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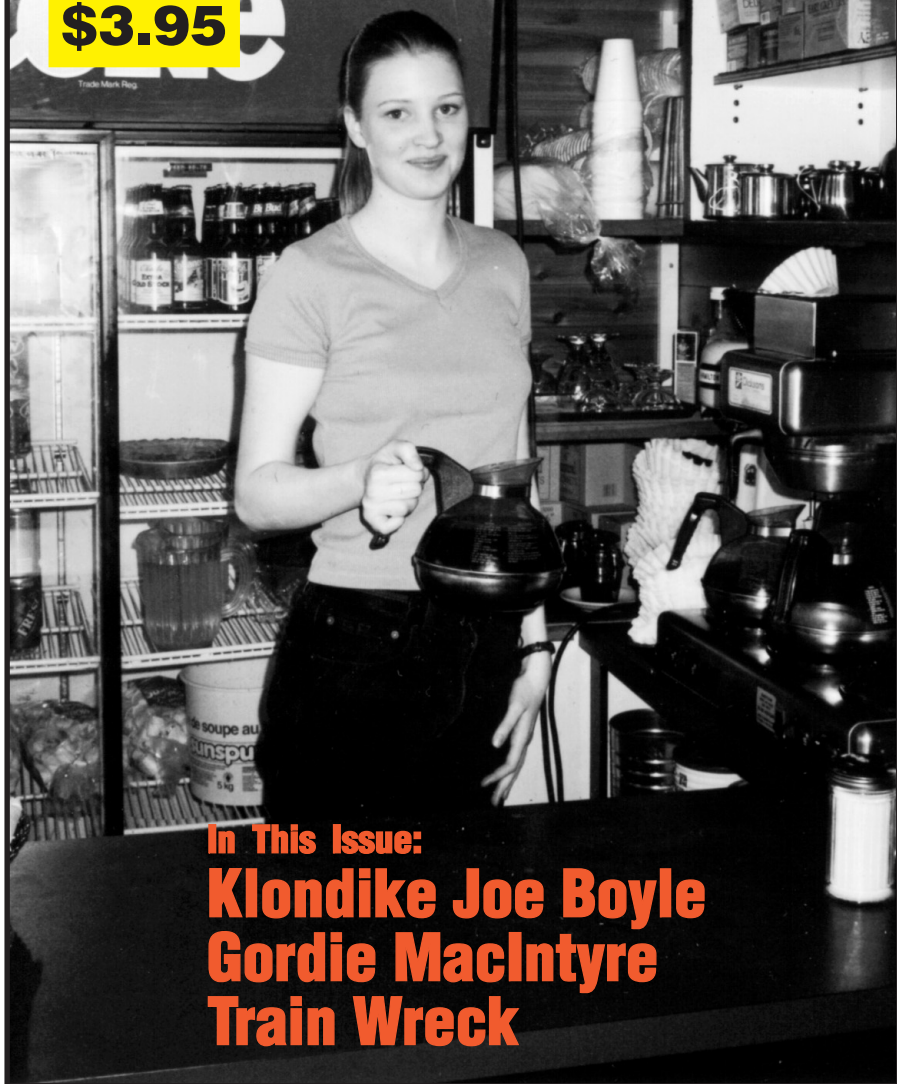
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# YUKONER

Enjoy

MAGAZINE

**\$3.95**



In This Issue:

**Klondike Joe Boyle**

**Gordie MacIntyre**

**Train Wreck**

# THE YUKONER MAGAZINE

Issue No.4

May, 1997

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Cover: Yukoner Elizabeth Sullivan, working at Annette's Country Kitchen, Carcross Cutoff, April, 1997. [S.H. photo]

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## From the Editor's Desk



**W**ell, this issue is coming out right on schedule. Which some people would say is quite amazing, especially if yours truly is involved. Last fall I went over to a fellow's place to pick up a pickup box for my old Dodgie pickup. I had bought it from him eight years before, in 1988.

He's an old Yukoner and all he said was, "I knew you'd show up for it sooner or later."

If you read everything in this magazine, you'll notice it comes out four times a year. But a subscription will get you six issues. So actually, it takes a year and a half to get your one-year subscription. We do it that way to cut down on the paperwork, for you and for us.

But the price for that one-year subscription (actually an 18-month subscription) is still \$24.00, the same price we charged for the Yukon Reader many years ago. We've kept expenses down by reducing the size of paper, not to mention the old printing press, which I have mentioned too many times already.

It reminds me of the gold rush we had here in 1980, when the price of gold went up to a \$1000 an ounce. Two fellows I knew drove up to Quill Creek to go into the saloon business. They each set up a bar on opposite sides of the creek.

The miners couldn't find much gold on that creek and they pulled out, leaving my buddies with all that booze and winter setting in. They were so broke they only had a dollar between the two of them.

So, Jack would go over to the other bar and spend the dollar, then his buddy went to Jack's bar with the same dollar and spent it—on a drink, of course. That way, they stayed drunk all winter for a dollar.

In the first issue of the magazine, I talked about learning to run this old press of mine. In the second issue I talked about the press again and in the last issue, No.3, I mentioned it only slightly and threw a photo of it in there. This time I'll lay off.

Except to say—it's as contrary as ever and taught me some more dirty tricks in the last few months.

A couple of winters ago, two Mounties went down to Watson Lake on an investigation. They were asked to check on an old trapper on their way back.

They stopped at the cabin and found him sitting in his favourite chair, frozen solid. It was fairly cold, maybe forty below, so the Mounties picked him up and set him in the back seat of the cruiser—very convenient.

At Rancheria they stopped for coffee. Another denizen of the Yukon asked them for a ride to Whitehorse. They told him to sit in the back behind the glass screen and that it would be cold back there.

Their passenger is well-known in the Yukon as a talker, and talk he did, all the way to Whitehorse. When the Mounties let him off in town, he remarked, “That fellow in the back doesn’t have much to say, does he?”

To which the Mounties replied, “No, he’s pretty quiet. He’s been dead for two weeks.”

And that’s me in this editorial. Very quiet. I can’t seem to get all in a flap about anything like I did in my younger days. Life does that to you, doesn’t it?

I was living in Dawson City when my first book came out (Yukon Gold). A fellow I knew had one in his hand at Diamond Tooth Gertie’s one night. I offered to autograph it for him.

“Why?” he said. “Do you think you’re going to be important?”

I have never offered to sign a book since. I got over trying to be important. Now I just like to enjoy a nice day in the sun, a trip to town, a good meal at the Carcross Cutoff Cafe, and conversations with all the characters who go there.

I love to run my old press (whoops), monkey-wrench my old Dodge, and keep the expenses down every way possible. That way I don’t have to get a real job or hear those awful words, “steady” or “permanent.”

So long for now,

Sam



Publisher Dianne Green taking off for town with her dog Pooper (black blob, back seat) going along to feel important and to guard the car.

# Wrecking Trains in the Yukon

## (or, The summer I tried to grow up)

BY GERRY WARNER

**I**t was the summer of 1967 and a lot of strange things were happening in the world.

The Middle East had erupted yet again and Arabs and Israelis were slaughtering each other with hateful fury in the Seven Days War. Sex, drugs and rock and roll was the mantra of the day in North America as the Woodstock Generation came of age in a psychedelic haze of cannibis, LSD and free love (lust?).

Hippies, a new phenomena then, were lying down on the street blocking traffic in an obscure part of San Francisco known as Haight Ashbury. Across the pond in Britain, four shaggy, mop-head singers called the Beatles knocked “the King of Rock and Roll,” Elvis Presley, off his throne and along with a darker, grittier group, the Rolling Stones, changed pop music and pop culture forever.

Even staid, old Canada showed signs of coming to life as Buckminster Fuller’s gleaming geodesic dome rose above the banks of the St. Lawrence in downtown Montreal and the least patriotic nation on earth began a rare, year-long revelry of chauvinistic celebrations that culminated in Expo 67.

And a scared, 21-year-old kid from the Kootenays in B.C. — desperate to grow up — set off on an odyssey, which after several strange twists and turns, would lead him to the Yukon. There, after helping to wreck a White Pass train, he decided to return south, not quite so desperate and not quite grown up.

The train wreck incident is true. You can check the June 1, 1967 issue of the Whitehorse Star to verify it. And the rest of this tale is also true, or as true as a tale can be after it’s filtered through 30 years of imperfect memory.

In January 1967, I pulled the plug on my barely-started university career at what was then the most politically radical institution of higher learning in Canada, Simon Fraser University.

Naive, foolish lad that I was, I didn’t understand why I was quitting except for this feeling of gnawing unease that grew greater in my gut every day. All I knew is that I had to get out there and find it, whatever “it” was.

Now, 30 years later, it’s easy to see what the problem was — I was over-stimulated. I was a small-time kid in a big city attending a big university and I just couldn’t absorb it all. That talent we develop as we mature to slough off the unimportant and the irrelevant was not an ability I possessed at the age of 21.



All I knew is that if I stayed in university any longer I was going to burst. I had to go somewhere where life was simpler. Where I didn't have to think about politics and revolution — big issues in the 1960's — or God forbid, the ongoing drive of any 21-year-old male — to get laid. (It was supposed to be "free love" in the 60's but you could seldom prove it by me.) So, like many 20-somethings of that era, I was on the run.

And what better place to go when you're on the run than the Yukon?

In May of 1967 the Alaska Highway pavement ended at Mile 96. I know that because an oil worker dropped me off there as he headed into the bush to work on the rigs and I started walking north with my pack to Whitehorse.

Fortunately, after hoofing it for five miles, I came to what was then known as Blueberry, a tiny hamlet at Mile 101 where I spent most of a fruitless day waving my thumb at vehicles that didn't even slow down as they roared by bathing me in a cloud of dust.

Late that afternoon another hitchhiker, who I'd met in Fort St. John, trudged into Blueberry claiming he had been "rolled" by an Indian further down the road and was now broke.

He asked me for \$20, and you know I was naive and gullible enough in those days to actually believe he had been robbed by the mythical Indian. So I forked over the money and he said he'd pay me back in Whitehorse. I ran into him later in the Rainbow Lounge of the old Whitehorse Inn where he promptly tried to stiff me for another \$20. This time he didn't get it. The growing up process had begun.

Needless to say, Whitehorse was a different town in the mid-1960's.



Photos by Gerry Warner.

The ugly green and white Federal Building was the biggest building downtown. But the old Whitehorse Inn with a huge, stuffed polar bear in the lobby and a magnificent set of moose antlers over the bar, was a big building in its own right and quite ornate with its wooden statue of a leaping white horse hanging from the second story of its corniced facade.

But I got to know the Whitehorse Inn for reasons other than architecture. Shortly after arriving in town, I got a job as a section-hand for the White Pass Railway and was stationed in a bunk house at Cowley about 10 miles south of town. The distance may not have been much, but in those days if you didn't own a car, Cowley felt like the middle of the wilderness. Come the weekend, we section-hand types — a motley crew of university students and locals — would get awfully thirsty. So one way or the other, we would find our way into town and inevitably end up at the Whitehorse Inn or another watering hole like it.

And it was during these nocturnal visits that I began the next stage of my growing up process — learning how to drink Yukon-style.

The protocol went like this. We'd arrive in town about 6 p.m. Friday, often coming in on the Casey car (scooter) past the tangled shacks of Whisky Flats and the boat yards with their long line of dry-docked paddle wheelers sitting forlornly on the river bank.

Draft beer was 35 cents a glass in those days and I remember the price very well because I'd only turned the legal drinking age that year and beer was selling for 20 cents a brew down south making the 35 cents seem awfully expensive.

But the price certainly didn't stop us and we would drink in the Whitehorse Inn until closing time at 2 a.m. and then head to the Bamboo Terrace, a cabaret close to the river which was later skidded downstream and is now known as the Roadhouse. And when the sun rose around 4 a.m.



— no daylight saving time those days — they'd chase us out of the Bamboo Terrace, and sloshed to the gills, we'd head to an all-night diner — the Blue Danube — where we'd order a side of fries and gravy and drink on that until the Whitehorse Inn re-opened at 9 a.m. And there we would be, eager for our malt breakfast and whoever was buying the first round of the day. The cycle would resume and we would continue to drink unabated until we passed out on the riverbank, the laundromat, the Sally Ann or wherever.

Looking back at it now, it seems like pretty pathetic behaviour. But if one was going to become a sourdough, you had to keep up with the locals. And this I tried to do until a major event intervened, the Great Train Wreck alluded to at the beginning of this yarn.

It rained hard that warm June night. It was still pouring when we left the Cowley bunkhouse to do our morning track patrol before the White Pass train roared through. At least that was what we were supposed to do.

In fact, we didn't do our patrol at all. Our boss Percy, whose name I've changed because he may still be alive, didn't want to get wet. So he told the lead hand to telegraph Whitehorse that everything was O.K. Meanwhile we kept dry in the scooter shack playing cards while the rain fell in buckets.

A couple hours later the train, loaded with Clinton Creek asbestos and rubber-necking tourists, rolled by Cowley station while we hid in the shack and shuffled the deck. Less than an hour later, we received a frantic call from Whitehorse.

"Train wreck. Bridge washed out at Bear Creek. Tracks suspended in mid-air. Two engines and several asbestos cars off the tracks and in the ditch. Miraculously no one injured."

The fact that no one was injured was probably the reason Percy didn't get fired right then and there. For that matter, they should have fired our whole crew. But they didn't.

Instead, in an ironic twist of fate, we got a ton of overtime the following week cleaning up the wreck, and when the messy job was done, we were back in the Whitehorse Inn drunker than ever.

Two things stand out most in my mind about the train wreck debacle. First was the actual cleanup, which was back-breaking heavy work but also a very delicate and tricky operation. The tricky part came after we dug the train wheels out of the sand and gravel and then raised it on enormous hydraulic jacks brought in from Skagway.

A "shoo fly" track was then built around the derailment enabling us to keep working while rail service resumed. After the enormous engines were raised several feet in the air, we built another "shoo fly" track underneath them. Then we waited with bated breath as the gigantic diesel engines were slowly lowered on to the newly laid track and driven out of the ditch and back on the main line. It was quite an operation.

The second thing I remember most about the train mishap was our good-for-nothing boss Percy. Oddly enough, he was in charge of the cleanup operation for the entire week it took to clean up the mess. But when it was



over, I knew something was up when several of the White Pass brass hats arrived at our lowly station house for “supper.”

The crew had already eaten and we could hear heated voices downstairs as the brass finished their dinner. Later that night, we ventured downstairs but there was no sign of good-for-nothing Percy. We never saw him again.

The White Pass brass had made their move and it was Percy’s last supper.

Nothing nearly as exciting happened the rest of that summer. But wouldn’t you know it, after the demise of Percy, he was replaced by a new boss who turned out to be a raving, sexual predator. And he fancied young men. Things got pretty tense as we crowded together on the tiny Casey car with this bozo who would be grabbing at whichever guy he could reach.

I finally had enough of this and the brain-destroying booze and quit before the summer was over. Back at university that fall, I ran into one of our crew and he told me they finally whacked the pervert boss — I think his name was Bruce — over the head with a cast iron frying pan and dumped him on the lawn in front of the Whitehorse RCMP station.

Later, I was told, White Pass rehired Percy.

Only in the Yukon, you say? I don’t know about that. But I do know that I started to learn something about the ways of the world that summer. More important, I started to grow up.

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The 1940 derailment of Engine 70 at 82 mile.

# The Astute Bird

By Fr. Andrew Cus

**O**n my first visit to Whitehorse I was impressed with the great numbers of ravens hovering over the city. These great birds nest on the high banks of the Yukon river close to the city where they can gather food all year round. Their place of preference is the dump-site where with the seagulls they can ravage and ravine what is eatable from the garbage.

I never did fancy this big, black bird with its croaking cry and clumsy flying. Needless to say, the raven has a worldwide reputation as the harbinger of evil and ill-luck. In some cultures it is even upheld as Satan's own emissary. For some unknown reason it projected a sinister aspect also to me until I started to perceive its intelligence and astuteness which outsmarts other birds and quadrupedes alike.

My first appreciation of the raven started when I was stationed for two weeks in Haines Junction a few years back. I always wanted to meet the grizzly bear at close range. This curiosity took me every evening to the dump-site where I spent hours waiting for my friend with camera at hand. The grand beast never showed up but the seagulls and the ravens were surely there gorging themselves among the piles of plastic bags. Although, at first sight, the seagulls and the ravens appeared to me all alike, gluttonous flying-pigs, I gradually perceived a significant difference of behaviour between the two species of birds. I started to witness in the black bird a superior intelligence as well as a sense of social responsibility and commitment.

Whereas the seagulls, aggressive and selfish as they are, went squawking and fighting among themselves, there always stood a raven on the lookout on the top of a tree while its comrades battered the garbage bags in search of food. At intervals, a raven flew up and replaced the guard so that he too might have a chance to join the rest in the banquet. The alternating duty went on uninterrupted all the time I was there waiting for the pompous, majestic but unmannerly "Ursus horribilis" who never showed up.

My growing admiration of the raven was later strengthened by a story which I read in the *Arctic Coast* between a dog and two ravens. The poor dog was enjoying a meal he had found, or had stolen, when two ravens zoomed and landed, one in front of him some three feet away while the other approached from behind pestering him by pulling the hair of his tail. Everytime the dog turned he barked angrily at the annoying intruder. Each time the raven moved back, ready to fly off. Finally, the raven pinned its beak into the tail and the dog jumped with pain, turned and pounced where the raven once stood. The bystander, who all this time stood motionless in



John Hatch photo

safe proximity, had sufficient time to grab the dog's food and fly away with it. Both ravens sat comfortably, at a safe distance sharing the meal.

Believe it or not, the ravens found out how to switch on the street lights in Faro and warm themselves up. Winter in the Yukon can be quite harsh. The temperature may fall down to forty or fifty below zero in a matter of hours. The shrewd raven found out that by sitting upon the photo-cell the street light switches on automatically and heat is generated. And there he sat warming himself up to his heart's content. When he felt satisfied, he conceded his place to the next fellow citizen.

The best story, however, is how the ravens succeeded in feeding on dogs. This happened in winter when the Yukon river froze. There are certain places where the river, in Whitehorse, does not freeze due to the force of the current. One of these spots is what is known as "Moccassin Flats" on the northern extremity of the city. It was Dick Stevenson who realized what was happening between the ravens and the dogs. When food became scarce in winter, the ravens ganged up to tease a dog who happened to be in the vicinity of the river. The intent was to lure the dog towards the edge of the snowy banks of the river. The foolish went around barking and chasing the ravens away, thus slowly and deceitfully being led towards the edge. While this stratagem was being deployed one of them stood at the edge of the bank which is icy and extremely slippery. Sooner or later, the dog caught sight of this raven and with impetuous fervour went straight at him.

When it was too late, the rampageous idiot realized he couldn't break the speed and stop from falling into the icy water. The doom of the dog was sealed. In a few minutes, hypothermia set in. The dog drowned and was carried under the ice by the current until the corpse reached another opening in the ice and settled on one of the islands. It was time then for the ravens to glide down and feast on the carcass. When nothing but bones were left, the story repeated itself. When Dick Stevenson saw this conspiracy, out of compassion he launched his boat and fished the stupid dog out of the icy water before it was too late.

Is it ever right the Irish folk-lore: "There is wisdom in the raven's head?"



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# The Many Lives of Klondike Joe Boyle

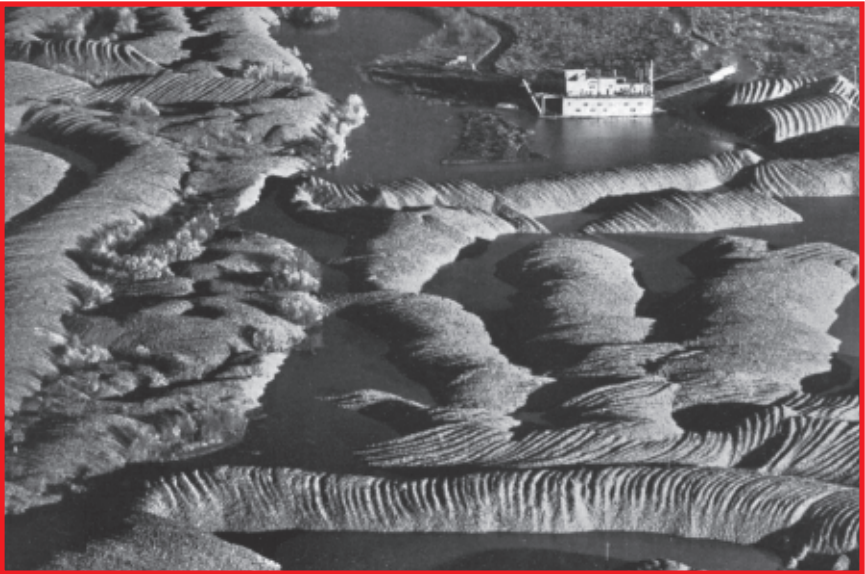
*By Sam Holloway*

If you stood on the moon looking down at our planet, you would see the scars left by the gold dredges of the Klondike. One of these monsters still slumbers on Bonanza Creek near Dawson City, pulled out of the muck and preserved by Parks Canada. Joe Boyle had it constructed in 1912—the biggest machine of its kind in North America.

Joe Boyle's story begins in 1887, when he returned from three years of adventure at sea, landing at New York. He was twenty years old at the time and owned shares in the ship he had arrived on. By now he had filled out to six feet and two hundred pounds, strong enough to push his way through any crowd or put a bully in his place. Few men would care to try him, not only because of his size and



Joseph Whiteside Boyle



A gold dredge in the Klondike River valley, with tailings piles all around it. Photo taken in the 1940s, photographer unknown.

obvious strength, but because of that look he had—proud, capable, able to handle any situation.

His family came from Woodstock, Ontario, but some of them resided in New York City, looking after their father's horse racing business. They hadn't heard from Joe in three years so they had a celebration. At the party he met his brother's sweetheart—Mildred Raynor, a flashing-eyed divorcee. On their first date he showed up wearing a bouquet that matched her dress and three days later they married.

He sold his shares in the ship to stay on land—to support this “bewitchingly feminine woman” and her son. He invested in a feed grain and livery stable and made a good living for himself and “Mink,” so named because of her love of fur coats. Joe took a night course to become a lawyer; he could speak and write very well and loved any sort of conflict or litigation.

In 1891, he became manager of a boxing club and there he met Frank Slavin, a well-known professional fighter. Joe sparred with Slavin to keep them both in shape and they dared John L. Sullivan of England to a fight, but Sullivan refused.

In 1893, Joe's brother David had a reputation for losing, starting with his lady love who married Joe. However, David found himself the owner of a colt that could run very, very fast. Secretly, he trained it and entered it in a big money race. The Boyle brothers put all the money they could gather on the horse. It won—by a nose—and they cleaned up \$56,000 (about a million dollars today). With his share, David bought his mother a property outside Woodstock which would become the family headquarters for many years.

Gamblers all, the Boyles. Joe on a woman he had only known for three days, David on an unproven colt. This trait, to gamble on fate, on life itself, would one day allow Joe to see gold by the bucketful, stare into the mouth of a loaded cannon, and take part in the greatest social upheaval in the history of the world.

But for now he became a “bookie,” taking bets on horse races, lending and borrowing money. Over this nine-year period, Mink delivered eight children, four of whom died in childbirth. Joe quit the bookie trade and decided to open a national chain of grain elevators. Arranging financing for this new business took most of his time and he saw little of his family.

One night he brought some business associates home for a party. As a joke, Mink dressed two of her maids in ghost costumes to frighten the visitors. The incident led to a quarrel between Joe and her that led to a legal separation. He sold everything he had and gave his wife three-quarters of the money. Joe took two children with him and moved from New York to Woodstock.

He settled a monthly allowance on her. Years later, with Joe's brother Dave, she hired a lawyer to try for more money; the court awarded her less than she already had been receiving.

Sometime in this period Joe and a friend were thrown in jail for drunken behaviour. For the rest of his life, he refused alcohol and tobacco.



In 1896, an Ontario newspaper published a report on a new gold strike in the Klondike, based on NWMP Inspector Constantine's letters to his political bosses in Ottawa. That fall Joe went on a boxing tour with Frank Slavin but they made no money. Boxing was *passé* in the East but they received an offer from San Francisco worth \$5000. They hurried out there but the other fighter backed out of the deal, leaving them stranded. However, Slavin found an unknown fighter to take him on for \$1000.

Joe watched the fight for a while and left to telegraph East for money he had left with his father. Slavin, well past his prime, took a real beating but got paid anyhow. Joe bought steamship tickets for Victoria, B.C. on the 17th of June, 1897. They staged a fight there between Boyle and Slavin and again Joe heard about the big gold strike in the Yukon. The big gold rush hadn't started yet, and the famous gold ships had still to land on the west coast.

For all of his life, Joe Boyle could see a big picture where others only saw details. In another age, another time, he might have been a conquering general, a far-seeing leader, a man with a place in the history books. But, he was a Canadian, from a country where the doer of deeds is resented and envied and rarely mentioned.

In Victoria, Boyle and Slavin met two financiers who hired them to blaze a commercially viable trail over the White Pass into the Yukon. They sailed to Skagway and were not impressed with the sight: a few buildings and tents under a grey sky. Joe spent his last 50 cents on a cup of "very poor coffee" and wondered what they should do. He found an abandoned banjo, played some tunes before a small crowd, and passed his hat around. When they finished, the hat had enough money in it to buy them a meal.

Supplies arrived from their Victoria backers and they started up the White Pass. This secondary route to the Klondike had been rarely used and nobody knew much about it. With a few volunteers, they struggled through heavy brush and across cold mountain streams, reaching the summit three days later.

Slavin and the others turned back to widen the trail and fetch more supplies while Joe Boyle went on alone. Using stone piles and blazed trees, Joe marked a trail all the way to Lake Bennett on the far side of the divide—a distance of thirty-three miles. His route would be tramped by thousands of later goldseekers and eventually it became the railbed for the White Pass railway. All those later travellers followed Joe's trail almost exactly, proving he had a marvellous instinct for a good path to follow.

At Lake Bennett, Boyle and Slavin assembled a 24-foot collapsible boat and headed downstream for Dawson City, arriving in late August of 1897. Boyle never mentioned Miles Canyon or Whitehorse Rapids in his later correspondence, probably because he thought they were easy.

On their first day they found pick and shovel work for wages on Eldorado Creek. Joe looked around and decided on a big operation—using hydraulic methods such as they used in California. He had no gold claims, no money, but he ran into a character by the name of Swiftwater Bill Gates.

Gates had a reputation as a fool about women and gambled his money

away, but he knew the mining business. It's been said that he could smell a rich piece of ground. He taught Joe how to use a gold pan and how to work a claim. He too had ideas of a syndicate and big equipment. At the time, Swiftwater owned part of claim on the richest section of Eldorado Creek and a half interest in the Monte Carlo Saloon in Dawson.

Boyle and Slavin built a small cabin on the hillside above Dawson, an area reserved for squatters, and worked as labourers to feed themselves. All the while, Joe was thinking.

Nobody could mine the Klondike River valley because the gravels were so deep, yet there had to be gold there. Boyle talked to the Gold Commissioner, William Ogilvie, who suggested he go to Ottawa to talk to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior. Just before freeze-up in the fall of 1897, he and Swiftwater Bill began poling a boat up the Yukon River—the same boat Joe had floated to Dawson just two months before.

The river began to freeze so they abandoned the boat and tramped along the shore. As they



Joe Boyle, left and below, standing with a group in front of Clarence Berry's cabin in the fall of 1897. Note the gold nugget and chain. Joe could only have been in the Klondike a few weeks when this photo was taken. He must have brought some fine clothes with him because there were none for sale in Dawson. He had no intention of making his living by digging in the frozen ground, although this is what he had to do in the beginning. Clarence Berry, a very rich claim owner, is the fiddle player. S.H.

[Yukon Archives photo, Betts collection]

crossed a subsidiary creek, Swift broke through the ice and Joe yanked him out before he drowned. They made it some two hundred miles to Carmacks where they met a group of men stranded by the freezing of the Yukon River. Electing Boyle as captain, the group struck out over the Dalton Trail which led west to the coast of Alaska.

Instead of a four-day trip, they struggled for 25 days through snow and wind. They shot their horses and rationed the food. Luckily, a ship lay anchored at Haines and they boarded it, arriving in Seattle on November 29. The group presented Boyle with a gold watch, attesting that without his leadership they most likely would have died on the trail.

Home again in Woodstock, Joe found a message from the U.S. War Department: they wanted him to take a herd of reindeer over the Dalton Trail to the Klondike. There were fears of mass starvation in the Klondike but Joe couldn't see the sense of it and turned the offer down.

He travelled to Montreal, where he raised some money, then went to Ottawa to see about his mining concession on the Klondike River. He stayed at the Russell Hotel in Ottawa where he met A.N.C. Treadgold, an English schoolmaster just arrived in Canada. The "Treader," as he became known, also had big plans for concessions in the Klondike, even though he had never set foot in the Yukon. In the years to come, he became Boyle's biggest competitor while pretending to be Joe's friend.

While Joe Boyle borrowed money from banks and corporations, the Treader took money from retired schoolteachers, friends, employees, anyone at all, to finance his big dreams. They came to nothing in the end although Treadgold was still staging court battles into the early 1950s.

Boyle applied and re-applied for his concession but nothing happened, partly because Treadgold already had connections in Ottawa that were better than Joe's. After seven months of waiting, Boyle headed back for the Klondike.

In a Skagway saloon, Joe saw a bartender punching an Indian who was too drunk to defend himself. The other patrons looked on but jumped out of the way when Joe grabbed the bartender and tossed him into a corner. Boyle helped the Indian—who turned out to be from the Dawson area tribe—out of the bar and took him to his room.

Indian Charlie became Joe's friend for life and travelled with him to Dawson. In the meantime, Boyle had sent Treadgold ahead to make sure no one was mining on his concession. When he arrived in the Klondike, Joe hired Slavin and a gang of men to prevent anyone from cutting timber on his property. Six days later he headed for Ottawa again. Back in a couple of months, he set up a firewood and timber business, using trees from his concession. By now, the hillsides along the rich creeks had been stripped of even the smallest trees so Joe's timber business turned into a real moneymaker. At this time, Treadgold was in Ottawa trying for another mining concession. He had soaked up every idea Joe Boyle had and would make the best of this knowledge.

In the fall of 1898, Boyle and Swiftwater Bill Gates headed up the fro-

zen Yukon River again. This time they were an experienced, well-equipped group. At Skagway, Indian Charlie was supposed to return to Dawson with Joe's dogteam. But he wanted to see the south so Boyle took him—and the dogs—all the way to Woodstock. In his Klondike outfit, Joe drove the dogteam all around Woodstock with his daughter Flora on the sleigh. Of course he went to Ottawa again to work on the bureaucrats and returned to Dawson in the spring of 1899.

Indian Charlie grew tired of Woodstock and how everybody stared at him. He set out for home with ten dollars in his pocket, arriving there before Joe Boyle did that spring. To this day, no knows how he managed; indeed, a story has been passed down that Indian Charlie walked the whole distance, reaching the Klondike two years later.

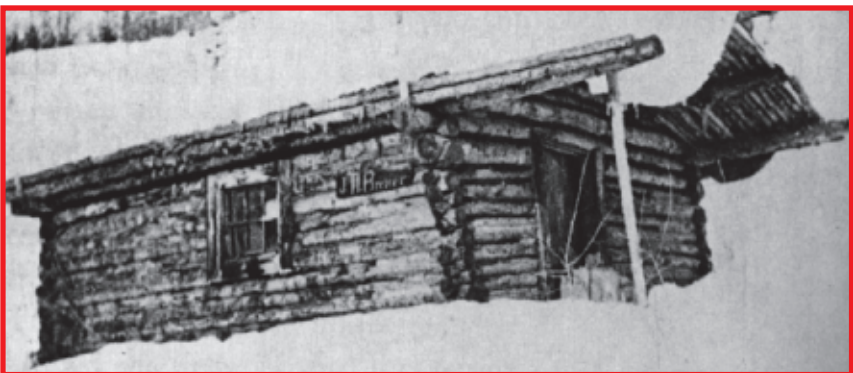
Boyle's old partner, Slavin, had staked some gold claims of his own and became famous as the champion boxer of the Northwest. Joe bought these claims from Slavin for \$20,000 and their long association ended.

Boyle's timber concession was finally approved in December, 1899, and he built a wharf and warehouse in Dawson. By now, the City of Gold was dying—8,000 people left there in one week to head for Nome and elsewhere.

He still had not received approval from Ottawa to mine the Klondike valley. Unknown to him, Treadgold was making deals with Frank Slavin and others and had a pact with Clifford Sifton, some say a kickback deal, to get all Boyle's claims for himself. Joe had no idea of any of this; in fact, he took Treadgold with him to examine Joe's ideas for a hydro-electric plant to feed the big machinery to come.

At last, on November 15, 1900, Sifton approved Joe Boyle's concession. He also granted a concession to Treadgold, with the further stipulation that all lapsed claims in the Klondike would revert to the Treader. It also looked like Treadgold would hold most of the water rights in the region.

The small miners howled in complaint about Treadgold's amazing deal and it was eventually rescinded. In the meantime, Joe Boyle had made a lot of friends in the Yukon. He set up a fund for St. Mary's Hospital, built a church for the Indians at Moosehide, set up a skating rink for the children, owned the finest dog team in the Yukon, drove one of the first cars over the



The cabin Joe and Slavin built on the hillside above Dawson.

trail to Whitehorse, and was involved in too many other activities to list here.

Over the next 14 years he built the biggest gold dredges in the world, sent a hockey team—the Yukon Nuggets—to play against the NHL Ottawa Silver Seven (the Nuggets lost), and made many trips to arrange financing, and oversee the manufacture of his monster machines. At one point he sold controlling interest in his company only to regain it through a lengthy court battle.

To finance the building of the dredges, he borrowed money from the English owned Granville Mining Company. He received the funds but refused to sign the final documents, saying they had been altered since the original deal had been hammered out.

Two dredging companies emerged in the Klondike: Canadian Klondike Mining Company (CKMC), controlled by Joe Boyle; and Yukon Gold Corporation, backed by the Guggenheims of New York, controlled at this point by Treadwell. The first CKMC dredge started operating in August of 1905. It had cost \$200,000 to build and paid for itself in two months of mining.

The “Guggies” assembled nine Klondike dredges and many arguments ensued over water rights and claim boundaries. Boyle conceived of a “superdredge” and in November, 1910, CKMC #2, named the “Canadian” fired up, powered by electricity from the North Fork hydroelectric plant. It could process 16,000 cubic yards of gravel daily, more than triple the capacity of any other dredge. Many experts predicted this monster would never operate but it proved to work better than even Joe Boyle had anticipated.



Joe Boyle (furthest right), Swiftwater Bill (with the tie), Indian Charlie (furthest left) on the second expedition up the Yukon River in 1898.



Every summer Joe sponsored a picnic for all the children of Dawson. He became friends with Martha Black and Chief Isaac, delivered a baby at his Bear Creek headquarters, and married again.

His new wife and his daughter detested each other. Sometimes Joe would walk for miles just to get away from the bickering. He and his headstrong son disagreed on many things also, so in some ways these were not happy times for Boyle and it seemed like he was bored with it all.

(The other company did nothing for the town of Dawson, even after becoming the only big operator in the Klondike, shutting down in 1966. The oldtimers still speak bitterly about all the gold that was shipped to the USA and London—yet YCGC never built so much as a skating rink for the children nor bought a sack of flour in the town. Joe Boyle, on the other hand, will always be remembered for his generosity and commitment to the community.)

During these years, 1903-1914, the government wanted to expropriate his hydro plant, he had to sort out labour unrest, and he continued his court battles, winning almost all of them. In 1913, his company made a \$1,000,000 profit, the equivalent of about \$20,000,000 in today's currency.

He wore the best clothes money could buy and held enormous respect in the Yukon and everywhere he went. No one disputed that Joe Boyle was indeed the "King of the Klondike."

Then came the momentous news: Britain had declared war on Germany. Every able-bodied male citizen of the British Empire would be called on to fight, to throw his life and blood into the trenches of France. But they



Dredge No. 4 on Bonanza Creek in 1975. It was built in 1912 and ran until 1959. It had 75 buckets, 16 cubic feet each, and could process up to 10,000 cubic yards of gravel per day. Restored by Parks Canada. [S.H. photo]

didn't want Joe Boyle; he was 46 and they felt he had passed the age of usefulness.

Even so, he offered the government a battalion of 50 men, outfitted at his own expense, about \$50,000. His son, Joe Jr. refused to go and the rift between them would never be healed. The similarities between father and son meant they would never agree on much of anything.

After a grand sendoff from Dawson, the Yukon regiment wouldn't see action for two years. It took Joe Boyle's intervention with the Minister of Defence to get them out of Vancouver. Canada's military leaders would not forget this upstart citizen who had gone over their heads to get things moving.

In 1915 one of CKMC's dredges was mysteriously wrecked, the shortage of manpower caused union problems for Joe, and his son got married. All the while, Boyle was haranguing Ottawa for a chance to do something in the war.

Then his chance came. In 1916 he was made an honorary lieutenant-colonel in the Canadian Militia. He travelled to London, England, leaving his wife behind and his son to run the company. He got nowhere with his desire for an assignment until the Americans entered the war in 1917.

In his lifelong style, he pounded on doors until one of them opened: an organization called ACE (American Committee of Engineers) wanted to organize the Russian railway system near the battle lines on the Eastern front. Joe Boyle would be in charge. At the same time, he was fending off a lawsuit by the Granville Mining Company. In Dawson, Joe Junior was doing a great job of managing the company.

It was at this juncture that Boyle left his old life behind him. He would never see his wife or beloved daughter again nor "pan the bonny dust" of a Klondike creek. His dredges would rip huge profits from the Yukon for another 50 years and Joe could have lived in comfort to a ripe old age but...

In full uniform and wearing a ceremonial sabre, he arrived in Russia in June, 1917. They were losing a battle to the German-Austrian forces, not because they couldn't fight, but because food and ammunition could not reach the soldiers. At this time, a provisional government under Kerensky ran the largest country in the world and undercurrents of revolt were everywhere. Czar Alexander had abdicated his throne and soon the Bolsheviks would be in command. It would be the most brutal, far-reaching revolution in human history. Joe Boyle would be in the thick of it for the next five years, dealing man to man with kings and dictators, and would find his first real love, a love greater than he had ever thought possible.

He travelled and investigated and made his recommendations. Over a period of twelve days, in the middle of a Russian offensive that had turned into a retreat, he opened enough railway lines to stop the retreat from turning into a massacre. For this he and his assistant, John Kennally, were decorated for bravery by the Russian army. He set up a hospital for wounded soldiers, protected a town from looting and raping by the soldiers, saved some refugees from a massacre, rescued some nuns, and dealt with the commanders and so-called leaders of Russia.

His power over these leaders, among the most butcherous in world history, was truly amazing. When Joe Boyle barked, they listened, they moved, they obeyed. It was how he lived through it all.

He learned of an impending disaster in Rumania. The queen of Rumania had coaxed the little country into the war against Germany but things went badly for them. Rumania's army had been forced into a small corner of the country where the local population, this army, and a large Russian force had run out of food. It was possible that five million people would starve to death over the winter.

Boyle sent many letters and telegrams to London. He was one of the first to realize that the Russians might pull out of the war, freeing millions of German troops to fight the Allies on the Western front. He saw what was needed and ordered 4,500 locomotives and 115,000 railway cars. While awaiting the results of that request, he set about organizing the chaotic railway system. He simply overawed the Russians with his overbearing manners and sureness of what to do. They followed his orders and for the first time, supplies started going where they were supposed to.

In the meantime, he received word from London that his court case was going against him and he should be there to defend himself. Kerensky's government was now being overrun by the Bolsheviks. They called on Joe to get food trains running to Moscow and Petrograd as those cities were starving. He did so in 48 hours, by leveraging unused cars over embankments to get them out of the way; others he sent down spur lines to wind up in farmer's fields. He sorted and organized and got everything moving.

He saw some Bolsheviks brutally murder a Russian army commander and realized what sort of people they were. From then on, he would warn the outside world of what was coming but no one listened.

It was time now to do something for the Rumanians. He arranged a trainload of food and clothing to be sent there and then he was to spirit their national treasure out of the Kremlin treasury. The Rumanian government had placed it there for safekeeping but as they saw the tremendous upheavals in Russian unfold, they asked Joe Boyle to get it out for them.



Joe Boyle and his second wife, Elma, at a Christmas party in Dawson, 1913.

Using his credentials and letters of reference from Russian leaders, he bullied and threatened until they released the jewels and currency to him. He loaded it all into his special railway car and disguised the treasure as Red Cross packages for the Russian army stranded in Rumania. He attached this car to a train heading through the Ukraine where the worst of the revolutionary fighting took place, between the Bolsheviks and the White Russians.

The Bolsheviks didn't think he would get so far. They sent a group of saboteurs to demolish the car a few miles from Moscow. The train stopped and Boyle and his assistant, Hill, saw some men trying to uncouple the car from the train. Joe Boyle knocked one of them out and the others ran. The train started again and their car, which had steel sides, was peppered with bullets. Down the line, a Russian Commissar stopped the train for a search.

Boyle invited him into his car, gave him a meal and drinks, and showed him the baskets. The Commissar let them go.

Then the train's engine broke down and they ran out of firewood for the boiler. Joe found a stack of logs and persuaded the passengers to load it into the fuel tender, by passing the logs along in a human chain.

At Kiev, they attached the car to another train. By now, many Bolsheviks knew about the treasure. As they waited for the train to depart, Joe went downtown on business. As his friends waited anxiously and the train was about to pull out, he returned. Hill had delayed the train just long enough for Boyle's return. A Bolshevik bomb had exploded near him, blowing him through a store window where he lay unconscious for a few hours.

Engine trouble again. They found another engine and got under way but soon the train was stopped. A Bolshevik officer informed them they were under arrest. Boyle and the others looked out to see scores of artillery guns trained on their car. There would be no running off this time.

They threw a party. Earlier they had come upon an abandoned vodka factory and so had plenty of liquor. For hours they drank and laughed and finally the guards and artillerymen fell asleep. The special car had been detached from the train and they were isolated.

On a sideline, a steam engine stood ready to go. With their revolvers at the ready, Boyle and Hill hijacked the locomotive and attached it to the car. Still the guards slept through it all.

Off they roared. A few miles down the track they threw a rope over a telegraph pole and pulled down the lines, hoping they did so before a message got through about their flight. As they looked ahead, they saw flashing red lights and a wooden barrier across the tracks. The hijacked engineer would not go faster; the train would derail, he said. Boyle threw him aside and pushed the throttle wide open.

The train crashed through the barrier, wobbling from side to side, and onward they sped.

At the Rumanian border, they saw another barrier, this one too large to ram through. Joe Boyle threw on the brakes but they crashed into a large mound of dirt and could go no further. They heard the sides of the car being

hammered with thousands of bullets. But the soldiers who appeared in the doorway were Rumanians.

Boyle delivered the treasure to the Rumanian capital. He got a hero's welcome and the government awarded him the Grand Cross of Rumania.

While he rode his wild ride, lawyers and friends tried to reach him from London: if he could not return now, his Klondike holdings were irretrievably lost. He received no messages at all. Treadgold and the others clapped with glee as they took over his empire, believing the King of the Klondike imprisoned or dead somewhere in Russia. The courts awarded them everything. Had he been there, Joe Boyle could have defended his interests successfully, but he made a choice to stay in the battle zone; indeed, in his mind, there was no choice at all.

Around this time, a British officer whom Boyle had called incompetent was attempting to have Joe removed from his duties. The Canadian government agreed with him and the necessary letters were sent to Russia.

Boyle went back to the Kremlin to arrange a peace treaty between Rumania and Russia. On his return, he was invited to the royal palace where he met Queen Marie, a great granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She had been an English princess who at one time could have married King George V. But now she was married to King Ferdinand of Rumania who was the figurative head of the country. He was a weak, vacillating ruler and it was she who managed everything. He had married her for political reasons and professed his love for another woman.

Queen Marie, 43 at the time, had had many lovers of her own. Joe Boyle, 53, married twice but knowing nothing about women, had never met anyone like her. As they gazed across a table at each other and talked, they formed a bond that would last for the rest of their lives.

It was like a fairy tale: she poured out her tale of woe, how her country and her life were collapsing all around her. Joe Boyle, in his uniform, big and strong and bold, told her in terrible earnestness, that he would never let it happen. His deeds told her with equal certainty that he meant what he said.

He left to conclude the peace treaty with the Russians (later broken by the Rumanian generals) and made many reports to London on what he saw. Because now he was a double agent: working for the Bolsheviks but sending advice to the Allies on how to defeat them.

He always wore his uniform with "Yukon" engraved on the shoulder straps and his buttons were made of Klondike gold. Financed by Britain and France, he set up a huge espionage and saboteur network in Russia, which now had been overrun by the Germans.

In the treaty with Russia, 60 Rumanian business people and dignitaries were to be released from prison and sent home. However, the Bolsheviks fully intended to massacre them all. In an incredible adventure, Joe Boyle rescued them and brought them safely home. For years afterwards, the hostages staged reunions to re-live their remarkable escape, holding as their saviour Joe Boyle, who managed to visit just one of their gatherings.



He got another hero's welcome. Thousands hailed him in the streets and named him the Saviour of Rumania. Under the full knowledge of almost everyone in the country, he and Marie became lovers. It has been said that they loved as only two people can who know they might be dead tomorrow.

In Canada, the newspapers, fed information by his brother Dave, reacted in horror to Boyle's romance with the Queen.

On June 18, 1918, while having a meeting with intelligence officers, he was convulsed with a severe stroke—and came very close to dying on the spot. Queen Marie had him brought back and moved into a cottage near the palace. She went to see him every day and it was under her love and attention that he recovered. But he never regained his former powers.

The war ended. He returned to Britain and was invited to all the meetings of the power brokers of the victorious Allies. He told the British government how to defeat the Bolsheviks and save much agony later. Only Winston Churchill took him seriously, as he admitted in a letter to Lord Beaverbrook many years later.

Boyle arranged a \$25 million Canadian aid package to be sent to Rumania and there was talk of giving him a British medal for his work on the continent. Even though he was hailed as a war hero, British and Canadian army bureaucrats ordered him not to wear his uniform, so he took it off. Then he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and he put his uniform back on, covered as it was with medals—but none from his own country.

Canadian and British officials discounted his war efforts, tried to have him wiped from the the official records, and made further efforts to have him remove his uniform.

He went back to Rumania, still operating the spy network, sending reports on the Bolsheviks to British headquarters. His ideas for reforming the Rumanian aristocracy and giving land to peasants made him a lot of enemies there. He also wanted more freedom and rights for women. His ideas were met with such hostility by Rumanian leaders that Joe decided to leave and return to England.

Gold was no longer his dream. From now on it would be... oil. His timing was excellent: the British navy was converting to oil and Henry Ford had started mass producing automobiles in a system that would be imitated all over the world.

He started working for Shell Oil of Britain. They paid his expenses and promised a royalty on any new oilfields he could bring under their control. The connections he had made in Russia, and the fact that Rumania was swimming in oil, made him a good choice for the company.

Throughout all, he and Marie kept a steady correspondence. He visited her for two weeks in 1921. He got caught in a bad train wreck in Russia and his health deteriorated swiftly. He lost 60 pounds and his hair turned silver. At last the heart that had pushed him into the forefront of action everywhere—started to falter. His legs swelled and his breath came in great

gasps at times. Sometimes he had to push himself around in a wheelchair.

He never visited Marie again, not wanting her to see how frail and shaky he had become. Then the Shell Oil company fired him.

He learned that a friend of his had been imprisoned by the Bolsheviks. Immediately, he set out to rescue him. He raised such a fanfare enroute that the Russians released his friend before Joe Boyle got there.

Back in London, he moved into a room at the home of an old Klondike pal, Teddy Bredenberg. Sometimes he couldn't hold a pen and had to dictate his letters to Marie.

On the morning of April 14, 1923, he died in his bed with two letters he had written the day before under his pillow. One was thanking Bredenberg for his hospitality, the other was addressed to Marie. He was 56 years old.

Teddy sent a telegram to Bucharest advising Marie of events, closing with the words, "my deepest sympathy."

His friends buried him in the churchyard across from his room. Marie could not attend the funeral but she wrote a long letter, part of which is quoted here:

*"For me, he is not dead. He was so big, he belonged absolutely to nature. For me he is in the trees, in the sky, in the sea, in the sun and in the wind that sweeps round my house. He is in the freshness of the early morning and the silence of the night—and the stars seem to watch me with his eyes and the clouds seem to bring me messages from that great heart that was mine."*

Some years later, she wrote another letter that became the forward for Kim Beatty's book on Joe Boyle:

### **By Her Majesty, Queen Marie of Rumania**

"HE CAME as all strong things come, quite simply, because there was need of strength.

He came at an hour when I had my back to the wall, a black hour when a blind faith alone, a bulldog tenacity, kept me from despairing.

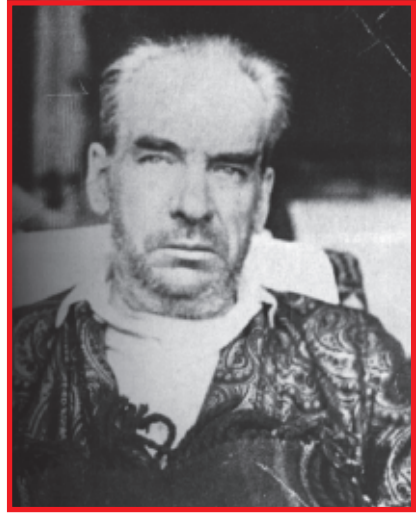
I was at the end of my tether; all things were tottering; each dawning day might mean final disaster, might be the beginning of the end. Many had been loyal; but they, too, were tired as I was, and the words they said were words of consolation.



Queen Marie and King Ferdinand

When Joe Boyle first entered my room, as a stranger, as many entered in those days, it was as though a rock had miraculously appeared before me, a rock upon which I could lean. It was exactly that. All around were dark waves, storm, voices full of anguish against a background of flame; and all at once Joe Boyle was there, a stranger, and yet, somehow, not a stranger, because I seemed to have been waiting for him...

Strong, quiet, quaint of speech; his eye was steady and his very presence a refuge against fear. Though I had never seen him before, knew nothing about him, not his story nor whence nor why he came, the first handclasp sealed a friendship strong and indestructible.



Joe Boyle just after his stroke in 1918.

The second time he came our cause was considered hopeless; Rumania had been given up... no one could help us now... they (the Allied Missions) were all leaving, they had to leave; it was not their fault... our sword had to be sheathed, we had been betrayed, the enemy was upon us.

All day long I had stood in the middle of my room and they had all passed before me—officers, doctors, nurses, Red Cross helpers—coming to say good-by...

I cannot even remember why he was there; he had dined with us, I think, and I had said to him afterward: "I have some difficult hours to pass until the ten trains leave. Will you come and sit with me in my room?"

And he came and sat with me, and somehow my tongue was untied. "They have all left us," I said at length, "all of them."

"But I shall not leave you," he answered.

Just that. And I laid my hand in his and I knew that his words were true. It was very simple; I never doubted. He knew I would not doubt; just a handclasp, and a friendship was sealed which lasted until death.

His creed was simple; what he said he did. All his life he had done what he said, and more. He had a great simplicity, sometimes almost the simplicity of a child. He had always kept faith and could not conceive that anyone could doubt his word.

My heart becomes soft when I think of him, soft with a great wistfulness and with an aching longing....

But this I must say, he could take only a leading attitude, he had to dominate. Love him as we did, I can but confess that he could be quarrelsome when opposed; he never could play second fiddle; he had to have his own way.

Inconceivably tender and gentle with children and animals, he could

be almost aggressively domineering over those with whom he did not agree, and sometimes I had to say to him: "Please don't bite off their heads; they cannot help being smaller than you!" "

After that terrible night when the Allies left us, he came to see me often from any part of Russia where he happened to be. I never knew when he would appear on the scene; he came always unheralded, he was just there, and his coming was always the most natural event. Backward and forward flew the big man, confounding the Bolshevik wherever he could, upholding the oppressed, negotiating for Rumania....

But there came a sad hour when he felt that his day in Rumania was over. "I am for times of trouble," he said. "I am a stormy petrel; I am not meant for days of peace. I am a fighter; I am quarrelsome. Court life is not for me. I am incongruous in fine clothes and polite company. I am a man of the wilds . . . I have done your work . . . now I feel that I must return to the wilds."

And he quoted to me Robert Service's lines:

I am sick to death of your well-groomed gods,  
Your make-believe and your show;  
I long for a whiff of bacon and beans  
And a snug shake-down in the snow.  
A trail to break and a life at stake  
And another bout with the foe.  
It's the olden lure, it's the golden lure,  
It's the lure of timeless things;  
And today, oh, God of the trails untrod,  
How it whines in my heart-strings.

And so he left us with our blessing, our hearts full of gratitude and a huge and lasting regret to see him go. His desire was to return to his old haunts, to his forests, to his tearing rivers, to his fields of snow—that was his dream.

I knew all his dreams. He told them to me; later he wrote them to me in long, rambling letters.

Strong and true had he been all the days of his life, and he was strong and true when he died at Hampstead Hill. Although he had more than once played with millions, and although recently enormous sums of money had been offered to him to do work he did not consider work Joe Boyle could do, he was so poor when he died that there was barely money for his funeral. Joe Boyle never cared for money except to spend upon others, or for some great plan he had in mind.

He died alone, like an old lion in the desert, or an old eagle on a rock, who cannot bear man or beast to look upon his end.... In our lives he left a gap nothing can ever fill.

Faithful to a promise given him, I had an old Rumanian stone cross put upon his grave; and these words I had carved upon the slab that lies over him, words taken from his favorite "Songs of a Sourdough":

**JOE W. BOYLE****A man with the heart of a Viking  
And the simple faith of a child.**

Beneath it my own little cross is engraved, the cross of the Regina Maria order.”

None of Joe’s letters to Marie have been found, but there can be no mistaking their great love for each other.

Marie came to London a few months after Joe Boyle’s death and sat for hours in the room where he died. She came out looking happy and refreshed, as though she had been talking to him—and maybe she had. For years afterward, dressed all in black, she returned to London to sit in his room and then she would cross the road to place flowers and kneel at his grave.

King Ferdinand died in 1928 and Queen Marie’s son Carol took over the throne. He quarrelled with his mother, treated her badly and, relegated to a room in the palace, she died in 1938.

In 1983, after much work by the Oxford Historical Society, Joe Boyle’s remains were flown to Canada aboard a military plane. On April 20, 1983, he was re-buried at Woodstock, Ontario, and the original monument from Queen Marie was placed on the grave.



Queen Marie of Rumania

**Editor’s Note:**

In my humble opinion, the best, most accurate book you can find on Joe Boyle is called “*The Sourdough and the Queen*,” written by Leonard W. Taylor, published by Methuen publishers in 1983. ISBN 0-458-96810-2. The author did a tremendous amount of research, travelling to London and Ireland to search for mementos and documents. Highly recommended!

The battle for control of the Klondike goldfields has been well covered by Lewis Green in his book, “*The Gold Hustlers*,” published by Alaska Northwest Publishing Company in 1977.

ISBN 0-88240-088-6

Another book, “*Brother, Here’s a Man*,” published in 1940, by Kim Beattie, is obviously fictionalized and inaccurate. Best left on the shelf!



# GORDON MCINTYRE, YUKONER

By Darrell Hookey

**G**ordon McIntyre has worn many, many hats to serve Yukoners these past 65 years.

First he was a teacher, then a soldier, then a liquor vendor.

Then Gordon entered the employ of Indian and Northern Affairs as the mining recorder for the Mayo district. A frugal federal government also gave him the responsibilities of marriage commissioner, juvenile court judge, justice of the peace, coroner, mining inspector, notary public and secretary of the hospital board.

In his spare time, he was a volunteer firefighter, stage actor and musician.

When a group of long-time Yukoners meet to discuss mutual acquaintances, they have to be careful to mention Gordon by name. Each could have a completely different memory of him.

One person might remember him as the only teacher they ever had. A teacher who maintained tight control over eight grades in a one-room Mayo school. A man who would entertain the class with cartwheels and send rowdy boys to the playground for chinups to burn off excess energy.

Another person may remember him as the government official who performed his marriage or listened to his story down at the RCMP barracks after a drunken brawl.

And yet another person will remember Gordon as the top-level bureaucrat who rose to assistant commissioner and the administrator of the Yukon before retiring to become a politician.

His father, in comparison, did only one thing all his life ... Angus McIntyre worked hard building frontiers.

Angus came west with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway and was present at the driving of the last spike Nov. 7, 1885. From there he ran a pack train of horses and cleared brush and stumps for road construction.



Itchy feet carried him aboard the steamer Humboldt and on to Skagway, Alaska, for the beginning of the Gold Rush. It was October of 1897 and he found work on a pack train from Skagway to the Summit.

Since he was already on the Canadian side at the end of these trips, he wasn't required to show his ton of goods for his own push to Dawson City.

Angus arrived in Dawson in July of 1898 and didn't stake a single claim. Instead, he bought a horse for \$600 and empty barrels for \$10 each and started hauling water from the Klondike River to his customers in Dawson. Hay for the horse cost him \$500 a ton.

From late 1899 to the fall of 1905, Angus secured many contracts to move freight from Dawson City to Moose and Glacier Creeks by advertising the Yukon's only mountain-climbing "side-hill mules" with legs longer on one side.

Gordon was born in Dawson City July 6, 1910. He remembers his father as "the man who came to dinner". He was always off to work before the rest of the family awoke in the morning and he worked six days a weeks.

In 1920, large-scale mining was over, half of the government officials were laid off and federal money dried up. There were no more jobs, so Gordon, his mother and two older sisters moved to Vancouver and bought a house. His father moved to Mayo to take a job with Greenfield and Pickering to haul silver-lead ore from the top of Keno Hill to the Mayo waterfront. His innovations made it possible to move seven tons of ore six kilometres down a steep hill to Keno City using horse teams. He worked in Mayo until 1924 at the end of the contract.



Gordon's class at Mayo, 1934.

Angus tried to live in Vancouver, but horses weren't being used as much anymore with the introduction of the Holt tractor. When he got the call from Greenfield and Pickering to buy horses for its new contract to haul mail from Vancouver to Dawson City, he was off to the Yukon once again.

Meanwhile, Gordon and the rest of the family stayed in Vancouver, where he was a good student, placing in the top five of his class each year. He enjoyed high school rugby and even played cricket for a couple of years.

He graduated from high school into the depression year of 1929. Both of his older sisters, Hazel and Edna, had their salaries cut in half and his father had just been laid off at the end of another contract.

Gordon had a little money saved from his after-school job as a sub manager taking care of 15 newspaper carriers. He kept this job and cashed in his war bonds to pay his way through Provincial Normal School. After two terms, he would become a teacher since there were no other jobs to be found.

His first term teaching was gruelling. It was a little one-room school built from green logs and was poorly equipped. He boarded with the secretary of the school board on her family's farm just outside the small British Columbia community.

His room was tiny with a curtain for a door and had no facilities or bath. He'd be awakened each morning with the whining noise of the milk separator and sent off to work with an unappetizing bagged lunch.

The living conditions forced him to resign and become a substitute teacher in Vancouver the rest of the year. The next fall, he studied book-



The one-room school in Mayo where Gordon taught. He is standing, left.

keeping, typing and shorthand at the Britannia Annex High School of Commerce.

Everything changed the summer of 1932 when he received a telegram from the commissioner of the Yukon. Gordon's father had talked to his friend the day before suggesting he offer an open teacher's position to his son.

In those days the commissioner was a one-man government and patronage was how things were run.

Gordon arrived in Mayo the day before Discovery Day. His introduction to the town and its residents was over a game of softball and an evening dance at the Pioneer Hall.

The next day, August 18, school began.

The school itself was a log building rented to the territorial government along with a supply of firewood. It had four bare 100-watt bulbs hanging from the ceiling and a wood stove, made from a barrel, in the centre of the room. Windows were placed on the south and east sides and green chalkboards ran along the west and north walls.

A galvanized water can sat at the south entrance with a dipper for drinking and washing water.

Townfolk had put some home-made playground equipment in a vacant lot west of the school, but the main playground remained the street intersection in front of the school (which is where the North Star Motel now stands). Games of softball, tag and dodge ball were played here while the Catholic Church was handy for a game of Andy-Eye-Over.

There was no Department of Education in those days, and so it was the commissioner's office that supplied funding to the school ... and the commissioner's office had very little money. Gordon paid for the baseballs and bats from his own pocket.



This photo appeared in *Life Magazine* in 1941. Gordon, left and his two buddies were at training camp in Vernon, B.C.

All Gordon would receive at the beginning of the year was a box of white chalk, half a box of coloured chalk, some foolscap and construction paper. The desks were hand-me-downs from a Dawson City school and the textbooks were old and out of date.

A Christmas concert was held each year to raise money for material. One year, they were able to buy the Encyclopaedia Britannica Junior. For everything else, the parents would have to chip in.

Depending on the mining activity, Gordon had 15 to 40 students in his class from Grades One to Eight.

He would start each morning with some math drills with the entire class. Then he would start the Grade One students with some work and progress up to the Grade Eight children. He would use some of the older children who were ahead in their lessons to help out with the younger ones.

The children were exposed to the other grades' lessons and so some progressed faster than if they had been in a one-grade classroom. One of his students went on to become a vice president with the Bank of Montreal.

In most cases, once a young person graduated from Grade 8, there was no further education available. At an age of 14, there wasn't much for them to do. The boys would get a job driving a light truck or, if they were big enough, cut wood in the bush. Most of the girls would end up married within two or three years.

The councillor for the Mayo district was concerned about four young ladies. Thomas McKay asked Gordon to teach them bookkeeping, shorthand and typing after school from 3 to 5 p.m. And so, with his own typewriter and another from Thomas, Gordon started the first vocational school in the Yukon.

This class only lasted two years until there were no other students interested.



Tennis players in Mayo during the 1930s.



Gordon's home these first couple of months in Mayo was a one-room cabin with one bare bulb. It was a culture shock for him as he was accustomed to living in Vancouver with all of the modern conveniences.

So he was "tickled to death" when Mary Fisher, a widow, offered him room and board for \$60 a month. Since he was paid double the amount a teacher would be paid in British Columbia, he still had \$115 a month to spend.

He now had three meals a day cooked for him and even had his bed made each morning.

Although he was the only boarder, "Ma" Fisher served dinner to five other gentlemen. They all became friends and enjoyed their conversations over well-cooked meals.

At the table was Joe Longtin, who delivered water in Mayo for 25 cents for two buckets; Bill Hutchings, the bank manager; and Dr. Allan Duncan, who was hired by the mine and allowed to open a family practice on the side.

These men mostly listened to Trail of '98 stories as told by Jim Fairborn, the White Pass agent; and Dr. Randolph MacLennan, who was a member of the 1905 Dawson City Nuggets hockey team which travelled to Ottawa to challenge the Ottawa Silver Seven for the Stanley Cup.

Both of these men kept their dinner companions entertained with endless stories from the Yukon's Gold Rush days. By the time Gordon read Pierre Berton's *Klondike*, he already knew most of the stories.

"I wish I had a tape recorder around then," Gordon says today.



The Keno arriving at Mayo, 1930s. The tent has perishables in it and the posts and cables were stabilizers for the barge. [G.A. McIntyre photo]



On retirement, 1974. L-R, Commissioner Jim Smith, G.A. McIntyre, Brian Trevor.

By 1937, Ma Fisher had left to live with her daughter in California. Two years later, Great Britain declared war on Germany changing the world and Gordon's life forever.

Just like every other young man in Mayo, Gordon signed his name under a telegram posted outside Binet's Hotel volunteering to join George Black's Yukon contingent. But that wasn't how things were to be done in this second world war and so he had to wait.

In the Spring of 1941, he chanced to see a newspaper article about the First Survey Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery. He cut it out and used the rest of the paper to start a fire. He wrote a letter that afternoon offering his services.

It wasn't until July, that the White Pass agent, Yorke Wilson, found him on the tennis courts to inform him he was authorized passage to the Victoria Bay Street Armories to report for enlistment.

The steamer, Keno, left a day or two later to connect with the Kaska where the Stewart River meets the Klondike River for the rest of the trip to Whitehorse. The two boats just missed each other, so Gordon borrowed a row boat from a White Pass crew and paddled to Dawson City.

He was joined by a young Japanese man. Although the two men parted ways in Dawson City, Gordon is sure he was not treated as an "enemy". Unlike Outside, the Japanese in the Yukon were not detained in camps.

The next morning, Gordon found himself on a plane ordered by the RCMP to transport a prisoner to Whitehorse. But first, he landed back in Mayo where some explanations were in order.

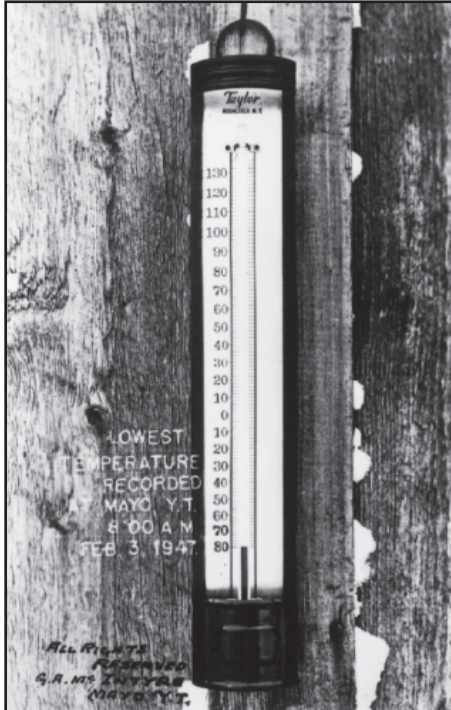
He took the train to Skagway, but missed the CPR boat by a day. The next day he talked his way onto a CNR boat. He still had time to visit his mother before reporting in for duty.

After basic training in Vernon, he was transferred to Petawawa in Ontario to take an advanced artillery survey course and then on to a reinforcement unit in England.

Although trained to work with maps, he was assigned to assist a personnel officer administer intelligence and suitability tests to the troops all over Southern England.

The next year he was assigned to the Royal Canadian Legion's educational service and was back to teaching. Mostly, he was helping officer candidates brush up on their math.

When the invasion of Italy began, Bombardier Gordon McIntyre was sent to North Africa to help the soldiers with their correspondence courses. Other duties included typing up news reports from the BBC and distributing



80 below at Mayo, Yukon, on Feb. 3, 1947. [G.A. McIntyre photo]

uting copies to be posted throughout the brigade locations.

Gordon followed the front lines north through Europe until he reached Holland and VE Day: "We were in tents and not close to any town where we could celebrate. There was no booze and no women to dance with."

It would have been a very long time before he was rotated back to Canada and civilian life if it wasn't for Jack "Pop" Hulland. He was superintendent of schools at the time and was entitled to submit an Industrial Discharge Request to speed up the discharge of a serviceman needed for civilian employment.

He was sent to England for the trip home, where he volunteered to take a slower passage aboard the destroyer HMCS Crusader. He enjoyed brief stops in such places as the Azores, West Indies, Panama Canal and San Pedro before arriving at the Esquimault harbour Jan. 21, 1946.

He visited with his mother in Vancouver and continued on to Kelowna

to visit his sister and his father, who had since moved there. He picked up his civilian clothes from his sister's safe keeping and found they were a little big on him, due to a recent bout of dysentery.

Shortly after arriving home, G.A. Jeckell, the controller of the Yukon Territory at the time, came to see him and discuss his future. Gordon didn't want his old teaching position back since there was already a teacher in place. So, the controller offered him the position of assistant liquor vendor.

As a war-time measure to cut costs, the liquor vendor was also responsible for paying the road crews, collecting taxes and repairing sidewalks and such. As well, they were the territorial agent and treasurer of the hospital board.

As the assistant, Gordon spent a lot of time actually selling liquor. He didn't like selling liquor, and so, a year later, he quickly accepted the position of mining recorder when Sam Wood resigned.

Between the territorial liquor vendor and the federal mining recorder, these two men were the government that ran the Mayo district.

Gordon was often called out to the mine as the coroner to release a body following a fatal accident. Then, as the mining inspector, he would decide if and when the mine should reopen.

Although he didn't know anything about either job, rules were rules and the federal government just could not afford to cover these positions full time.

As the justice of the peace, he would be called down to the RCMP barracks to hear a case. If there was an ambitious corporal in charge of the detachment, he would be called out possibly three times a week. Some detachment commanders were more easy going and so he would only have to come out about once a week.

The mining business was booming after United Keno Hill opened and 20 other mining companies flocked to the area to open a mine of their own. A lot of claims were being staked so Gordon finally got some help from a stenographer to do the typing for him.

Even with all the extra men in town on the weekends, Justice of the Peace McIntyre wasn't that much busier because the police were concentrating on catching the bootleggers and not so much the drunks.

In 1965, a competition came up for the position of mining recorder and supervisor of lands for the Whitehorse district. Climbing the ladder was the expected thing to do and so Gordon applied. He didn't expect to get the promotion since the days of patronage were now over and commissioners weren't allowed to hire people on the spot.

But he did win the competition. He left Mayo where he knew everyone and had enormous responsibilities and moved to Whitehorse where he knew very few people.

Gordon held several positions until 1974, when he retired at the age of 64 so that he could represent the Mayo district on the Territorial Council.

He won the election and started to work as the MLA for Mayo. Besides visiting with constituents in Mayo every couple of months, he was only

busy two months a year when council was in session.

This council was the last that was free of political parties. Gordon says there was less fighting in that system, but it wasn't without its problems. After appointing a cabinet from among themselves, everyone left over was the opposition and the cabinet ministers had no back bench to rely on.

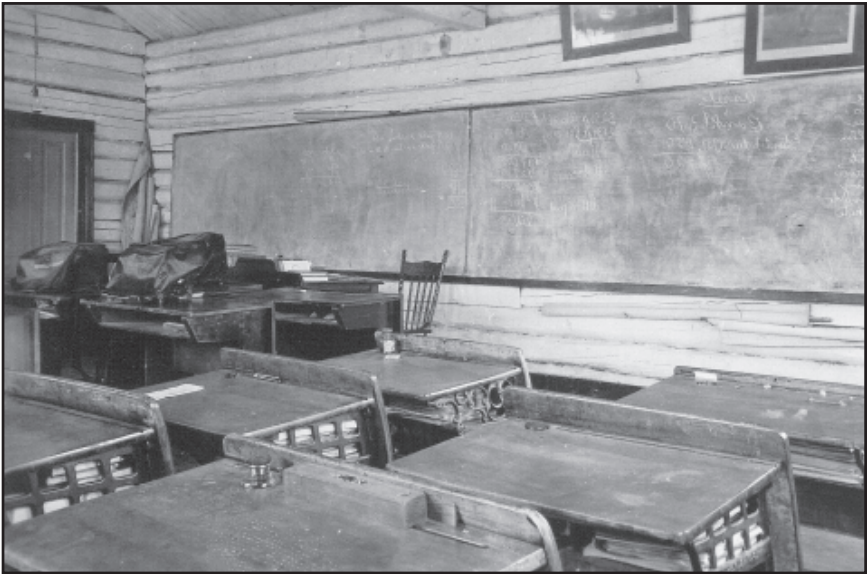
Gordon tried to run as an independent in the next election since he didn't see much difference between the parties. But a couple of weeks before the election he reluctantly agreed to run as a Liberal and lost with only 10 votes dividing the three candidates.

Today, Gordon is kept busy with his grandchildren. His wife, Ruth, whom he married in 1955, says he was always an active father giving baths, changing diapers, preparing meals and shopping for the groceries. The payback today is that Angus, Mary (Sofko) and Norman have stayed close along with seven grandchildren aged four to 16.

Gordon and Ruth's Riverdale home has lots of toys, Disney videos and extra beds for sleepovers. Between baby sitting, drop-in visits for lunch and any excuse for a family party, the only hat Gordon is wearing these days is a chef's hat ... and he's loving it.

Gordon died on June 11, 2011. He was born in 1910 at Dawson City, Yukon.

***Next issue, Ruth McIntyre's story.***



The classroom in Mayo where Gordon taught.



# Sweatheart

## By Sam Holloway

\* We've had some letters asking about old Sweat, who was mentioned so many times in the Yukon Reader. Sad to say, he died in the spring of 1994. I wrote a column about him for the Yukon News, reprinted here.

The King is dead. Never to prance this earth again. The vet and his assistant came out to put him down last week. As they injected the poison, he held his head in that proud old way until it drooped and drooped and his eyes glazed over and then, to my everlasting sorrow, our old dog was gone.

He grew up in Keno City and if anyone from that area reads this, they will have some stories to tell about Sweat. When the silver mine at Elsa was going strong, Sweat always headed for the cookhouse on steak night, knowing exactly the right day and time.

He is said to have killed quite a few male dogs in Keno, and eventually the other dogs ceded his title as King. How did he get the name, "Sweat?" Well, the miner who owned him thought he was such a cute puppy that he named him "Sweetheart." Then, when the little gaffer started to grow and grow and take on the neighbourhood dogs, his name was changed to "Sweatheart" and from there shortened to "Sweat."

Besides all his fights to the death with other dogs, Sweat chased a small grizzly down the main street one day until it headed for the woods, never to return.



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And then he arrived on Army Beach and into our household. He fell in love on a regular basis and sang the Lovesick Blues, in a very deep baritone, for days on end. By now he had enough confidence in his monarchy that he didn't kill or injure other dogs; he just flipped them over and put his jaws around their neck until they decided to stop arguing.

Summers were a the heat and loved the lie on the crunchy snow foghorn voice. Children last days, the daycare requested his visits and him, which he loved. A deeply in love with the

He was probably the that ever walked the Yu- ened with old age and his him, he sometimes de- for a few days, but always re-

bummer for Sweat. He hated cold nights when he could and howl and woof in his went mad over him. In his kids down the road re- made a great fuss over woman we knew fell old gentleman.

most spoiled, loved animal kon. When his heart weak- legs started giving out on spaired and went into a funk covered.

One day just before the end, he wanted to go for a ride in the truck. It was something he hadn't bothered with in a long time; he just wanted to take one last ride.

Well, old Sweat, this column will bore people, but really, I wrote it just for you and me.

May you prance the hills of heaven, if they take dogs there, and don't get into any fights, please.



# SPRING IN PARADISE

## ROB ALEXANDER

**Y**ukon summers range from very warm to unreasonably hot, but a sudden cold snap in August can bring a fall of snow which causes one or two wimpy tourists to hightail it south. Fortunately, this summer snow is usually confined to the surrounding mountains, and the warm rays of the sun melt it very quickly, and the summer continues.

When autumn arrives, a few minor snow flurries start to settle on the ground, but more often than not the snow has disappeared by the following day. As the sun drops lower in the sky and the temperature falls, there comes a time, usually around October or November, when the next snowfall will remain on the ground until the following spring.

By the end of winter, as much as eight feet or more of snow may have fallen, but the weight of each successive snowfall presses down on previous layers, so that the average depth around our cabin rarely seems to increase much beyond two feet, except where the wind has caused deep drifts, or in terrain where the sun does not easily penetrate. Oddly enough, our driveway receives plenty of sunshine and very little wind, yet the snow seems to enjoy targeting this particular area for a heavier concentration than any other part of our property. Regardless of variations in depth, we have found that as a rule, the snow will always extend above the height of boots or mukluks, regardless of how tall our footwear is, and especially if we forget to lace them up.

On those rare occasions when a snowplough makes it out to our place, it creates high walls of snow that line the front edge of our property, and we ourselves create more huge mounds each time we clear the driveway. Our cabin is surrounded by hundreds of tall spruce trees that are thickly plastered with snow, and the roof of the cabin has a deep layer of snow hanging precariously over the eaves, and everything looks so picturesque, but we worry about the weight of all this snow on the roof, especially in spots where it compresses into ice. We use a wide snow shovel to clear the snow from the roof, but no matter how far we fling each shovel-load it always seems to land on the pathways that we just finished digging out the day before. One of these years, we shall remember to clear the roof first, then the pathways. Eventually, these mounds of snow grow so high that our paths start to resemble the trenches of the first World War.

As the months roll by, we become so accustomed to the whitewashed scenery that we start to believe there is no other kind of existence; a landscape without a covering of snow must be a figment of our imagination, or perhaps wishful thinking, and when spring arrives, it comes almost as a surprise.

Day by day, the temperature slowly rises. Lumps of snow drop from the trees and make depressions in the deep carpet of snow on the ground, turn-

ing the surface into a pockmarked and cratered tableau, like the surface of the moon. The tops of several black spruce trees have arched under the weight of the snow, and some of the smaller thin trees are bent so far that their tops have become pinned to the ground, resembling ostriches with their heads frozen under a cover of snow. The melting snow and ice frees them and they spring back into place, but most of these small trees remain partly bent, and likely will never grow tall and straight, because they will be the first to bend again next year. Each winter we shake the snow loose from these small trees but the trunks of some have already snapped, and soon they will die. At the foot of each tree, the snow gradually sinks and creates a hollow basin that drops lower each day, until a patch of ground is exposed, spreading and growing wider by the hour.

Occasionally, small light flakes of snow start to fall, reminding us that winter has not quite finished. The flakes grow larger, but then, just when they look serious, they abandon their effort and once again the sky turns to a beautiful clear blue, and the melt continues.

The hours of daylight grow longer, and the extra sunlight hastens the drop in snow level. The small patches around the base of each tree reach out farther each day, extending their territory and exposing ground that is littered with spruce cones and millions of spruce needles. There are numerous dead twigs, a few small green boughs, some old rotting branches and gnarled tree stumps covered with damp green moss, and many pools of muddy water in the dips and depressions.

Resident winter birds, Ravens, Gray Jays, Chickadees, and others, are joined by scores of small Redpolls that chirp and twitter in the trees, then flutter down to the ground like dry leaves shaken loose by the wind. There is a hint of buds on many of the willow bushes.

It is around this time that a large variety of “*things*” begin to make their appearance. As the depth of the snow grows less each day, these things appear here and there. They poke out of the snow where they have lain for most of the long cold winter, and we run around like children in a candy store, chatting with excitement as we identify various missing objects, with statements like: “*So that’s* where we parked the Renault!”

More things appear; objects that were brought here during the winter by neighbourhood dogs, or by our own dogs. These self-appointed canine refuse disposal officers (most of them quite large and very strong) drag so much junk onto our property that by springtime enough items have accumulated to furnish an entire home. There is a wooden bed frame, and very thoughtfully, a piece of mattress to go with it. There is a chair (broken, but fixable), two cushions, and a small scatter rug. There are pots and pans, dishes, spoons, forks, one or two plates, and a cup. In addition, there are bits of rope, clothing, shoes, and a pair of boots. There are also several rather gruesome remains that even experts in forensic medicine would have trouble identifying. Heaven knows where the dogs find all these items; most people keep their household junk out of reach, so we can only assume that these dogs are professional housebreakers.

Another particularly enjoyable pastime for the dogs is their participa-

tion in winter picnics. They drag garbage bags from all over everywhere and spread the contents across our front yard. They select various delicacies which, despite temperatures as low as minus fifty, have rotted sufficiently to meet with approved standards of canine cuisine, and they munch contentedly for hours.

Naturally, we try to dispose of this unsightly garbage, but it usually disappears beneath the snow before it is seen by us, and most of the time the front yard looks like a pristine winter paradise. There is little point in trying to uncover the garbage because it is hard to find under the snow, and in any case, the dogs will likely have moved it to a new location that has also disappeared under the snow. So we wait until spring, when everything reappears, and by which time there is enough garbage to fill a large pickup truck. Ditto dog turds. In addition, there is a bone collection that would be the envy of any prestige-conscious natural history museum.

As the surface of the snow drops closer to the ground, more and more objects appear, courtesy of the dogs. A blanket, a shirt, a piece of a snowshoe, a bicycle pump, and a copy of "War and Peace". We have heard of circus dogs riding bicycles, which might explain the pump, but we were completely unaware that our dogs were able to read.

We find several useful tools. A hammer, some screwdrivers, a pair of pliers, and a dovetail saw, all of which had somehow vanished last year without a trace, and all of which, naturally, were sorely needed to complete an important indoor winter project. We argue over who left them outdoors, and then we stare suspiciously at our dogs. After removing rust from the tools and returning them to their proper "everything in its place" place, we return to the front yard.

We rake all the garbage into little piles and burn whatever is burnable, and the rest we haul to the garbage dump. While we are gone, the dogs notice how drab and bare our front yard now looks, and very thoughtfully they quickly drag in several more bits and pieces. When we arrive back from the dump, they jump up and down excitedly, their long tongues drooping almost to the ground, and their tails wagging enthusiastically, as they look back and forth from our faces to the newly decorated front yard, which from their point of view, now has far more colour and greater attraction, and obviously adds considerably to the value of our property. For a while, we stare blankly at one another, and then we argue the pros and cons of a quick shotgun blast to the head, versus a needle from the vet. Then we relent, and lock the dogs in the dog run.

Last, but certainly not least, the final object makes its very dramatic appearance. Our friend and neighbour Jurgen. He went missing in midwinter after a particularly enjoyable Yukon style weekend party. His body looks a bit damp and weather-beaten, but he has a contented smile on his face, and clutched in his right hand - held securely in place by rigor mortis - a bottle of his favourite German wine. Empty of course.

We so look forward to next spring in the Yukon.



## Smile or Else

by Sam Holloway

If you really want to live on the edge for a time, try operating a highway lodge in the Yukon.

You'd have endless hours of work, in many cases for little or no pay. You'd have to know how to make or fix anything. You'd have to smile when you'd rather just clobber someone.

A successful summer season is the only hope for a survivable winter. In the last few years, the tour bus companies have tried to dictate how these lodges should be run or how they should be laid out. In one case I know of, a tour bus company told a lodge owner they must eliminate that awful old-style Yukon look. Or else.

Or else meant no more business from that company or their associates. Luckily, most lodge operators are survivors and haven't yet allowed the chrome and antiseptic look to take over.

Sometimes just an unproven rumour, say tainted food or something, can ruin a highway business. The CB radios start buzzing up and down the Alcan and that's it for the season. Of course, it can also work in the opposite way.

Yukon lodges are wonderful and I hope you get a chance to stop at them all. Some of them started out as roadhouses during one gold rush or another. Many have burned down, only to be rebuilt. Every one of them has a character all of its own. My favourite is Burwash Landing Resort. Part of the reason is that when Olay, the owner, reads this, he'll probably give me a free room next time I head up there!



Obie, Dubie and Herbie of Burlibilly Hill, sitting in the Burwash Landing Lodge. Summer, 1994. Photo by Anke Becker of Duderstadt, Germany.