

THE

YUKONER



MAGAZINE

ISSUE
No. 30

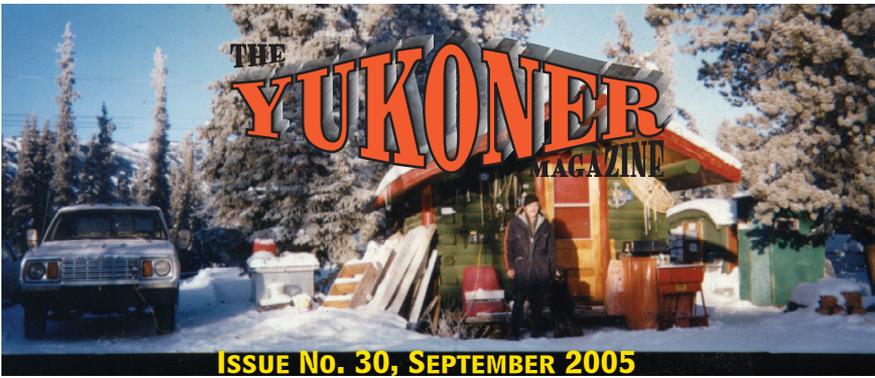
\$4.95

- BERT LAW & FAMILY LODGE
- AMANDA CLIMBS THE CHILKOOT
- MODERN TRUCKERS ON THE ALKAN
- THE OBLATE FATHERS

THE SCENE OF THE ALASKA HIGHWAY



Walter Malicky and Josée Bonhomme on Main Street, Whitehorse, July, 2004. Walter is one of the most famous Yukon prospectors, known for his great stamina in the bush and mining knowledge. Josée too is well known in mining circles, having worked with placer miners and published a book about them. Walter and Josée jointly own gold claims in the Mayo district. [S.H. photo]



www.yukoner.com

Click on these page numbers to go to that story. Click on page header (Yukoner Magazine) to return to the contents page.

From the Editor	_____	4
The Mail Run	_____	5
The Bert Law Lodge, by Jane Gaffin	_____	9
The Chilkoot Trail, by Amanda Ford	_____	30
Alaska Highway Truckers, by Mike Craigen	_____	34
Fr. Rigaud and the Oblate Missions, by Michael Dougherty	_____	42
Monty Alford and Mountains, by Frank McLaughlin	_____	55
Will Rogers in Dawson City, by Eric Jamieson	_____	58
From the Publisher	_____	65

Cover: Heather Worden of Whitehorse, sitting in a '66 Dodge Power Wagon, June, 2005. [S.H. photo]



Published four times annually by GreenInk Publishing
Whitehorse, Yukon

Postage paid at Whitehorse, Yukon
Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 40019654
PAP Registration No. 08098



website: www.yukoner.com e-mail: yukonermagazine@gmail.com
Publisher: Dianne Green Editor: Sam Holloway

From the Editor

You were wondering if this issue was ever going to arrive, what?

We had the stories ready, the print shop all repaired, but I couldn't corner enough time to put it all together. I've had to strap on the old electrician's tool belt (that I bought in 1964 as a first-year apprentice) and go around making sparks in various buildings at Marsh Lake, Tagish and Whitehorse.

The idea was to supplement our income and cover some of the added expenses that have built up over the years. Canada Post have raised our mailing costs every year since we started. Paper costs twice as much as ten years ago, and we all know about the price of fuel, electricity, and everything else. But if we raised our newsstand price and subscription rates, our sales would go down and we'd be no better off.

So I traded some electrical work for an old Dodge van, threw some wire and marrettes in there and became another contractor in the Yukon. A rusty one, you see. Eyesight not too good either. I underbid some jobs, blew up a \$5000 surge protector, and didn't get paid for some other work. But it is getting better. I actually made money last week and now have time to fire up the old press.

We had to buy a little electric motor for the collator for which a Canadian company wanted \$1300. On the Internet, the greatest invention since the printing press, I found the same motor for \$300, in the good ol' USA.

It's been fashionable in Canada to bash our American friends in the press and amongst ourselves. I find that sad and hope it will change. My old Dodges were engineered in the US, as were the AB Dick press this magazine is printed on, the computer I'm staring at, and almost everything else we have around here, including my electrical tools and testers. Alcoholics



Your editor and grandson Alex finding gold on an unknown (to you) creek. [photo by Heidi Brooks]

Anonymous, the environmental movement, the film industry, the Internet, all come from the lower 48. Nor can anyone can doubt that the Americans, in all their battles, past and present, right or wrong, have the courage to risk their lives and money for what they believe in.

So long for now,
Sam



The Editor,

In your #29 issue, there's an article on Taylor & Drury and a photo caption that states "The first #1 rock and roll song, "Rocket 88," released in 1951 by Jackie Brenston and the Delta Cats." This old geezer, who was a teenager when the rock and roll revolution swept the world, is compelled to set the record straight on when, and by whom, the first rock and roll record was recorded. It was in 1948 that Wynonie Harris recorded "There's A Good Rockin' Tonight," later (the mid 50s) popularized by Elvis.

In the late 40s and early 50s there was negro/black music called rhythm and blues that white folk didn't listen to because it was considered too raunchy. Deep segregation and ultra conservatism were also prevalent in North America at this time. Good Rockin' Tonight, for example, alluded to sexual activity and white folk at the time were totally freaked out by negro sexuality. Black, and only Black radio stations carried rhythm and blues recordings like "Rocket 88" and "There's a Good Rockin' Tonight." Caucasians listened to songs about coal, "Sixteen Tons," and dogs, "How much is That Doggie in the Window." Life in the early 50s was very boring—for white folk.

Then in 1956, Bill Haley and the Comets recorded, "Rock Around the Clock," and all hell broke loose. The conservatives thought the world was coming to an end, and a New York disk jockey, Alan Freed, coined the term rock and roll.

Al Ross

*Rock and Roll Historian
Texada Island, B. C.*

Dear Sam,

Back in 1992 I bought a \$1 car from an autowrecker in Lloydminster, Sask. And drove it to Whitehorse. I was sick and tired of the on-again and off-again work of the oil patch. I had a hefty four dollars in my pocket when I hit town. One of the first people I met was Neil Regimbald. He took my rifle as collateral for a room at the '98 Hotel. Neil and I don't see that much of each other anymore but I will never forget what he contributed to my first impression of the Yukon.

While I was staying at the '98 I met an old codger by the name of Otto Hansen. He told me about a place called Livingstone Creek, that he had a cabin there, and if I wanted to check it out he'd help me get set up. It was exactly what I was looking for! So we got Dave Young to fly us out.

Otto had a prospecting grant so he was able to pay me \$50 a day plus groceries. His groceries were a little different than I was used to! One time he was going into town and I gave him a grocery list. He was supposed to be in town for two days. He came back 10 days later, fell out of Dave's plane

THE MAIL RUN



onto the landing strip, and I had to drag him away so Dave could take off. He had one block of cheese, a ring of garlic and 100 pounds of sugar. Next day he told me, “We’ll never have to go to town for booze again.” So much for eating!

After a couple of years in the bush someone dropped off a newspaper at my place. There was an ad in there for “The Bushman” so I made up my mind that the next time I’m in town I’ll get that book. So I bought it and threw it in my pack, went back to Livingstone and didn’t look at it for a month. What really got me, Sam, was the start—Moose Jaw, 150 miles. That’s where I come from. And I was sitting in the middle of your book! I know all the places in Livingstone that you describe. I am amazed how many born and bred Yukoners have never heard of Livingstone Creek. It was a town before the goldrush.

*Gordie Lautamus
Whitehorse, Yukon*

Hi Sam,

Your publicity and the Archives have helped to clear up some information on the Hornsby Crawler, thanks to you all.

The account of how this engine got to Dawson would be impressive. By ships or barge up the West Coast, narrow gauge Railroad, sternwheel river steamers, etc. Now can we find out if it hauled any coal?

*Neil Brady-Browne Sr
Courtenay BC*

*Publishers’s note: Thanks to Marlene Koppang of Whitehorse for sending us a copy of an article on the Hornsby steam chain track tractor, which appeared in the September 2004 edition of “Old Glory,” a magazine for restoration buffs published in the U.K.
(www.oldglory.co.uk)*

Hi Sam,

We are still thoroughly enjoying receiving *The Yukoner*. With cousin David (Locke) now moved “outside,” our trips north may be less frequent, but it’s great reading the history as told by the people and their families who lived it first hand rather than some dry history book!

You and Dianne are doing a great job. The Internet can be great for a lot of things but as avid readers our preference is still the written page. Keep up the good work!

*Chuck and Marylou Caddy
Summerland, B. C.*

THE MAIL RUN

Hello Sam,

Your magazine looks to be a great place to query your readers about an eccentric individual that I am researching. I am looking for any information relating to the trapper/hunter Henry/Harry/Hank Hanlon a.k.a. the "Labrador Kid" who disappeared on the White river during or after Aug. of 1932. He had been living there since the turn of the century. Mainly a recluse who had very few friends, he was "difficult to get along with" by other trappers' accounts.

Henry Hanlon was born in the remote area of Bennett lake, New Brunswick, now part of Fundy National Park, in the early 1880's. He left home at the age of 18 and headed for the Yukon, undoubtedly like many other gold rushers; looking to strike it rich. Of his life there, I know little. The last individuals who saw him alive in 1932, as per the RCMP investigation at that time, were named J. McLaughlin and W. Mittelhouser. He had just stocked up on supplies, something he did twice a year. He is believed to have drowned following an accident while poling the White river in his boat/raft. He had many cabins along the White river, all of which were still stocked when the RCMP investigated his disappearance. His estate possessions consisted



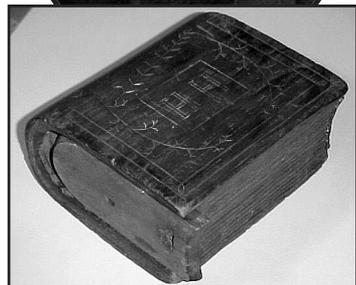
Ruth and Frank McLaughlin, visiting Army Beach from New Jersey. Frank has contributed many articles to this magazine. He has been a wonderful friend and mentor since the first Yukon Reader came out in 1989.

mainly of furs (\$7.00 worth) and a single Kodak camera that was evaluated at \$5.00.

He appears to have somewhat of a legendary status. I would love to gather any information I could on the life of this character. It is quite possible that people still remember first hand accounts of him. I have included a photo of the young Henry Hanlon and a picture of a spruce gum box that he carved in New Brunswick when he was 14 (mid 1890s). The box has his initials. Thanks,

Claude Smith

Moncton, New Brunswick



Dear Sam and Dianne,

Thanks for the wonderful magazines. We just spent 10 months on the trap line on the headwaters of the Skeena River. We flew in summer of 2004 August and came out this June 6, 2005 when the lake thawed. We had an exceptional year trapping and then we were busy getting logs, lumber cut, etc. to build a new cabin.

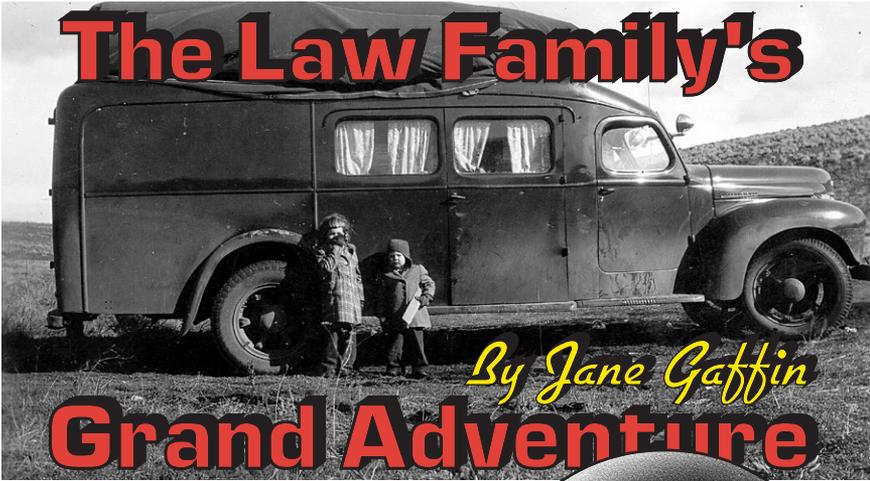
Martin made a trip through Watson Lake taking supplies over to Totogga Lakes to be flown in by Otter at the end of June. He was fortunate to visit a fellow trapper, John LaGeare and his wife, Marie. They trap out at Larson Lake in the Yukon and we trap in B. C. However, we all stay in contact during the winter months of November through to March with the winter Sched. By H. F. radio, each evening at precisely 700 with 514, Don Taylor at Stewart Lake. Don has been doing this for many years and he is very much appreciated by us trappers who often count on him to relay messages, make phone calls, help in emergency situations and generally keep an ear open for his extended family.

Anyway, that's just a little tidbit of news from us trappers.

*Sharron and Martin Lamoureaux
Smithers, B. C.*

The winner of the
gold nugget for
subscription
renewals is:
Frank Spooner,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.





The intrepid James Joseph saw the cheerful, round sign announcing the Silver Dollar Lodge at Mile Post 843 and wheeled his car left from the Alaska Highway into the yard on a bitterly cold day in 1952.

The place wasn't as remote from the rest of the world as one might at first believe. Yes, the town of Dawson Creek, British Columbia, was 843 miles behind him and it was 75 miles farther to Whitehorse at Mile Post 918.

But on the opposite side of the road at the Squanga airstrip a telephone could link him with his editor at the *American Magazine* in New York City.

Mr. Joseph had reached the halfway point on the Alaska Highway, a wartime effort the American Army built 10 years before from Mile Post 0 at Dawson Creek. The 1,600 miles of road snaked into and through the Yukon Territory, and carried on into United States territory at Fairbanks, Alaska.

Tucked back among the evergreen stands was an inviting, single-storey L-shaped log structure, about 200 feet long to house 15 guest rooms. Smoke trailed straight up from the lodge's chimney. Several log out build-



Ellen and Bert Law,
newlyweds, 1940.

Photo, top of page: Bert refurbished a war surplus 1942 International bus for the family's move to the Yukon in 1948.

ings served as workshop, garage and for storage. All were framed by a mountainous backdrop and inserted unobtrusively into an eight-acre wooded landscape that looked like a Christmas card.

Strains of “shrimp boats are a comin’, they’re comin’ tonight...” seeped through the lodge’s walls. Jo Stafford’s voice carried a far distance in the brittle air.

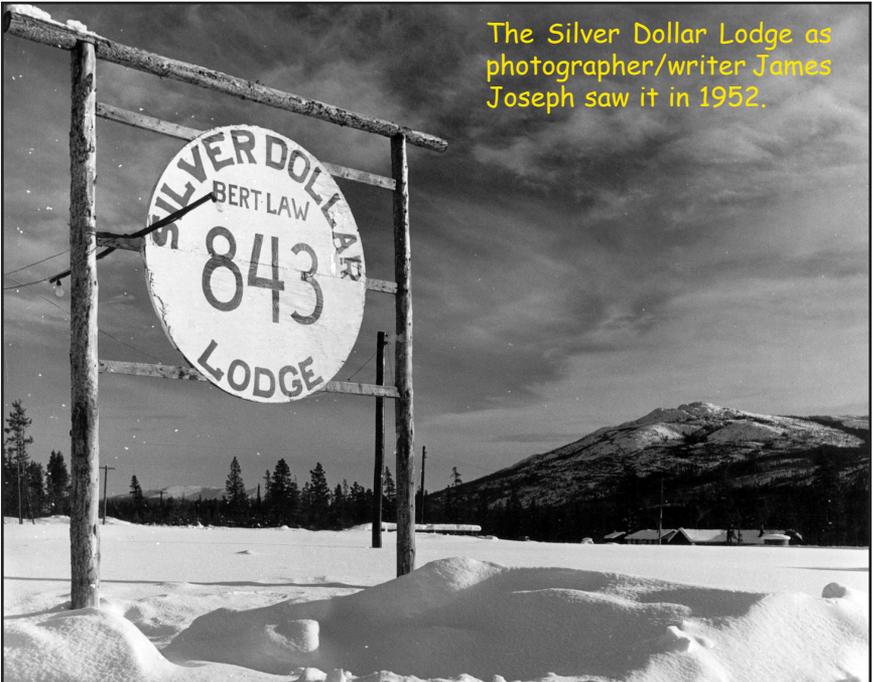
In his travels, Mr. Joseph had discovered that practically everybody along the highway knew the California couple living here with their youngsters Frances, 9, Tommy, 7, and George, 5.

Tough-fibred American and Canadian homesteaders, big-game outfitters, hunting guides and lodge-keepers had enthused about the five-member Law family forging a lifestyle out of a new frontier against pressing odds. Unintended, the Laws had inspired and rekindled confidences of many fellow pioneers who were ready to pack up.

Sight unseen, the writer knew the Laws were the epitome of a well-integrated, outstanding family which was why they were selected as *The American Magazine’s* Family of the Month.

When Bert Law heard about the accolades, he replied, “Some folks along the highway have had it a whole lot tougher than we did.” He likened his family’s ordeal to a picnic. “Only sometimes, there wasn’t any mustard, and often no hot dogs or buns, either.”

The writer lifted the homemade latch and entered the low-ceiling, Technicolor living room. “Vividly beautiful Indian blankets draped rustic



log couches. The yellow-pine walls glowed like polished amber. In one corner were a couple of tables covered in Chinese-red linoleum.

“Bert Law’s plaid logger’s shirt, decking out his youthful muscularly thin six-foot frame, made a splotch of color in the already colorful room,” the writer described in his 1952 article, *The Laws of the Yukon*.

What really impressed Mr. Joseph was the happy cacophony of blaring phonograph music and three bright-eyed children who couldn’t play outside because the temperature was colder than 35 degrees below zero F.

“Flaxen-haired Frannie, whom her father describes as ‘delicate like a panther’, was curled up by the hammered-copper fireplace. Oblivious of the raucous music, she was browsing through a 3rd-grade reader.

“George, a wide-eyed and chubby 5-year-old, was tacking his latest crayoned masterpiece to the wall over the Laws’ ‘school corner’—a cheerful, book-furnished alcove devoted exclusively to educating young Laws’ minds.

“Nobody scolded Georgie for hammering tacks into the wall. The kids’ drawings are A-1 priority stuff around here, Bert explained. Tommy, the family’s mechanical wizard, was sitting cross-legged on the floor, fiddling with a toy steam engine.”

Ellen, permed and fashionably trim, wore a dress, silk stockings and a fancy apron. She didn’t look 30, despite her endless, heavy-duty chores associated with operating a highway lodge, tending a family, plus home-schooling the children.

After eight years of marriage, Bert and Ellen had decided to escape California cities and live in open spaces. Bert, a crackerjack mechanic, cleverly converted an International, 24-passenger panel bus into a self-contained rolling home with cooking and sleeping facilities and a carpeted play area for three small children.

Poking along in May, 1948, they waited in Calgary for the Alaska Highway’s spring mud to harden so the International could churn along in bulldog gear with its tires encased in chains.

They stopped short of an Alaskan destination when they spotted a place in the Yukon that appeared to be of temperate climate. From a big, red-headed chap at Morley River, they purchased a group of broken-down log structures nestled in the picturesque setting 66 miles up the highway.

What the Laws didn’t know was that the owner of the abandoned army camp buildings was a shady character, who was not paying for the gasoline he hauled from Edmonton and was re-selling it without paying territorial taxes. He had sold the rough buildings three times to other unsuspecting buyers and repossessed them an equal number of times.

The buyers, always Americans, would invest their complete savings—as did the Laws—then be abandoned to starve or be forced to retreat across the border since Americans could not legally work for wages.

The red head announced he was going to Alaska and would buy lodge and restaurant supplies for Bert who gave him a long list of items, plus \$2,000—none of which Bert ever saw again.

“We finally got word that he had crossed the border into the waiting arms of the FBI,” Bert said. “He was AWOL from the navy and had disappeared into Canada. I understand that he also was wanted in the States, in a number of places for a number of wrong doings.

“So, that was the end of him. He was the sort of guy who wouldn’t do anything honestly if he could do it dishonestly. He had quite a racket. But he didn’t realize what a tough guy I was.”

Their money gone, the Laws were stranded at Mile 843 on the Alaska Highway with their potatoes, oatmeal, occasional orange juice and milk for the youngsters, and a strong survival instinct.

“I do everything all or nothing-never halfway,” declared Bert. “Maybe I go into things too much.” He was once compared to an eager octopus who seemed to have four sets of hands when he worked.

An example was the run-down service station he had bought in California and worked hard to build up. The long hours almost killed him, but the station sold for a nice profit before the family moved North.

It was the service station that spurred Bert to go home early one evening and express his thoughts about pulling up roots and going some place different.

The more he worked at the station, the more convinced he became he was only existing-not living. He wanted to grow up with his kids and guide them. He didn’t want them drifting into the lifestyle of punk teen-agers who sometimes hung around the station telling smutty jokes and smoking cigarettes. Bert knew some were from decent families but suspected their fathers weren’t able to spend enough time with them.

Bert and Ellen sat up late, poring over maps and planning. First, they had to sell the business.



Berkeley Days: Ellen Law in 1942 with the couple’s 1937 Chevy Coupe.



Bert had purchased the service station because good-paying jobs were difficult to find, especially after he shattered his left leg. For his disability he received financial

compensation and good medical treatment, but was unable to continue working at Cutters, a pharmaceutical laboratory making blood plasma.

It was after serving in the army he had returned to Cutters as head painter. In his usual state of being overtired, he let a ladder slip out from under him and was knocked unconscious on the cement floor a great distance below.

The mangled leg healed. A bone specialist, reserved for the atomic scientists at the nearby University of California, laced Bert's crushed limb in a stainless steel case. The leg was destined to give him endless grief. When he was exhausted, the leg was susceptible to twisting and would collapse him unceremoniously on his backside, usually under a heavy armload of firewood.

He also was plagued with stomach ulcers, the reason he was sprung early from the United States Army. However, he was awarded American citizenship for his service. He was actually Canadian by birth, born in Hamilton, Ontario, on December 26, 1914. It was during the darkest part of the Depression he had drifted into the United States.

Bert had two sisters and a brother. He was 13 when the family moved to Ingersoll, Ontario, where the factory in which his dad worked had relocated. He stayed until 1934. With no hope for a job in sight, and his friends disappearing into marriages, shacks, jalopies, poverty and children, he hitchhiked across the line to Detroit, Michigan, where he found a car lot in need of extra drivers to ferry vehicles to California. He was fired for getting lost in a maze of Texas highways.

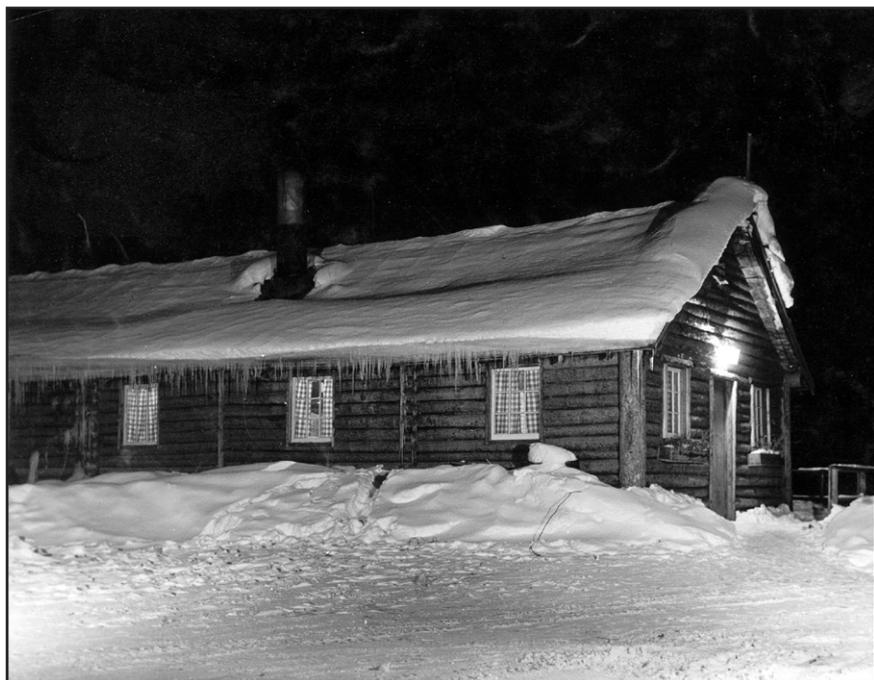
Bert continued thumbing his way to Los Angeles where he found work in Studebaker's automobile assembly plant. Later, he moved to park-like Berkeley.

He was jerking sodas in Stu's Creamery when he met Ellen Astad, who was born in Norway in 1921. The daughter of a fairly well-off carpenter, Ellen grew up in California. She had graduated from Berkeley High School the year before and was employed as a telephone operator.

She frequented the popular hang out. Her sparkling blue eyes captivated Bert. He was so rattled he made her a vanilla sundae instead of the chocolate soda she had ordered. She smiled away his mistake, said Bert.

When business was slow, Bert and Ellen played blackjack for pennies in a back booth. "She was pretty and won all my money. She liked that. I proposed to her just a few weeks after we'd met."

Bert accepted Ellen's "no" as "goodnight" and "goodbye", until she rang the next evening and asked to be taken to a movie. He almost hit a



The Silver Dollar Lodge. Photo by James Joseph, 1952.



fence with his friend's car when she announced she had changed her mind.

They sent a box of chocolates to her mother and went to Reno in the friend's car, for which Bert had gas money with an extra dollar left over for the preacher. Ellen had \$30 and a payday approaching.

It was May, 1940. He was 25; she was six years younger. It was an elopement of sorts, except everybody knew about the marriage. Ellen had wanted to avoid the fuss of a fancy wedding.

At the relevant time, Bert was working at Cutters and sideling as a mechanic. He fixed people's vehicles and re-built broken-down ones to sell to hot-rod buffs. As well, he was doing weekend carpentry and house-painting contracts.



The California kids, Tom, Frances and Bert enjoy their first winter in the Yukon.

After two and a half years of marriage, their first baby, Frances, was born in 1943. A second child, Thomas Herbert, followed in February, 1945, then George came along in November, 1946.

In 1944, the Laws had pinched and saved \$1,000. Bert borrowed more money and invested with a partner in the service station. When the Laws decided to go North, he sold the station within a few weeks and paid off a loan advanced to buy out his partner's interest two years before.

Bert had \$3,000. It was added to a small savings and what Ellen accumulated selling all the furniture except beds and the sewing machine. They had \$4,000 for the trip.

They bought the war surplus 1942 International panel bus which was only six years old but had aged dreadfully due to the navy using it in the South Pacific. When he finished ingeniously refurbishing the unit into one of the first Winnabagos, he was \$1,000 poorer.

They set sail under the full understanding from authorities that if they chose to settle in Canada, American citizens couldn't work for wages. They would have to be self-employed. Virtually the only self-enterprise that didn't require special permits was lodge-keeping and they could homestead without forfeiting their American citizenship.

They rolled out of foggy San Francisco Bay to Calgary, Alberta, and on to Mile Post 0 of the Alaska Highway. "The minute we were on the road we felt like young marrieds all over again. We were not heading into adventure. We were setting out upon a new life."

Soon, despite the set backs brought on by the crooked red head, they were camped on their wooded empire. The Canadian government charged only a dollar an acre a year rental. After three years, government surveyors would set the boundaries, do an appraisal, and hand over the deed for a reasonable sum. The \$2,000 they had paid to the red head had only covered the price of the ramshackle buildings, plus the list of supplies they never saw.

The Laws had set to work on the original structure, cobbled hastily together by the U.S. Army Engineers. The building nevertheless was solid and sturdy despite the beating it had taken from weather, vandals and neglect.

They peeled the ugly bark from the interior walls to find they had an amber-coloured, pine-panelled lodge. They calked the cracks with moss. They dug a basement and installed an efficient wood-burning Yukon furnace, fashioned from a 45-gallon oil drum.

One man's junk is another man's treasure. It was those hundreds of souvenirs the construction crews had scattered from one end of the Alcan Highway to the other that earned it the nickname of Oil-Can Highway.

The Laws crafted furniture and upholstered the couches and chairs with Indian blankets. Bert had bartered a few days of labour with a trading post 50 miles down the road to pay for the vividly-designed fabric.

Bert bartered with lodge owners for most of the supplies he needed to install piping for showers and bathrooms and electric wiring and fixtures.

On one such bartering mission for a light plant, part of the loot he brought home was a record player and a stack of scratchy 78 rpm records they played incessantly.

While spading up what would be her garden, Ellen hit what turned out to be long runs of buried pipe connecting their buildings. They dug up the good-as-new pipe which went into their plumbing system.

A scavenged copper coil was installed in a Yukon furnace and connected to a 45-gallon drum mounted under the rafters above the bathroom as a hot water reservoir for cooking and bathing.

First, Bert had to dig a well and was lucky to hit water. Until then, they had to drive six miles every day to the river.

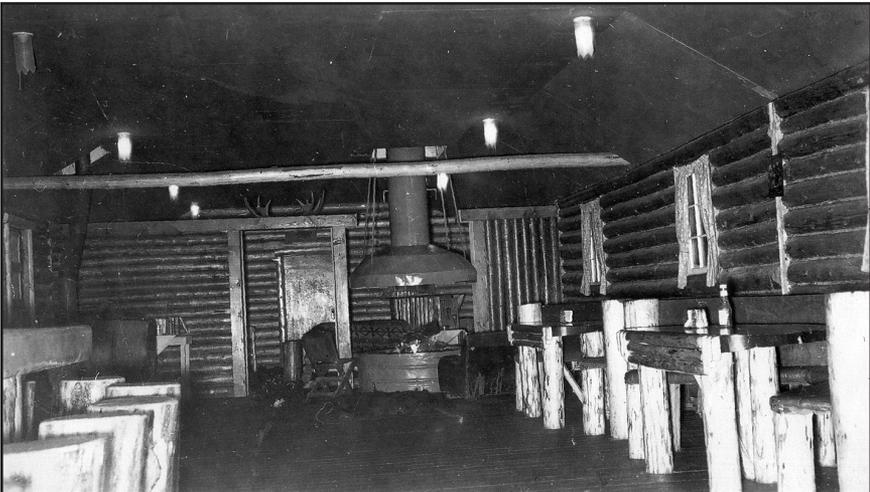
After about six months on the property-and most of that time spent camping in the bus-the Royal Canadian Mounted Police came calling in the fall of 1948. Bert thought Inspector Cronkite was coming to collect. Until the Laws actually owned the land, they were supposed to pay 50 cents per cord of wood cut.

It seemed the Mounties had been keeping an eye on the Laws. "When we think you can afford to pay for the wood you use, we'll start charging you," offered the Inspector who probably knew what desperate straits the homesteaders were in but didn't want to embarrass them.

"That was our first experience with the power and the justice of the famous Mounties," Bert recalled.

The Laws had no income and no lodge facilities to offer highway travellers to start earning an income. They were down to eating hotcakes and oatmeal.

One winter day, 1,000 pounds of potatoes magically landed on their doorstep. A Dawson Creek farmer claimed he was headed for Whitehorse



The hammered copper fireplace was the lodge's centerpiece. Photo circa 1952.

but the spuds would freeze before he got them to market. He insisted Bert was going to buy them.

Bert insisted just as vigorously that he couldn't. "I can't even afford the burlap bags." The farmer accepted his words as a deal. If the potatoes were of \$30 value to the Laws over the winter, Bert could send the money when he had it. Bert sent the money as soon as he dredged it together in the spring. Six months on the monotonous rations had saved them.

The turning point in their circumstances came in early 1949. The Laws were still flat broke but felt confident to put up the big Silver Dollar Lodge sign.

Highway travellers, police, public health nurses, truck drivers and tourists came in for coffee, a breakfast of porridge or a plate of potatoes. The Laws invested those pennies wisely into more food, more services, until the daily cash intake increased. Bert's mechanical skills were always in demand.

Soon, a Canadian Army lieutenant and a captain stopped in. They learned of the Laws' predicament. The two fellows drove into Whitehorse and somehow convinced the owner of Tourist Services Supermarket that the Laws were indeed reliable people and a good credit risk, a privilege denied them in the past. The officers returned to the Silver Dollar Lodge with grocery-stuffed cars.

On the strength of this new credit rating, which translated into a steady stream of customers, one day a construction foreman came in to



Bert Law liked to keep a few vehicles around the property. Photo circa 1952.

inquire if the Laws could board about 10 men for the season. You bet your last silver dollar they could.

The crews were building the Atlin Road. The Laws fed them practically anything, and as much as, they wanted. The Laws stocked the lodge and tore into the food bank like starving refugees. Bert, whose body was literally falling apart at the seams from too much physical exertion on insufficient calories, said he regained strength in six weeks on his prudent diet of T-bones, ice cream, strawberries and whipped cream three times a day.

By 1950, business increased from accommodations, gas, meals and groceries offered to highway travellers and road crews. People came for coffee and steaks and potted veal.

The Laws paid their bills without fail. Every Thursday, a refrigerated truck from British Yukon Navigation (BYN), a division of White Pass, rolled into the yard with their weekly \$200 grocery, meat and ice cream order.

The mail truck delivered and picked up school correspondence lessons and library-loan books from Edmonton and Anglican Sunday School lessons from Whitehorse and any catalog orders for new Easter frocks or garden seeds.

The kids were rating A's and B's in their studies and reading at levels above their big-city peer groups. There was no way the Laws would have split up the family sending the two older children away to boarding school. So, the tasks of teacher, principal and truant officer fell to Ellen.

In the "school corner" was a blackboard, a 10-volume encyclopedia and another 10 volumes of Book of Knowledge. The parents were avid readers and curious about everything, which rubbed off on the children.



One of Bert's favourites: A 1928 International truck.

The whole family discussed every subject under the sun and the moon. When they weren't outdoors stargazing, they were indoors dissecting words. They played what might have been an early-day Scrabble game. "One night, for instance, we discussed the word 'guttering'," Bert remembered. "We would define, examine and chase the word all around to find out what it was about."

The Laws were busy, for sure. Traffic was steadily increasing along the highway. Among their treasures, they had acquired a wringer washer and a combination truck-snowplow and a 1937 convertible.

By 1951, business was brisk. The Silver Dollar came alive with a steady flow of people and parties. "Everybody came to the Silver Dollar expecting a party and they got one," exclaimed Bert.

Neighbours, looking for entertainment after a hard week's work, drove hundreds of miles to visit on Saturday nights. The Silver Dollar had a large dance floor and a brand new record collection of the latest hit tunes.

In 1952, another knock sounded at their door that was going to change the course of their lives.

Prospector Al Kulan regaled the Laws with his prospecting adventures in the McDame Creek and Deadwood Lake areas of northern British Columbia and around Watson Lake, Yukon, where he had come in 1947.

Bert was impressed with the 30-year-old penniless prospector's infectious enthusiasm and charm. He brought out the best in others. He



Supplies arrived weekly by truck. Photo by James Joseph, 1952.

seemed to have potential to move ahead fast in life. Everything he did was quick, clean, smart.

The Laws had built up a small reserve and were willing to share. They invited Kulan to bring his wife, Wynne, and their young son, Barry, from Lower Post, British Columbia, to live with them. There was plenty of extra space in the winter at the lodge, which could be used as a prospecting base. The Kulans must have thought they had gone to heaven to have such a generous offer. They had endured some hard times like the Laws.

The two men would stay up late into the nights, formulating a homemade strategy. Kulan insisted on a full partnership with Bert and an equal split of any profits. On this basis, they developed a five-year program that included the Ross River Indians.

It was easy to become enraptured with Kulan's enthusiasm and forget the lodge needed attention. One day, Bert had to refuse an invitation to go to the field with him. "I have to dig a hole for the new septic tank."

The next morning Bert crawled from bed to find an eight-foot-cube of a hole in the ground that Kulan had been digging since early morning so Bert could go prospecting. "He worked like a machine," remarked Bert, who did sometimes accompany Kulan in the bush. But mainly Bert was the grubstaker. He provided the money, food, shelter, airplane charters and had



In his 1952 article for the "American Magazine," photographer/writer James Joseph portrayed the Laws as an ideal American Family living in the Yukon.

restored one of contractor John MacIsaac's decrepit 50-cent army trucks for Kulan's transportation conveniences.

Bert took Kulan into Tourist Services to introduce him to the lady in charge of the front end of the grocery store. Bert told Majorie Lester that his friend was going prospecting and needed outfitting with his food requirements. The bill was to be sent to the Silver Dollar Lodge.

Around 1952-53, Kulan was in and out of Tourist Services, charging back and forth between the Silver Dollar and the bush, coming in for sup-



Tom and Bert pose for photographer James Joseph in 1952.



plies, going out again to prospect, staying in a constant blur of motion, moving at amazing speeds, never exhausting his endless whirlwind energy, but using an astonishing quantity of goods, supplies and equipment.

When Bert suddenly realized he had sunk deeper into grubstaking than initially planned, supplies and food bills had mounted to over \$4,000. He was supporting up to 10 Indians, who were natural prospectors, and whose dogs were used for transportation. As well, he was supplying the groceries to their families so the fellows were free to go prospecting.

In July, 1953, Kulan was on what was supposed to be his last outing before he had to find paying work in town. With him at Vangorda Creek, 30 miles downstream from the village of Ross River when the discovery was made, was Peter Thompson, a fresh-air fanatic and non-paying Silver Dollar guest from Montreal who replaced Bert Law in the field.



Laundry day: Ellen and Frances with Ellen's brother Gunnar, who made the trip up North with them.

The contingent of Ross River residents consisted of Jack Ladue, brothers Robert and Joe Etzel, and Art John, whose boat was launched to travel down the Pelly River.

On July 10, Kulan and Thompson drove hell bent for leather from Ross River and burst excitedly into the Silver Dollar Lodge where Al and Bert fussed over the lead-zinc samples through the night.

Several days later, the prospectors obtained a verbal agreement with Ted Chisholm, exploration geologist for the Toronto-based Prospectors Airways.

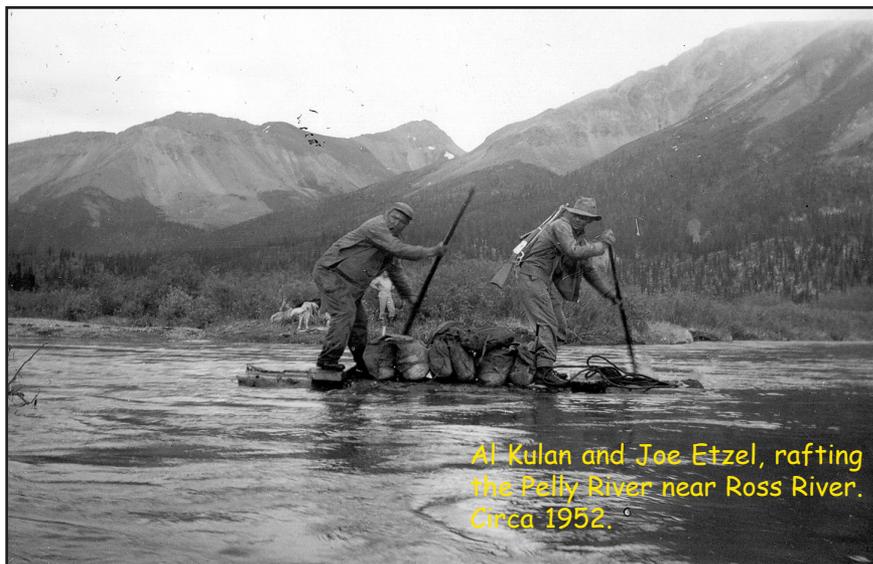
Bud Harbottle of Whitehorse Flying Service landed them 150 miles northeast of Whitehorse on tiny Shrimp Lake. They pitched camp on the afternoon of July 15. In the evening, they staked their dozen discovery claims.

Bert's four claims were named the Elle May and Al's eight claims were the Wynne. Those claims encompassed the visible outcrop that became the Vangorda deposit's focal point. "It was a magnificent showing," Chisholm confirmed in a 1978 interview in Vancouver.

The two prospectors who believed in the "bird in the hand" adage, accepted Prospectors Airways' terms reduced to \$150,000 from \$250,000, and a 12 percent vendor share, decreased from 15 percent, in a new company called Vangorda Mines.

As prevalent in mining deals, it would be 1984, after many shareholders were dead or infirm, before an agreement was haggled out in a Dome Petroleum appeal case in Vancouver that finally set the share's worth at \$8.00. Dome went bankrupt. It would be 1992, nearly 40 years after discovery, before the 10-million-ton Vangorda deposit would be mined by Curragh Resources. Clifford Frame's Toronto-based company also went bust.

Around 1953, the Laws had leased out the Silver Dollar Lodge and moved to the Indian village of Ross River, where they bought the old Taylor



Al Kulan and Joe Etzel, rafting the Pelly River near Ross River. Circa 1952.

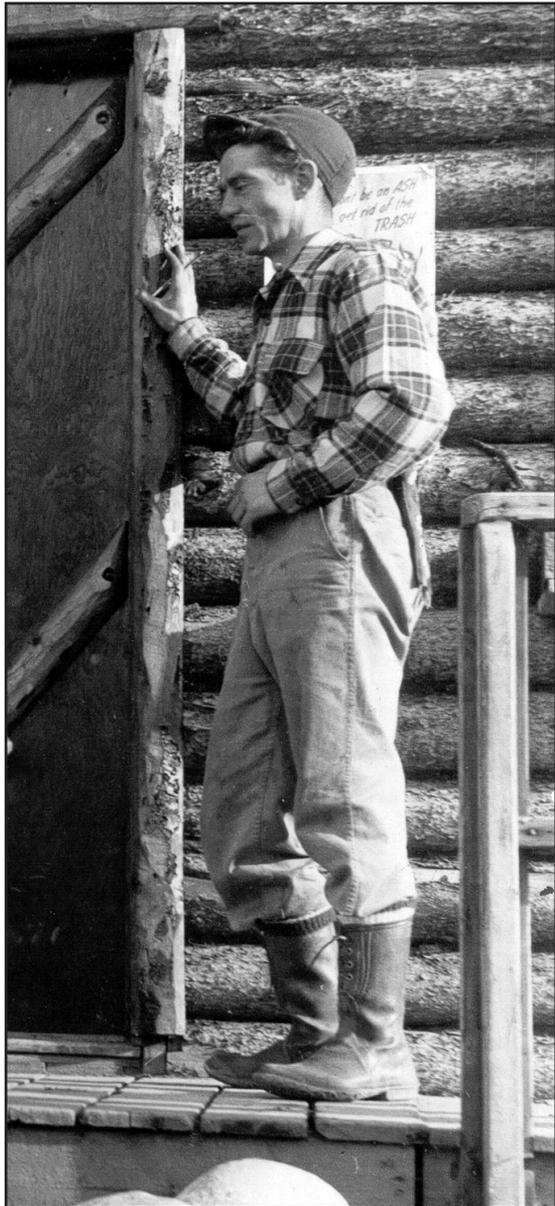
& Drury Trading Post. They did fur trading with the Indians, sold groceries and expedited oil and supplies to Vangorda Camp for a year.

The Vangorda deposit was jinxed with legal complications from the outset. As with most successful mining ventures, others smell money, and, rightly or wrongly, believe they deserve a portion.

The first indication of a pending lawsuit occurred when Prospectors Airways transferred the first portion of the payoff from Toronto to the Whitehorse banks, and the court seized it. Road contractor John MacIsaac had filed a statement on September 22, 1954, against Kulan and Law. MacIsaac claimed a 20-percent interest for his grubstake.

“We were real plums, fresh for plucking,” Bert said. “Practically every lawyer in town had a piece of the action.”

The five-day civil trial, heard in the Yukon’s Supreme Court by Mr. Justice J.E. Gibben, started January 26, 1955, and focused on what constituted a partnership and when did the one claimed by MacIsaac dissolve.

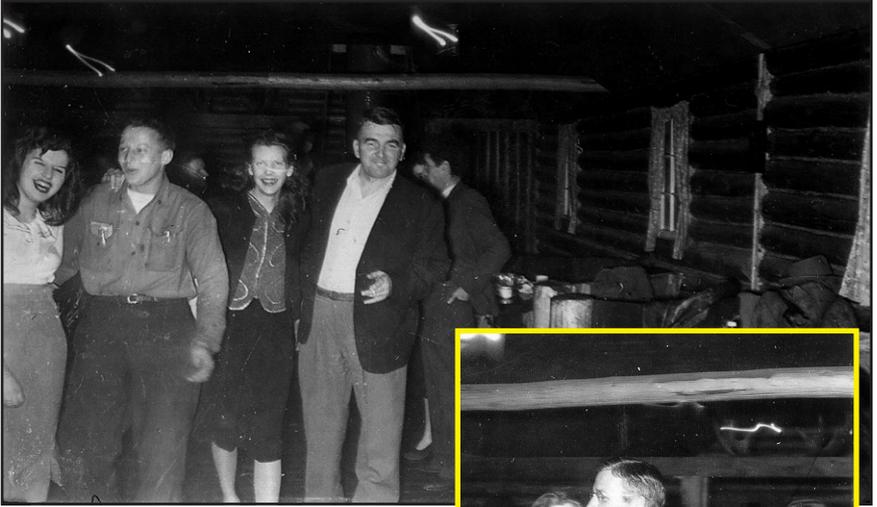


Al Kulan and his family stayed with the Laws at the Silver Dollar Lodge. 1952. Kulan was later shot to death in the Welcome Inn at Ross River (See Issue No. 14)

As is common in civil cases, the judge never did rule on the matter before going to his grave. After two years, the prospectors were forced into action. "We had to move," Bert emphasized. "We had to get a settlement so that we could pay off the Indians. We wanted to pay them. We owed them."

In desperation, Kulan and Law made an out-of-court, take-it-and-run offer to MacIsaac for \$10,000 cash and almost an equal amount in stocks. Bert then made MacIsaac pay a rebate as partial compensation for his grubstake against MacIsaac's.

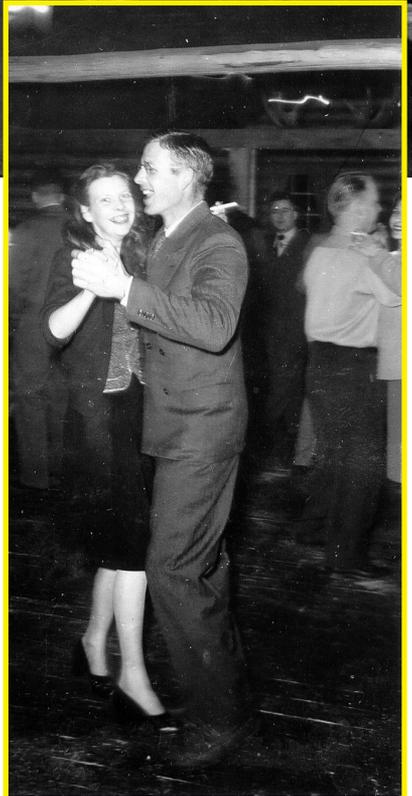
While Kulan and Law had been entangled in their own legal web, the



Indians, who had always respected and trusted Kulan, had been presumably persuaded by MacIsaac, to sue for their portion. Kulan and Law paid off through the Indians' lawyers, the King brothers. Stock certificates, issued in the Indians' names, were turned over to their lawyers but later burned in a fire that destroyed the lawyers' Whitehorse hotel and offices at the corner of Main Street and First Avenue.

When the matter of Vangorda Mines' shares initially came before the Vancouver court, Bert Law tried unsuccessfully to convince Indian Affairs to represent the Indians' interests. Sadly, the feds would not do it.

"It was all very distressing,"



said Bert, who had only a \$10,000 house to show for his efforts. The remaining \$15,000 had been spent in various ways during the two-year limbo period pending the Gibben decision that never occurred.

“Everything was so near,” Bert said. “Nothing black or white but in shades of gray. Things happened fast in a short period of time. Obviously, MacIsaac thought he had a legitimate beef. But if he’d paid his share in the first place—or at least a decent part of it—there never would have been such a huge problem.”

Law and Kulan got into some gray areas in their own partnership, too. Bert abandoned prospecting and grubstaking forever but retained a brotherly-type relationship with Kulan who needed bailing out more than once from bad real estate deals.

The Laws sold the Ross River store to Kulan. In 1955, they moved to Whitehorse to lead a more normal life in the frontier burg of 2,600 residents. Ross River was no place the Laws wanted to raise their youngsters. And,

for sure, they did not relish going back to the lodge. “The life was too tough,” Bert added. “It almost killed us both.”

The Silver Dollar Lodge lessee operators and vandals had decimated the place. What hadn’t disappeared was burned for firewood. Bert didn’t want to lose the lodge to taxes, which he couldn’t afford. He approached local businessman Clyde Wann who gave him a cheque for a bit more than taxes owing. Bert paid the \$900 plus owing and signed the transfer papers to Wann. That was the end of the Laws’ lodge-keeping.

Bert was occupied briefly as a commissioned salesman with Hume Insurance. One day, he decided he needed a job. “I could either be an undertaker or go into real estate. I chose real estate.”

He had formed Yukon Realty, probably the first real estate office in the territory. “But there was nothing to buy or sell in 1955.” Business gradually picked up and he became wellknown and highly respected for his long career as a realtor, businessman, a politician and a gentleman.



Photo, previous page: A bunch of the boys and girls were whooping it up at the Silver Dollar lodge-warming party, 1949. Inset: Ellen and Bert dancing.

Above: Neighbours from the next lodge along the highway, Johnson’s Crossing, Bob and Elly Porsild came to the lodge-warming.

In 1959, he had begun early flirtations with politics. He was elected alderman when Gordon Cameron was on his second and final term as mayor before being appointed Commissioner of the Yukon.

Afterwards, Bert ran for and was defeated twice as a mayoralty candidate. “The first time I ran for mayor I was sincere about winning. I ran for mayor because nobody else wanted the position. I got people too interested. About four other guys joined the race.

“When the smoke settled, I had finished last—so far last that when I walked a couple of blocks down Main Street more people said they’d voted for me than the actual votes counted in my favour.”

Bert did go back into municipal politics and was adored by the electorate for his fair, practical, common sense approach. During most of his city-hall years, 1980 to 1988, he was also in the appointed position as Yukon administrator, the person entrusted to sign official documents in the commissioner’s absence.

Whatever the Laws undertook was done with pride and perfection. They were avid gardeners, as was evidenced by their neat log house and gardens on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Jarvis Street.

One of Bert’s pet projects was to encourage city council to preserve a small, violet-infested island in the Yukon River for its natural beauty. In 1986, the city officially attached the name Bert Law Park and erected a nice signage on the tiny piece of real estate, connected to Robert Service Campground with a foot bridge.

Almost 40 years to the day of when the five-member Law family came to the Yukon in 1948, asthma forced Bert to resign his fourth-term seat as city councillor four months prematurely so he and Ellen could move to Vancouver Island’s more hospitable climate.

The Yukon pioneer, businessman and politician died on April 21, 1998, in Nanaimo, British Columbia, where Bert and his wife retired in 1988. He was 83.

Ellen Astad Law was 82 years old when she died on November 25, 2003, in Calgary, Alberta, where she had moved to be closer to her married daughter, Frances. The Laws’ two sons raised their families in Whitehorse.



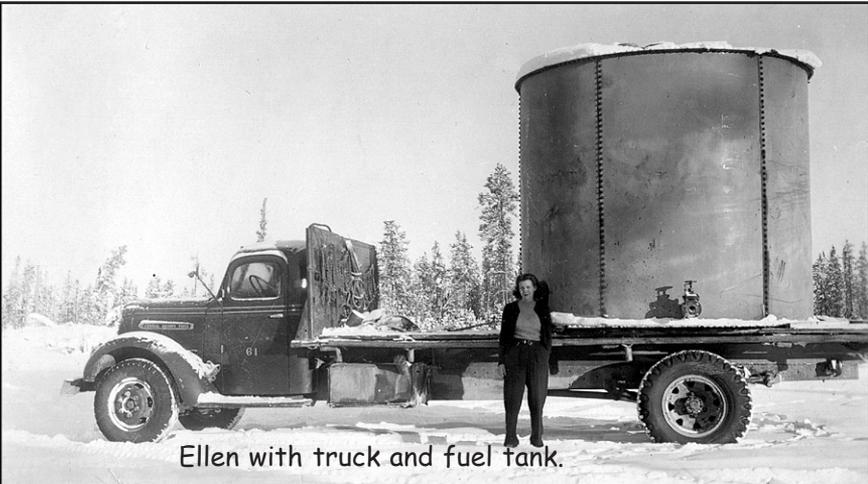
An improvised blockheater.

Bert and Ellen Law are remembered for their integrity, honesty, generosity and unconditional willingness to help anybody who needed help. But friends spoke first and foremost of the Laws as good, genuine people. One could not wish for a better legacy.

*Jane Gaffin nominated Bert Law for induction into the Yukon Prospectors' Association's Honour Roll which recognizes people who have shown faith in helping prospectors fulfill their dreams. Further, the Laws are profiled in her book **Cashing In**, the history of Yukon hardrock mining, 1898 to 1977, available at Mac's Fireweed Books in Whitehorse.*



Ellen and Burt Law in 1989, shortly after the couple retired to Nanaimo, B.C.



Ellen with truck and fuel tank.

The Long Hike

By Amanda Ford

Last summer my new-found friends, Jim, Doreen, Sheldon, Don, Ruth, and I decided we would hike the historic Chilkoot Trail. And what a hike it was!

We started the climb at 11:30 a.m. It was a warm, sunny morning, almost perfect for a hike. The six of us had on 30-to-45-pound packs, which were pretty light for the first hour. After that they seemed to get heavier and heavier with each and every step we took.

Well, we talked and walked, and walked until it seemed like we were going nowhere. Uphill, down hill, round a bend, across the moving



Amanda Ford (age 16) at the foot of the Chilkoot Pass.



The Chilkoot Pass beckoning in the distance. All photos (except the first two) by Amanda Ford..

planks. Did I mention one of us gets seasick really, really easy? Up the rock stairs! Oh yeah, and quite a few of them. Past swamps, shrubs, ponds and then finally in sight, our campsite! No, wait - our first resting spot. I think we should have prepared ourselves for this hike.

They say, "No pain, no gain." Well, we pained a lot and gained a little. Hours later we finally reached our first night campsite. Sweaty, sore, stinky feet and achy backs, muscles and joints. Cold ground to sleep on. Eerie noises! Aside from that we all slept peacefully. All was finally quiet.

Crash! Bang! Scream! I bolt upright in my bed. Something is outside my tent! Body shaking, bear spray in trembling hands, clip is off, ready to fire! I hold my breath. My heart is racing. "Sorry, that was just me tripping over the coffee pot." I mumble a few choice words under my breath. Who invited those men along anyway? I give a quick glance at my watch. Four a.m. A few more words for my hiking partner.

Everybody started getting up. Oh, boy, coffee was not ready. Talk about a bunch of grouchy people. Good thing I don't need coffee to wake up in the morning. Breakfast is eaten, sleeping bags are rolled up, tents are down,



and bags are packed. We are ready to go. But stop! Wait! I hear something: bears! We round the bend. What bear?

A little while later. What are you guys doing? Changing into shorts? Let me turn my back first so I don't throw up. "Oh, boys, you better hurry up. Remember those four girls who were at camp last night?" Wow! I didn't know guys could change so fast.

We are walking again. What was that about "false summit"? Man alive! I have never seen so many rocks in my life. Does anybody know where the trail is? Hey, what are you doing down there? We're supposed to be walking, not sitting on our butts. Is that snow? "No, it's some white, sticky, cold, melt-in-your-hands-and-disappear sand"! Don't put it down my back! Everyone is laughing.

I'm mad. Whoever said that white stuff was cold needs to do a little more emphasizing. Laugh at me, will you? Why are you sitting in the snow? I didn't push you; I'm way over here! Boy, this stuff is pretty slick. Will people stop sitting on their butts?

There it is, the real summit! That is pretty tall. How long do you think it'll take to climb? Why are you asking me? I've never been here before. "Okay, Amanda, you and Sheldon go on up. We'll trail behind."

Stop rolling rocks down on me! Will you hurry up some? We're at the top! Where's the Canadian flag? We will be at the top when we see our flag. Fifty minutes later! "Oh, Canada!" We made it! Where's the others? I am a human, not a mule! Oh yeah, wanna bet!

Two hours later, lunch is done. Mother Nature's call answered. We're on our way. What did that Ranger say about a bridge? An ice bridge! We have to cross that? Stop sitting down! Cuts, bruises and scrapes. Don't fall through. That's the only bridge, right? Good! Ahh, not good! Cold feet. Wet pants. What toes? What's that? Our second night campsite. Finally!

What stinks? Cover your feet! Put up the tents. Go to bed. Peace, finally. Nope! Wind, thunder, lightning, rain. Tents leaking. Beds wet. Packs soaked, not mine. Plastic works! Thanks Mom. So much for drying our boots in the sun.

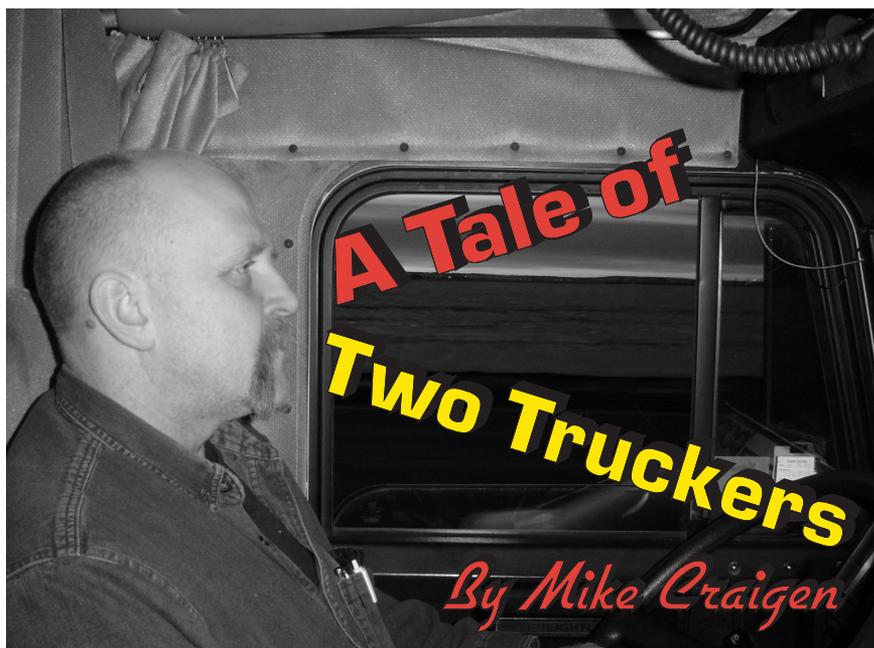
Time to get up. Mumble, grumble. No one slept. I thought that yesterday morning was bad! Get those packs ready. Is it just me or are these packs getting heavier?

More wind. More cuts, bruises and scrapes. Up hill, around a hill. Slipping. Sliding. Are we there yet? Where's the cutoff? About time! Sore feet. Achy back. These train tracks are long. Can feel every stone. We're almost there. Just around this bend. Or the next one. Walk faster! Gramma can walk faster and she's dead!

Wait, look there! That was a beautiful sight. I've never seen a pickup truck look so good. Let's get some real food. Right on!

Three hours later. Home at last. Nice warm bath, warm clothes, warm bed. No rocks in my back. No bears. No wind. No lightning. No thunder. No rain. No noise. No annoying, pain-in-the-butt men! Peace at last.

But ask me if I would do it again? "Absolutely. When am I going?" Go ahead, call me crazy but I had a blast!



Writer Mike Craigen has been fascinated with the trucker's life for 30 years, ever since a trucker rescued him when his vehicle rolled on his first trip up the Alaska Highway. Last winter he decided to take a closer look at the work of truckers when he accompanied two Pacific Northwest Freight Systems drivers along the Alaska Highway to Fort Nelson and on to Edmonton.

At 1:00 in the afternoon on a cold clear day in February, 2005, Gerry Roberts pulls out of the Whitehorse trucking depot of Pacific Northwest Freight Systems. He adjusts his air-cushioned seat and unties the laces to his boots.

"I've got to be comfortable to enjoy the scenery," he sings out. With a vigilant check of gauges and braking systems, he points his year-old, 450-horse powered Freightliner tractor cab south, beginning a trip, which has become very familiar to him.

Roberts is delivering an empty 53-foot-long trailer (sometimes called a van or reefer in trucking jargon) to Fort Nelson. His assignment is to drive this rig 600 miles south on the Alaska Highway to a plywood factory. There it will be loaded with 25 lifts of plywood bound for the booming housing market in Edmonton.

At Fort Nelson, Roberts will exchange trailers with a driver from Edmonton. Hauling the new trailer loaded with consumer goods for Yukon, Roberts will arrive back in Whitehorse sometime Tuesday evening.

Many people dream of doing this trip once in a lifetime usually in their motor home. Roberts does it sometimes twice a week in his truck, which is



Above, Gerry Roberts, Alaska Highway truck driver. Previous page, Mike Fast. [photos by Mike Craigen]

complete with a luxurious sleeper. The interior is clean and equipped with a bed, sheets, pillow, television, 150-station satellite radio, VHF, CB radio, and food for the road. Mounted on the dash is a GPS tracking device. Either the Whitehorse or Edmonton office of Pacific Northwest can monitor the exact location of the tractor and send messages to the driver at any time.

Roberts, an experienced truck driver of some 40 years, has operated a wide range of construction equipment and trucks. He drives the Alaska Highway in winter and in the summer he works for the Yukon Department of Highways.

“I like to keep busy,” says Roberts with a grin.

Roberts makes a call on his radio to inform the scale operator in Whitehorse that his trailer is empty. The Yukon operator tells him that he doesn't need to cross over the scales but scale operators in other provinces can be real sticklers at times.

“The guys at the scales in the Yukon are really good. They know we have to make a living and are fair to us,” Roberts states.

A born and bred Yukoner of First Nations ancestry, Roberts has a deep love for the mountains and rivers and likes to hunt and fish. His great grandfather, Ira Van Bibber from Tennessee, walked over the famous Chilkoot Trail during the Goldrush of 1898.

“With over a hundred years of Roberts and Van Bibbers up here, I am related to half the Yukon,” he says with a broad smile. Roberts, has an easy going manner and an obvious good sense of humour.

“I love the Yukon and the ladies of the Yukon love me,” Roberts says with a twinkle in his eye. As his big rig rolls on down the highway, he takes in the ever-changing panorama of snow-covered lakes, mountains and trees bent over with snow.

Yukon roads are in good shape, thanks to the efforts of government highway workers. Roberts engages in short radio conversations with grader and snowplow operators as he passes them. He concentrates on his driving, gently applying the brakes as he heads down some long winding curves and valleys.

Cars are rare, as most of the traffic in the winter is made up of local half-ton pickups and long haul, semi-tractor trailers. Passing truckers

share information on road conditions. Lines such as, “How’s the ole trail?” “Keep an eye out for buffalo on the road,” and “There is a wide load coming your way” are typical of talk between truckers.

“I just don’t think about what might be around the next corner, but think about what might be around the next two corners,” says Roberts, who has logged hundreds of thousands of kilometres. Accidents mean down time for both driver and employer.

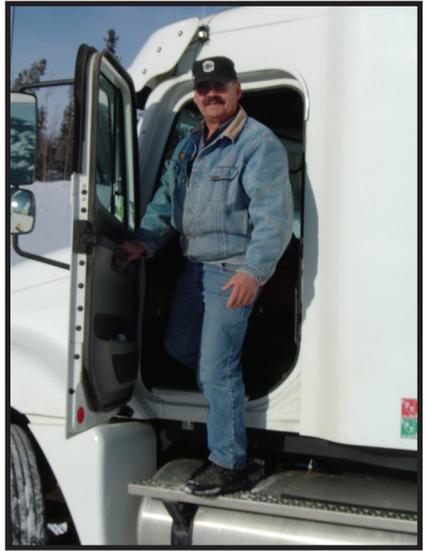
“When, a truck is not working, I’m not working and, besides, I don’t want to cause any grief for the company,” states Roberts.

Having just talked of accidents, Roberts rounds a corner and a small half-ton truck is in his lane. All conversation stops. Roberts applies the brakes and stays the course, rapidly calculating in his mind what the oncoming driver will do. With just a few feet to spare the approaching vehicle turns back into its lane.

“That was one of the closest ones I’ve ever had. Man oh man, that guy scared the shit out of me,” says Roberts as he pats his heart a few times. It takes a few minutes for him to come down, for he knows that, had a collision taken place, the driver in the pick up would have driven his last mile.

The formidable Roo Bars mounted on the front of the tractor are a trucker’s life insurance. Roo bars are mounted on passenger and commercial vehicles in Australia to protect occupants when in collision with kangaroos. On the Alaska Highway, it is common to collide with caribou, elk, buffalo, sheep and moose. Remains of dead animals in the winter attest to this grim reality. Roberts chalks this incident up as just one of his many road adventures.

Experience has taught him to be prepared for emergencies and he has often helped other highway travellers out of a jam. In addition to his moccas-



Gerry Roberts

sins, work boots, running shoes, winter insulated boots, rubber boots, steel toed boots, extra gloves, coveralls, chains for pulling vehicles out of the ditch and a first aid kit, he carries a wide variety of tools for minor repairs and breakdowns.

He remembers a trucker spinning out on an icy hill in front of him. The driver was pretty frantic as the rig was beginning to very slowly slide backwards. Roberts ran up to the tractor in front and managed to throw some tire chains under the spinning tire.

“This did the trick and we were able to chain him up and get him on his way,” Roberts says matter of factly.

“Some people are quick to blame truckers for accidents, but in actual fact, very few truckers are involved in accidents, considering the millions of miles they drive. People also think that this is an easy job; it’s not,” states Roberts.

“Many of the steel bridges have a build up of snow and ice on the girders during the winter. As the bridges vibrate with heavy loads, there is a danger of windshields being shattered and smashed from falling material. You have to be careful,” says Roberts.

About five minutes after crossing a bridge, Roberts sees a passing truck with a windshield covered with cracks. Quickly picking up his radio, Roberts says, “Hey buddy, what happened to the glass?” The reply is short and to the point, “A chunk of ice fell off a steel bridge while coming up Highway 37 (Stewart Cassiar Highway). Roberts looking down the road exclaims, “What did I just say?”

“Motor home drivers, they are another story,” says Roberts. He remembers following a motor home for miles down the highway. The RV crept up hills and around corners. When Roberts tried to pass the driver on a straight stretch, he would speed up.

“I finally had it with this guy,” says Roberts. “I got on the radio and said, Good buddy, if you are on holiday and I think you are, slow down and enjoy the scenery. I am still working for a living and have a schedule to meet.” The motor home slowed down and let Roberts pass.

Truckers don’t take chances in running out of fuel on the road. If this happens in extreme temperatures, the tow bill can be very expensive.

“On one trip I was only 50 miles from Whitehorse but was running low. I pulled over at Jake’s Corner and waited for six hours for the pumps to open, filled up and drove on home,” he says.

The coldest temperature experienced by Roberts was at Pilot River in Yukon when the mercury dipped to -57 Celsius. Newer engines can handle these temperatures. They are more efficient and circulate the diesel. This keeps the fuel from gelling and a “belly carpet” keeps the transmission fluids flowing.



Load bans on some secondary roads (i.e., The Klondike Highway, which connects Whitehorse to Dawson City) restrict the amount of weight carried in trailers during spring thaw. This explains why there are so many industrial loads being delivered in the winter.

“Bag and Drag is the best type of trip for me,” Roberts explains. “I just have to hook onto to the trailer, deliver it to the destination, hook onto another and head on home.”

Slowing down on approaching Upper Liard, just outside of Watson Lake, Roberts spots eight dogs walking in single file along the highway and remarks, “I could throw a set of harness on those guys and have myself a dog team.” The high snow banks keep the dogs from jumping into the ditch. They continue heading on up the Alaska Highway.

On one trip, Roberts saw a motorhome pass him with flames shooting out from underneath. “I radioed behind me and told a trucker to flag down the burning camper,” says Roberts. “The truck driver got out and had his fire extinguisher in hand. Risking his own life, the trucker waved the driver over and extinguished the flames.”

“I am going to pull into Iron Creek Lodge. They have good food there,” says Roberts.

Walking into the entry of the restaurant, he quickly slips off his moccasins and places them with the other boots around an oil stove. Roberts sings out, “Home Sweet Home.”

The restaurant floor is spotless and everybody wears socks. The food is home cooked and tasty. Roberts sits with some grader and snowplow operators and the conversation centers on the condition of the road and Robert’s near miss with the half ton earlier in the day. On leaving, Roberts orders a fresh load of bread to be picked up next day on his return up the Alaska Highway to Whitehorse.

Later on in the night, Roberts sees a shooting star complete with a fiery tail. As it plunges to earth, he says, “That is the nearest meteorite I have ever seen in my 40 years of driving. This is what I enjoy about driving The Alaska Highway. Sometimes when the Northern Lights are really dancing, I will pull over and stretch out on the hood of the tractor and just look at the sky.”

Roberts believes in UFOs and says that on one occasion, “I saw a huge bright light near Beaver Creek and it moved just above the ground towards Fox Lake.” On returning to Whitehorse the next morning, drivers on the Klondike Highway had reported seeing the same light.

Roberts continues to exercise courtesy on the road throughout the night as he pulls over to let pilot cars and trailers loaded with oil and gas exploration equipment navigate corners and bridges. A simple “Thank You” is transmitted by radio to Roberts by the drivers of the pilot cars and tractor trailers.

“This is what truckers call Jurassic Park,” says Roberts, as he motors on through Stone Mountain and Muncho Lake Provincial Parks. For the next few miles, buffalo, caribou and moose are seen along the road. For a few frantic moments, a moose is caught in Roberts’ headlights. He brakes,

the tractor and trailer swerves a little and the moose manages to get out of the way of the Roo Bars just in the nick of time.

Later on, in Fort Nelson, Roberts learns that a group of three caribou that he saw on this stretch were not so lucky and were all killed by a truck. The snow is deep along side of the road. Animals find it difficult climbing back over the bank. Robert's says, "I've seen groups of buffalo sleeping right on the road."

He arrives in Fort Nelson at one o'clock in the morning, some twelve hours after leaving Whitehorse. The service road runs parallel to the Alaska Highway. It is lined for about a mile on each side with tractor trailers of every description. Engines are running and clearance lights are on as drivers bed down for a few hours in their truck sleepers. Hotel and motel parking lots are jammed with half tons. Every place is booked solid. With logging, and gas and oil exploration fuelling the economy, the remote Alaska Highway town is booming.

Roberts backs his truck up to the loading dock of the plywood plant and says, "I will sleep right here and be first loaded in the morning." Shortly, after eight in the morning, his truck is full of lifts of plywood. He switches trailers with a north-bound Edmonton driver.

After a quick breakfast, Roberts is back on the road heading back to Whitehorse on. He will stop at Iron Creek for his fresh loaf of bread, again in Watson Lake for some deliveries and be back in Yukon's capital city early in the evening. He will have been on the road some 30 hours and will have driven 1,800 kilometers.

Continuing down the Alaska Highway to Dawson Creek and on to Edmonton, our writer, Mike Craigen, rides with Mike Fast, another Pacific Northwest driver.

"I have been driving off and on for 30 years," says Mike Fast. "I have been across Canada a few times and through 39 States."

Fast has arrived in Fort Nelson with an empty trailer from Whitehorse. The trailers including Roberts' are now full of plywood. With a final check, Fast climbs up into the tractor and prepares himself for the 1,000-kilometre drive to Edmonton.

After driving the Alaska Highway for years and in all seasons, Fast has developed a deep appreciation for the magnificent scenery of the Yukon and Northern British Columbia.

"Driving the road is like getting paid to go sightseeing, that's the way I see it," says Fast.

Like many drivers, he has done a variety of jobs in his life. He has been involved in the fish charter business off the coast of B. C. and in summers is a big game guide in the Yukon. Fast states, "I like being my own boss and I like my own company." He adds, "It helps to have an understanding wife." The life of a trucker is demanding and it is rare to find a trucker who has only driven a tractor and trailer all their life.

Fast's Dad was a trucker and was instrumental in sharing many of the basic rules of the trade with his son. At 16, Fast was driving a five-ton truck.

He was always interested in maps. Trucking and the open road seemed to be a natural fit for him. Fast says, "I did a lot of listening and learning just happened."

The trucking industry is facing a critical shortage of experienced drivers. Fast thinks that it is important for drivers to be professionally trained and to have practical experience on the road.

Truckers are a unique group. They have a sense of humour and a love for living life as it comes. Fast cracks a joke, "What's the difference between white collar workers and truckers? White collar workers have stock portfolios and truckers have the lottery."

Mountain and lake scenery is now replaced by more rolling country, ranches, and hay fields as Fast rolls along through Fort St. John, Dawson Creek and into Alberta. Fast comments, "It used to take 18 hours to drive from Whitehorse to Fort Nelson, now with improved roads and good weather, the trip takes about ten hours."

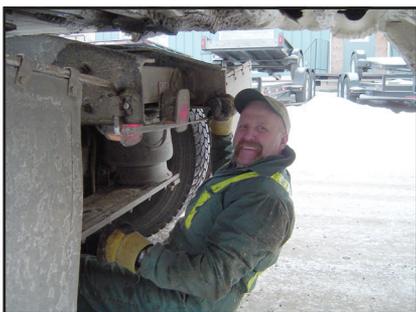
Conversation focuses on trucking as a career and lifestyle. The money can be good, however, the responsibility and being away from home are major downsides to being on the road. Fast has good advice for young people and says, "Try on a few different jobs until you find one you like and then do it well."

Too often, home becomes the truck. Keeping in touch with your wife and family is important so Fast pulls over at a service center and places a call home.

About mid afternoon, a passenger in a passing vehicle indicates by holding her nose and pointing to the trailer that something is wrong. Fast quickly reacts by pulling over to the side. Smoke is bellowing out from the rear axles and a strong smell of burning rubber hangs in the air. Fast pulls on his coveralls, squirms under the truck and makes some adjustments to the brakes. This is just part of the job of a driver. Truckers often have to figure how to fix breakdowns, especially when they happen miles from a service center.

The tension on the brakes is relieved. Soon, Fast is on the road again and carefully monitors the side mirrors for tell-tale signs of smoke. Fast states, "Every accident can be prevented. Proper maintenance of tractors, trailers, driver alertness and experience are the key factors in road safety."

A beautiful sunset greets Fast, as he cruises through the bustling city of Grande Prairie. The horizon is a scene right out of "Star Wars." Looking off into the orange layer of colour on the horizon, Fast comments, "It would be nice to be an astronaut but, until they put trucks in space, I won't be there."



Mike Fast under his truck

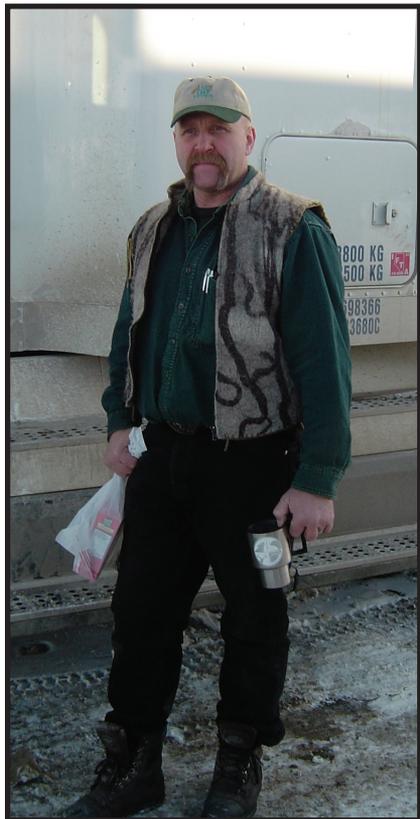
Certain types of trucking jobs can be very dangerous. Fast talks about his experiences in driving logging trucks. The trailers are usually loaded up to 65,000 kilograms and are driven on secondary logging roads. There is incredible wear and tear on the trucks and accidents are common. Mills have their own inspectors who regularly inspect the rigs of private contractors to insure greater safety. Along with this, Fast says, "Surviving in this industry, calls for a code of ethics and helping other drivers when and where you can."

Heavy truck traffic decreases. Cars and half tons are common on the road as Fast approaches the outskirts of Edmonton. He is concentrating on getting his load to the Pacific Northwest freight yard. Driving through late evening traffic in the city, Fast arrives at his destination. Around midnight he crawls into his sleeper for a well-deserved sleep.

In the morning, he reports the problem with his brakes to the shop mechanic. After filling up his tractor with diesel, (the round trip Whitehorse to Edmonton takes about 2,000 litres) and having breakfast, Fast carefully pulls out of the yard with a full load of freight bound for Yukon. The Alaska Highway and the long haul trucks that travel it make up the lifeline so important to Yukoners.

In a couple of days, Fast arrives back in Whitehorse after logging another 4,000 kilometres to his trucking career. He enjoys a couple of days of rest and time with family and friends. Returning to work, Fast hooks onto another trailer and heads back on down that "ole road" once more. For in this business, if you are not driving, you are not making money.

Johnny Carson might have been thinking of the likes of Roberts and Fast when he said: "If you are happy in what you are doing, you will like yourself, you will have inner peace. If you have that along with physical health, you will have had more success than you could possibly have imagined."



Mike Fast

Venit, Vidit, Aedificavit He Came, He Saw, He Built

By Michael Dougherty

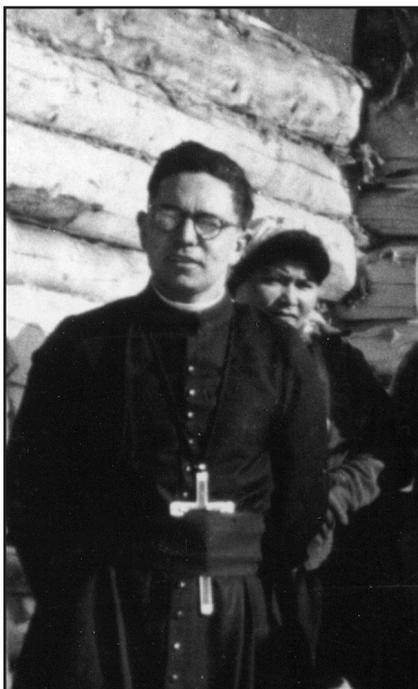
In 1946 his Oblate superior called the newly ordained Father Pierre Rigaud into his office at the La Brosse-Montceaux seminary in France. He had spent most of a very eventful last five years of his life there. “Where do you want to go?” the Father Superior asked. Father Pierre told him, “I want to go to Canada, anywhere in the North.” Then he added, “Oh no but not the Yukon, there are just prospectors there, no Indians.”

Young Rigaud had already been corresponding with fellow Oblates working around Hudson Bay with the Inuit and he hoped that he might serve there too. A week later he was called to his superior’s office once again and asked, “If we sent you to the Yukon, what would you do?” Without hesitation Father Rigaud replied, “I took a vow of obedience, I will go!” His superior then ordered, “Pack your bags.”

Born in Mauves Sur Loire on the Atlantic coast of France on May 29, 1920 Rigaud early on knew he wanted to be a priest. Maybe it was the stories that he heard told about a friend of his father who had taken his beret and bible to missions in northern Alberta, or possibly the time he had spent as a boy accompanying the local parish curé on his daily village rounds taking communion to shut-ins that influenced his choice.

The accidental drowning of his older brother, then the death of his father, delayed his vocation. At 17 years of age he had to take charge of the family business, the trading and training of horses on their small family farm. The course of his life took another dramatic change just three years later. He was not alone this time, millions of people’s lives felt the impact of the German invasion.

A serious attack of pleurisy which left him bed ridden for nearly seven weeks, gave him time to reflect on his life and the call to become a priest he





At the church in Snag, Yukon, 1948. L-R Copper Jack, Andrew, Mary Atlin, Mrs. Jack, Father Rigaud, Mary, Bill...

continued to feel. Pierre Rigaud wrote the Oblates. They accepted him into their novitiate, his first step towards the priesthood. He made his first vows as an Oblate in November of 1941. He continued his studies at the Oblate scholasticate at La Brosse-Montceaux east of Paris along with other seminarians including now well-known northerners Jean-Marie Mouchet, Pierre Veyrat and Denis Buliard.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) began when, under the inspiration of Eugene De Mazenod, a group of like-minded men sought to reach out to the poor and marginalized in post-revolutionary France. By 1841, just 15 years after their official recognition by Pope Leo XII, this congregation had grown to the degree that it could respond to requests for priests and religious workers from outside France.

The first request came from Bishop Bourget of Montreal. In response De Mazenod, then Bishop of Marseille and also the Oblate Superior, sent four Oblate priests and two brothers to Canada. This formally began the congregation's missionary outreach. By the time of his death in 1861, Bishop de Mazenod's congregation had grown to 416 men who had spread rapidly out through ten countries such as Canada, Ireland, Sri Lanka, and South Africa.

Oblate Alexander Taché, called the "Father of the Church in Western Canada," represented the wave of missionaries that would follow the ex-

panding frontier to the western limits of our country. By the late 1840s Catholic missionaries had reached the Mackenzie River.

Mary McCarthy writes in her book "From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth" that the "Oblates came to the Mackenzie region with the goal of incorporating the Dene into Roman Catholicism." For these religious pioneers the inculturation of their religion into the indigenous cultures they contacted did not mean assimilation. It was, McCarthy continued, "on the basis that it was a universal religion to which all cultures could adapt without violating their individual integrity."

The first Oblates' philosophy towards the First Nations stood in sharp contrast to the prevailing thought of the country's political leaders like John A. Macdonald. In an oft repeated quote attributed to the country's first prime minister, the government sought "to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit to change."

Young French seminarians for generations had learned what it meant to work with First Nations peoples from returning Canadian missionaries. Jean-Louis Coudert from Menat, France was one of them. He came to northern Canada in 1923. Coudert worked in the Mackenzie and Athabaska regions from Goldfields, Saskatchewan to Fort Smith and Fort Chipewyan. In 1936 Rome named him coadjutor bishop for the Yukon. The Yukon for the previous twenty had been administered out of Prince Rupert.

On Bishop Coudert's trips back to France in the 1930s he shared tales of life in the Canadian North with young aspiring Oblates such as Joe Guilbaud. Coudert was not alone in inspiring young French men with the desire to come north. Written accounts of life in native communities by authors like Father Duchausois read like adventures. Scores of other country men had made the trek and deepened ties between their home towns and adopted homelands.

In 1942 the young Oblate men of La Brosse-Montceaux faced challenges that previous generations of seminarians hadn't. The German occupiers ordered that all the local young men, including the seminarians, present themselves for a physical. The Nazis sought to dragoon the youth for STO or 'obligatory work service' in Germany, basically forced labour. Rigaud and others fled. A network of World War I veterans sheltered him in the Alps.

Eventually in 1943 when the situation calmed down his Oblate superior, who had been corresponding with him in coded letters, told him to return to La Brosse-Montceaux. He passed through checkpoints with no problem. The calm would not last.

On July 24, 1944 Pierre Rigaud, Jean-Marie Mouchet and Pierre Veyrat were among ninety other priests, seminarians and brothers seized by Nazi police and soldiers at the seminary of the Missionary Oblates at La Brosse-Montceaux. They had been betrayed.

The seminary had been working with the underground resistance. Via a clandestine radio, they helped coordinate allied air drops of weapons for the resistance. Everyone had a job. Twenty-four year old Rigaud repaired weapons damaged in the falls. Twenty-one year old Veyrat, artistically gifted, prepared false identity cards.

The Nazi found parachutes and empty containers in a well on their property but no weapons. They had been well hidden in a nearby cemetery. The Nazis source had, though, managed to give them a list of the names of suspected resistance members from among the now captive Oblates. They pulled a lay brother, two priests and two seminarians out from among them. One by one they were tortured to find out where the arms were. Beaten but not broken they refused to talk. The Nazis shot them in front of the others after allowing them to receive absolution. They never found the guns.

The Nazi troopers jammed the rest of the Oblates from La Brosse-Montceaux onto a train along with 1,800 to 1,900 other prisoners. They were all bound for the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. Two priests who had been away from the seminary at the time of the raid, managed to get word of what had happened back to the Allies. The British bombed the rail ahead of the train preventing it from leaving France.

The Nazis put all the prisoners into an abandoned Russian prisoner of war camp at Peronne closer to the German border. They then set them to work repairing the rail line. One foggy morning in early September of 1944 their guards marched them down to the river. Father Rigaud recalls hearing cannons from a rapidly advancing front line going off on both sides of the Somme River. Through the mist they saw tanks on the opposite bank. They had stars emblazoned on them.

Ordered back to the camp they still feared for their lives. They knew first hand of the cruelty of their captors. Father Rigaud fondly recounts how his barracks commander, a Captain Moss from Luxembourg, manipu-



Snag, Yukon, 1947. Father Rigaud putting the last touch on Bill Blair's cabin. This became the first Snag school.

lated their guards guaranteeing their safety. First they set everyone over 50 years old free. Then the rest of them were liberated.

The war ended for them nine months before the fighting and dying stopped in Europe. Scars remained. Memories of their executed friends did not fade.

Life at the seminary returned to a semblance of its pre-war normality. Young men took their perpetual vows as before. Ordinations followed. Jean-Marie Mouchet became a priest on February 18, 1945. Father Rigaud said his first mass on July 6, 1946. Father Veyrat followed with his a year later on July 6th and Denis Buliard on April 12, 1948. Each knew that he could be sent to any of dozens of countries from the tropics to the Arctic where the Oblates had come to serve.

They all came to the Yukon. They followed in the footsteps of the first Catholic missionaries into our territory. Father Gascon OMI arrived in the Watson Lake area in September of 1861. A year later Father Seguin OMI crossed the Richardson Mountains into the Yukon from the Fort Good Hope mission. These forays and those over the next three decades left no permanent imprint.

Gold at Fortymile near the Alaskan border on the Yukon River brought prospectors and renewed Catholic missionary interest. The Jesuit order asked Bishop Grouard, OMI, of the Athabaska and Mackenzie regions for permission to work in the Yukon. The thousands of people following the Klondike strike in 1896 brought the Oblates back to the Yukon as well.

Father William Judge, a Jesuit, built the first permanent Catholic Church in the Yukon at Dawson City. The first Oblate, Father C. Lefebvre, arrived a week after a fire destroyed the first St. Mary's church in early June of 1898. He traveled down from the Mackenzie Delta following the northern route used by the Oblates thirty years earlier. Church reconstruction became the priority for both men.

Meanwhile three other Oblates came in over the Chilkoot Pass. Fathers Desmarais and Gendreau together with Brother Dumas made it to Fort Selkirk in late June where they immediately set about building the second Catholic Church in the territory, St. John the Baptist. Father Judge died on January 16, 1899 leaving behind its first Catholic Church, hospital and school as a testimonial to his energy and dedication.

Father Judge's death left the affairs of the Catholic Church in the Yukon in able Oblate hands. They served along with religious women like the Sisters of St. Ann whom Father Judge had invited to work with him. Building continued to mark early 1900s. When Lefebvre and Dumas pitched a tent on the lot where Sacred Heart Cathedral now stands in Whitehorse in late June, 1900, it marked the beginnings of the ninth Catholic church in the Yukon. Like the Church of the Holy Family on Dominion Creek or St. Anthony's on Hunker Creek, most are just archival footnotes now.

After World War II, Oblates from France, Quebec, Holland and the United States came to spend their lives here. Like many before him Father Pierre Rigaud left his home, family and brother Oblates for a new life in Canada. The young priest boarded the *Ile de France*, a luxury liner that had been

converted into a troop carrier. He sailed from Cherbourg for New York City in 1946, then trained via Montreal to Battleford, Saskatchewan.

Just as for Joe Plaine or Pierre Poulet who preceded him before the war or Denis Buliard or Pierre Veyrat who followed, learning English became the priority. Rigaud dedicated the next seven months to this task in Battleford. A Saskatchewan winter also provided a preparatory lesson for the Yukon temperatures he would experience.

In the summer of 1947 the Oblate network passed the newly minted missionary on north, first by train to Dawson Creek where Father Yvon Levaque met him. They traveled up the Alaska Highway together to Ft. Nelson. From there Father Rigaud took the bus to Lower Post where he caught up with Fathers Mouchet and Poulet. Mouchet already had six months experience of life in the North.

The opening of the Alaska Highway in 1942 sparked a major expansion of Oblate mission activity particularly along its route. Prophet River, Watson Lake, Burwash Landing had all seen missions built in the five years before Rigaud's arrival. Soon Bishop Coudert called him on to Whitehorse then the seat of the Vicariate for the Yukon. It had only three years earlier, in 1944, gained independent ecclesial status from Prince Rupert. Another twenty years would pass before Rome would raise Whitehorse to the rank of Diocese.

Bishop Coudert is rumored to have greeted his young newly arriving



L-R Johnnie Mac, Bishop Coudert, Little Peter Johnnie, Cathro Peters, Scambella Jack. No More Lake, 1962?

missionaries with a toolbox and the charge “go build the Church.” True or not, off Father Rigaud went to join Father Eusebe Morisset in Burwash Landing. The Quebec born Morisset had been befriended by the Jacquot brothers as he traveled the pioneer road serving as an auxiliary chaplain for the U.S. Army. The Jacquots invited him to build a church and school in their community. With the help of locals Our Lady of the Rosary became a reality in 1944.

Scrounging had become an art in war ravaged Europe. Father Rigaud used his skills well in 1948. He stripped an abandoned military barracks of its wiring. By splicing the scores of short pieces together he managed to wire the church and day-school in Burwash Landing. Henri Jacquot let him hook up his system to the hotel generator. However, his attempt to impress Bishop Coudert, who arrived in time for the first flip of the switch, failed when a crossed wire on one of his many splices shorted out his improvised system.

He had his first real go at church building in Snag, Yukon. He arrived a year after the all time low temperature for North America was recorded at the weather station on the site of an auxiliary military airfield, about six kilometres south of the village.

The cold-catching Snag sits in a bowl-shaped valley of the northward flowing White River. The now abandoned village lies about 30 km east of the Alaska border and 25 km north of the Alaska Highway at the Mile 1178 marker. In 1948 some of the people of the White River First Nation still used the village in their traditional seasonal rounds in addition to the weather station and airfield staff.

Providing a seasonal school for the young of the White River People became an obvious priority. Father Rigaud set a goal of offering six months of schooling a year at Snag. First, he had to build a small day school. He accomplished this task with the help of Brother Cyprien Soucy and Father Morisset. He then went on to build a chapel along with a small house for himself.

Dollars were scarce. Father Morisset had the only church vehicle at that end of the territory. For most of his heavy hauling Father Rigaud had to rely on a hand pulled sleigh. On one visit Bishop Coudert commented on the drudgery of the heavy pulling, “Why don’t you get some dogs to pull your sleigh? I’ll pay for three of them.” Brother Hoby Spruyt recorded that Father Morisset immediately cut in, “No, no, no dogs around here!” Morisset apparently thought dogs took more work than they saved. Besides they were “expensive for food whether it is bought or fished or hunted for.”

The discussion ended there. This meant no dogs for Father Rigaud, at least not then. Visits to outlying camps of the Copper or White River Peoples entailed long walks into the bush. Hitchhiking allowed him to get occasionally to Beaver Creek or Burwash Landing.

The rapid pace of building continued into the 1950’s across the Yukon. A new rectory went up in Whitehorse in 1949. Father Guilbaud built a church at Pelly Lakes without using a nail in 1950. Federal incentives prompted the opening of the Lower Post Residential School in 1951. This ended for the

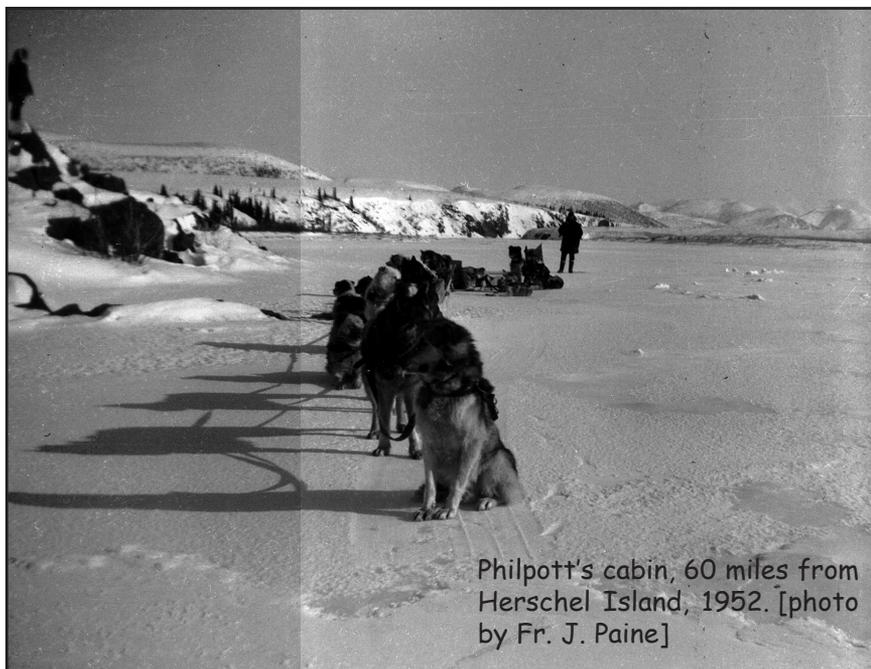
most part the day schools that had sprung up along side the churches. Father Joe Plaine navigated the “Little Flower” mission boat down the Yukon River that summer from Dawson City then up the Porcupine River on a nine day river trip to Old Crow. There he along Father Denis Buliard would open the mission that Father Mouchet would later be identified with for his landmark youth wellness and skiing work.

Father Pierre Rigaud left Snag for Ross River in 1951. He would spend the next 16 years at St. Michael’s mission there. Eventually he got the dogs denied in Snag. His team became an integral part of his pastoral work as he visited far flung parishioners. Father Rigaud’s competence at dog handling, lead him to become a competitive musher. He was a Sourdough Rendezvous race regular in the early 1960’s.

His experience was not unique. Many of the La Brosse-Montceaux Oblates learned to mush. During his stint in Old Crow, Joe Plaine traveled from there to Herschel Island with three other mushers; a local guide, an RCMP officer, an Inuit and thirty dogs. He and his dogs made the trek back on their own.

The physical building of the Yukon church continued matching the rapid population growth in the territory from 9,000 in 1951 to 15,000 a decade later. The distinctive Our Lady of the Way chapel in Haines Junction, Our Lady of the Yukon in Upper Liard, St. Ann’s in Watson Lake, a new cathedral, Maryhouse and Christ the King Elementary School (now the Wood Street Annex) in Whitehorse all date from the 1950s.

Building carried on into the 1960’s. Ross River and Carmacks saw



Philpott's cabin, 60 miles from Herschel Island, 1952. [photo by Fr. J. Paine]

churches moved to the other side of their rivers. Our Lady of Grace opened its doors in Beaver Creek and St. Ann's Separate School took in its first students in Watson Lake.

Only three priests had been serving in the Yukon in 1936, the year Bishop Coudert took over. By the time of his death in November of 1965 while attending the Second Vatican Council in Rome, Coudert had 24 Oblates working throughout the territory and the northern quarter of British Columbia also under his charge. Added to this number were sisters from various religious communities, members of the Madonna House Apostolate and lay volunteers.

With the new bishop, James Mulvihill OMI, Our Lady of Victory moved from Takhini to Porter Creek, the 'tepee' church in Teslin opened and Father Rigaud took on yet another challenge. Bishop Mulvihill called him and asked him to go see what was going on up the road from Ross River.

Father Pierre knew quite well what was happening. He had been following for some time the growing interest and activity around the rich deposits of zinc, lead and silver identified some 60 kilometers west of the junction of the Ross and Pelly Rivers. The Anvil Range Mining Corporation began laying out a new town for employees on the south-facing slopes above the Pelly River in 1968.

A forest fire in June of 1969 destroyed much of the newly built town of Faro. In typical Yukon fashion all that was lost to the fire and more was rebuilt with in months. Al Rosen who was in charge of the town's construction offered Father Rigaud the choice of any available lots for the site of the new church.

Bishop Mulvihill influenced by the new spirit of ecumenism sweeping through the Christian community in the wake of Vatican II, asked Father Rigaud to look into the possibility of building a multi-faith church to serve the newest Yukon town. The Anglican Bishop John Frame thought the idea was great. The Lutheran and United churches gave it their blessings as well. However none of them had any money to back their moral support of the project.

"Here is \$25,000," mandated Bishop James, "see what you can do with it." Off Father Rigaud went. A successful \$500 bid on the vacant pan-abode school and teacherage in Keno City provided the bulk of needed materials. He hired a local construction company to take apart the tongue and groove, inter-locking building logs of the structures. They numbered them as they went. They then hauled them hundreds of kilometers to the town site lot he had chosen.

Meanwhile Father Pierre called on Al Kulan, the discoverer of the Vangorda base metal deposit that had sparked all the mining activity. He asked his friend then living in Vancouver, to try to buy a pickup for him within the strict constraints of his budget. Kulan got one right away. Father Rigaud made the trip down to Vancouver where he loaded the pickup with all the aluminum roofing that he needed for his recycled church and residence plus 75 stacking chairs and assorted other building supplies.

Father Rigaud drove the well balanced load back to Faro. There he found all the pan-abode logs, toilets, furnace and other pieces of the Keno City buildings dumped in a pile on the site. A passerby saw him and asked what that all was. Father Pierre pointed at the heap and said with a laugh "That is the church!"

Log by log the the buildings took shape. A passage cut between the structures tied them together. The first ecumenical church in the Yukon, the 'Church of the Apostles', held its inaugural service appropriately on Thanksgiving, 1969.

Father Rigaud fondly remembers the early days in Faro. "That town was a family. There was no distinction between boss and worker. Everybody was one." With the major building done now community-building became his focus.

Using the knowledge gained from his family's business in France, he got some horses and taught riding and horsemanship to interested children. He organized a youth camp some 40 kilometers out of Faro. It provided a whole other range of youth activities. No young Faroite could say there wasn't anything to do.

Locals surprised him with a Valmont skidoo which made activities at the camp even more accessible. It also allowed him to make an eleven day trip to Norman Wells, NWT in 1972.



Fr. J. Guilbaud leaving alone
for Pelly Lake 1950 and dogs

Rena, Gaspar, Prince, Corp.

Father J. Guilbaud leaving Ross River for Pelly Lake, 1950. The dogs were: Rena, Gaspar, Prince and Corp.

On his induction into the Yukon Sports Hall of Fame his testimonial notes that “Father spent many hours with the children of Faro. He supervised and assisted them in many sporting activities. He volunteered his time, and his firmness and unrelenting fairness made him a favourite with the children. There was always a keen interest to participate in any activity led by Father Rigaud.”

In a highly transient mining town families often had to face difficult work choices. Father Rigaud set aside a room in the church residence and lined it with bunk beds. It became a dormitory for boys whose parents had to leave Faro in pursuit other job opportunities. He would take in three, four or five children at a time. Father Rigaud still fondly calls these former students ‘his boys’.

Bust years followed the boom years of Faro. Church history in the Yukon mirrored this cycle as well. Secularization together with increased government engagement in the provision of social services reduced the formal role of the church. Changing social values contributed to a sharp decline in formal vocations for the priesthood and the religious life in general. Church sponsored institutions like a First Nation student residence in Riverdale, men’s and women’s emergency shelters in downtown Whitehorse and an orphanage in Hillcrest closed.

It took only a few years after the closure of the native residential schools such as Lower Post in the 1975 for the first allegations of abuse to emerge. The public image of the church suffered. Many who had selflessly served their communities while maintaining the highest level of personal deportment, felt abandoned.

One by one aging priests retired or died. A new face of the church in the Yukon began to emerge. Lay volunteers and religious women assume the



Father Jo. Guilbaud at Ross River, cutting his wood with a Swede saw,

day-to-day administration of and responsibility for remaining parishes and missions across the Yukon.

Bishop Thomas Lobsinger assigned Father Rigaud to Teslin in 1990. Then the bishop would return him in 1994 to the Kluane district where he has started his nearly sixty years Yukon ministry. Now at 85 years of age as pastor of Our Lady of the Way in Haines Junction he has responsibility for the churches in Burwash Landing and Beaver Creek as well. In the late 1940s when he first served in Snag, the area had four or five Oblates working along that stretch of the Alaska Highway.

Father Pierre Rigaud and the other men from La Brosse-Montceaux came, saw and built. They survived the destruction and devastation of war. Leaving family in Europe they set out without hesitation for a far-off land which would become home. They built physical buildings often with the most meager of resources. But more importantly they helped Yukoners build communities.

A plaque mounted on a boulder in the French village of La Brosse-Montceaux commemorates the Oblates who fell on July 24, 1944. This phrase ends the engraved testimonial to them, "Ils voulaient que vienne la civilisation de l'Amour." (Their wish was for the coming of a civilization of love). No less can be said of Father Rigaud and the other men of La Brosse-Montceaux who came to the Yukon and continue to serve.



Father Rigaud, July 2005. [D.G. photo]



The church in Faro. Dianne Green photo, July, 2005.

Editor's Note:

Doug Thomas and his partner, Josh VanVugt, brought the dismantled school to Faro from Keno City. Doug Thomas, well known in the Yukon as the owner of the Gold Rush Inn on Main Street in Whitehorse, tells the story:

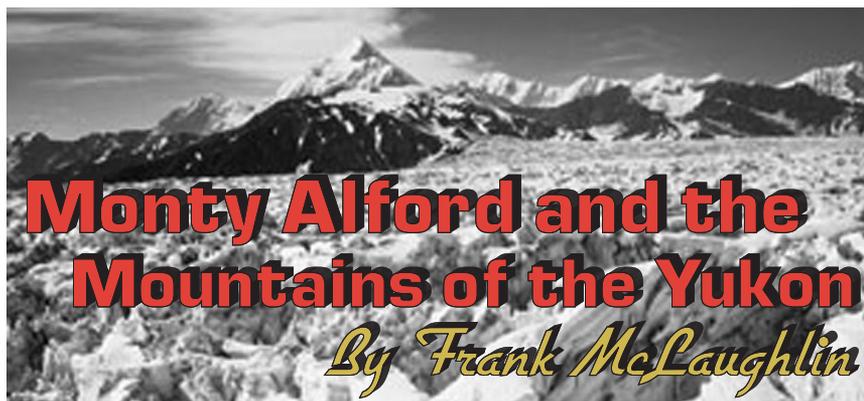
"We drove an old Army truck to Keno and took the school apart, numbering all the pieces. Valchick Transport hauled it to Faro. We arrived at Carmacks only to find about the big forest fire around Faro. We had to wait three days at Carmacks, then made it into Faro. Half the town had burned up and there was no power. We dumped the load off and slept in the back of our truck.

"Next day, with Father Rigaud helping (and cooking for us) we started assembling the church. It rained so hard that we built a garage for our camping gear and tools. There was no power so we used handsaws and a brace & bit to drill holes.

"On one occasion, we noticed that the pork chops Father Rigaud cooked for us were quite green in colour. He said someone had left them "out back" but that he had soaked them in vinegar so they should be okay. "All that for the grand sum of \$2500. Before that, we had built another church at Teslin."



A busy day at the church in Ross River. These days (2006) less than half a dozen people attend this church.



Fourteen years ago I first drove the stretch of Alaska Highway between Burwash Landing and Haines Junction. For 40 miles I followed the narrow, winding road along the banks of Kluane Lake, with huge mountains alongside that soared straight up from the roadside. Having been transported into a mountain paradise of blue water and snow covered summits, I kept stopping my rented car to walk around and breathe in one spectacular vista after another.

I was not surprised to learn that Monty Alford made the same trip on a much rougher road in 1949 and his first impression convinced him to make the Yukon his home. Monty emigrated from England the year before, having trained as an aeronautical designer and taken night courses in surveying. The latter helped him land his first job as a surveyor for the Northwest Highway System. A short time later he began his life work as a hydrologist, recording the discharges and measuring the water levels of rivers and lakes of the Yukon and surrounding areas.

I met Monty Alford in September 1988. I had come to the Yukon to research Arctic bush flying and needed to learn about the territory's weather and terrain. I found his first book, *Yukon Water Doctor* in Mac's Fireweed bookstore and called him. We met for breakfast two mornings later; I asked him about the flying he did in his work as a federal water surveyor. He told me the story that prompted him to write his first book.

In February 1965 Monty was flying in a Beaver, perched on his sleeping bag behind the pilot. He, the pilot and two other passengers had flown from Fort Laird, just inside the Northwest Territories, bound for Watson Lake. They were crossing the Caribou Range heading toward a pass between mountain summits. Monty, watched the altimeter indicate 5500 feet. The pilot throttled for more speed, then turned upward. The indicator didn't move. With a summit looming ahead the pilot began a slow turn through the clouds. Suddenly, the ground rushed up at them. Miraculously, the combination of a strong downdraft and the ascending angle of the plane enabled their skis to touch down on snow and thread through the big boulders strewn around them. The pilot cut the engine and they coasted upslope to a stop. After a

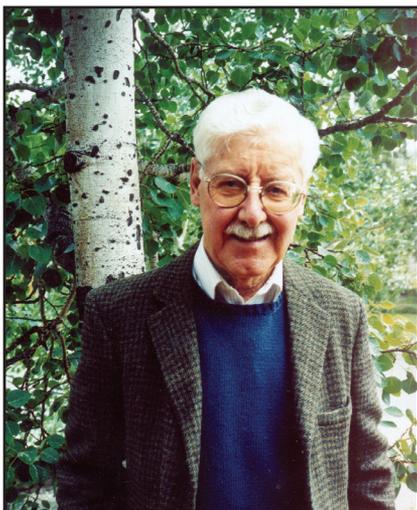
stunned silence they stepped out of the plane onto the wind swept summit at 5600 feet. Five hours later after they had turned the plane and cleared a path, the wind changed and they were able to fly off the mountain.

Flying into remote locations has been integral to Monty's every day life. Working alone or with an assistant, he moved throughout the territories, learned to read ice, the swift-changing weather and how to survive the harsh conditions. Through trial and error he developed techniques to cut through ice over four feet thick and keep equipment from freezing. This might be enough of the outdoor life for most of us; for Monty it whetted his appetite for mountaineering. From the beginning the St. Elias mountains beckoned.

Monty first saw Mount Hoge en route to Alaska in 1949. He had spend several hours wandering around Burwash Landing, which had once been a supply point for the Kluane area gold rush between 1906 and 1915. He had driven north a few miles and could see the snow-covered mountain 15 miles southwest of the highway. While doing hydrometric work three years later, he spent ten days camping out on the Duke meadow, each morning opening his tent flap to see Mount Hoge. In 1955 with a friend he followed the glacier-fed Duke River for ten miles, then climbed the Hoge Massif to 8200 feet where they set up their second camp and then were forced back by foul weather. The following year Monty with a different friend was disappointed again.

After this second attempt he contacted Walter Wood, one of the two most famous cartographers of the mountains of the Northwest. Wood, who had begun exploring and surveying the St. Elias Mountains since 1935, sent him maps with suggested routes to the summit of Mt. Hoge. In 1958 Monty tried again. On August 23rd the weather held. Monty and Bill Hurst reached the 9800-foot summit of Mount Hoge where they could see the Donjek glacier and several major peaks of the St. Elias chain.

Stories like this are the heart of Monty Alford's new book *The Raven and the Mountaineer*. What lies behind Mount Hoge and the lesser mountains near the Alaska Highway is what Monty Alford wants us to know. The Saint Elias Mountains that border Alaska were first sighted and named by the Danish explorer, Vitus Bering, who commanded two vessels of the Russian Navy in 1741. Russia laid claim to the "great glacier" that existed east of them beyond the fog-covered, perpetually cold sea. Captain James Cook felt the same awe three decades later as he explored the northwest coast of



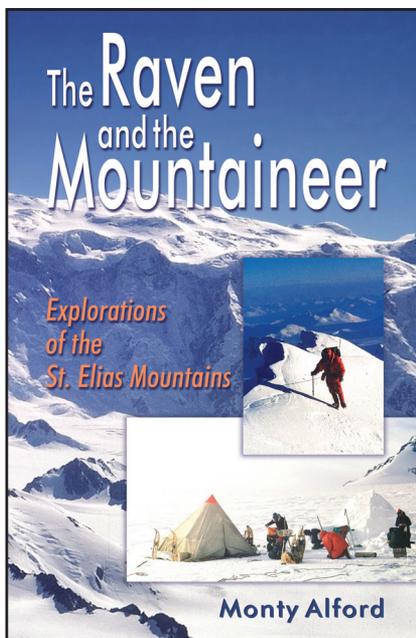
Monty Alford

North America. A century later expeditions to explore and map the area began. The St. Elias chain has the largest concentration of peaks over 141,500 feet in North America and its icefields are the largest outside the polar regions and Greenland.

The Wrangell/ St. Elias Parks, an American and Canadian preserve, along with four other adjacent reserves and national parks form the largest wilderness in the world protected by international law. An example of the immense scale within the parks is the Malaspina Glacier, a piedmont glacier that covers 1500 square miles. an icefield larger than Rhode Island. Glaciers are not inert; they advance and recede. In the mid 1960s the Steele Glacier was surging at nearly 50 feet a day. Monty was hired to do the aerial surveillance during 1966 and 67.

The Raven and the Mountaineer, published by Hancock House, is an account of several expeditions that Monty Alford either participated in or led. He also presents some historical perspective of this high mountain chain, the features that make it remarkable, and background on some of the scientists and adventurers who climbed, mapped or named many of the peaks. The soft-cover edition is filled with very sharp photographs (both in colour and black and white) and many relevant maps and sketches. All were created by the author, who also employs the narrative device of opening chapters with the voice of a raven. These large crows, curious scavengers who have observed wolves and men from primitive times, certainly must puzzle over what men with their strange belongings are doing in such forbidding places. These openings provide a different perspective, but I would preferred that he relate more of those treacherous moments when mountaineers cross dangerous ice, scale gaping crevasses, are caught in whiteouts or must react in high altitude to sudden storms.

Monty is retired now. He no longer climbs mountains. When I last spoke with him, he was preparing to sail the Lynn Canal near Skagway, Alaska. He also takes an annual canoe trip down a river of the Yukon, often stopping to meet with old friends. But he is not finished with mountains. "Each year," he said, "with two friends we pick a mountain and walk around it."



Will Rogers

"The Man With The Hat"

By Eric Jamieson

The headlines of *The Dawson News* one-week apart said it all. On Saturday, August 10th, 1935, the paper proudly boasted: **WILL ROGERS AND WILEY POST IN DAWSON - WORLD-FAMOUS ACTOR AND FLIER PAY CITY SURPRISE VISIT.** By the following Saturday, August 17th, the banner had turned tragically to: **POST AND ROGERS KILLED IN CRASH.** The lives and deaths of two famous Americans were sadly captured in the space of one week.

Two days before this last shocking headline, Wiley Post and Will Rogers, on a memorable trip to the north, had touched down on Walakpi Lagoon, Alaska, in poor weather to seek directions to nearby Barrow. There Will was to meet with Charles Brower, U.S. Commissioner for the area, as well as the proprietor of the local trading post and whaling station. They spoke to Claire Okpeaha and his wife, both members of a seal-hunting encampment on the shore of the lagoon.

After getting their bearings, Will and Wiley took off, little knowing that what would happen in the next few seconds would shock a nation and stun a world. The famous Rogers' quip, "Well, all I know is just what I read in the papers, and what I know when I am there to know it...", would come true with a grim finality. The legend wouldn't be going home.

By 1935, the one-eyed Wiley Post had already made aviation history three times, and Will Rogers was just about as famous as any man could wish for, adulation being the understatement of an appreciative America.

Post achieved the first of his three flying records in June 1931 when, together with his navigator, Harold Gatty, he circumnavigated the world in eight days, 16 hours. And he achieved the second in July 1933, when he accomplished the same feat solo in seven days, 18 hours and 49.5 minutes. His aircraft was the legendary *Winnie Mae*, a Lockheed Vega model 5-C which Post had borrowed from his employer, oilman F.C. Hall. Hall had named the bird after his daughter.

It was as sweet a looking craft as Lockheed would build; a record breaking, high-winged monoplane that had a maximum speed of 170 mph and



Will Rogers at Aklavik, August, 1935. On his right is his duffel bag, on his right, his portable typewriter. [Photo courtesy Rex Turpening]

sense philosophy that had made the earlier man famous.

"I am practically world famous for my ignorance," he used to joke, but behind the false modesty was a man with a keen intelligence, a sparkling wit and one who cared deeply about injustice. Perhaps it was his Cherokee ancestry that made him all the better at seeing. He once joked that; "My ancestors didn't come over on the Mayflower, but they met the boat."

Beginning his wild ride to stardom as a cowboy and trick rider with Texas Jack's Traveling Wild West Show under the billing, "The Cherokee Kid," his shenanigans and comedic observations soon made him a household name. By the time of his death, at age 55, he had acted in 71 films, written 4,000 syndicated columns for the *New York Times* and authored six books. Not bad for a high school dropout who saw a cattle drive and lariat lessons from a freed slave as more valuable than a formal education.

He would always regret not finishing school, but the fact that presidents and kings sought his advice, suggests that he had learned his lessons well. Although his films and columns made him popular, it was his attitude, epitomized by the simple line; "I never met a man I didn't like," that made him great.

The two began their journey at Seattle's Bryn Mawr air field (now Renton airport), Post arriving first with his wife Mae, and Rogers following three days later. Betty, Rogers' wife, was said to have never worried when Will was with Wiley such was her confidence in him. She supported her husband's love of the air which Rogers wrote about in a July 14, 1935 column: "Well, after I finish a long siege of work, I sorter begin looking up in the air and see what is flying over; and Mrs. Rogers, in her wise way will say, 'Well, I think you better get on one. You are getting sorter nervous.'" He had already flown with the best aviators in the world and counted among his acquaintances, Charles Lindbergh, Eddie Rickenbacher and Billy Mitchell.

They departed for Alaska on Wednesday, August 7th and seven hours later touched down at Juneau – a first visit to the north for Rogers. He wrote the next day: "Well, that was some trip. Thousand-mile hop from Seattle to Juneau. Was going to stop at Ketchikan for lunch, but mist and rain came up and we just breezed through, never over 100 feet off the water.

"And talk about navigating. There is millions of channels and islands and bays and all look alike (to me) but this old boy Wiley Post turns up the right alley all the time.



Will Rogers on his arrival at Dawson. [Photo by Jean Bredenberg]

“Nothing that I have ever seen is more beautiful than the inland passage, by either boat or plane, to Alaska. You know, I just been thinking about things at home. You know who I bet would like to be on this trip, Mr. Roosevelt.”

Poor weather kept them grounded until Friday, August 9th when they took off for Dawson, flying east over Skagway before turning north over the Canadian Wilderness. Will was fond of Canada and had once written that “Canada is a mighty good neighbor and a mighty good customer. That’s a combination that is hard to beat.”

They landed on the Yukon River at Dawson at 4:15 later that afternoon. In the crowd of onlookers was a young nurse, Jean Bredenberg (nee Gray), who had only just arrived at Dawson City to work there as a nurse in the hospital. She snapped one of the last photos of Rogers, a silhouette in classic pose of him standing on the front of the Lockheed Orion’s pontoon. Despite years of stardom, Rogers still looked awkward at the attention he probably felt he didn’t deserve.

Harriet Malstrom, reporter for *The Dawson News*, recorded the event: “Mr. Post first stepped out of the plane and, after giving the crowd a hearty smile, proceeded to tie up his plane. Then the smiling countenance of Hollywood’s most famous actor appeared on the scene and, after giving his hat a few characteristic jerks and shuffling his feet in the well-known Rogers manner, he descended to meet the eager onlookers. (And how the cameras clicked to “Look this way, Will!” and such. He and Post were so obliging and friendly as could be, so it’s no wonder that they both won the admiration of the Dawson people as they did.)”

After checking into the Royal Alexandra Hotel, Rogers and Post were squired around Dawson, visiting Bonanza and Hunker creeks before stopping by Robert Service’s cabin – Robert Service had left the Yukon for Europe by that time - where both signed the register, Rogers adding, “To me yours are the greatest poems ever written.” Next stop was Dawson’s “Home of Good Eats” for a feast of moose steaks, the perfect venue for the cowboy from Oologah, Oklahoma.

Rogers spent the evening interviewing the locals, more fodder for his many comedic sketches and columns, while Post excused himself to retrieve his maps from the plane to plan the next day’s adventure. As he stepped onto the plane’s pontoon he slipped and tumbled into the Yukon River for an unexpected evening dip, a chilling one at that even in August.

That same evening, Rogers gave Harriet Malstrom a hint of their itinerary: “We’re in no hurry,” he said, “We’re just bummin’ around. Don’t know if we’ll be leaving tomorrow or where we’re goin’ from here, or how long we’ll be gone, or – aw, ask Post, he knows ‘way more about it than I do.” Post, described by Malstrom as one of the “most amiable” men she had ever met, informed her that he and Rogers were on no fixed schedule but that they expected to spend a month and a half in the north. Post also informed her that he was flying to Siberia and that if Rogers didn’t want to accompany him that far he could return by boat. Rogers added: “Oh, yes, the Arctic, that’s what I want to see,” but he was not planning to continue on to Russia.

Although the trip may have been pure holiday to Rogers, to Post it was more a holiday of the working sort. He was committed to surveying a mail and passenger route from the west coast of North America to Russia for an American airline, and as well was planning an imminent move to Fairbanks. On his return to Los Angeles he was expecting to wrap up his affairs there before moving north with Mae where he intended to team up with the famous Alaskan Pilot, Joe Crosson, for a mining venture. Crosson, an aviation pioneer in his own right, was the first to fly an open-cockpit aircraft between Fairbanks and Point Barrow, and he also pioneered many of today's Alaskan flight routes before gaining some fame as a pilot on the 1928 Wilkins-Hearst expedition to the Antarctic.

The next morning, Post informed the press that they were bound for Aklavik which they expected to reach in two and a half hours and would later visit Herschel Island. They departed at noon on August 10th but not before Rogers had time to talk to the local Magistrate, Judge Macaulay. According to the *Dawson District News*, he said: "Well, Judge, if I hear any more yarns in the Yukon, and use them, I'll blame them all onto you; and I'll probably see you when I come up to Vancouver some time to visit my old friend, Bob Cromie."

At Aklavik Will wrote that; "Was you ever driving around in a car and not knowing or caring where you went? Well, that's what Wiley and I are doing. We are sure having a great time. If we hear of whales or polar bears in the Artic [*sic*], or a big herd of caribou or reindeer we fly over and see it.

Friday and Saturday we visited the old Klondyke [*sic*] district, Dawson City, Bonanza, Eldorado. Say there is a horse here: the furthest north of any horse, and he eats fish and travels on snowshoes. Maybe Point Barrow today."

While at Aklavik, a couple of the men from the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (RCCS) photographed the pair smiling and shaking hands before departure (see photos). The pictures, from the Rex Terpening Collection (Rex Terpening is an aviation pioneer himself), are courtesy of the North West Territories & Yukon Radio Systems History Project 1923-1959 (www.nwtandy.rcsig.ca).

From Aklavik they flew west across the border to Fairbanks where they were expecting to stop for a couple of days before resuming their journey, and while there they flew down to Anchorage with Joe Crosson and Joe Barrow piloting.

Back at Fairbanks, Will was now looking forward to visiting Charles Brower at Barrow. Wiley radioed the government weather station there and was informed that snow and sleet had reduced visibility to zero. They decided to stand down but departed the following day. Crosson was worried as he didn't like the look of the weather, especially considering that the flight would cross the Brooks Range. He suggested that Post follow the Anuktuvuk Pass until he sighted the Arctic Ocean at which point he should fly west along the coast to Point Barrow.

Crosson had also observed that Post's plane was nose heavy and sug-

gested that some alterations be made before he and Will resumed their flight. Crosson was concerned that in the case of engine failure the aircraft would not be able to maintain a powerless glide. Reduced airflow over the horizontal stabilizer would compromise the effectiveness of the elevators; the consequence, an unrecoverable forward dive.

Post had known about this problem for some time. The bright red aircraft was a hybrid, constructed from two wrecks; the fuselage was a Lockheed Orion with the long wings coming from a Lockheed Explorer and it was powered by a 550 HP Wasp engine. And when Post added the Fairchild 71 floats, which were much heavier than recommended, the aircraft became noticeably nose heavy.

Post knew that to correct the problem he could replace the stabilizer-elevator but he also knew that this would attract the attention of the Commerce Department and he wasn't sure his hybrid craft could survive such scrutiny. Post compensated by loading passengers and freight toward the rear of the aircraft. Although he had ordered more suitable Fairchild Edo 5300 floats, they had not arrived in time for the journey. Anxious to be away, he felt he could fly through the problem, which he could, barring the unexpected.

On August 15th, the unexpected happened. Post took off from the lagoon and before the aircraft had reached cruising speed, he banked it to starboard in the direction of Barrow. Claire Okpeaha and his wife watched excitedly as the aircraft lifted off in the mist and moments later, after hearing the engine misfire and then quit, continued to watch in horror as it dropped from the sky into the shallow, shore-line waters of the lagoon. Gravel, displaced by the impact, rained down on the water around the stricken craft, and after a momentary explosion and ball of fire, all was unearthly quiet.

Fearful, Claire Okpeaha approached the aircraft, shouted, but got no response. His next thought was to get word to the authorities at Barrow. Running sixteen tortuous miles around lakes and through tundra marshes, five exhausting hours later he arrived at the store at Barrow to alert the owner, Bert Panigeo, of the crash. He, in turn, notified the local school teacher, Frank Dougherty, who called Sergeant Stanley Morgan of the United States Army Signal Corps who was in charge of the local weather station. A rescue party was organized and it was during the trip back to the crash site through the cold and mist that Okpeaha gave Sergeant Morgan a physical description of the men in the plane. Morgan had a sinking feeling that he knew exactly who they were.

By the time the rescue party arrived, the hunters had removed Will's body from the split fuselage, but Post's body was still pinned behind the Wasp engine that had been driven into the cockpit by the impact of the crash. With block and tackle they pulled the plane apart and finally extricated Post's lifeless form from the crumpled craft. The two deceased men were wrapped in sleeping bags for the cold and sorrowful journey by boat to the hospital at Barrow.

There, they were prepared for burial by the visibly shaken local doctor,

Dr. Greist, his wife and David Brower, son of Charles Brower and a member of the rescue party. Upon emptying the pair's pockets, Post's broken watch was discovered; it had stopped at 8:18 p.m., the time of the accident. Rogers' inexpensive watch, tied to a simple piece of string, was still ticking. His damaged typewriter was also recovered. He had been working on his latest column, the third page of which was still in place, the final sentence ending precipitously in mid sentence. The last word he had typed was ironically, "death."

Joe Crosson, Post's friend and future business partner, the man who had been concerned about the safety of Post's hybrid craft, flew through the weather to Point Barrow to retrieve his friends' bodies and take them back to Fairbanks.

A post mortem of the crash revealed that the aircraft's forward wing tanks were dry - Post would have had to have manually switched the fuel flow from the forward tanks to the rear which he had failed to do before take off. The aircraft's low airspeed made any corrective action impossible.

Not only a nation, but a world would mourn their passing and for one fraction of a second the public consciousness, now listening to the drumbeats of war in Europe, was diverted to pay their respects to one, a gallant pilot, and two, a loveable cowboy who just happened to be the toast of America. Perhaps Rogers was prepared for his demise, for seven years earlier he had written: "This thing of being a hero, about the main thing to it is to know when to die. Prolonged life has ruined more men than it ever made." Amen to that.

THE DAWSON NEWS
CANADA'S FARTHEST NORTH NEWSPAPER
DAWSON, YUKON TERRITORY, CANADA, SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 1930. VOL. XXXIV, NO. 4.

POST AND ROGERS KILLED IN CRASH

WILL ROGERS AND WILEY POST KILLED IN CRASH

Engine Falls Them In Jumble Near Point Barrow.

WRECKAGE, Aug. 17.—(Special to The News.)—Wiley Post and Will Rogers crashed to death Friday noon. The Albatross, a twin-engine biplane, was flying over the Yukon when it crashed into the sea. The wreckage was seen by a small boat there Thursday afternoon on account of fog and unfavorable weather. The body of the pilot, Wiley Post, was seen on a raft of ice, which was approximately 500 feet from the spot where the airplane crashed. The wreckage of the plane was seen by a small boat there Thursday afternoon on account of fog and unfavorable weather. The body of the pilot, Wiley Post, was seen on a raft of ice, which was approximately 500 feet from the spot where the airplane crashed.

British Subject Arrested in Germany

BERLIN, Aug. 16.—(Special to The News.)—The British subject, Maxwell, was released at Berlin this afternoon on representations of the British consulate.

BERLIN, Aug. 16.—(Special to The News.)—Mr. Maxwell, a naturalized British subject, was arrested this morning by the German secret police and is being charged with having passed uncomplimentary remarks about Hitler to an acquaintance while on a visit in Germany. His acquaintance told the Nazi headquarters what Maxwell had said. He is here, believed the secret police, who proceeded to arrest Maxwell.

Mr. Maxwell was originally a German but became a British subject in 1923. The British foreign office has asked the German government for permission to release him.

Preparations for War Going On

LONDON, Aug. 16.—(Special to The News.)—Preparations are being made in London for the war that is being fought in Spain. The British government has announced today that it has 15,000 troops in the northern part of the territory. Several ships of the Royal Navy have arrived at the port of Algeciras and have had lengthy consultations with the Spanish government. A secretary of the British legation at Algeciras, according to the Algeciras railway to Algeciras, is reported to have been instructed by a private committee to investigate the situation. The committee is believed to be headed by the British consul at Algeciras.

Seven Planes Arrive From Fairbanks

Large Number Plane Ever Seen in Dawson at One Time

It was a great day in Dawson today, when the seven planes from Fairbanks, and a number of the other men who had been in the plane, were seen in the sky. The planes, which were of various types, were seen in the sky at one time. The planes were seen in the sky at one time. The planes were seen in the sky at one time.

Conviction English Officer is Upheld

MADRID, Aug. 15.—(Special to The News.)—The Spanish court of appeals in Madrid to inquire into the case of Captain Kay upheld the conviction but has granted Post of new lease pending a review of the case.

Haile Silas Appeals to Subjects

ADDIS ABABA, Aug. 15.—(Special to The News.)—His Majesty Haile Selassie, the King of Ethiopia and Emperor

Yorkshire On Top in Cricket League

LONDON, Aug. 15.—(Special to The News.)—Yorkshire is still on top in the County Cricket League, with 24 points out of a possible 26, an average of 21.5. Derbyshire is second with an average of 18.6 per cent.

Mine Sweepers

BERMUDA, Aug. 15.—(Special to The News.)—A new United States fleet, the USS-1, was launched at the Naval Yard, Groton, Conn., this afternoon. The ship, which was launched at the Naval Yard, Groton, Conn., this afternoon. The ship, which was launched at the Naval Yard, Groton, Conn., this afternoon.

Danish Farmers Threat Government

COPENHAGEN, Aug. 15.—(Special to The News.)—Danish farmers have threatened that if the government does not take action to reduce the price of their commodities, they will stop all production, among other products, will stop all production.

New Union Castle Liner

BERMUDA, Aug. 15.—(Special to The News.)—A new United States fleet, the USS-1, was launched at the Naval Yard, Groton, Conn., this afternoon. The ship, which was launched at the Naval Yard, Groton, Conn., this afternoon. The ship, which was launched at the Naval Yard, Groton, Conn., this afternoon.

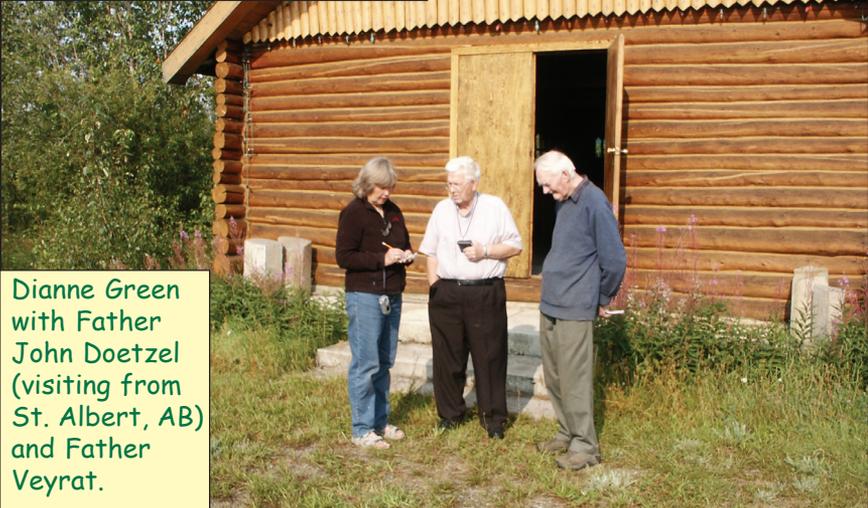
From the Publisher

It's hard to believe that nine years have passed since Sam and I put out the first issue of the Yukoner Magazine. One of my personal goals for the publication was to travel around the Yukon and learn more about our beautiful territory and its colourful people. This year, with Boler trailer in tow and dogs in the back of Sam's old Dodge, we headed for Ross River.

Starting at Watson Lake in southeastern Yukon, we bumped our way up the Campbell Highway to "Ross," as local folks call their village. At mile 51 we stopped at Simpson Lake where Sam made some emergency repairs to the truck. At mile 108 we rested at Frances Lake where the dogs waded into the water for a drink and Sam snoozed in the Boler. Government campgrounds at both these lakes were deserted. The 232-mile trip along that rough dirt road took eight hours and we met only four vehicles along the way. Flying gravel wasn't a problem; there was no gravel! There were no commercial facilities of any kind so we ate homemade zucchini bread with peanut butter, washed down with juice or beer.

In Ross River we visited Tensley Johnston, a contributor to this magazine who will mark his 94th birthday in November, and Father Pierre Veyrat, who belongs to the Oblate order of priests featured in this issue. Both men have lived in Ross River for over 30 years.

The next day we motored on to Faro, where we ate a good breakfast, then travelled the northern portion of the Campbell Highway to the Klondike Highway junction at Carmacks. Our wilderness adventure was over.



Dianne Green
with Father
John Doetzel
(visiting from
St. Albert, AB)
and Father
Veyrat.