Imperial Mines in 1957, the company had by 1963 acquired by staking, option, or purchase, all of the properties along the copper belt except for the Spring Creek and Polar. Accelerated exploration, including drilling and the new technologies

of geo-chemical and air born manometer surveys indicated 5 Million tonnes of open pit reserves located at the Arctic Chief, War Eagle, Little Chief, Brown Cub and Keewenaw properties. The grade was 1.17 per cent copper with profitable amounts of gold, silver, and molybdenite.

In 1966, a 2,000 ton per day mill was constructed at the Little Chief and the old train track (built in 1907-09) was pulled up and the bed was converted into the "mine haul road." Additional infrastructure needed to open pit the properties was put into place at a total cost of close to $7 million. Then, systematically these properties were open pitted or more so glory holed. First the Little Chief then the Arctic Chief then the War Eagle, the Black Cub and then the Keewenaw in 1971. Ongoing exploration indicated surprisingly 3.5 million tons of 2.2 per cent copper under the Little Chief Pit and plans were made to move underground.

Between 1969 and 1973, development of an underground mine to access the Little and Middle Chief ore bodies was underway. This included sinking an 1,800-foot shaft and a 10 by 15 ft. surface decline that zigzagged for over a mile into the depths of the mine. By 1975 the Little Chief was in full swing employing over 160 persons directly as well as the many spin-off jobs in the transportation and service industries. Also, due to the fortunate combination of good management and employees, high metal prices and good ore grades the mine was now for the first time turning a profit. Having repaid all of its loans, Whitehorse Copper was now paying dividends to it's shareholders. This prosperity continued throughout the 1970s when again ore trains were seen regularly rattling down the tracks and off to Skagway to be transported via ocean liner to smelter. But, just as all good things must come to an end such was the case with the Little Chief. By 1982 the Little & Middle Chief ore bodies had been mined out and the mine shut down for good.

By this time the "Copperbelt" as a whole had produced over 10 million tons of ore which in turn produced 334,290,000 pounds of copper, 177,000 ounces of gold and 2,600,000 ounces of silver valued in 1993 dollars at $496,483,800! Eighty-five per cent of this total had come from the Little Chief - Middle Chief ore bodies alone. When we look at these figures it can be seen that the "Chiefs" having extracted over 150,000 ounces of gold just as a by-product of copper mining, actually produced more gold than the richest claim in the Klondike!

What about the pioneers, the ones who staked, worked and opened the ground in the first place? As is too often the case, they would not live to see the true fruits of their labours, for they would give their very lives opening up a country for others to follow. McIntyre in late 1902, crashed with his dog team through the ice of a frozen Yukon lake while employed as a mail carrier for the Northern Service. Grainger suffered a no less brutal demise in 1907 when, while preparing a fire to thaw the Copper King shaft for inspection by Colonel Thomas, he along with assistant Gilbert Joyce were overcome by carbon monoxide fumes, or "black damp" as the old timers say.

Both were found dead at the bottom of the shaft. The entire town of White Horse showed up at the funeral and the Pioneer Cemetery where the men were laid to rest. Grainger was hailed as "The most Ardent believer in a greater Whitehorse."

The White Horse Star continued: " For nine long years he worked his property as his means would permit, always and continuously boasting of the camp and predicting for it a glorious future. And now, just as his fondest anticipations were being realized, he is taken to that bourn from whence none return." Grainger was described as "a typical Kentuckian, intensely impetuous but generous to a degree that amounted to extravagance in his willingness to aid and assist others." Grainger's age when he died was between 46 and 50. He left no known relatives.

And what of Porter? H.E. Porter, staker of the Great Pueblo Load? Well, Porter ceaselessly prospected the Yukon in search of hard rock gold, silver, copper and even coal before disappearing in 1914, somewhere near the headwaters of the Stewart River, never to be seen or heard from again.

Today it can be guessed that the average citizen of Whitehorse, doesn't know the connection between these men and the mines, but somewhere along the line someone was thinking because three of the largest subdivisions in the greater Whitehorse area are named appropriately Granger, McIntyre and Porter Creek.

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Some tailings from an old copper mine behind the Kopper King in Whitehorse. (S.H, photo, 2005)

Kicked By A Dead Moose

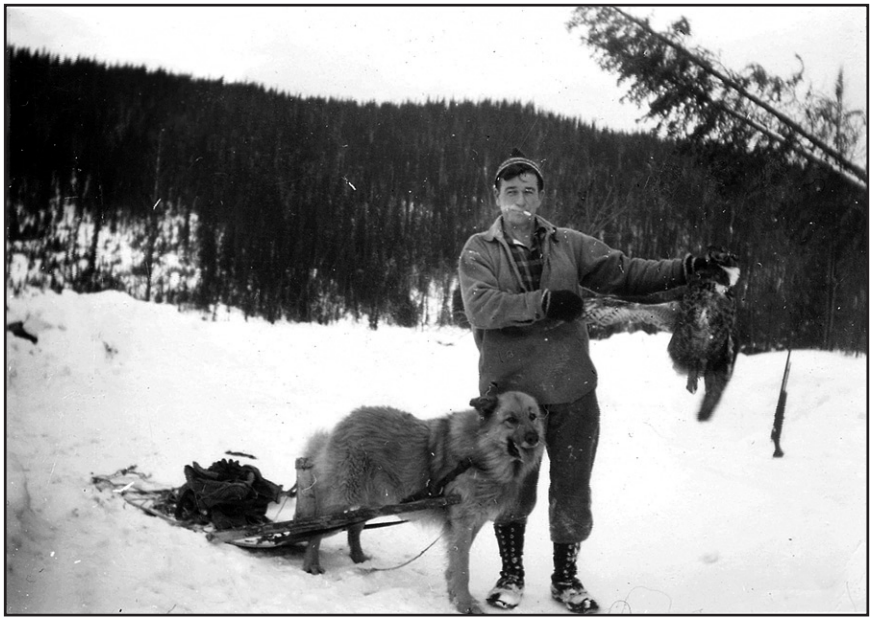
...AND OTHER STORIES OF 65 YEARS IN THE BUSH

By George W. Gilbert

Hand Mining

I was not discharged from the RCAF until 19 July 1946, almost a year after World War II was over. Arriving home in Wells, I found that the mines were on strike, so for a few weeks, I was hired by Fred Fleury to work on his placer operation in Big Valley. However, when lifting a 'too-heavy' boulder, I ruptured a back muscle which precluded any further heavy work, so I was hired by the mine to make lunches for the underground crews. My back gave me intermittent trouble for many years after. In fact, much later, I was working in my Newmont office in our basement in Whitehorse, when I heard one of the 'girls' my wife had invited over for coffee say, "I understand your husband has back problems." "Yes," replied Eileen, "He has trouble getting off it every morning."

Anyway, the next year, Owen and Ellis Hughes 'took a lay' on Fred's claims. A 'lay' is permission to mine or evaluate someone else's ground. I was invited to join them. There was an unused cabin, in good shape, about a quarter of a mile upstream from 'the diggings,' so we moved in. The sign above the door said 'Bovine Castle.'



Fred Fleury and "Big Valley Pete." Caring for the dog meant keeping a pick handle close by.

To convey water to the sluice boxes we had built, we got several lengths of rivetted hydraulic pipe - about eight inches in diameter - from Bert Rhys on Shepherd Creek. These we had to pack on our shoulders for the last six miles beyond the end of the road. Since the pipes were twelve or fifteen feet long, it took two of us to carry each length.

Once we had dug a 'cut' down to the clay 'bedrock,' we could start mining. We were, of course, about seven feet below the creek. The procedure was to pick down the face of gravel on to 'muck plates' we had built from boards. Then we would splash water on the resulting pile with a snow shovel, remove the large boulders, build a retaining wall, and throw the smaller ones behind the wall.

Then we used rock forks to remove the plus-one-inch cobbles and pitched them behind our wall. Finally, we had a pile of fairly fine sand and gravel which we threw up into the boxes with snow shovels. We had made moveable splash-boards for the sluice boxes, so most of the gravel actually went into the boxes. We took turns climbing out of the pit to shovel tailings away from the end of the sluices.

As may be imagined, this was pretty hard work, but we ate like horses so were certainly not short of calories. A typical breakfast was: a large bowl of oatmeal, reconstituted Klim, and sugar; bacon and eggs; hotcakes with syrup; stewed apricots or prunes; and toast and coffee. Supper made the breakfast menu look like a diet for an overweight person.

Bread was a problem as it didn't last long and usually suffered from the back-packing, so we started to make our own. Bannock is fine for a while, but gets pretty monotonous in a short time. Our stove had a stove-pipe oven which would only hold one loaf, so one of us would have to take a turn at playing 'baker'. The first loaf I made smelled good but I couldn't force a knife through the crust. It was the only loaf I ever made that I had to slice with a swede saw.

In spite of the war being over, rationing continued for some time. However, as a 'basic industry,' we were allowed double ration coupons. Even with that advantage, we augmented our meals with grouse, Dolly Varden trout, and part of a black bear that Fred shot.

The Dollies wouldn't take lures so we shot them. There were several deep, clear pools in the creek that were inhabited by trout. These fish spent most of their time on the bottom, but would frequently rise to the surface: possibly to replenish their air-sac supplies. One of us would sit quietly (and patiently) above the pool with a .22 rifle ready. When a fish rose and broke the surface, we would shoot it - if we were fast and lucky. This method would probably not be approved by the game warden, but it was effective.

Fred and Skip had a ditch line which tapped the creek upstream from our cabin, and this supplied a modest head of water to the hydraulic monitor. Occasionally, a Dolly would get into the ditch and thence to the monitor, which would choke up momentarily, and then blast the fish against the gravel face being worked. However, with few exceptions, Fred's dog 'Big Valley Pete' got to the fish first. 'Pete' was some sort of malamute, or at any rate,

he was a large powerful dog, and obedience was not his strong point. In this canvas pack-saddle, he would carry a case of Pacific canned milk, and chase rabbits along the trail: a case of milk weighs 48 pounds.

For Pete's first trial pack, Fred put a ten-pound sack of sugar on each side. When he later caught up to the dog, he found him lying in Stewart Creek with a now-empty couple of sugar sacks in the pack.

One time, Fred and Skip had to go to Port Moody for a wedding, so asked us to look after the dog for a few weeks. Fred said that once a week, traditionally Sunday, we would have to take a pick-handle and beat hell out of the dog, or he would terrorize the camp. We took these instructions 'with a grain of salt,' until one day Pete and I walked up to the cabin from the 'diggings', in a heavy downpour. I wanted to see how the supper beans were doing, so put the pot on the floor and lifted the lid. Immediately, I was grabbed by the arm and would have had teeth driven into it but for the heavy, double-canvas 'bone dry' coat I was wearing. I dragged the dog over to the cabin wall where a pick-handle was standing and beat 'Pete' senseless. He was a nice dog for a week.

George Gilbert and "Mum," first leave, winter of '43.

One day we received a visit from my sister Joan, and brother Art. They had bicycled to the end of the road and then walked to camp. On the way, they had come upon a grizzly. Hughes' dog 'Major' had immediately given chase. The bear apparently said, 'To hell with this' - and started to chase the dog. 'Major', of course, then returned to the 'kids.' Joan climbed a jackpine and yelled for Art to do the same, but couldn't see him. Climbing higher, she found Art almost at the top of the same tree. The grizzly ambled off into the bush, but it was some time before the dog rejoined Joan and Art.

While we were mining, the ground water was continually running over the gravel face, and we could occasionally see flecks of gold. I later learned that a flake of gold weighing one-billionth of an ounce can be seen with the naked eye. Judging from our clean-ups, that was the size we were seeing.

The Canadian mint in Ottawa would not accept a shipment less than six ounces. Over that they would

refine it and pay about $35 per ounce minus sixty cents an ounce for refining. In about a month they would send a cheque: we never were able to take advantage of this, so sold our gold to McKenzie's general store in Wells for $27 an ounce. If this seems ridiculous today, it really was not: two of us could barely lift $27 worth of groceries.

Any placer mining I have done since has been strictly recreational. Ellis and Joan have made several trips to the Yukon, and we always do a little mining on Lee Olynyk's claims in the Klondike. I built a small sluice plant and bought a pump, so mining is much easier ... and we don't use snow shovels. n

Ajax

In 1967, having accepted a job as resident geologist in the Yukon for Newmont Mining Corp., I drove alone up the 'all dirt' Alaska Highway in our VW station wagon. My wife and the two kids stayed with her parents in Quesnel until I could get settled. We had bought a house in the Riverdale area of Whitehorse, but the owners were to occupy it until July. The 1300 mile trip took four days since I was held up by a slide near Muncho Lake for 24 hours. I had made a reservation at the Capital Hotel in Whitehorse.

I no sooner checked in than the desk clerk handed me a message: I was to take the next CP Air flight to Vancouver, from where I would go up the coast to Alice Arm, where a large diamond-drilling program was underway on the 'Ajax' molybdenum property. I was to take over the project from my old boss and good friend, Marcel Guiguet, who had been supervising the program since early spring.

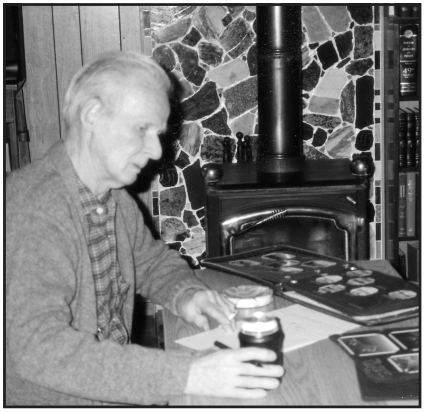
The camp was above timberline on a mountain between the Dak and Kitsault Rivers. A fourteen-mile bush road connected us – except for the last mile – with Alice Arm. This so-called road was little better than a game trail – the best time I ever made, later, in the Toyota land cruiser, was four hours; the worst – ten hours. Anyway I found that I had about forty people in camp: thirteen diamond drillers, a catskinner, a cook and helper, three geologists, and the usual collection of summer students etc.

We had a large cookhouse / dining room trailer, several tents with plywood floors and walls, electric lights – and lots of rain. My office and bunk were in one of the tents. We only chartered a helicopter on infrequent occasions.

I had no sooner arrived in camp, when the cook tackled me about their bear problems. In spite of their precautions, the blacks kept coming into camp. The garbage was burned every day and the remains covered with dirt by our D4 bulldozer. Probably the kitchen smells from cooking for forty people attracted the animals. Dynamite charges and bullets just missing them didn't discourage the bears for long.

One morning, the cook came to my tent and asked me if I wanted breakfast this morning. I looked at my watch and said, 'Yes, but not at 5:30 a.m.!'

'Well then, you had better come and get the bear off my grill!'



I took the rifle and found that the bear was, in fact, up on the stove licking the grease off. Not wanting to shoot him in the kitchen, I yelled and threw things at it until it finally exited the back door where I shot it. In the two months that I was in camp, I had to shoot seven black bears. If the chopper was in our area, I would have the dead bears fastened to the hook with a rope and dropped out in the valley below.

One time however, we were not expecting the helicopter for a few days, so I had two of the students pack the carcass out well away from camp. The next day, two Kennicott geologists arrived in camp in a Land Rover – the first wheeled vehicle to do so. Over coffee, I congratulated the boys on navigating the rock-strewn last mile to camp. They told me that they almost didn't try it, since there was a dead bear at the end of the road, propped up and holding a big sign, which read 'Go Away!' Or words to that effect. ❐

Top of the World Highway (near Dawson City) in August, 1986. (SH photo)

From the Publisher

You'd think that as we get older life would start to slow down a bit but I just get busier and busier. I used to have time to watch the ice melt in the spring but now the changing season is just a blur, like watching the scenery from a car traveling 90 km per hour. I did get over to M'Clintock Bay a few weeks ago, arriving two days after the number of trumpeter and tundra swans resting in and around the shallow water peaked at over 1,000. Swan Haven is a wildlife viewing area just down the road from Army Beach. The government built it about 15 years ago so visitors can view the swans without disturbing them. The earliest swans arrive at the end of March and by mid-May they are gone. Some years I don't get over there in time to see them but I do hear their honking from our house and I watch them flying over. Because there's no open lake water where we live until the third week in May, there's no place for swans to eat and swim.

Our neighbours, Florence and Neil Wright, have the right idea. They live farther down the beach than we do and their solarium overlooks the stretch of open water where the M'Clintock River flows into Marsh Lake. Sam and I visited the Wrights one Sunday afternoon to return Neil's photo album. Neil's story appears in this issue. It was a cool, cloudy day but plenty warm in the solarium. I used their telescope to view the swans and a bald eagle standing on the ice in their midst, fishing I guess. I thought the eagle might attack the swans but Neil assured me that the eagle would be pushing his luck. Earlier, Neil had seen a swan attack the eagle, battering the white-capped bird with its huge wings.

Several days later I was on a plane to Vancouver. My daughter and grandson picked me up at the airport and the first place we went was Stanley Park. The trees and spring bulbs were in bloom but the only animals we saw in the park were a few ducks.

The next day I attended a workshop put on by the Canada Magazine Fund. The workshop took place at the Harbourside Hotel overlooking Coal Harbour and Stanley Park. The night before the workshop I stayed in a room looking over the water on the 12th floor of the hotel. I left the drapes open and awoke every few hours to enjoy the night-time and early-morning view. After the workshop I took the sky train out to Burnaby. The sky train travels through parts of the city people don't usually see from their cars. The train is fast but I took in as much of the view as I could. Maybe that's all we can do—enjoy the scenery when and while we are able.