THE YUKONER MAGAZINE

$4.95

- The Yukon Adventures of Bill Weigand
- Terry Delaney of CBC
- Penny Sippel
- Digger Cook
- More Wolves

ISSUE No.26

WHITEHORSE MOTORS

Ford

SALUTES

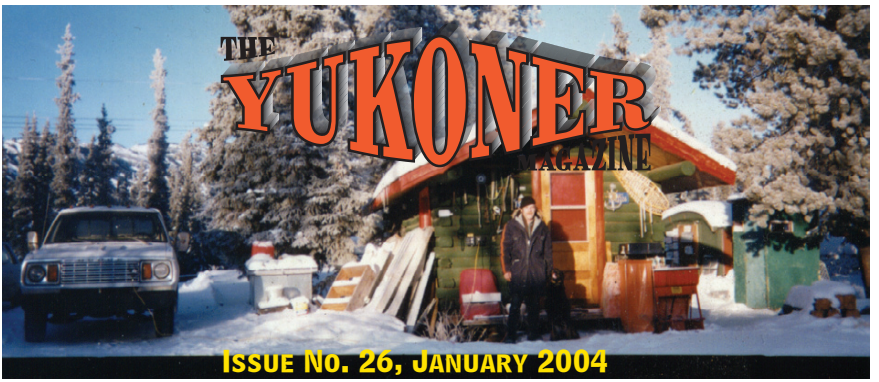
Art Smith

Art Smith, born and raised in Atlin, just south of the Yukon border, has seen many changes during his lifetime here. He and Renie recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the Tagish Community Centre (the inset photo shows Art and Renie on their 25th anniversary).

He has observed and remembered almost every event and personality from the past seven decades of Yukon history. If you want to hear a unique perspective on those times, see Art at his service station/store/cafe at Tagish, 60 miles southwest of Whitehorse.

ISSN NO. 1206-6974

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



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

Cover: Top: Wayne Salé, below, his three daughters, Ashley, Heather and Angela, at the Carcross Cut-off, December, 2003. [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

My neighbours think I'm nuts. I have been hauling parts trucks home in case I needed something for my '66 Dodge Power Wagon (see photo below). So far, I have only managed to find seven of them. It turns out that what Dianne and my neighbours thought to be a bunch of hideous, not-in-my-yard junk—is worth a fortune.

A set of lettering, meaning the cast metal Dodge and Power Wagon emblems, just sold for $327 on the Ebay auctions. Can you imagine what a good rear end or front end would be worth? If anyone has a Power Wagon from the 1960s collecting dust and leaves in your back yard, please let me know.

Government is now the biggest employer here. Nobody really knows what goes on in all those office buildings in Whitehorse but they do try to enlighten us by publishing notices in the local press. Here is a government press release that appeared in the *Whitehorse Star*, an announcement from Human Resources Development to the French community in the Yukon.

"Through its economic development and employability network (RDEE), the Association franco-yukonnaise will use these funds to implement a strategy aimed at enhancing the vitality of the community by supporting its socio-economic development through human resources planning and work force adustment activities."

If anybody knows what all that means, please send a translation.

Why is the magazine late again? In this instance, by December/03, we only had one story to publish. As happens with almost every issue, the whole thing suddenly came together only during the last two weeks.

If you look at the mailing label on the back of the magazine, you can find the issue number (after your name) when your subscription expires. However, you will always receive at least two months notice before it does.

So long for now,

Sam

Parts trucks on their way home. On this trip, I met Don Sippel on the highway who said later, "When I saw those old Dodges going by, I knew it had to be Sam."

The Mail Run

Dear Sam,

I have been in and out of the Yukon all my life, you might say. My dad brought my brother and I in to the country in 1946 on our way to Dawson City. We were held up for two-and-a-half weeks waiting for the ice to go out of Lac La Berge. While waiting around Whitehorse we made friends with a girl named Billy. Don't remember her last name. She worked at the old laundry not far off Front Street. Just a shot in the dark that some of your readers may have known her or what became of her.

Tex Fosbery
Williams Lake, BC

Dear Sam,

I spent two years in Old Crow with the Mounted Police in 1959 – 61 and four years at Fort Nelson from 1965 – 69 and was up to Dawson and the Dempster Highway visiting my brother three different times since 2000. Once in February and again in October when he was trapping on the Dempster for an old-timer and again this fall with my son hunting caribou. I have always loved the Yukon but my work kept me elsewhere. Next summer I plan to take my friend on an RV holiday for a month up there.

Dave Hart
Sundre, Alberta

Howdy Sam & Dianne,

I worked in Whitehorse in the fall and winter of 1952 for the DNT delivering stove oil and diesel with a FWD truck. My wife, Wilda, and I returned to the Yukon and Alaska in 2000 for a month's holiday. In a way I was disappointed not to be able to show Wilda the Inn 98, Regina and Whitepass and have an overproof rum "Lite." The buildings all were gone including the Army barracks and hospital.

We checked at City Hall for population on June 21, 2003 and it was 22,984. In 1952 on December 21 it was 2,300. We met Stan Cohen in a book store and discussed some of his books that we have on the Alaska Highway.

In 1952 I met Johnny Johns and daughters Ada and Hazel. In 2000 I met Art Johns on the boat from Juneau to Skagway and he told me of his dad's passing. He said Johnny had written a book and he was working on getting it published. If and when that should happen I would love to obtain a copy. If you ever see one could you let me know?

Merv Taylor
Caroline, Alberta

Dear Merv,
The '98 Hotel and the Regina Hotel are still there but the Regina is now called the "Riverview." The old Whitepass building is still there although it had a facelift in 1953. I haven't heard anything about a book on Johnny Johns although I wrote a story on him in 1985 for Jim Robb's "Colourful Five Percent" magazine.
—Dianne

Dear Sam,

I wonder if any of your reader's would remember an old timer from Carcross. His name was John Wallace. He was a miner and trapper and was a resident of Carcross at least from 1915 – 1944. He was my grandfather and the above is all the information I have about him. We don't know what brought him to the Yukon or where he went when he left. He had a brief relationship with Aage, my grandmother, a Carcross Tagish lady. I would love to hear from anyone who may remember him.
Elizabeth Ettel
34621 Merlin Place
Abbotsford, BC V2S 5L2

Dear Mr. Holloway,

My supervisor loaned us copies of the magazine in advance of our vacation to hike the Chilkoot Trail and visit Whitehorse, Dawson City and Skagway in July 2003. While in Whitehorse I saw Old Dodgie and immediately recognized it. I then saw you in a bookstore across the street and will always regret that I didn't approach you. My husband and I enjoy your magazine very much. I enjoy your writing about Old Dodgie, as I owned an older Dodge truck (and miss it very much!). We look forward to the next publication.
Laura Morrow
Medicine Hat, Alberta

Dear Ms. Green,

I have been intending to write for some time as I have been to Whitehorse and north while I was a member of the PPCLI First Battalion. We were there to participate in an exercise with the Americans. I was a member of the Mortar Platoon and drove from Wainwright, Alberta leaving o the 2nd of January 1950, returning on March 14th.

What I remember of the Alcan Highway was at times not knowing whether I was going up an incline or going down and coulc only tell by the truck engine. It became quite obvious that the tires we had were not compatible with packed snow and ice. I can still see in my mind a three-ton truck with a trailer hanging off a cliff with trucks all over the road. We had

The Mail Run

to wait at the bottom of the hill for the vehicles to clear the way. The other thang was looking over the cliff and seeing nothing but darkness at the bottom in the middle of the day.

Mainly what I wanted to know is this. During our time in Whitehorse there was an aircraft lost with 37 people aboard. I participated in the search for a two-week period. We didn't find it and I am wondering if you know of any aircraft that may fit the description being found, from the Haines cutoff and around to the southwest of Whitehorse.

Les Morden
Carberry, Manitoba

Dear Sam and Dianne,

A couple of points in the very interesting Neil Wright story (issue 24) raised for me the sort of coincidences one so often encounters: the Austin A-90 convertible and Red Hull. In 1955 Peter Garvey, a mine captain at United Keno Hill Mines, owned a maroon-coloured Austin A-90 convertible. I worked there that summer and Peter took me on a couple of memorable weekend trips to Dawson and to Carmacks. Since A-90s were not a common vehicle, I wonder if Peter had bought the one that Neil had driven to Yukon in 1951? We knew a Red Hull from our years at Calumet. He was a mine captain when we left there in 1963 and later was sent south of Whitehorse to the Venus Mine. He must be the same fellow Neil refers to in the picture on page 27.

Joe Riddell
Onaping, Ontario

Hi,

I went to Yukon in 1955 for six months and stayed for 43 years. I bought Pete Brady's claims on Hunker Creek and placer mined for 29 years. We sold out in 1998 and retired to Ashcroft.

Peter Erickson
Ashcroft, BC

Dear Sam and Dianne,

I want to thank you for using my stories. I'm very happy to share them with all those that only dream of our lifestyle. I'm sure the first time you saw a yellow gleam in the bottom of you pan you never had the same feeling again. Like my first lynx of the age-old intelligence in the eyes of a trapped wolf. My eyes are getting dim and my walking days are over so I hope to share my good times with everyone in your wonderful little book. Once again I thank you both. Take care.

Tin (Tensley Johnston)
Ross River, Yukon

THE MAIL RUN

THE SANTA TRAIN

By Jared Story

In days past when mining and the military were still a presence in Whitehorse the local children had not one but two December dates etched indelibly as Coming Events.

On a pre-ordained Saturday, usually accompanied by a spine twisting cold snap, the First Event would arrive. The excitement, the chaos of preparation, then the thumpity, square-tired ride downtown with all the moving parts and all the passengers in the car squealing in seven octaves.

We would assemble around the White Pass building at the end of Main Street, a collection of miniature multi-coloured Michelin tire logos joining a similarly dressed hoard. Most of the adults gravitated to the Ice of the building to chat and relax, knowing the river was frozen and that the kids' winter costumes restricted mobility on par with a ball and chain.

Clumps of youngsters wandered about through a haze of pre-dawn ice fog, car exhaust and human breath, speculating on when the crashing noises from the rail yard would materialize as The Santa Train.

Then it would arrive! A designated official would bellow something sounding like instructions but these were hammered to oblivion by the diesels and washed away by a sea of child cheers. A scramble for window seats and general pandemonium, an expectant hush, then - next stop - The North Pole.

The few surviving adults hunched around a tiny corner stove that radiated less heat than a cup of coffee and tried to ignore the bedlam. Kids rolling down the aisles. Kids climbing the walls. Kids turning purple trying to expel enough breath to melt a peep hole through the window. Kids awestruck numb on their first ever train ride.

McCrae was a more than credible North Pole with its barren scape and wind - sculpted drifts. We'd come to a metal-tortured screeching stop and pick up Santa. Even the scrawniest St. Nick

The Whitehorse railway yards in the 1970s (John Hatch photo).

dressed for this temperature took on the required rotund proportions and whatever that beard was made of it was always covered with real frost. He would "Ho Ho Ho" through a mini riot in each car somehow managing to present each child with their own little gift.

The ride back was always shorter. Before we could get those peep holes rethawed the train stopped at Main Street. Santa marched up to Hougens with most of us in his wake. We would find parents, get photos taken, accept bribes to go to the movie matinee, shop or just wander. After all, there was still the real Christmas.

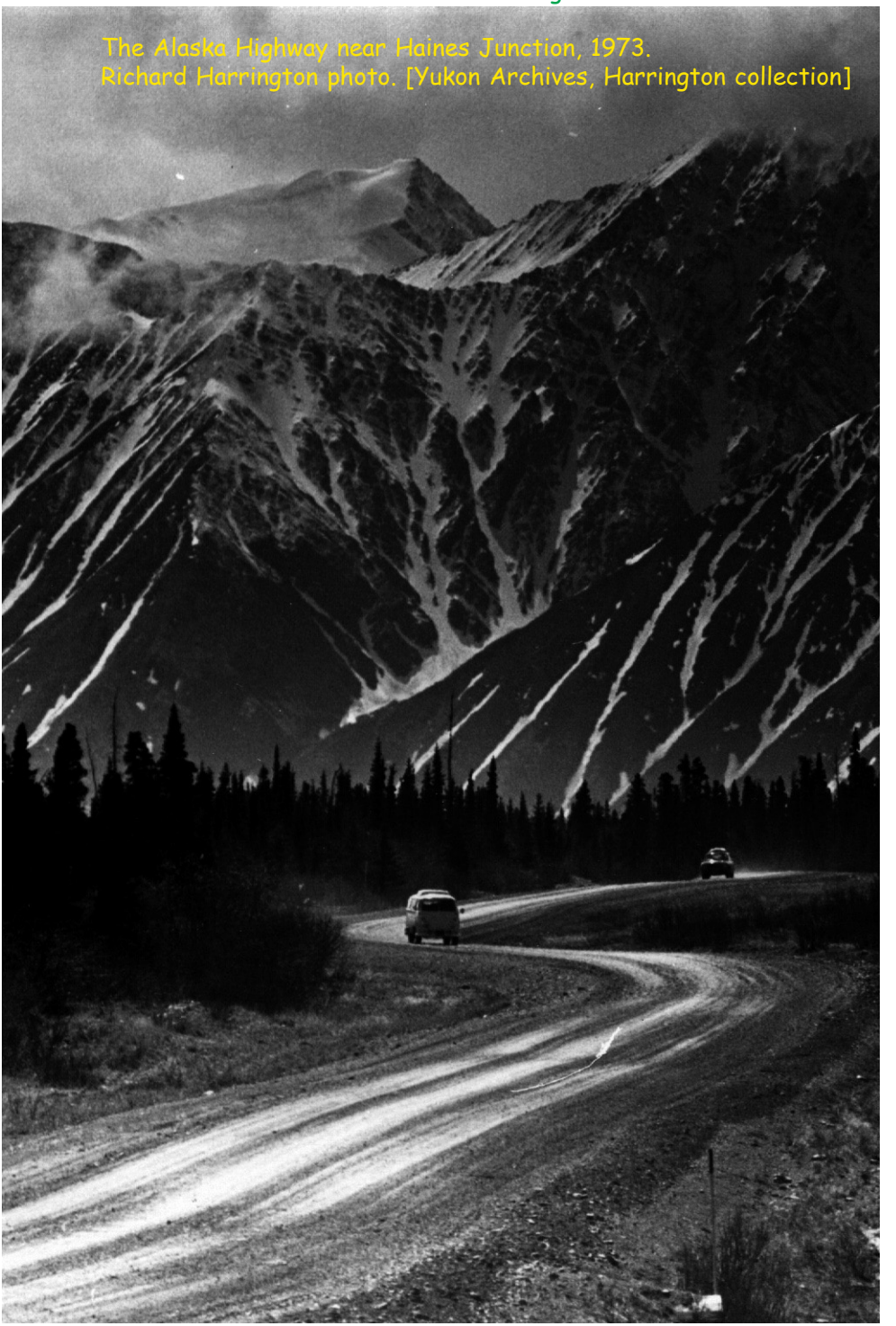
Is it only a locomotive and a couple of green and gold cars that we're missing? A free trip of a lifetime for every kid that showed up. A child-free Saturday with your partner before the holiday rush. Or is this just one little tradition of many that we've let slip away?

Isn't it time we put a metal-screeching stop to our own spiritual backslide? Isn't it time to start singing carols; lifting our eyes high enough to see the sun on Grey Mountain; wave at our neighbours, dive into a snowbank and leave an angel imprint? Isn't the Real Christmas what our hearts are reaching for? So next season, hold all that is dear and those little traditions closer and climb aboard Your Santa Train.

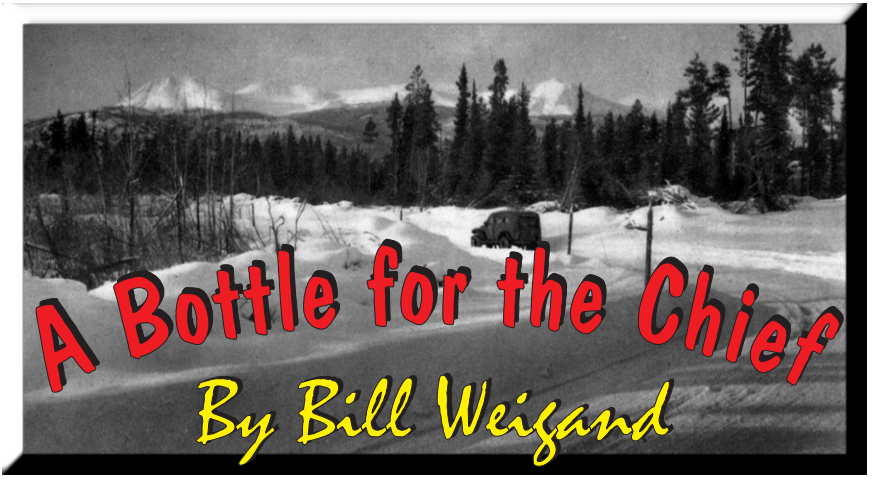
Jared Story
Tagish, Yukon

The winner of the gold nugget draw for subscription renewals is RJ Robertson of Petawawa, Ontario.

Rick Mortimer, big game guide and old trapper, at Yukoner Magazine Print Shop, September 2003. (See story on Page 28)



The Alaska Highway near Haines Junction, 1973.
Richard Harrington photo. [Yukon Archives, Harrington collection]



OCTOBER 13 – 1947

Army Fire Service - Fire Hall # 1 - 17 Wks Coy RCE Whitehorse Yukon

The crew of "*A*" *Platoon* was sitting around the "ready room" shooting the breeze, reading or dozing. It was close to 11 am when Chief Dunlop strode in, paused, looked around, and eyed us one by one. The chatter died away and we knew something was up because the Chief seldom popped in. Usually the crew chief or one of us would be "called to *the* office" down the hall.

His eyes focused on me for a few seconds and I thought, "Oh, Oh," thinking back on what I might have done to be singled out for the "stare."

"Red," he said, "the Major just called, he's got a problem around Mile 48 on the Haines Road. A culvert under the road is plugged with gravel and the road is washing out. He thinks it can be flushed out with one of our pumpers, so get over to Stores and draw a sleeping bag and cold weather gear. Crew Chief Coles will get the Ford front mount pumper truck ready with 500 feet of 2½-inch hose. There won't be any gas after you leave Camp 1016 so go over to the fuel point and draw a 45 gallon drum, it'll ride up top ok. Just secure it good—and don't forget to take a wobble pump.

"I want you away by 6 am; there will be a highway maintenance guy waiting for you at the camp. He'll go with you to handle the hose and flushing. You should be back to the Haines Junction camp by tomorrow night. The mess hall at camp will fix some rations to take with you. Any questions? No?"

The Chief took another drag on his cigarette. "The weather looks good so if you get a chance to go into Haines try and get me a bottle of *Everclear*. Ok?"

It was October 14th my eighteenth birthday and just as dawn was breaking I pulled out of the Dowell Area (present location of Qwanlin Mall) and

headed up the Two-Mile Hill, my sleeping bag and cold weather sheepskin coat and mitts tucked under the tarp. The drum of gas was synched down tight along with the wobble pump, riding high on top of the hose bed. In the rear view mirror I could see the cloud of white dust rolling up from the road behind me and hear the constant ping of loose gravel bouncing off the silver running boards.

The curves and hills of the Alaska Highway passed quickly under the wheels of my fire truck and the miles slipped by. It felt good to be on my own away from the crew, alone on the open highway heading west 100 miles to Camp 1016 (Haines Junction, where the Alaska Highway splits, north to Fairbanks and south to the seaport of Haines, Alaska.)

The sun was highlighting the great snow capped Kluane Range mountains when I reached 1016. The camp foreman was waiting for me when I climbed down from the cab.

"You made good time coming from Whitehorse. This is Ron," he said, pointing to a tall handsome young guy about my age with sandy hair and a broad smile. "He's going with you. He knows the road real good. You guys better get going soon if you want to get back by tonight."

"Hi Red," Ron said. "We better gas up your truck and get going. The foreman says the weather forecast is calling for snow later today. We've got to get back tonight and it's almost 150 miles each way. I see you have some extra gas up top. That's good in case we have any problems—Camp 75, the last place this side of the border where we could have got gas is closed now. You gas the truck and I'll run over to the mess hall and pick up the rations."

I told Ron to grab his sleeping bag … just in case!

We pulled out of camp about 10:30 and headed south towards Dezadeash Lake at Mile Post 125.

I had never been up the Haines Road. I had only heard stories about it. But as we drove along Ron told me about the road ahead, 160 miles of beautiful scenery along the St. Elias Mountains bordering Yukon and Alaska. He knew all the names of the creeks and rivers and pointed out the emergency shelters and maintenance camps already closed for the winter.

"In 1943 the American army punched through an escape route from the Alaska Highway to the Port of Haines in case the White Pass Railway was closed," said Ron. "They say it cost them 13 million Yankee dollars."

The road followed the Old Dalton Trail from Haines, Alaska to Klukshu Lake and from there proceeded along the Western shore of Dezadeash Lake to Mile 125 and on to Haines Junction.

The sun was bright and we were making good time. Ron was telling me about his job at the camp and was asking me about my job in Whitehorse.

We passed the closed camp at Dezadeash. The sun had faded into gray skies and the first big snowflakes came drifting down. Big soft, velvety flakes. Ron said we should pull into Million Dollar camp at Mile Post 103 and take a break. As we walked about the empty camp … the white painted buildings, mess hall, barracks and workshops looked out-of-place and strange to me. I compared them to the drab brown army lock-stave buildings of the highway camps and the Headquarters Buildings in Whitehorse. No wonder they called

it "Million Dollar Camp." Ron told me when the US guys left the camp; they left everything … the dishes and cutlery were still on the mess hall tables.

He laughed. "They must have been in one big hurry to *get gone* back home to the States," he said.

We climbed a long steep hill navigating the sharp "S" curves. By now the snow was really coming down and those big soft lovely flakes weren't looking so *lovely* anymore. I could hardly see to drive. Ron was getting concerned too … we still had a long way to go. We were now creeping along with Ron standing outside his door on the running board calling for me to "steer left, straighten up, steer right" … sometimes he would get out and walk ahead in the middle of the road which was now covered by a foot or more of snow. It was eerie and scary and we knew there was no way we would get back to Haines Junction that night.

As we passed each emergency shelter, (the small metal Quonset Huts equipped with bunks, stoves, and wood, situated at intervals along the road) I was thinking, we had better make a decision soon to *hole up* for the night and wait out the snowstorm. But Ron said, "Since we're on the plateau now, we should keep going to Camp 75 … after that, we'll start down a steep hill with a few dangerous curves then we'll be into the heavy rainforest valley … be easier going once we get into the trees. We can bunk down at the old Canada Customs House for the night … what do you think?"

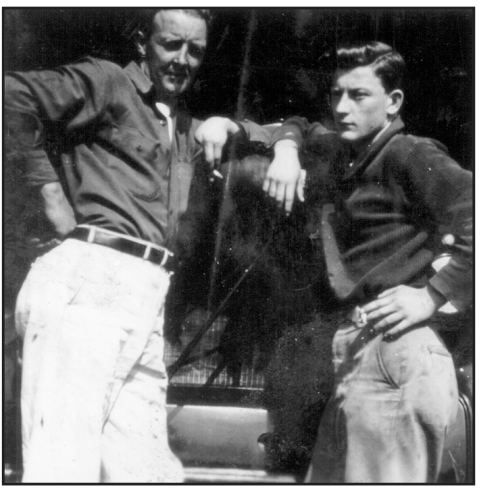
I clenched the steering wheel and tried not show my absolute panic at his words. "How steep? How dangerous? There's a foot of snow on the road!"

Ron didn't bother to answer. He ignored me and kept shouting directions. I didn't have time to think. I was too busy trying to keep the fire truck in the middle of the road.

Ron was right. We could barely see the outlines of the buildings through the heavy snowfall as we passed Camp 75. Soon we were creeping down the long, curving road into the valley and the snow seemed to lighten up.

The Canadian Custom House, an old log building, loomed out of the dark. There were no lights in the windows and no tracks in the deep snow leading to the building. And no vehicle tracks ahead of us on the road to Haines. We stopped and trudged up to the door and were surprised to see a scrawled note, "Road closed – Gone to Haines."

The door was unlocked. We



Left-Harvey Brandon – Right- Bill (Red) Weigand – Army Fire Service 1947

packed in our sleeping bags, spread them out on the floor and crawled in. We were two exhausted young guys.

The morning was bright and clear. We stood outside the old log building looking at a winter wonderland. The thick forest of tall firs and spruce trees was laden with new snow. Not a track anywhere. Not a sound, just stillness.

"I think we're stuck here," Ron said. "What'll we do?"

"How far to Haines?" I asked.

"About 40 miles, but it'll be tough going if we can even get through at all."

"Lets give it a try," I said. "We need gas after plowing through all that snow and we need to buy some food. Looks like we're going to be around here for a while. And on the way you can locate that plugged culvert and look for water to pump."

I climbed behind the wheel. "Oh yes, and, don't forget, the Chief wants a bottle of 190 proof *Everclear*."

Ron was right again, the heavy wet snow made it hard going. We crept along, trying not to get too close to the edge of the road, especially on the hills. As we came down a long slope onto a level stretch Ron said, "Stop, here's the culvert!" Ron slid down the bank to take a look. "Yeah," he yelled, "It's plugged alright … you drive the truck ahead and I'll stand on the running board and see if I can see a place for you to lay the hose line to some water."

"It better be close, we only have 500 feet of hose," I said. "There's usually a good low spot or a hole that the engineers dug at the bottom of the hills near the culverts."

Ron found his water hole at the bottom of a steep slope, and with a foot of fast melting snow on the ground it looked pretty slippery. I knew I would have to "chain up" and back the truck up the slope to the highway when we were done. I was worried.

We decided it was not a good time to start work; it was getting too late in the day. We would go into Haines and on the way we could spot an emergency shelter to camp for the night.

We drove into Haines by late afternoon and Ron directed me to the only gas station in town. The guy at the pumps was surprised to see a Canadian Army fire truck pull up. He told us that he heard the Haines road was closed and wanted to know what we were doing here anyway. We gave him a rundown about the road washing out over the culvert near Mile 48, about the scary drive after the snow started coming down and how we finally got to the Custom House. He said the road would be closed for a few days. He said that Clyde Wann had fuel trucks waiting in Haines Junction for the road to re-open so he could haul as much gas and oil to Whitehorse as he could before the road closed for the winter. (It wasn't until the mid-sixties that the Haines Road would be opened year-round.)

We didn't have much cash with us, not expecting to buy gas or food. We bought bread and canned beans; picked up a 26oz of Rye (or was it Bourbon?) and a bottle of *Everclear* for the Chief, and then over to Blanche's

Bar for a couple of bottles of Ginger Ale. It was pretty quiet at Blanches, I thought. Just one lady behind the bar.

"What do you think, Red? We pick up a couple of girls I know and take them for a ride in your fire truck? Maybe park somewhere and have a few drinks. It'll be fun."

"Are you kidding?" I said, "Not in *my* army fire truck … where are you going to get these girls anyway?"

"Over at the Catholic convent. I've done it before. After 9, they'll be in their dorm. I'll throw some stones at the window to get their attention and they'll sneak out down the fire escape."

Hoping my red Canadian Army fire truck would never be spotted I parked it down the street from the Convent.

Ron was right for the umpteenth time. It worked. I had a new respect for this guy. The girls were excited about getting a ride in the fire truck and the four of us squeezed into the cab. We drove a little way out of town, parked and passed the bottle around, taking a swig of whiskey and then a round of ginger ale. It was fun and every so often one of the girls would step on the siren button and we would all giggle and laugh. After awhile we decided to drive over to the other side of town to where the girls knew another good parking spot. One of them gave the siren a short blast again as we passed through main street.

The ginger ale soon ran out but the girls didn't want to go home so Ron suggested I drive back into town for another bottle.

I parked across the street from Blanche's Bar. I could see through the windows that the place was jammed, a lot of guys drinking up a storm I thought. Lively place!

Fire truck pumping……near MP 48

Stepping up to the bar, I asked the lady (probably Blanche) for ginger ale. It took a minute to realize it was suddenly quiet. Dead quiet. This big guy in a plaid shirt was standing at my elbow. My eyes focused on a large silver star pinned to his shirt … SHERIFF! All I remember thinking is Oh! Oh!

He was big. He was over 6 foot tall … I know, I was looking up … and he was looking down. "Hi Sonny," he said, "is that your little red fire truck out there?" I glanced around the room. No one was smiling. These guys staring at me were definitely not friendly.

"You get back in your little red fire truck and get the hell out this town..."

"Yes sir," I mumbled.

"And what are you doing here in Alaska with a Canadian Army fire truck?"

"I got orders to flush out a plugged culvert near Mile 48," I stammered, "the road is washing out. We got over the road as far as the Custom House and we're snowed in … I needed gas and food so I came in to town."

"Well, Sonny, do you know who all these guys are?" And he swept his hand around the bar room.

"No, sir," I said, with a dreadful feeling. I was in trouble. Deep trouble.

"Well Sonny," he emphasized the Sonny with his big finger as he tapped my chest, "these guys are the Haines Volunteer Fire Brigade, and every time you went though town and tooted your little siren, they rushed down to the fire hall. Three times! We've been waiting for you."

The axe was about to fall. I was a dead man. I would be heading back to Edmonton as soon as NWHS Headquarters in Whitehorse got word of this night. What do they do to Canadians in trouble in Alaska? And the girls in the truck? A Canadian Army truck … and Ron? My truck? It was only a minute but a multitude of horrible thoughts were going through my mind as I stared up at the big guy with his finger making dents in my uniform jacket.

"Tell you what, Sonny," he said, "You get back in your little red fire truck and get the hell out this town … get that culvert flushed out and get home. If you're not out of town in five minutes, I'll throw you in jail."

"Yes sir," I said hurriedly and moved towards the door, not daring to look back at all the guys, who by now appeared to be having a party of their own.

As I made a dash for the truck across the street, Ron and the girls were watching me and wondering what was taking me so long to get a bottle of ginger ale. When I was about 20 feet from the truck one of the girls pressed the siren button. "No, no, not now," I shouted as I flew into the cab, rammed the gearshift into place and tore out of town.

We parked just outside of town, and I told them about my encounter with the Sheriff and volunteer firemen. Now we had a real problem. We had

to get the girls back to the convent before they were missed and I wanted to get as far away from that Sheriff as fast as I could. I kept thinking about the disastrous reception I was going to get in Whitehorse.

I think it was about one in the morning when we stole back into Haines, stopping a short distance from the convent. We said goodbye to the girls and watched them scoot up the fire escape and into their dorm.

We found the shelter we had spotted earlier on our way into town and were surprised to see a light in the window and smoke rising from the chimney.

"Strange," said Ron, "no vehicle around."

As we approached the door it was opened by two rough looking guys, one big and tall, the other short and wiry.

"Come on in, lots of room," they said. "What are you guys doing out here at this time of night?" the tall guy asked.

We exchanged names and looked each other over. I noticed they had a lot of gear, including a couple of rifles by one of the bunks. It looked like they had been living in the shelter for some time. They told us they were from the States and were going prospecting as soon as the snow melted. In the meantime, they were trapping and hunting in the area.

We told them our story and they thought it was funny, especially the part about the Sheriff and volunteer firemen.

"Have you got any booze left?" the short guy asked. "We could sure do with a couple of drinks."

We finished off the last of the Bourbon while we swapped stories. Then we made a big mistake. We opened the bottle of Everclear. The one the "Chief" would never get to see. With the Everclear the stories became exaggerated and the little guy bragged about his past as being a champion *pugilist*.

Watching the little guy toss back another slug of Everclear, I said, "what's a pugilist?"

"Means boxer … come on, Red." He motioned me closer, dancing around and punching the air. "Try and hit me, I won't hurt you … come on, give it a try."

I had a bad feeling as I put up my fists and took a fighter's stance in front of him. He looked wild-eyed and a little crazy to me. I made a half-hearted jab at him.

Ron and the big guy picked me up and helped me to a bunk. The little guy was still dancing around making jabs in the air, no doubt believing he was still in some championship fight somewhere in his past. Ron and I and the big guy climbed into our sleeping bags. I was hurting.

In the morning, the prospectors made a big batch of bannock, stirring the mixture in a tin can. Besides having a *doozer* of a hangover, my ribs and shoulders were hurting from the slamming the little guy gave me.

At the culvert we laid the hose line along the road and eased the truck down the slope close enough get the suction hose in the water hole. We pumped water most of the day, with Ron flushing gravel and boulders until

the culvert was clean. Then came the hard job of picking up the long hose line in the wet slippery snow, breaking it into 50 foot lengths and rolling it up and stacking them by the roadside. My great fear was that the truck would spin out in the slush and mud as I backed it up the steep slope to the road. But we made it with the help of our tire chains.

Later that night in my bunk at the emergency shelter, I shuddered as I thought about the fire hall, the Chief, the Major … and oh, no, we drank the *Everclear*! Maybe the Sheriff wouldn't report me to Chief Dunlop.

Next morning I was feeling better and after another batch of bannock and beans for breakfast, made by the pugilis*t* and the big guy, we went outside to sit in the morning sun for a smoke. We could hear a truck coming from the north and a fuel tanker came into sight. The driver pulled over and rolled his window down and said, "Hi Red, thought it was you when I saw the fire truck … the camp foreman said to keep an eye out for you. They were worried when you guys didn't get back and sent a crew out with some grub the next day but they only got about half way to Camp 75 then gave up. The snow was too deep. They left the grub in one of the emergency shelters. You'll see a sign nailed to the door. The plow just got through to the border this morning and I was following it."

Ron & I said "so long" to the two prospectors, loaded our gear and started for 1016. The little guy waved from the door and said, "Sorry about the boxing lesson, Red."

We stopped at the shelter with the "*Sandwiches Here*" sign. The cook at camp had made some good sandwiches but after three days they were all dried up.

All the way to the junction I went over and over what I would say when

Mixing the bannock—the two prospectors.

the time came to face the music, not only to the Major at Headquarters, but the Chief, too.

We pulled into Haines Junction and reported to the camp office. The foreman said everyone was relieved when they got word we had made it to Haines. I waited to hear "*what word.*" Nothing followed. He said the Chief called every day for news about us.

Next morning, feeling maybe, just maybe, I was ok …I decided to have breakfast at the "Kuskanaw," Sally Backe's restaurant. I could smell the bacon and taste the coffee before I even sat down. After the bannock and beans this was heaven! Sally was busy behind the counter, she looked at me. "You must be Red," she said and I could see by the smile on her face something was coming. "We heard you and Ron really stirred things up in Haines a couple nights ago. You guys sure did it up good."

Editor's Note: Bill Weigand was the mayor of Whitehorse from 1991 to 1994. Photo courtesy of City of Whitehorse.

Breakfast didn't taste so good but it wasn't Sally's cooking. It was my conscience . I began to worry again. The word was out and I was in trouble. I waved goodbye to Sally and started for home.

The Chief accepted my report, listened to my description of driving in the blizzard and said he was glad we made it back safely. I waited every day for the axe to fall but the days went by and nothing happened.

I began to think the Sheriff was not such a bad guy after all.

Spring, 1948. The crew of "*A*" *Platoon* was relaxing in the Ready-room. Chief Dunlop came striding in. "Coles," he said to the Crew Chief, "we need to send the Ford front-mount pumper up the Haines Road." He turned to me, "but you're not going Weigand."

I could see what looked like a grin on his face.

I never saw Ron again, or the girls, or the Sheriff. It was many years before I visited Haines again. I often wondered if the Sheriff and the Chief had a few laughs over making me sweat for a long time.

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Growing Up Yukon

The Story of Penny Sippel

By Dianne Green

Penny Sippel considers herself a first generation Yukoner and has treasured memories of her childhood spent in the bush. Sometimes, though, she jokes that she was "robbed "of her Yukon heritage.

A member of a well-known Yukon family, Penny was born in Vancouver, B. C. in 1940. Penny's mother, Martha Collins, formerly Martha Burian, had lived in the Yukon since 1936 but she returned to her parents' home to give birth to her second child. Penny's grandmother brought her into the world. Soon after the birth, mother and child travelled to their Yukon home on Stewart Island.

The Burian name has been associated with Stewart Island and the Stewart River country for a long time. Penny's uncle, Alfred Burian, came first, then brothers Renny, Karl, Rudy and Walter joined him. These were the Depression years and jobs were scarce in the south. In the Yukon, however, there was plenty of work for anyone with a strong back and ambition. The brothers operated a string of wood camps, supplying fuel for the boats that travelled the Yukon and Stewart rivers.

In the 1930s, the Keno silver mines near Mayo were in full production. Located at the confluence of the Stewart and Yukon Rivers, Stewart Island bustled with activity during the open-water months when silver concentrate from the mines was off-loaded from the Stewart River boats and transferred to the larger, Yukon River steamers. Passengers and freight bound for Mayo, Whitehorse, and Dawson City also stopped at Stewart Island.

Martha Burian joined her brothers at Stewart Island in 1936 and she and brother Rudy bought the Stewart City Roadhouse. The following year,

Martha married Phil Collins, who had come from Vancouver in 1930 to work as a longshoreman for the British Yukon Navigation Company.

After their marriage, Martha and Phil took over running the roadhouse. In winter, when the river froze and the roadhouse business was quiet, Martha and Phil went trapping. Martha continued to trap her day line after her children were born.

Daughter Penny was only two when the family moved from Stewart Island to Dawson City but she has memories of picking berries and morel mushrooms and of being bundled up in a sleigh on the trapline.

The Burians' neighbours at Stewart were the Woodburn family, who had sold the roadhouse to them, and seven or eight single men, trappers who lived in tiny cabins on the island. One of the men gave Penny the name she has used ever since. Impressed by the tiny girl's size, the man said, "You're small as a Penny." Penny's parents had named her "Lily," which is her legal name.

In Dawson, the family lived on fork of the Kondike River where the family took up residence in an old roadhouse called "Hullenbach's."

Phil Collins with his children, Phillip, Antonia and Penny, at Hullenbach's.

These were good years for the Collins family, which now included four girls and one boy. There was plenty to eat and fur prices were good. Potatoes, carrots and turnips from Martha's garden were stored for the winter in a root cellar with a sod roof. Jars of preserved carrots, peas, onions, and celery lined the shelves of Martha's pantry. The family kept chickens and the forest and streams provided moose, fish and rabbit for the table.

The Collins children watched their father skin furs, which he sent raw to the furriers. Their mother's day trap line produced squirrels, rabbits and the occasional lynx for a second source of income. Penny remembers her mother, who was always an excellent cook, making meals for trappers and other travellers in the area.

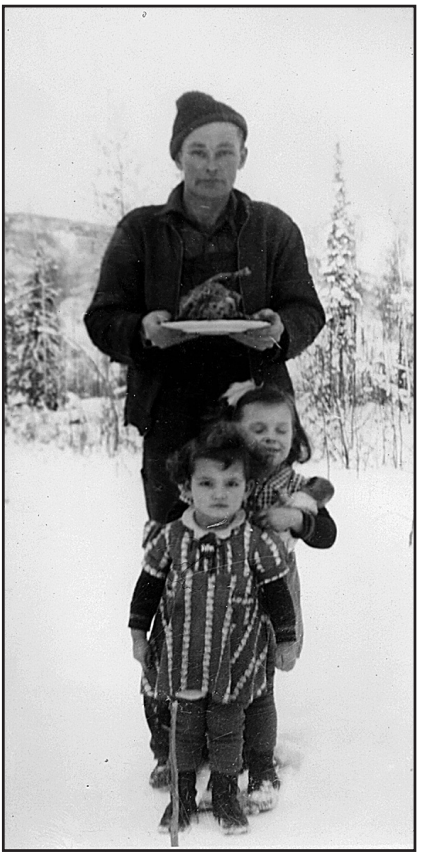
Penny, Martha and Freda, ca 1942. Right, Martha at the Stewart cabin and in the bush, ca 1947.

There were also visitors from the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation power generation station across the river. The YCGC plant provided power to the corporation's gold dredges, mining camps and to Dawson City. The North Fork power plant consisted of two ditches, which brought water from the Klondike River to three turbine units.

The plant employed three operators and three oilers along with a ditch drew. YCGS had strung a cable across the river and people pulled themselves back and forth in a bucket suspended from the cable.

One spring day eight-year-old Penny and her six-year-old brother decided to cross the river by walking on the ice. When the time came to return home, it was late in the day and the afternoon sun had melted the top layer of ice covering it with water. Penny knew a narrow place up river where they crossed to the south bank by walking across a tree. It had never occurred to her to ask an adult to take her across in the bucket.

In winter, when Martha was out on her day trapline, the Collins children spent a good deal of time on their own. Supposedly, they were doing correspondence courses but with no one at home to supervise, the schoolwork progressed very slowly. This meant that the children had to work at their lessons summer and winter in order to pass their grades.



Phil Collins holding Christmas dinner—a rabbit—in 1943. Penny and Freda in the foreground.

In 1949, Penny returned to school – this time in B C's Lower Mainland. Penny isn't sure what prompted her parents to leave the Yukon but she suspects it had something to do with hers and her siblings' need for an education. The Collins family lived briefly with Martha's parents in Burquitlam, then rented a farm in the Fraser Valley. Phil Collins went to work at Fraser Mills then returned to the Yukon after spending less than a year "outside." Martha and the children remained in BC for another six months or so before moving back north.

This time the Collins family settled in Whitehorse. Their first home in the Yukon's newly designated capitol city was Whiskey Flats, a frontier community of temporary shacks, which hugged the Yukon River in the south end of town. Later the family lived in the "Y" area at the end of

Second Avenue. During this time Penny's father built Army houses at Camp Takhini.

Penny attended school at the Armouries in a military building located where Qwanlin Mall is now. Later she attended Whitehorse High School on Second Avenue.

During the 1950s, Whitehorse saw rapid growth and change. Now in

Phil Collins giving his father and Wilda a ride, in front of the Stewart Roadhouse, ca 1937.

Originally rooms added onto the roadhouse, this building is now a museum.

her teens, Penny threw herself into the excitement and activity. Her Young People's Association raised enough money to buy an old army building and, with the help of the Kiwanis Club, set up their own teen centre on a lot on Fourth and Hoge Street.

By 1957 Phil and Martha Collins had grown restless and were ready for a new adventure. This time they moved with their younger children to Dawson Creek, BC. Penny had no interest in going to Dawson Creek.

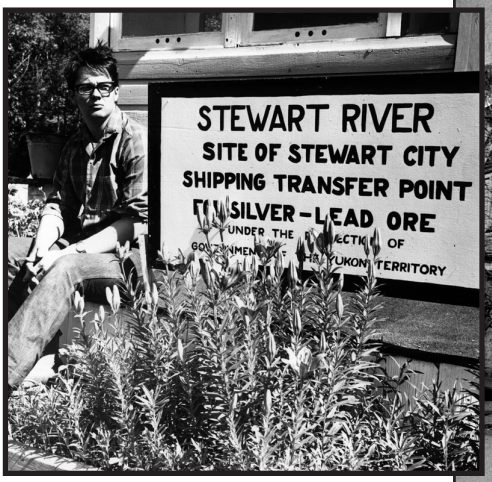
At age 17, Penny married Don Sippel, a blue-eyed young man who was serving with the 19th Alberta Dragoons. It was the first Whitehorse wedding planned by a military unit. A photo taken by now-Senator Ione Christensen shows the happy couple emerging from the Presbyterian Church—Penny wearing a bouffant, white wedding dress, her handsome groom in full-dress uniform. With their swords raised in an arch, the uniformed Alberta Dragoons flank the young couple's pathway from the church.

In Dawson Creek, Phil Collins helped build the new Safeway store and Martha got a job as a cook. In their spare time, the hard-working couple cleared 160 acres of their own land.

In 1967 or '68, they moved back to Dawson City, Yukon. With most of his children grown and fewer mouths to feed, Phil decided to go mining. It was something he'd always wanted to do. He also had a trapline on the 60-Mile River and he worked in the Dawson City jail. Martha worked in the jail, too, and she was a housekeeper at one of the local bars.

During this period their youngest daughter, Otelia, was still living at home. When a visitor called at the Collins home one evening Otelia was home alone. When asked where her parents were she said, "Mom's in the bar. Dad's in jail."

Although they worked very hard,



Ivan Burian at Stewart, 1973. [Richard Harrington photo, Yukon Archives, Harrington collection]

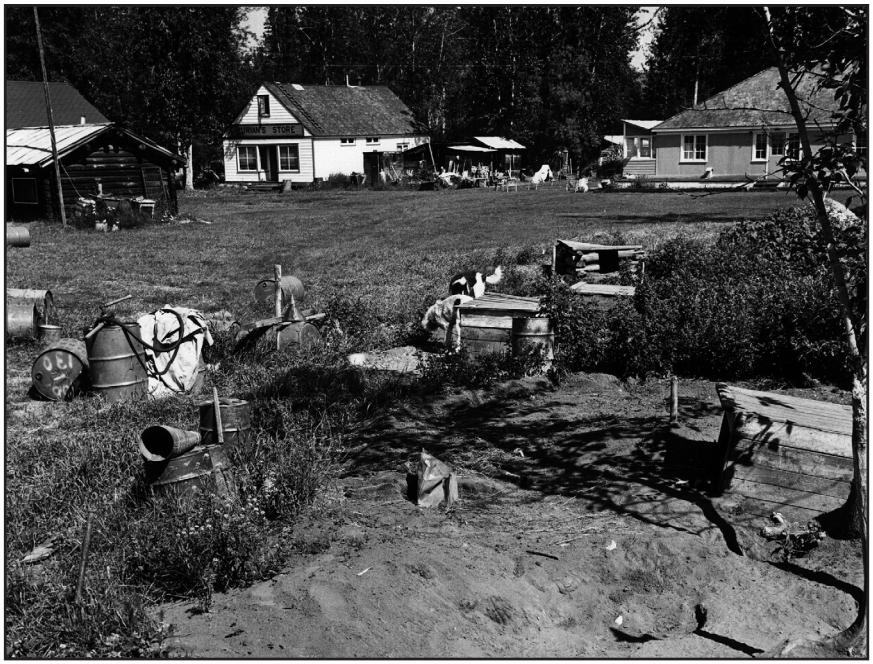
The Collins home in Dawson City, July 1, 1946.

Phil and Martha enjoyed a good laugh and they had a good time. Phil especially enjoyed the trip he and Martha took to Hawaii in 1974 with their daughter, Penny, and son-in-law, Don. Although Phil had spent the best years of his life in the bush, in Hawaii he declared that he'd like to spend the rest of his life under a palm tree.

In 1987 Phil and Martha moved to B C's Okanogan where Martha planned to spend more time working in her garden. Although there were no palm trees in Keremeos, the weather was warmer and the growing season was longer than in the Yukon.

Martha lives alone since her husband's death in 1996. Her daughters, Freda and Otelia, live in neighbouring Okanogan communities. Daughter Antonia lives in Burnaby, BC. Although she is getting on in years (87 last September), Martha makes the long drive north to visit her family and friends in the Yukon every year. At the end of the summer Penny drives Martha back to her home in Keremeos.

In the summer of 2003, Penny and Don Sippel moved from their home in Whitehorse into the Marsh Lake cabin that they had bought 40 years



In the centre is the old Hudson's Bay store (changed to "Burian's Store).
Right is the Burian home, which since has fallen into the river from bank erosion. Photographed in 1973 by Richard Harrington
[Yukon Archives photo, Harrington collection, 79/27]

earlier. The cabin was once a bakery attached to the Whitehorse Inn. The Sippels keep the original bakery sign stored in their garage.

"I'm afraid to put it up in case people come looking for bread," Penny says.

Although they have built a new bathroom and utility room onto the original structure, it was a challenge fitting possessions they had accumulated in 46 years of marriage into a one-bedroom cabin. Boxes of Christmas ornaments, extra linens and old photographs still fill the utility room.

Just outside the back door, a new, tastefully decorated guest house gives the Sippels some extra space. It is a quiet refuge for visiting friends and relatives including daughters Donna and Cindy with their husbands and children, son Paul and mother Martha.

Penny and Don enjoy the easy-going pace and friendly attitude of their neighbours at the lake. They like it when people take time to stop by for coffee and talk about the weather. Penny says it reminds her of years past when all of the Yukon was that kind of place.

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Except where noted, these photos are from Penny's family album.

Penny and Don Sippel at their 40th wedding anniversary, 1997.

WOLF! There is something about that word that reeks of wild places and lonely dark nights by the fire. The image of a dark wolf vaguely seen at the outer limits of the firelight somehow makes me feel vulnerable and alone.

I was trapping on the Donjek River in central Yukon Territory back in the Seventies and was out one afternoon in December scouting the country for lynx tracks. It was almost fifty-below zero and I was snowshoeing as the snow lay about three feet deep in the open meadows and on the creek ice where I travelled. I'd just come down off a steep mountain from the high country and was now in the spruce bottom that ran parallel to the river. I wasn't particularly cold as I kept moving until I would hit a fresh lynx track. Then I'd study it for a while to see what the lynx had been up to. I wasn't setting any traps this day, only getting a feel for the lynx population in this area. I had found a fresh lynx track and stopped to look at where he'd investigated a pile of brush. Suddenly, about a mile or so back up my trail and on higher ground, came that long, low, and deep howl of a mature timber wolf.

I've heard wolves howling at various times so that wasn't anything new. What made me pay attention was it was so close. It was joined by another deep howl, and then another. There was what I guessed to be seven wolves all yelling and raising hell up there behind me on the mountain. Apparently these wolves were coming along the side of the mountain where I had travelled and they hit my snowshoe trail. They probably didn't have a clue what it was as I was in a very remote area where humans are scarce, especially ones leaving huge tracks! So I figured they were howling out of curiosity. It made me stop and think for a moment to know there were six or seven of these big wild guys right on my back trail.

The air was full of tiny ice crystals and I could hear my breath freeze when I exhaled because it was so cold. After stopping for a few minutes to listen to the wolves and check out the lynx tracks, I was cooling off so I started up the creek toward where the tent was pitched, about two miles away. The wind had packed the snow hard along here and it was fast and easy going, which was good because it was getting on to about 2:30 pm and the winter days were short this far north. I continued to snowshoe steadily without too much trouble from soft drifts or overflow until I came to a place that had glaciered up bad. The glacier had pushed up chunks of blue ice creating what looked like a frozen waterfall and I had to swing off the creek into the spruce trees to go around it. I turned to the left and climbed up the bank and had just entered the bush when something caught my eye off to the left and back down the creek.

Here I was literally surrounded by a bunch of curious wolves.

Slowly, I turned my head and saw a good-sized black wolf coming straight down my snowshoe track, maybe 150 yards back. I know he hadn't seen me yet because of the way he was moving with his nose on the trail and his tail low to the ground. I watched him come but I made sure the clip was in the rifle just the same. Suddenly, he sat down right there in the middle of the creek and raising his nose to the sky, let out that mournful howl wolves have. Well, it raised the hair on my head, believe me, and as if that wasn't enough, there came an answering call not 100 yards away in the other direction—ahead of me just up the creek. My first thought was that I was surrounded here on the creek bank by wolves but then my second thought was equally alarming: "Where are the other four or five of them?"

I was standing beside a good-sized spruce tree about two-and-a-half feet in diameter. It didn't take me long to get my back against it and check that I had a shell in the chamber of my 6mm Remington, safety on, muzzle clear of any snow or ice, scope turned to its lowest power. Then it came. The other wolves, yes, five of them, which made seven in this pack, started speaking up from various directions. Two were across the creek and back in the bush a bit, and one was down the creek but farther back than the first one I'd seen. The other two were on my side of the creek in the bush to my left. This did not look good. Here I was literally surrounded by a bunch of curious wolves.

At least I hoped they were only curious. I'd seen wolves hunt before and had always admired the way they travelled through the country and never seemed to miss any game at all. But, when you are the one being hunted-for whatever reason, well, I don't think admiration was the feeling I had at the moment. I didn't feel particularly scared. Apprehensive would be a better word. Excited too! This wasn't something that happened every day, at least not to me. I felt sharp. Alive! Charged with adrenaline, I felt

like I could whip anything coming at me at that moment and was almost eager for the challenge. I also remember thinking "Thank God I'm not hurt and bleeding."

The wolf directly up the creek ahead of me made a noise again almost a yapping sound and, when I looked in that direction, I could see him through the willows coming back down the creek toward me to stand on the ice upstream from the glacier. It just stood there, looking at its companion coming up the creek from the other direction. Suddenly, I heard a rustling in the bush off to my left and the other two, one gray and one black, went trotting past me about 30 yards away and crossed through the willows onto the creek to join the one ahead of me.

They sniffed noses and did little circles for a moment or two, then all three sat down and howled together. What a great sight that was! They were not 50 yards away, completely unaware of my location and singing up a storm. I think what they were doing was telling the other four wolves that my trail hadn't come this far and that they had lost me.

The black wolf that I had first seen behind me was now close to where I had turned off from the creek. Although he had stopped for a moment when the others howled, he was again walking up my trail into the bush and was close enough now hit with a rock. I could hear the snow squeaking from his weight as he slowly came toward me. For some reason I didn't want to shoot him. I've shot plenty of wolves in my time on the trapline and I can't explain my reluctance to shoot this one, although I had a feeling that the blast of a rifle in this scene would be like making a loud noise in church; it just did not belong there. I didn't feel in any danger and I believed that these wolves weren't hunting for meat so much as they were merely trying

Rick's daughter, Liz, and a St. Bernard examine a dead wolf.

to identify what I was. So I stood very still and watched that big black male walk toward me.

I have seen where wolves have taken big game animals down: strong and healthy moose and caribou. It is wrong to think that wolves kill only the sick and the weak because if enough wolves get together at any one time, they can kill anything they want. They are a tremendously strong animal and I have seen those big leg bones from a moose cracked right in half from a wolf bite. It is always incredible to me how they can kill a moose but I've seen enough places where they've done it to know that wolves usually get what they are after. A wolf has a chest with big lungs like a greyhound and he can run a long way when he's chasing something. Then, when he does get to it, he's got the weight and size to handle almost any game he's after. For prey that is too big like a moose, he simply buddies up with some help. Wolves are tough and smart enough to increase the odds in their own favour.

So here I was—my back to the spruce tree, rifle in hand ready to go, but not wanting to use it, when that big black bugger stepped up over the bank walking on my snowshoe trail with his nose down and his eyes on the trail.

"Hey, you," I said in a real low voice. "What do you want?"

He stopped all right. Boy did he stop! He never moved a hair either; he just stood and stared at me staring at him. Those eyes can look right through you and see what is on the other side. Pale and unblinking, they seem to come from a ghost or a spirit world. They acknowledge a different reality. I don't think he knew exactly what I was. He had a how'd I get this close?' kind of look on his face. He didn't growl or make a sound, but I noticed the ruff on his neck rise and his ears go back a little. We stared at each other for what seemed perhaps half of a minute and then he evaporated! He was there and then he was gone. He was standing there, my heart beat, and he was gone.

The tracks later showed that he had jumped to the side of the snowshoe trail in the direction of the other three wolves that had howled. The first steps he'd made were ten feet from where he had left the ground.

I don't know what he said to the other wolves when he got there but none of them ever even glanced back as they bolted across the creek and into the timber beyond at a flat-out run. I never did see the other three wolves that were still down the creek, nor did I hear from them again.

Funny, but I was breathing hard, as if I'd been the one galloping across the creek. I could feel my heartbeat too. Fast. But I felt totally exhilarated! What an experience that was! How often do you get to be alone in the middle of a pack of wolves a hundred miles from the nearest person and in the dead of winter?

Why didn't I shoot one or more of them? I don't know. I could easily have had half a month's wages in pelts right there if I had chosen to. Maybe there are some things that are worth a lot more than money.

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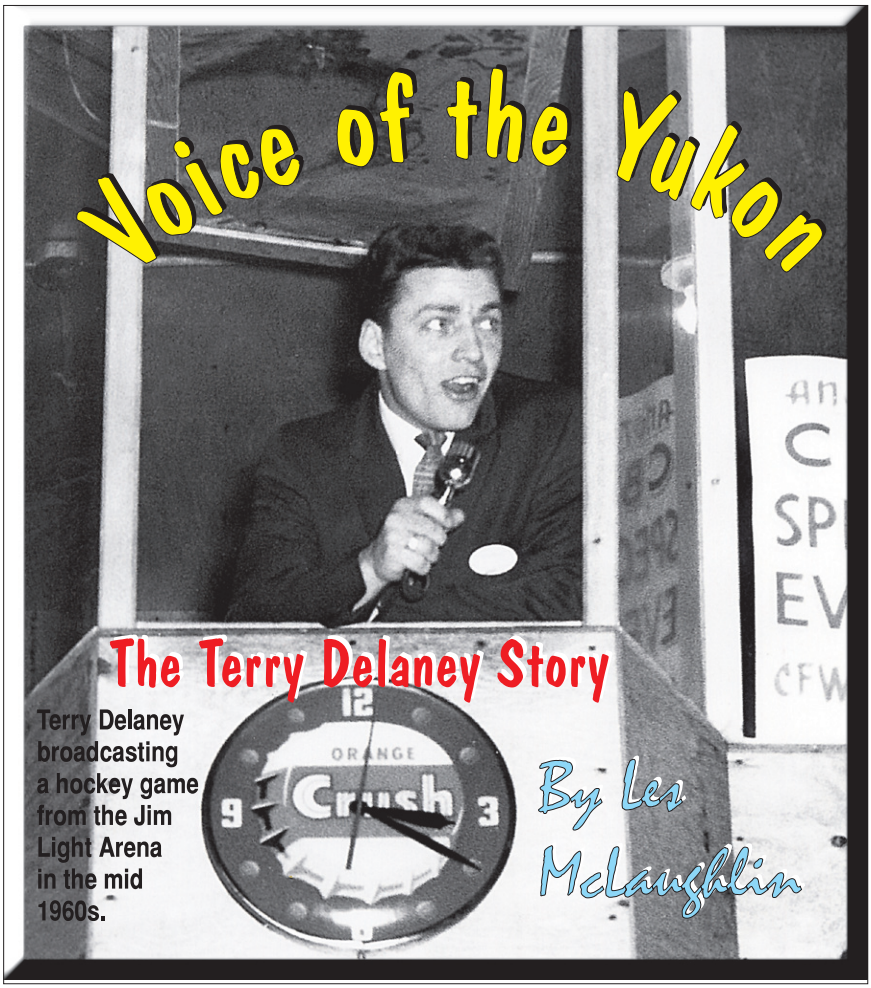
Voice of the Yukon

The Terry Delaney Story



Terry Delaney broadcasting a hockey game from the Jim Light Arena in the mid 1960s.

By Les McLaughlin

Terry was a consummate Yukon character who arrived in the Territory from Edmonton with his family in 1947. As a teenager he worked on the riverboats including the *SS Klondike* where he recalled that one of the passengers in the early fifties was the Governor General, Viscount Alexander.

His broadcast career began as a volunteer at CFWH, the Whitehorse radio station that was first created in 1944 when the American military, then operating the Alaska Highway, set up a radio service in a clapboard building at McRae.

When the Americans left the Territory, the Canadian military assumed all their assets including ownership and control of the radio station. Though still run by the military, civilian volunteers played a significant role in keeping it on the air.

As a driver with the Army's Service Corp., he became a volunteer on

the day that he made a delivery to the CFWH studios, then located in a Quonset building across the Alaska Highway from the airport. An Air force corporal operating the morning program told young Delaney that he had to slip out to attend pay parade and asked Terry to take over for a few minutes. Those few minutes became two terrifying hours as the untrained Terry tried to keep the morning show on the air, but when the Corporal finally returned, Delaney was hooked on broadcasting.

When the CBC Northern Service was formed in 1958, CFWH became the first station in the fledgling Northern Network. Delaney applied for a position and was one of four announcer-operators engaged as full-time CBC employees.

Like other broadcasters of an earlier time, Terry had no formal training in the complex art of radio production. However, the Northern Service was the ideal place for an individual with street smarts and an outgoing personality. Delaney possessed these qualities and so began a career filled with stories enough to fill a still unwritten book.

Terry had a nose for news though it was not his first love. Sports in general and hockey in particular were. During the late fifties, and into the sixties, the CBC maintained a tradition established during the volunteer days by broadcasting local senior men's hockey games. No one, perhaps not even Foster Hewitt called a more exhilarating match.

And Terry guaranteed that his audience heard exciting audio action even if the on ice activity dictated otherwise. During one game with the score 23-2 heading into the third period, he decided to ignore the on ice shellacking and call the game as if each play had the Stanley cup riding on it. He simply neglected to announce the score. He felt he had a sense of duty to his faithful listeners and would do whatever it took to make a sporting event stimulating and relevant no matter how dreadful the action on the ice became.

Terry enjoyed his days as the regular CBC Sports reporter and was noted for packing his sports broadcasts with names. If Little Jimmy failed to score a goal or get a hit, it didn't matter to Terry. Mom and Dad—Terry's listeners— would know their son had played the game.

Terry Delaney with Robert Kennedy at the base camp of Kennedy's climb of the newly named Mt Kennedy in March, 1965. [Photo from Les McLaughlin Collection.]

He was assigned to the coverage team for the first Arctic Winter games in Yellowknife in 1970 and, when he retired in 1989, he had missed just one Games— because of ill-health.

One thing about Delaney that always struck his colleagues as odd was his inability or unwillingness to use a typewriter. Instead, he would jot down a few notes on a scrap of paper and proceed to ad-lib his sports report. Perhaps this is why he always sounded casual, indeed, natural though he did admit that it opened the possibility of mistakes. Terry would just shrug them off with his motto: "Your most important sportscast is your next sportscast."

Terry loved his work with the public broadcaster, not only for the celebrity it brought, but also for travel. A memorable trip occurred in 1960 when he was a member of the crew —sort of— as well as the CBC's designated reporter on the last voyage of a sternwheeler on the Yukon River. When the *SS Keno* steamed to Dawson City to become a national historic site, Delaney was on board. He lugged a cumbersome tape recorder and a wet suit. A wet suit? Well, one of his many varied outside interest was scuba diving and no doubt he convinced the expedition organizers that they needed not only a reporter but a guy who could fix things underwater.

As luck would— or wouldn't have it— the Keno struck a sand bar near Minto. Henry Breaden who was the first mate on that historic voyage picks up the story.

"Just above Minto there was a section we called Slack Water Crossing and the channel had changed dramatically. I was sitting on the floor eating my supper of a plate of wieners and beans when I saw Frank Slim jump out of his chair at the tiller and I knew that something was wrong.

So I dropped my beans and went forward to see what was going on. Frank and I both knew that the channel had changed but it was too late! We rang for full astern but we still went on to the bar.

Frank and I with a deckhand sounded out the channel with a sounding pole and became aware that the channel had cut right next to an island. We needed a stern snatch block attached to the stern ring and, as there was about two feet of fast water, Terry with his Scuba gear dropped over the side and did that for us. We were then able to pull the stern of the boat toward the island freeing the Keno."

There is no audio record— at least I know of none—of Delaney describing this unusual action. But by a special broadcast arrangement he was able to report the difficulties the gallant Keno had experienced much to the chagrin of the crew who had hoped for a flawless trip.

When they docked in Dawson, Terry filed news stories about the arrival of the grand old boat and presented a more positive picture of her future as a National Historic site.

Delaney was no stranger to Dawson having covered Discovery Day celebrations there for years. In 1962, when the city of gold began to emerge from the cobwebs of a neglected past, Terry was assigned by the CBC Network to provide coverage of the most flamboyant scheme ever dreamed up for the dear old town.

A Stratford theatre man, Tom Patterson, had managed to convince the federal government to refurbish the Palace Grande Theatre and so they did. That summer, Broadway descended on the Klondike with the premiere of a musical called "Foxy" starring Bert Lahr, the cowardly lion from the Wizard of Oz.

Once again, the musty, dusty gold rush town was brimming with action and Delaney was there to provide the colour and commentary to curious listeners across the nation. However the lustre of that halcyon summer diminished rather quickly when it became apparent that the federal government was not prepared to spend the millions of dollars it would take to make the town a rival to New York.

A few years later, on assignment with producer Cal Waddington, the pair discovered to their dismay that not very much had been planned to celebrate the Yukon's most famous event - the discovery of Klondike Gold. Not even a parade!

However, the two creative broadcasters were not to be thwarted so on that quiet August 17th, they scurried around town and organized a parade. Cal told the parade Marshall that he must not allow the event to begin before 12:30 pm because that was the only time the CBC could broadcast the proceedings to the Yukon network live from the deck of the *SS Keno*, the best vantage point in town.

Lo and behold, at noon, as Cal briefed Terry on the coverage plans, the parade came marching by and within five minutes had disappeared on its

Terry Delaney on Air from CBC Yukon's Master Control Room, 1967.
[Ed Kerry photo - from Tim Kinvig Collection.]

way to Minto Park. There were still 25 minutes to air time so Terry feverishly wrote descriptive notes about the floats.

At 12:30, with no parade in sight, Delaney began his live colour commentary by reading from his notes. Presently, a listener walking down Front Street with a transistor radio in his ear, surveyed the empty street, thought for a moment and then in a voice loud enough to scare a bear yelled:

"Bullshit. There's no parade. The CBC is lying. The Parade it gone."

Terry desperately tried to shield the microphone from the sacrilege emanating from the passer by but to no avail. The entire Yukon, unaware of the earlier passing parade, knew that Delaney was describing a non-existent event.

Terry covered news events before the CBC in the Yukon had a news department. He made it his business to know everyone on a first name basis, including air traffic controllers, and was often the first to hear when someone newsworthy arrived at the airport. So when US Senator Robert Kennedy deplaned in Whitehorse in 1965, on his way to climb the St. Elias Mountain named for his late brother, President John Kennedy, Terry was there.

His close friend, Cal Waddington recalled that Kennedy refused their repeated request for an interview, but then Terry said:

"Senator, sir, we are just little guys from the sticks and this is likely the only time we will see you. If you'd just give us a few minutes of your time, we would be grateful."

Terry Delaney - Broadcasting live from the Whitehorse Trade Show, 1973. [Tim Kinvig Photo.]

Cal said the spiel seemed to touch Kennedy and, as the famed Senator changed from street clothes to mountain climbing gear, Terry got the interview thus becoming one of the few journalists in the world to see the reclusive Kennedy brother in his underwear.

At Kennedy's insistence, there would be no interviews during the mountain climb. Still, Terry flew to the base camp in the press plane that carried photographers to the scene.

If he couldn't get an interview— the Senator considered it a private visit to the majestic mountain—Delaney was not about to leave without something to prove he was there. Befriending a photographer for *Life* magazine, he convinced Kennedy to allow one picture for the record. The photo says it all.

Though the CBC did not have a formal news operation until 1967, it did cover major events and aired a nightly newscast written by the editors of the *Whitehorse Star*. The early sixties had brought a profusion of momentous news stories including the stunning saga of Helen Klaben and Ralph Flores, whose light plane crashed in the wilderness near Watson Lake in 1963.

When they were miraculously found alive 49 days after the crash, the incredible news flashed around the world and Terry Delaney secured the first interview given by the pilot Ralph Flores. Less than a year later, the infamous Alaska earthquake of March 1964 ravaged the land. Anchorage was in a shambles as death and destruction swept the solitude of the mighty State. Terry drove all night from Whitehorse to Fairbanks then hitched a ride on the first plane allowed to land at the Anchorage airport becoming one of the first journalists to survey the scene. According to former CBC Producer, Cal Waddington, Terry's gift of the gab made it possible for him to open doors that were often closed to others. His audio reports of the devastation again made news around the world.

Terry was quick with a quip. Though not as smooth as some broadcasters, he was never at a loss for words. While covering the Arctic Winter Games in Hay River in 1978, he was assigned to travel on the first passenger train in the NWT—another milestone for the broadcaster who seemed to be everywhere. On that train trip from Hay River to Pine Point, Delaney was supposed to record interviews with the happy passengers. No problem. Just invite the guest to give his or her name and ask for their opinions about the ride.

"What's your name?" asked Terry of a reluctant passenger.

"Henry ... er .... Harry Lieshman, " came the hesitant reply.

"Well, make up your mind," said Terry. "What does your mother call you, Harry or Henry?

Another interview featured a young boy who looked as if he would rather be anywhere but on the radio.

"What's your name?" asked Terry.

"Billy," came the one word reply.

"Are you enjoying the train trip?" asked Terry.

A long soundless pause was followed by Terry exclaiming: "Don't nod, Billy. No one can see you nod on the radio!"

Terry himself loved to tell what we now call "Terry Delaney stories." In the early years of CBC North, a typically British BBC program called "The Archers" was broadcast for 15 minutes every morning. After a few years on the air, CBC management decided the Archers was dull and irrelevant for the Yukon radio audience. The show was cancelled. Little did management realize that the Archers, like Coronation Street had a loyal following. Nor did they know that they had cancelled the show on the very day that a whole bunch of loose ends in the on-going family drama were tied together.

The phone ran off the hook and the CBC had to arrange for a special feed of the program to Whitehorse so fans could at least find out what happened. Delaney was assigned to record the feed for later broadcast, but he became so engrossed in the stunning story line that he forgot to press the record button. Luckily he did remember what occurred on that final program and so he spent the next few days on the phone telling listeners who called in what exactly had happened to so and so.

Terry loved working the early morning shift, not because he relished getting up at 5 am on cold dark mornings, but rather because the shift ended early in the afternoon and he could spend the rest of the day maintaining his contacts on the streets and in the local watering holes. More than once, our morning man failed to hear the 5am alarm and the station was silent at

Terry Delaney and Pam Buckway - Broadcasting from the Yukon River ice during the 1977 Sourdough Rendezvous Dog Races. [Tim Kinvig Photo]

the 6 am sign on. The many managers he served under were not pleased with this situation.

However, Terry was inventive and fooled more than one boss with a little trick he developed to cover his tardiness. Arriving late for the morning shift, he would set the tone arm of the turntable into the middle of an appropriate song and start it up.

When the song ended, Terry would say:

"For the past 15 minutes you have been listening to the music of Ray Conniff and his Orchestra."

Managers and listeners alike could only wonder what was wrong with their radio sets.

Terry Delaney on the air from CBC Yukon's Studio on 10th November, 1983 - during the special 25th anniversary celebrations of the CBC Northern Service. This occasion also marked Delaney's 25th anniversary with the CBC. [Tim Kinvig Photo.]

Through more than 30 years with the CBC Terry Delaney left his mark on the Territory and the people. Though many Yukon broadcasters were smooth as silk on the air and some went on to stardom "outside," few captured the hearts and minds of the listeners the way Terry did. In 1983, during CBC North's 25th anniversary celebrations, a straw poll was conducted asking listeners to list their all-time favourite CBC personalities. Terry finished second just behind the irrepressible Wee Willie Anderson, another colourful character who belongs in Jim Robb's "five percent" club.

As we have discovered, Terry began his radio career as a volunteer. I too had been a volunteer at CFWH prior to the take over by CBC. I too wanted a job, but the Corporation was not about to hire a 17-year-old high school student and my budding broadcast career came to a shuddering halt. While attending UBC, I worked summer jobs with the Canadian Army and tried to put the pleasant memories of volunteer broadcasting behind me.

Then one sunny day in 1962, while I was sipping a coffee in the Taku restaurant, Terry Delaney walked in, sat down and told me that the CBC needed a summer relief announcer and that if I wanted, he would make arrangements for an audition. Thus, for better or worse, he was directly responsible for my career with CBC North. I suspect I am not the only youngster whose path in life Terry had influenced.

Terry retired from the CBC in May 1989. Though he had been in failing health for some time, his death on Sunday June 6th, 1993 at age 60 shocked and saddened his many friends and family. He was one of the Yukon's few non-native residents for whom a potlatch was held at Champagne where he is buried in the local cemetery.

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Editor: Many thanks to Tim Kinvig for loaning us these photos.

The Life and Times of Digger Cook

As Told To Henry Legel

Fred Cook in 1943.

Excerpts from the Book

1941: not suitable for War

If the drought hadn't come at the same time as the Depression, it would have made a huge difference in my life. I'd probably never have left Saskatchewan, the farmers would have had money. When the war broke out in '39, that changed everything. I was 19 years old. The government had made camps for all the single men that had nothing else to do, army camps, before the war actually started. It was to get them off the freight trains and out of the cities. You'd get your shelter and you'd get fed and maybe 5 dollars a month or something like that to buy your tobacco. They only started recruiting after the war broke out. All those men in the camps they volunteered right away, they'd start getting a dollar a day.

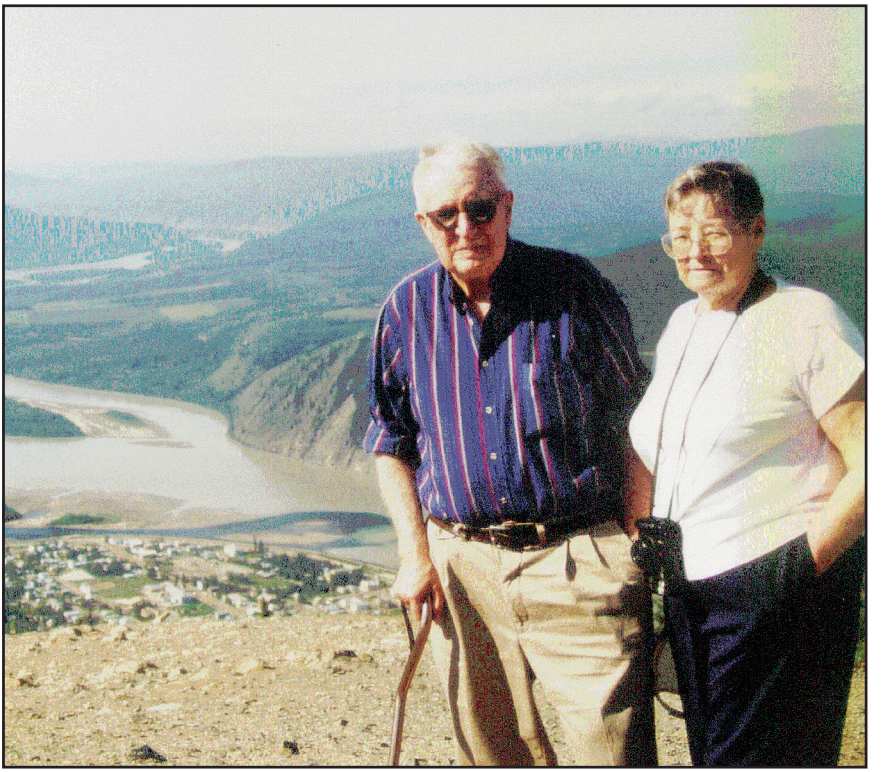
Everybody my age knew that we were going to have to go to war. The first contingent that went overseas was all of the guys from the camps. I was at university at that time. When you signed up for university the male students also had to sign up so they would be trained to be officers for the war, otherwise they wouldn't let you in. So you went through army training then, you took classes and at nighttime you'd go through the drill. When the spring came at the end of the season they sent you to an army camp for further training like for guns and stuff like that. I didn't care for this very much anyway so I first finished school. In 1941 there was no conscription except in Quebec. They didn't want to go over and fight for those "damned Englishmen".

I had army training but I joined the air force. Some of us were sent to England to get further training there. We joined at Saskatoon and were sent to Toronto for our basic training. There they figured I wasn't suitable for going overseas. When I was younger I was never in perfect health.

So in the fall of '41 I went back home and looked for work. My brother was an engineer and he was working in the PFRA- Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act - a scheme for irrigating the prairies. So first of all they had to survey all that land to find out where they were going to put in all the canals and dams.

At university I had taken engineering and had some surveying skills so I was ready when my brother got me a job on a surveying crew that worked at those irrigation systems in the prairies. This experience finally got me up to the Yukon. I worked on that survey for a year.

I had a school chum from my hometown and he graduated in engineering and then moved to Vancouver. For some reason he got a job in the Yukon as an engineer on the airport at Whitehorse. We kept in contact. At that time I was working in the coal mines in Alberta. I thought there must be a better place to be than in a coal mine. So one day when Carlyle Scull, my friend from school, told me that I should come up north because they were looking for people who were knowledgeable in survey work, I didn't think twice. I had my honourable discharge from the Air Force and was free to go anywhere I wanted. So I said "Fine, how in the hell do I get there?"



Fred and Jean Cook on the Midnight Dome, Dawson, 1998.
[Henry Legel photo]

At that time in the Yukon at the end of the great depression it was just like over in Alaska at the pipeline in the seventies. Everybody wanted to go and work there. The problem was, how did you get there!? You could go to Skagway by boat, but the American Army ran the railway there too.

"You go to Edmonton," he says "and go up to the Royal Canadian Air Force. We'll send a warrant for your passage." So I went to Edmonton and sure enough, the warrant was there. They said, "Fine, come here tomorrow morning!" and that was it.

Airports and Roads and "Tokyo Rose"

So I went to Edmonton, because Edmonton had a lot to do with the highways. The road started in Dawson Creek, B.C., just 300 miles away. Lots of Canadians were there. But to get up to Whitehorse, that was more trouble. There were no roads north at that time; the Alaska Highway was the first road ever built into Whitehorse. There was just an old trail between Dawson and Whitehorse which they called the winter road, which was also a stage route, perhaps one of the longest in the world. They told me they had up to 200 horses on that project. Every 20 miles they had a post to change horses. The river is too rough to travel in the wintertime so they went overland. Part of this trail is still visible. They still use part of it today, for example in the Yukon Quest sled dog race. Sometimes they used runners, sleighs, you know, for the coaches.

God, I looked forward to going North! On the streets of Edmonton there were big banners right across the roads: "GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN!" That was exciting, you know. I wanted to work too and this fitted right in.

My friend told me that I would be joining the Canadian Government, they called it the Department of Transport, Federal Government. In working for the Federals they could fly me on the military planes, you see.

I first came to Whitehorse in March of 1943. The highway construction had not been going for long so there were still lots of soldiers around. The Canadian job wasn't on the highway because the Americans built it and they didn't need any help from us.

We were working on the "Northwest Staging Route" project. That was to build the airports along the highway. At that time they were bringing planes up to Alaska mainly for the Russians, because they were fighting the Germans. The planes came from Montana and were handed over to Russian pilots in Fairbanks. So the Americans needed bases to refuel, for safety and for radio contact.

Whitehorse in 1943 was full of Americans, but all in all there were only about 450 people there. Whitehorse at that time was mostly bush. There was a road up to the airport, they call it "Two Mile Hill" now, and there was another road that went up the big clay bank. They had to cut a road in the hillside there to get up to the airport the other way too. There were only two or three stores on Main Street then and the White Pass depot and that's

about all. We were in a camp where they now have an airplane up on a pedestal. They were building the hangars and the airport wasn't finished either. They were still building the runway.

There were two other airport projects to the north, at Aishihik and Snag. I was put on the Aishihik project. At Canyon Creek we started to put the

Fred is fixing the motor on his D-4 Caterpillar while Jean looks on. Scroggie Creek, Yukon.

road in to where the airport site was going to be. That was 70 miles up the lake. We worked long hours just to get the job done. We had to keep ahead of the crew all the time, surveying. Not every day but every minute counted. The Japanese, even at that time, were still advancing up the Aleutians. The Japanese had a woman on radio for propaganda, she was called "Tokyo Rose", and she was telling us that we should quit and that Hirohito would win the war and stuff like that. I remember listening to her, she was telling us that we should hurry and get the road built because the Japanese would need it when they hit Alaska, they would need it to come down to the States. So they meant business. But the U.S. finally stopped them at Attu, basically at the same time when they got the highway into Alaska.

The American base in Alaska was Fairbanks. That's where the Russians came to get the planes. On their way up from Montana the planes followed the road, the "Alaska Highway". They were having a lot of trouble, planes were getting lost, they had no radio contact and no weather forecasts and they were flying VFR only, visual flight, you know. So if they got off the course, around a mountain, if they lost the highway, they were just lost! In those days there was no search party, the poor guy was just gone. They'd find him 10 years later, maybe.

So the idea of the Canadian Government was to build these airports along the highway to put in installations like radio and equipment and manpower for weather forecasts so that they at least had radio contact with the planes. Also they would have a place to land in case of an emergency or if they ran out of gas. They put fuel in there for them to fuel up. The Alaska Highway was pretty well roughed in then. We had to get the airport in, then they brought the meteorologists, radio men and weather men. When I got there the Americans had just rolled through but you couldn't travel on the road. They had trouble even with their big trucks.

The Americans were putting the road in and paid for it, but behind the American army they had big American road construction companies coming and they made the road better and finally some Canadian companies started to come in, too.

My First Yukon Adventure

While I was out there surveying for the Aishihik airport I got a sore on my foot. We had to walk a lot, you know. My boss told me that I had better get to town and see the doctor about that. So I got on the next plane and went to town. There I went to a young doctor. In those days you didn't expect him to have a whole lot of experience. He didn't really know what the hell it was, so wanted to try something. It was some kind of an infection, it wept, you know, like a fungus. It didn't get any better so I went to my mentor, Captain Harold Adcock. He knew some doctors in the U.S. Army's Officers mess and he got hold of the medical officer and told him about my problem and that nothing had helped me. He said "Send him over!". Of course I went to see him and he knew what it was right away. In the army, they had a lot to do with the soldier's feet. He told me what it was and then he got something and he said "You just put this on it."

When I went out to work that spring I had bought a brand new pair of boots downtown. They came up above my ankles and the leather was dyed and was rubbing so I got the infection. The Doc said that I was allergic to that red dye. He said, "You throw those boots away!" I got some other ones and it healed up.

On this flight into town I was on a little old airplane with floats, we landed on the river in downtown Whitehorse. Canadian Pacific Airlines had just taken over this airline. Actually these planes belonged to the White Pass; they had an airline too at that time. They were single-engine.

I got on one of them on Otter Lake. One guy was sitting up front with the pilot and two of us in the back. Just about half way to town the goddamn motor quit. I tell you that was a sickening feeling! So we just looked at each other and shook hands, "Nice knowing you!" The pilot was trying to make the thing go, we were going down and down and down, and finally he got it going again. I think it had something to do with the fuel. Anyway it started

The Discovery Days parade (August 17) in Dawson, 1970. Charley Rendell is driving Fred's Jeffrey-Quad truck, one of the oldest trucks in Canada. The four-wheel drive truck was built in 1910 and was acquired by Fred from the US Army in Eagle, Alaska. In the background of this photo stands the old Principal Hotel.

going and we made it into town. We're getting off the plane and there were two mechanics, they were on the float there and tied the plane up, and I heard the pilot tell them "You get that damn thing fixed," he said, "I got to go to Watson Lake tomorrow." They said "O.K., O.K.!"

Anyways the next morning he headed off to Watson Lake but the plane never made it. He crashed. Same plane. But he walked away from it. He wasn't injured but he had to walk out. He knew where he was, but he had to walk 20 miles to the highway. I saw him again years later and he said: "That's the best place for that plane right down there."

Years and years after that two CP engineers got the rights to salvage it and they went in and took it out. They rebuilt it. It's in the Aircraft Museum down in Ottawa now. It still flies.

Well, we got the road into Aishihik. Then I went back to Whitehorse that winter. There I was told that they would give us free passage to go home for Christmas. So I went back to Saskatoon.

The rest of the winter I spent in Whitehorse again, working at the airport.

By the spring of '44 things started winding down a little bit. The Americans had stopped the Japanese and there was no threat from there anymore so the American army started to pull out. I'm sure I could have stayed on that summer but I was pretty sure that the next fall they probably wouldn't need me any longer. My mentor, this old gentleman Adcock, was in charge of the office. He once was a captain in the British Army but now he was a civilian. He treated me like a son. So I told him about my suspicion, that I was afraid I had no job in the fall and that I would like to see Dawson City before I had to leave this country. I saw those riverboats going north all the time and I'd sure like to go down to Dawson on one of them.

Out into the Wild!

We talked about that a lot. One day that spring Mr. Adcock called me into his office and he said: "You're still figuring going to Dawson?" and I said "Yeah!" And he asked "How?" and I said "Oh, gettin' on a boat or something." He said: "I'm gonna tell you something. One of the things I do, I'm sort of a mining promoter also. There's a creek up in the Dawson area that I have an interest in. We have a mining company coming in from Toronto that is going to go up there and prospect this creek to see if we can put a dredge on it. There's an engineer coming up in a week or so. I'm pretty sure that he would like to pick up an assistant to go with him. I think you'd fit right in there."

When the engineer, Franklin Price, came he interviewed me and said: "Ya, I think you're my man!" So we made a deal there and I hired on with Numa Lake Mines. That was the second time my survey work in the prairies came in handy. We had to stake claims and stuff like that, you know.

Price came up just about the time of break-up on the first of June. I quit my job and we were going to fly up on a charted plane. He didn't waste time

sightseeing, so I didn't get my boat ride. But we couldn't go in right away because there was a flood in Dawson, a river flood, and the hotel we were to stay in was flooded and they couldn't accept guests yet.

At that time Dawson was already getting some tourists but the main traffic was freight for the town and the gold company which had changed hands from the Guggenheims, you know. At that time gold mining had already been going on for 50 years and now it's over a hundred years and still going.

There was a landline telegraph so when we heard we could come we went to Dawson. We were staying at the Royal Alexandra Hotel, right on Front Street. Dawson was a lot smaller when I got there than it was around 1900. Lots of the buildings on old maps weren't there anymore.

We were getting our stuff together, they had made arrangements for a Cat, a bulldozer that would come in from Mayo on the riverboat. The guy with the Cat had to build a landing on the Stewart River so that the steamboat could land at the mouth of Scroggie Creek, about 24 miles up from the mouth of the Stewart. At Stewart there was a Hudson's Bay post. Rudolf Burian lived there later but he's dead now; his wife Yvonne still lives in Dawson today. Burians when I got there lived maybe three miles up the Stewart from the mouth of Scroggie Creek where we had to do our survey work.

Further up the Stewart in Mayo, where the Cat came from, there were silver mines. We had to put a road in on Scroggie so we needed a Cat, you see. One of the old winter trails from Dawson to Whitehorse, the stage route, you know, went up Scroggie. It went from Dawson up Bonanza, down Quartz Creek and then across the Indian River to a place they called Black Hills Creek. It went over a summit there, down Black Hills Creek to the Stewart and then along the Stewart down to Scroggie.

The first few miles up Scroggie was the old stage road, it came to a creek called Walhalla Creek. Then the Walhalla turned left and the road went to the left but we were going to the right, continue up Scroggie another 12 miles so it was 24 miles up Scroggie all together, close to the Pyroxene Mountain. That's where the Cat came in so we brushed the road out for the last 12 miles. We built what they called a stoneboat, a flat kind of sleigh from two logs. You pull it on the ground. We would put stuff on that and the Cat hauled it.

We had hired a guy with a riverboat and he took us up from Dawson up there. There was an old fellow way up Scroggie, 24 miles up where we're gonna work, named Bill Mason. He had claims up there, too. He went to work for us and became our cook.

First we got a campsite, brushed it out, started building some stoneboats and things like that. We built a landing at the mouth of Scroggie so that a riverboat could get in and land and put our stuff on the bank there. From there we hauled it on these stoneboats with Cat to our camp.

The next year we brought a drill in but we didn't find anything, well, at least not enough for a dredge. There were some good claims but for a dredge

you want to look ahead for maybe 20 years. There just wasn't enough gold for that.

All the other land around the Klondike that had that kind of gold in it was owned by the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation.

Of Monty Velge and Jesus Christ

My boss Franklin Price was very "air minded." He believed in getting somewhere the fastest way and that meant flying. There wasn't a charter service in Whitehorse at the time so we were chartering from Carcross. Northern Airways was owned by George and Aubrey Simmons, the pilot was Pat Callison, a very famous bush pilot.

One day he was taking us back to Scroggie Creek by float plane and before we landed on the Stewart River he said to Franklin: "There is a bench at the confluence of Scroggie and Walhalla and I think there's room for an airstrip!"

We flew over to see it and he said that if we could clear off 1700 feet and take the tall trees out from one end he had a plane that could get in there with wheels in the summer and skis in the winter.

Franklin said: "O.K., this would be only 12 miles from our camp!" The old landing site on the Stewart was 24 miles away. So when we got back to our camp he sent Connie Lakness, the foreman, to the site with the D-7 tractor. Bill Mason, our cook, and myself went with Connie; we stayed in one of the cabins there. These cabins were once used by the old stage-line.

One day while we were working I looked around and coming towards me was a man walking with two dogs. I introduced myself and welcomed him. He was Monty Velge and was from Brewer Creek, which is on the Stewart River not far downstream from us.

He had been on Brewer Creek in the early days and had left to go overseas during the First World War with the Honourable George Black's contingent. He returned after the war to his creek and had been there alone ever since.

He had never seen a bulldozer working and was amazed. He asked me: "How many wheelbarrows of dirt is it pushing?" Connie saw us and drove over to see our visitor. When he got off the tractor he invited Monty to go for a ride. Monty declined but with a little persuasion we got him on the tractor. When he opened the throttle the tractor gave a loud roar and both the dogs took off - out of sight.

When Monty got off the tractor he went to the cabin to talk to Bill Mason who he knew. He was going to stay overnight in the other cabin.

I started back to the cabins at suppertime and when I got close I heard someone yelling. I looked and there was Monty, waving his arms around, looking up to the sky and yelling; "Here, Jesus, Christ!"

Immediately I thought that we might have shocked him or something and that he had gone out of his mind. Were we in trouble?

When I got to the cabin I asked Bill what was wrong and he said: "Oh

nothing. He was just calling his dogs! They are afraid and won't come into camp."

Now - what names for dogs are those anyway?

That evening I visited with Monty. He had a Lee-Enfield rifle, 303 Cal., old army perhaps. He also had some steel jacket ammunition 303. I had a Greener 303 British rifle and used 220-grain soft nose ammo. I offered to trade him some but he would have no part of it. I think he thought he would be obligated.

Some time later I heard that he was badly mauled by a bear. I later met him in Dawson and he told me about it. He was out hunting for some meat. He met a bear and he shot it but it was only wounded. The bear charged and mauled him. He passed out and woke up in a willow bush. He saw his rifle, crawled to it, the bear came back, he fired at it and hit him again. Then the bear mauled him a second time. When he came to again the bear was gone, he probably died. Monty told me that the bear nearly knocked his scalp off. I asked him if he went to Stewart City for help. "No," he said, "I just went home, washed my wounds, pulled my scalp on the best I could, put a tea poultice on it and wrapped my head in a towel."

I had never heard of such endurance. I also wondered after if he had used the 303-330 grain ammo this might never have happened. May Jesus Christ bless him.

Living like Kings

The next winter my boss had hired two men who were supposed to sink winter test pits on two other creeks we had picked besides Scroggie. That was the winter before we started to drill there. He had a deal with them that they were paid for every foot they dug. My job was to go out with a dog team and test all these holes they had dug during that winter. If the hole was down to bedrock I had to take samples along the sides of the hole, take it in the cabin and pan it out, get the gold and take it to town. There we dealt with the Bank of Commerce where we could use a room upstairs. I had to weigh the gold. Then we'd calculate how much gold a yard would hold, for the dredge, you see.

So in the winter of '44-'45 I had to represent the company in Dawson by doing this. I first learned how to drive a dog-team, in kind of a hurry. My boss had hired "Big Felix", Felix Lederer, to go with me out there. We had two small teams. I was staying at the Royal Alexandra Hotel that winter, that was my headquarters. I ate in the Arcade Cafe.

So we had two guys on Scroggie, one on Sixtymile and two on Moose Creek which is close to Alaska. To get there we had to go right to the Alaskan border, that's where it came in. To make the round it always took us about two weeks.

We would leave Dawson, go up Bonanza, down Quartz, cross the Indian River, over the Black Hills, down to the Stewart, over to Scroggie and up Scroggie. That would be already roughly a good hundred miles until I got to

the last guy, Bill Mason, at the head of Scroggie. Then I'd come back to town, make some calculations. Then I had to make the other trip: we had to go up the Yukon River, about eight miles to Swede Creek and up Swede, go over Fish Creek to California Creek and then down California to the Sixtymile River, then up the river to where these guys were. From there we had to go up to what they now call the Top of the World Highway. It joins there at 49 Mile. There's a little cabin there, it's still there, the only one left. There was no trails. Most of the time we had to snowshoe ahead of the dogs, break trail, you know. So when we got up to the 49 cabin we had to go more than ten miles, maybe 15, on what is now "Top of the World Highway" until we'd get to Moose Creek. Then we'd go down Moose Creek, find the guys there. That time we were close to the Fortymile River and we were actually going into Alaska. The American boundary crosses the creek there. Then we followed the Fortymile down to the Yukon where the old townsite of Forty Mile is situated. From there Felix and I continued upriver to Dawson. That whole trip would take two or three weeks. If couldn't get to a cabin we just slept out, made a bivouac, you know.

On one of these trips, when we got down to the guys on Moose Creek, it was fifty below. At that time there were more cabins, more people on the creeks. Trappers and miners would stay the winter; they had nowhere else to stay. We had sleeping bags, took our own food and dogfood. The food for the dogs used to come from Old Crow mostly. There were bales of salmon and they were split and smoked, dried and lightweight. Half a salmon was plenty of food for a dog for a day. The NC Company sold it.

We met all these old guys out there on the trail; we had never been in that country before, it was strange for us. They tried to tell us how to get where we were going. Sometimes - they don't do it intentionally - they don't give you the exact way. "Just take the first creek" - stuff like that. We once were told we should look out for signs of a guy that had snowshoed over that Christmas from Moose Creek to Sixtymile to pick up his mail. Joe Castaguay was his name. If we found the snowshoe tracks, that would be the creek.

We started out and we were way up there and the wind was blowing you wouldn't believe it, just like mad - and cold! So I said to Felix we should pull in here and get the hell out of the storm. "Well," he said "if it's only a short ways, we always can drop down in the bush, we'll be okay anyway, so what the hell,we might as well keep going." I didn't like that, so anyway we started again. We hadn't gone far but he got ahead of me quite a ways and I caught up to him and he was stopped. His dogs were lying beside their toboggan and they had quit! They just wouldn't get up. "That's it," they said, "the hell with it!" you know. So I said to Felix, that we better get back and those dogs just got up and went! They knew! They absolutely knew what was right and what was wrong. We stayed in that cabin for a couple days before the storm let up.

At last we found out that it wasn't just the next creek but that we had to go for about 15 miles before we would find some signs of Joe coming up. We were happy to get out of the wind going down that creek. It was still blowing out there.

Anyway, we were at Moose Creek. There was an old gentleman known as "W. West", he was a partially deaf and mute man, a real nice fellow, you know. His wife was a full mute but their kids were normal. He was a machinist or boilermaker in town and had a little mining thing going out there on the side. We got in one of his cabins there and he had just a little stove, a Yukon stove. It had a firebox on one side and an oven on the other side. If we lit a fire in there you might as well have a candle for heat. It wasn't big enough! So Felix went out and got us a bigger heater from one of the other sheds. Then we got some heat and finally had supper and went to bed. In the middle of the night I hear Felix yell at me: "Get up, get up, the house is on fire!" I woke up and it was just full of smoke. So we opened the door to get the smoke out and I got my mukluks on and what not and grabbed a bucket to get some snow. What happened was: we put the heater on the floor and there was a hole in the bottom and it started the floor on fire! If the cabin would have burned we wouldn't be here today. We got it out anyway.

Finally we got to our guys and they looked at us and said: "What in hell are you guys doing out here in this kind of weather?" They had a thermometer and it was fifty below.

Most of the men on Moose Creek were American chaps who were spending the winter. They were surprised to see somebody, we were very welcome, they invited us and treated us like kings. Lots of grub and a little bit to drink and what not. They didn't want us to go.

They were mining on the Fortymile and stayed there for the winter. It's cheaper than going to town. They even had plane service for their mail; they were living like kings out there.

When we got to Forty Mile we met a gentleman named Simon Peter Anderson and we asked him if he could rent us one of his cabins for the night. He said we would be welcome to use it but if we wanted something fancy we should go on to an old fellow named Shultz, he had the roadhouse. We asked if it was open and he said, "Oh, ja, sure!" So I said, "Oh, gee, that sounds good! We won't have to have to cook or anything!" So we went to see him. I asked, "How much is it?" He said, "It's two dollars a night and two dollars a meal and you have to help with the dishes."

That sounded quite funny but anyway we agreed on it and we stayed there quite comfortable in the middle of the wilderness, in a hotel. That was the only time I voluntarily did the dishes - well, it wasn't voluntarily really, I was on kind of a contract wasn't I?

From there we needed two more days to get back to Dawson. Just about half way from Forty Mile to Dawson was the place of Percy de Wolfe, the mail carrier between Dawson and Eagle. We stayed with him, he had lots of cabins there, quite a big outfit.

I think on our second trip when we got into Dawson, the Mounted Police were in town. They came over and asked if they could use our dogs. I said "Well, no problem, I guess, where are you going?" He said, a police patrol had left Fort McPherson to come over here, and was missing. They used to make these annual patrols, you know. This was the last patrol in '44 that was made by a dog team.

Law enforcement, mail and identity was the reason for those patrols. On our way back we had come by the Chandindu or 12 Mile River where there was a native village and the patrol had to come down that river. So I told the RCMP that we stopped there and talked to the people who were trapping up there. They never mentioned seeing anybody.

I said they should give the dogs a rest for a day or two and then go ahead. Well, two days later they came over and said that they'd arrived. The famous "Lost Patrol" was the same thing, you know, but they weren't as lucky.

Today if you go on a trip like that you go check with the police and if you don't show up they go look for you, which is a good thing. In those days if you'd go to the police and say, "We're going!" they'd just say "Good bye!" to you or "Have a good trip then!" And if you don't show up in the spring - well, bad luck, you know.

Toboggans, mukluks and Joe Henry's snowshoes

In Dawson there were stores when I arrived where you could buy your clothes. Some of it was factory made, some was made by the native people, but they were harder to get because there was a lot of work in it. So they weren't very plentiful, you know. When we travelled with the dogs we never rode on the toboggan, we always walked behind and helped push and a parka would be too hot anyway. I had a light parka made just of canvas with no buttons or lining or anything. When you go through the bush and you hit a tree the snow wouldn't get down your neck, you see.

That was enough; we had wool pants and a heavy wool shirt, and if you're working you wouldn't sweat too much. You put your heavy parka on only when you're stopped. I had a pair of mukluks that were made by native people and they had a caribou shank that was waterproof. Our snowshoes were made of babiche, that's sinew out of the leg of the moose. The ones made by manufacturers were heavy wood; they were stronger, but we had light ones from Joe Henry. He's still living in Dawson now, must be over a hundred now. The old gentleman was a wizard at making snowshoes and if you ever get a pair of his snowshoes you got something! His were wonderful light snowshoes and they were sort of cone-shaped or bent on the front, they weren't flat.

Most of the time we weren't just following a trail, we were breaking our own trail ahead of the dogs. From Dawson to Stewart over Solomon Dome down the Indian River we'd make it in five days. There were lots of cabins on the trail at that time. At the Stewart River we got to a place called "Maisy May Ranch". There a whole family was living, Rudolf Burian's family. Later on he moved to Stewart. He used to cut wood at Maisy May for the steamboat that came from Mayo down to Stewart. On the Stewart there were people mining before the Klondike was struck, bar mining, on the sandbars, way up. They were adventurers, prospectors, you know. Most of them had been all over the world. They were mining in northern B.C. before they

were mining in the Yukon, and they all figured there had to be gold in the Yukon. Then Henderson came in, long before the Gold Rush. Some of the white traders there, like Harper and Ladue and those guys questioned those fellows. They were trading, but they were prospecting also. Henderson went up the Indian River and ended up on Gold Bottom Creek that comes into Hunker. He was on Gold Bottom when Carmacks discovered the gold on Bonanza just over the hill. So he was in the right church but the wrong pew.

I'm chased by wolves while drilling through my toenail

Once we were coming down the Black Hills. There we met with two trappers I knew. They were good trappers and had quite a cabin and two good-sized teams which they worked different ways on the loops of the traplines. So when we came down the creek my lead dog, a female, came in heat. That's a nice thing to happen on the trail, I tell you. The damn wolves, they followed us all that day, we could hear them, not too far away, they were behind us. We got to the trappers place and one of them, Ivor, said "Boy, by god, they'll be in camp tonight!"

Well, on the trail that day I hit my foot and banged my toe when I upset on what we called a glacier. It was terribly sore. When we got to the camp I took my shoe off and my toe was just black. Ivor said I somehow had to get a hole through my toenail to relieve the pressure. So I took my hunting knife and used it like a drill. I didn't know how to do it, so I stopped when it hurt too much, then I'd do some more. Finally I did get through and the blood shot right out.

While I was doing this it was bright moonlight outside and the trappers had their guns ready because if the wolves came in that night they wanted to nail them.

So while I was drilling through my toenail I suddenly heard the dogs snapping their chains and yipping, and Ivor said "They're here!" and he and Felix grabbed their guns and out they went. Finally I heard this shot, "boom!" and Felix shouted "I think I got one!" Well, I was still sitting in there, nursing my toe and they came back and Felix said after checking our dogs "I saw him jump, I think I got him. I just couldn't find your wheel dog." So he went back to look for him and he found him, hiding. He brought him in and we saw that he had shot him. The bullet just broke his skin fortunately, but it left quite a gash. The three men cleaned the wound and sewed him up. He was alright, it was just a flesh wound.

I meet Klondike Kate

When I was with the mining company I was staying at the Royal Alexandra Hotel. It was probably the best hotel in town. You've heard of Klondike Kate? Well, Klondike Kate, she was then living in Oregon but used to come up every year. She was the biggest entertainer during the gold rush; that's where she made her fame.

She was quite a wealthy woman at that time. There are books written about her. A lot of people didn't care for her; the do-gooders, you know. They thought she was a prostitute because there were lots of prostitutes in town when she was there. But a lot of the old-timers knew her and told me she never was a prostitute but just an entertainer. Anyway, as years went on she made a fortune entertaining, she was very popular, and I guess the old-timers gave her a lot of nuggets. Finally she got tied up with a guy named Pantages, a Greek guy maybe. Well, she had the money and she built a theater in town. Now they had their own theater and really made money. Pantages went outside for some reason, he sort of left her I guess, and she didn't know it at the time. He started a string of theatres somewhere in the States and they called it "Pantages Theatres" and he made big money, too. But he left her and she wanted her money back because there was no money there, she was left with nothing. She tried to sue him but lost and ended up broke. Anyway after that she married a man named Matson, he was a miner and one of her admirers. He mined up on a creek named after him, Matson Creek. It comes in the Sixtymile River, quite a ways from its mouth in the Yukon. He lived in a cabin up there. Klondike Kate would go out to Oregon and she'd come back and spend most of the summer. He would spend the winters up on his creek.

Usually she would come into town with the first riverboat, the Casca, the first week of June. He'd come down from his mine to meet her. She used to stay in the Royal Alexandra when I was there. That's where I met her. There was a couple by the name of Gleaves, Harry and Nan. Klondike Kate was a good friend of theirs. They owned the hotel and the cafe there which was attached to the hotel. I just happened to be lucky enough to meet this Dawson legend. She never did get any money from Pantages anyway.

When I first came to Dawson in 1944 there were lots of old-timers and gold rush guys still living there. Every one of them I asked about Kate, they would say she was just an entertainer, she was never a prostitute.

Stories of the Stewart

There were still lots of trappers on the Stewart when I was there. They were on all the little creeks up there. And there still was a post of the Hudson's Bay Company at Stewart City where they could trade in their furs. Earlier their station at Fort Selkirk had been burned down by Chilcat Indians; they didn't like it there. But now the Bay had come back. The Stewart River is a long river and they were trapping up the Stewart. You go up the Yukon from the Stewart about ten miles and the White River comes in. There were a lot of trappers way up to the head of the White River, too. They'd come down before the break-up in the spring with their furs and they'd trade their furs at Stewart City. That's where I met most of them. Most of the trappers had cabins at Stewart and they'd stay there for the summer. They had a place to put their dogs and everything and they may do a little prospecting or bar mining at the Stewart in the summertime. When the winter would come, they'd go back up to their traplines.

The White River's valley is wide but the river twists a lot, is hard to navigate, and picks up a lot of ash and silt on it's way. That's why it is called the White; it turns the Yukon white, too, as soon as it comes in.

The trappers of course didn't have the fancy stuff for food we have now. I don't think they had tomatoes and stuff like that. They used to get a lot of dried fruit, especially prunes and apricots. Then beans were a big thing, pork and beans and flour for bannock. They'd shoot a moose or a caribou, whatever. Oh, they were on their own back then, nobody was their boss. They'd do what they wanted but it was a tough life. Especially if they were alone up there; if they had a partner I guess it was easier but most of them didn't have partners. They didn't want one.

Well, if there were two guys that were good friends and you'd put them together throughout the winter they sure as hell would have beaten each other by spring. Cabin Fever, you know.

The telegraph company had a land line from B.C. right up to Dawson. They had a man in a cabin every so many miles on the line. He had to look after the wire if it got broken or a tree fell on it or something like that. Some of them would get a little strange. The company tried to do something about it and they put two men in the cabin for safety's sake I guess, but it didn't' work out. It was worse than before. The cabin is only twelve foot square.

So most of the guys I knew there were alone, they trapped alone. In those days you were just on your own. If you didn't show up in the spring they'd go up to the cabin and if you were dead the police would just bury you there, that's all. They had no other choice, they couldn't bring you out.

Like John Matson, Klondike Kate's husband, he died in his cabin, too. They found him in the spring. A lot of that happened especially in the later years, those guys were getting pretty old. Some of them were '98ers, you know. If a trapper did die out there and he had dogs, well, that was the end of them, too. The wolves would get them.

The man who knew Jack London

There was a fellow named Huey Charter. There were three or four of these old-timers, Huey and Jim McLaughlin and some other fellows at Stewart City at the time. That's where the Stewart River enters the Yukon. Huey Charter told me that when Jack London was coming in, he and bunch of other guys got stuck in Stewart because the river froze up before they could get to Dawson. So they spent the winter there at Stewart City. Jack London had a cabin there. Huey told me that his cabin was close to his and that they used to visit a lot.

He knew that London was a writer. He was writing then, you know, and he talked a lot about it.

Afterwards another writer, Dick North, who is a fan of London's, went up to Stewart with Joe Henry and some other guys. Actually, they were on Henderson Creek where they found and identified Jack London's cabin. By that time it was pretty well tumbled down, so Dick took some of the logs out

of the cabin and they brought them to Dawson. They shipped some of the logs to California and the rest stayed in Dawson where they built "Jack London's Cabin". So now there are two "original" cabins of his, but there was no real cabin of Jack London in Dawson before that.

When Huey met London he wasn't too famous yet, you know, and in those days they didn't talk too much anyway so unfortunately he couldn't tell me much more about him.

I get a radio

Once at Stewart City I met this old guy named Dick Gooding that had this new kind of machine, a radio. I liked it and bought it. Just straight long-wave, forty-forty. You could either talk through a microphone or use the key. Talking with the microphone was harder on the battery. If the weather was bad and the reception and static were bad, they would tell me, "you better use the key." So I would try to key. I had a list with all the different Morse-signs but the Dawson Signal Corps had a hell of a time reading me. They would say, "We take from what you're saying that you want an airplane tomorrow. Now give us a long dash if that is correct!"

Of course everybody in town that had a radio could pick us up, it was kind of an open circuit, even the girl who later became my wife listened to us talk on the radio station. So you were very careful of what you said on the air.

The signal went in to the Royal Canadian Signal Corps in Dawson. If you had a message, let's say to Vancouver, they'd send it for you. They had this schedule made up for everybody within range, the miners, the trappers or anyone else.

So we drilled in '45; the company only had a two- year project, and that was it. They offered me another job, I think at Kluane Lake, where they were going to get some more ground, they told me. But I didn't want to go. Well, the reason was obvious because meanwhile I had met a girl, Jean.

I meet my wife and give her hell

Jean and I were married in '46. That had a lot to do with me settling down. I started to work for the NC Company in Dawson where she also was working. Her father was the dentist in town. I was caught somehow, you know.

The Northern Commercial Company had a whole block in town, all under one roof. I went to work as a clerk in the hardware department.

Dawson at that time was the capitol of the Yukon and a real honest, little community. It lived mainly off the mining industry and in the summer there was a little bit of tourism but not much because the tourists all had to come by boat. There was no road to any place. Just a little airport 11 miles up the Klondike. Jean's mother came in by a little plane from Whitehorse in '38 after taking the boat from Vancouver to Skagway and the train to

Whitehorse following her husband who started to practice dentistry in Dawson one year earlier.

If you didn't work for the NC store or some private industry like the Gold Company, who had their own little town up Bear Creek, you had to take a government job. The Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation had about 90% of the gold fields. There was just a few individual miners left, they had just small operations. But there were up to ten dredges working at once in the gold fields and the Gold Company owned the water and sewer system, the power system and the telephone system in Dawson, they basically owned the whole area.

I met Jean first at the NC Company where she worked in the store. The first time I saw her I gave her hell. My boss, this engineer Franklin Price, you know, and I were on the boat, probably the Casca, going up to Stewart and Scroggie again. We needed a part for the Cat and the NC Company also was the Caterpillar agent and they should have put this part on the boat for us. So I went back to the store before the boat left to make sure that the part was on board. I walked in the door and there was the goddamn part, still sitting on the counter! And Jean was behind it and all the others were looking out the window, looking at the boat! So I just grabbed the part because the boat would go pretty quick and I had to get the hell back to the boat. Of course I gave her shit first. She didn't even know what I was talking about because she was just selling hardware, not Cat parts, you know. Anyway, I got the part. We didn't go together until I moved to town later.

I become an Entrepreneur

At the store I started out as a clerk in the hardware department. Then I went to the Caterpillar department. I worked for the NC Company for two or three years, after we got married in 1946.

There was a guy in Dawson that had a taxi business in town and he had the airport limousine, a guy named Taylor. He wanted to leave, to sell out. He had two or three rigs and he had the taxi license and all that. So I said to my wife, "Gosh, I'm gonna talk to him." I went to see him and I made a deal with him to buy him out.

Then we left the NC Company and in 1949 we went into our own business. We called it "Cook's Taxi". That was the start of our transportation and trucking business.

I bought a place in town because we had to move out of the Company house. We had the office downstairs and an apartment upstairs, right in the middle of town. Houses weren't expensive, I think we paid about $900, something like that. It was not like today. That was 50 years ago.

The only plane that came into Dawson at that time was the DC-3 that is now on the pedestal in front of the Whitehorse airport. It was a CP airplane and together with another one, the spare one, they served the people that wanted to go to Mayo or Dawson after they came into Whitehorse from Vancouver or Edmonton with bigger planes. They used to go to Whitehorse

- Mayo - Dawson, then they'd overnight in Dawson and go back the same way.

One day CP figured they could use their company employee in Dawson somewhere else and they asked me to be their agent. You got free flights for that, you know. So that was fine with me and that's how we got to Hawaii a couple of years later. We worked ten years on that.

We had our own office in town anyway so the wife would do the ticketing there.

After we opened our own business I was rather proud of my first business cards. The "Dawson News" printed them.

I used to call my tours "Cook's Tours". There is this other big, worldwide outfit that has the same name, you know. I had a long airport limousine that had three seats so I could take ten people and I had a sign on top: "Cook's Tours." I'd just drive down to the boat when the tourists came in and they would see this and I'd give them a card of course. On day a bigshot "Cook's Tours" representative was on the boat. He came over and he looked at that and he got a hold of me and he said, "Do you realize that name is patented? We own it and you're using it illegally! Haven't you ever heard of Cook's Tours?" I look at him and I said: "Ya, they are a subsidiary of mine." He just turned and walked away. He gave up right away. He was right, but at that time I'd never thought about it.

I become "Digger" Cook

I got the name "Digger" because I was also the undertaker in Dawson, because I dug holes, you know. I was "Digger" Cook.

The Northern Commercial Company had a general store in Dawson where they were selling everything. Their store in town covered a whole city block, all under one roof. I was in the hardware department and the guy in charge there was also the undertaker. I used to help him. Later on when I had already started my own business in transportation he came in one day and told me that he was leaving because he had bought the hotel in Mayo. He said, "I guess you're going to be picked for the undertaker!" I says: "Oh, god, I don't want it. You get somebody else!"

Finally he convinced me. The morgue was there, you know, and I already knew a lot about it. So we decided on fifty-fifty, I would try and keep the business running while he took care of the building and was paying the taxes. Anyway, somebody had to do it. I was running it for quite a while when he wanted to get rid of it, so I finally bought him out and owned it myself.

In Dawson there was another family with the name of Cook, but no relation. His name was Fred Cook, same as me, and his wife was Jean Cook, same as my wife, and they had a son named Jim Cook and our son was Jim Cook as well. All the same! Except for the daughters. Theirs was named Bella, ours Beatrice. He was working for the Yukon Consolidated Gold Company on the dredges so he was called "Dredger" Cook. "Digger"

Cook and "Dredger" Cook, funny. The postmaster used to go crazy, you know. At Christmas time he took all the Christmas cards with "Fred Cook" on them and put all the mail in a pile. So whoever came first was told: "Here-sort it out by yourself!"

At the end we had the following jobs: taxi, transportation, mail, trucking and tourism under "Cook's Taxi", we were the CP agents and the undertakers. Being the undertaker wasn't that time-consuming, you know. It was just a little town and at night you did what you had to do.

Of Dredges, Goldfish and "Deadmen"

With the taxi business we were quite busy in town especially in the wintertime when people were putting their cars away and they wanted to go downtown or something like that. The biggest business was the gold mining company. Their employees had to be brought back and forth from the dredge camps. There were up to ten dredges running at the same time so there were as many camps on the goldfields. Besides, they had men working on the "flats," which were the creek beds, and they prepared the ground ahead of the dredge. The dredges were coming up the river or the creek and the ground is all frozen from frost permanently. They'd take the tractor and strip all the trees off, all the brush. They'd get all that off and then you're down to this black muck. Then you had to get rid of that muck because the gravel is underneath it and that's where the gold is. They used a half-inch pipe and forced water through it, you know, to create an enormous pressure. On the creek they'd set up a big water-line-system. The water would come in under heavy pressure and then they'd take their monitors, just like a garden hose, but a four-inch thing under about 80 pounds of pressure, and they'd wash all that away and down the river. And then they had to do the same thing with the gravel. They just thawed it right down to bedrock no matter how deep it was.

This was where the main body of men worked. There were hundreds and hundreds of them. They used to bring in three or four hundred men in the spring besides the dredgemen. And they all had to be transported. I had a contract with the Yukon Consolidated to do their manhaul.

These guys would all arrive in the spring and they had to be met at the airport, taken to Dawson. They'd sign them on and send them to Hunker Creek, Sulphur Creek and so on. I had to take the men from Dawson to their camps. That kept me pretty busy in the summertime.

Finally I ended up with a 20-passenger bus. I also had other rigs to take 7 or 8 men. Most of the time that was all you needed.

There was a long way to go. Granville was 50 miles and the roads weren't good like they are in these days. Then the men would get a day off or something and they'd be coming to town to have a good time and they'd have to get back out again, so we were busy all the time. I'd wear a car out by the end of the year.

The tourists were coming in long before I got there. There were other

companies that already took care of them, but I offered other tours, too. There were three of us, I think. You'd meet the boats, you see. There was one boat, the Casca, she was the biggest boat, she was a mere tourist boat. From Whitehorse it took her about three days going down. The boat would stay in Dawson a couple of days, I guess. We'd take them up the Dome, then to Bonanza Creek.

On one of these trips I had a teacher on board and she was asking all these questions and taking notes. That's when I had the bigger bus and I had a PA system on it to talk to them. She was sitting right behind me and was continually after me, so I couldn't talk to the other people too much. I got kind of annoyed with her. We were going up Bonanza Creek and the creek was low, it was getting on towards fall time and there wasn't much water in the creek. Finally she said to me, "Driver, driver! What kind of fish are in that creek?" I said "Gold fish!" What else do you expect in a gold creek? She wrote it down.

To go to Granville to pick somebody up and bring them back, that was a 100-mile trip. If you left in the morning at eight o'clock you wouldn't be back in town before noon. Granville was a little town at that time, you know. They even had a hotel there. And there were dredges all over the place: two on Sulphur, one on Dominion and Granville and so on. The roads connecting all the gold creeks we called "the loop".

The guys working on the dredges would get what you call a long change, change shifts like from midnight to 8eighto'clock in the morning, whatever. They'd get two or three days off. They would phone you and you would have a car ready for them when the shift was over. They'd flip into town and have their fun and you had to make sure you get them back again. You'd always have to keep in mind that you had to pick them up again and take them home. In those days they had the girls of ill repute in town, you know. That kept them busy, I tell you. With all those dredges out there working at one time there was always someone coming to town or going back.

The dredges were floating around in their own big pond, no matter how big or small the creek was. The dredge was digging its way swinging back and forth just taking the pond with it. The dredge was anchored on cables and winched ahead, leaving the excavated gravel behind, filling the pond up again. They had a special crew to set these anchors for the cables; they called it the "bull gang" and the anchors "dead men." They'd bury a log in there to hold the cable.

When the fall time came they had to shut down all these stripping and thawing operations because the water would freeze and all these men had to leave again. They had to get to town, get paid and the company would ship them back to Vancouver. Again I had to pick them up, take them to Dawson and to the airport the next day and away they went.

The dredge crew would stay a lot longer. They could dredge even in bad weather. As long as she was moving and it didn't freeze up they kept her going. So these guys would be the last to go. There was a winchman, a bowdecker, a sterndecker, an oiler on board a dredge and the dredgemaster

usually lived close to the dredge on the creek somewhere; the company had a house for him. He had to make sure everything worked properly but didn't work on the dredge himself.

The bullgang that was moving the anchors consisted of three men and they went from one dredge to the other. My wife's brother was a winchman on Number Four Dredge.

Of course, when the men were all gone, things would quiet down. Dawson was isolated, there was no road outside. There were the mines in Mayo, the silver mines, so the Government put a road in from Whitehorse to Mayo and later they put bridges across the Stewart, the Pelly and the Yukon to serve the mines. But we in Dawson didn't have a road to connect to that road. The government wouldn't put a road into Dawson because they said, well, you've got the boats, you don't need a road. So in the wintertime we were isolated. There was nothing.

A lot of the miners, even the big Gold Company, wanted a road; it was only a hundred miles, you know, from Dawson to Stewart Crossing. In the winter there was just the old winter road, the former stage route. Some of the smaller miners started it: they took their own equipment, their Cats and what not and put a winter road to connect to Stewart. Maybe the Company helped, I don't know, but the smaller miners did it. They followed mainly the old stage route.

So that particular winter when they had the connection I would take the men off the dredge, let's say these four guys, and take them by car on this winter road all the way to the regular road, and then I'd go towards Whitehorse with them. The Stewart River and the Pelly River would freeze up first, before the bridges were put on. When they first put the road into Mayo they were using ice bridges in the winter and ferries in the summer. So in the winter the trucks had to build ice bridges. They built up ice by pouring more water on it and they used to put timber in it, too, freeze them in and make the ice maybe three feet thick. So we would cross the ice bridges over the Stewart and the Pelly, but the Yukon would still be running open at Carmacks. So I would get the dredgemen to Carmacks. There were people living on the side of the river and they would take them across the river by boat into Carmacks. Then I had Yellow Cab from Whitehorse send a car out to meet them in Carmacks so they got to town. That was a hell of a long trip, I tell you, in the wintertime. The road was pretty bad, you know.

I am licensed to bootleg

By that time I also had a mail contract to Granville, a government contract. Usually I took the mail around the creeks once a week, usually Saturdays. There were all these miners that stayed the winter, you know. I'd bring in their mail and their grub and their booze. You might forget a loaf of bread but don't forget the booze! That was unforgivable.

I had to stop at the Arlington Roadhouse then go up Hunker Creek to

Hunker Summit, where the Brady brothers and Jimmy Miller were. Then you'd go down Dominion Creek to a place called Paris, then down to 'Little Quebec' where there were three guys, and one beyond Number Ten Dredge. The old fellows all had their own little mine. The National Film Board even got me on film delivering the mail; they show this strip at the Dawson Museum now.

In my transportation business I mainly had to drive groceries and the booze. Everybody wanted to have their own. Like the Frenchmen wanted their cognac and their wine, you know, and the Brady brothers wanted rum and so on. I had a list of what they wanted; I used to charge them a dollar a bottle. I'd go to the liquor store and I'd buy all this booze and I'd deliver it to them and they were quite happy to pay the extra dollar. Anyway, one day the police, the Mounties, came up to me and they said, Fred, you're going to have to quit hauling that booze over to Granville! And I said "Jeez, why?" So he said, "Well, in a sense you're actually bootlegging!" He said, "You're buying the liquor and you're selling it and, sorry, actually, according to the law, you are bootlegging!" So I thought about it, and actually I was, you see! I agreed with them, you know. So I said, "Well, I don't want to get in any trouble, so I'll quit!" They said that was fine and nothing more was said.

I went out to the next trip and - no booze! Holy Jesus, you thought the world would come to an end! They immediately got on the phone and the fat hit the fire. The Commissioner was in Dawson because at that time it was still the capital of the Yukon, you know. So they all phoned the Commissioner, he was the big guy, you know. They'd give him shit and everything, so finally they came to me and they said that I would get a letter from the Commissioner and that everything was to be okay and that I would be allowed to give them this service. Unfortunately I later lost the letter in the fire, but I actually had a letter from the Commissioner that allowed me to bootleg! I was a licensed bootlegger. And the Mounties were happy and I was happy and especially the miners were happy, too. I wish I had that letter now, it'd be valuable.

I get an operation "Dawson-style"

All my life I was sort of sickly. Even when I came up here it was the same way. I couldn't eat most foods, even when I was married. There were two doctors here, they were brothers, the doctors Duncan. The older one wrote that book "Medicine, Madams and Mounties." He came up a long time ago, went to Mayo first and then over to Dawson. When I got there he was already there. He was treating me for ulcers; he said, "It has to be ulcers," so I used to take treatments. In those days they weren't as advanced in their medicine like they are today, you see. I had to swallow barium and he x-rayed it and he had me on a diet and everything. Anyway, his brother was a doctor, too. He was in the Air Force and came to Dawson to be with his older brother who wanted to leave anyway to go to Vancouver and specialize or something. So that was good for us, because if anything was really wrong and we had to go to Vancouver he was there to look after us.

This was in the wintertime and it was colder than a son of a bitch, 40 below or more. Barry Duncan, the doctor, never used to try and run his car in that kind of weather, in the wintertime he just phoned the taxi. I'd take him down to the hospital and back home again or I'd pick him up if there was an emergency. One day I picked him up at his home and drove him to the hospital. I was bending over the wheel. He said "you're pretty sick today, are you?" I said "I just feel terrible." He says "Well, you better come on upstairs and I'll have a look at you. Just leave your car down here."

So I went upstairs, and he got me on the table. He looked at me and said "Well, Fred, I'm leaving in a few days for a week to a medical convention. There's an Army doctor coming up from Whitehorse to relieve me when I'm gone. If anything happens to you I don't think he will operate on you up here." In those days, well, they were good doctors but they wouldn't do an operation alone, you know. So he said: "I think I will operate on you!" So I looked at him and I said "When?" He says "Right now! Take your clothes off!" And I said "Jesus, I can't do that, my car is downstairs and it's running and everything..." And he said: "I'll phone your wife and get a driver. Now get your clothes off!"

So I got my clothes off and lay on the table. There was just him and the Catholic nuns, the Sisters of St. Anne, that were running the hospital. There was Sister Lorena, she was the head nurse, one other nurse, and doctor Barry. The building maintenance man, he was the anaesthetist. So the doctor went down to the boiler room and got him up there, too, to give me the ether. They got the ether going and what not. God, I was scared, you know. They were just waiting for me to go under, I guess. I had in my mind that they're gonna start to cut me open before I'm asleep, you know. I was really scared. The maintenance man's name was Gustave Martin. He was a French guy, I think. I think he took the mask off or something like that. You see, there's a tray with all the tools on it and Barry moved over to the tray and I shouted: "Don't start yet!! I'm not asleep!" And he said, "Oh, shit! Give 'im some more, Gustave!" So back on goes the mask and Jesus, they gave me a dose this time! I shouldn't wake up for hours after this. So they did the operation, got me sewed up and put me in a room.

Like I said, it was cold weather and in those old buildings like that there was no ventilation, no air conditioning or anything and usually the windows were stuck, they wouldn't open. They phoned my wife and asked her to come up and sit with me. They were short-handed and busy, you know. So my wife came up and I was in the room waking up in the bed and she was sitting on a chair and Sister Lorena I guess came by one time and she just peeked in the door, see what was going on, and my wife was going to sleep in the chair! The fumes were coming out of me and she had passed out! They had to get her out and walk her up and down the hallway to get her going again. The dose of the maintenance man was too much even for her!

Well, afterwards the doctor told me he took a look inside me and that the ulcer was there but that my appendix was just terrible. He said it had broken and that it had woven in amongst the intestines and that he had to

cut it out. It was leaking, you see, and it was poisoning me. So he cleaned everything up but didn't touch the ulcer, it would heal by itself now, he figured. And he was right. Two years later I was eating everything, roast beef and so on. Until this day I never had any trouble any more.

I'm Licensed to Poach, too!

When I first got to Dawson all the old fellows shot ducks out of the season. People said that even the Member of Parliament, the Right Honorable George Black, was caught one time duck shooting.

My hunting partner in later years, Jack Butterworth, had a clothing store in Dawson. We used to hunt together all the time. At this particular time we were agents for CPA, that had all the installations at the airport. There was a small hangar there, they had the fuel supply and they had a house there for the aircraft engineer to stay there. When they moved him and their own agent they hired us. When the plane came up from Whitehorse they'd carry an engineer with them so they wouldn't have to keep him there. He'd just travel with the pilots and supervise the plane. So this house was vacant. There was swamp and lots of ducks around the airport and when we used to go hunting we'd stay in the house, you see. We'd stay there all night and get up early in the morning.

One day I was looking for ducks in an old water ditch and I looked down the road and, Jesus, here was the game warden coming along! So I took a dive into the hay field there and yelled at Butterworth who was on the runway with no place to go. At that time they had markers for the runway, and they had them tall, big, big tripods, painted white and red. So he tipped one of those things over and he crawled under it and pulled it back. He was sitting there and there were two dead ducks in the pond. The warden looked around, couldn't see anybody, maybe 30 feet away from me. You never move, you know, and so he picked up the ducks. He could see tracks leading into the bush so he took off and thought he could catch us there. So we got the hell out of there.

It was at springtime and one day the teacher in the school had a class, young gaffers, you know; she was going to give them a prize if somebody would get the first sign of spring, like a crocus coming out. They would get a star or something like that. So the next day she asked them and this little imp, he put up his hand and said: "Mister Butterworth and Mister Cook were out on the airport hunting ducks!"

He was the police corporal's son, and the teacher said, "Oh, no, no, Robby, they wouldn't do something like that." But the little imp insisted, "Oh yes, they were, they had the CPA truck there, too!" I had bought the truck from the company, you see, and I still had the sign on it. That little bugger Butterworth and Cook shooting ducks as the first sign of spring!

And there was another thing. The pilot came to me one day and he said, "these goddamn ducks on the airport - I'm getting scared of them!" There were duck ponds on both ends of the airport. Especially on takeoff they could

block off the oil-cooler of these DC-3s pretty easily, you know, and that would be it, you're dead. So the pilot wanted me to do something against those "goddamn ducks." I said: "Well, I could shoot them, I guess." But officially I couldn't shoot ducks in the springtime, see. He said he knew somebody to talk to. Anyway, they went down to Whitehorse and their boss-guy in Whitehorse told our Commissioner about this, about the "duck-problem up there." He was really worried about it. So finally he told him that he could get their agent up there, that was me, to shoot them off the airport.

It ended up that I had the privilege to shoot the ducks off the airport before the planes came in. You were supposed to just make a noise but I couldn't help it if I hit a duck, you know. When I was firing a shot and a duck got in the way, that wasn't my fault, see. So I not only had a permission to bootleg, I had also permission to poach!

The case of the frozen corpse

At the time I was in Dawson the old-timers, the '98ers, they were getting old. At that time they were dying out. A lot of them were way out on the creeks and lived alone, and they died there, too. Even Klondike Kate's husband died out on the creeks one winter. He never came in in the spring, so if they don't show up in the spring they go and look for them. Sometimes they were living up to 50 miles apart from each other so nobody would even visit.

One day I heard that somebody had died way out in his cabin on the Sixtymile. The guy didn't show up in the spring so the police got out and found him. He had died that winter somehow. Most of these guys didn't have any money so the government would bury them, you see. The undertaker in Whitehorse would have the same problem with them. The government figured "Well, they're indigent, just throw them in the ground!". They'd give him a casket and things like that, but they wouldn't give us enough money to pay the expenses, see. In those days the undertaker dug the graves, now the city does. We had to dig the graves, get the casket, supply the funeral, get the preacher into our little chapel there. They just wouldn't give us any more money and we fought them all the time; got on the phone and argued with them. In the case of this fellow it was even worse. The poor guy had fallen down with his limbs asprawl and was frozen stiff in a position you just couldn't get him into the casket! So we would have to thaw him up and straighten him out, you know, a lot extra work, maybe $50 worth. So again I argued with them about this and at one point I said "Piss on you! The next time a guy dies I'll send him down to you, you bury him!"

Anyway the police had brought this poor guy in in the middle of the night, they had a key to the morgue and they wouldn't wake me up. So the next morning I phoned up the police and told them that I wouldn't bury him because again the Territorial Treasurer had refused to pay my expenses. I just hung up the phone and that was it.

Jack Butterworth and I were sitting together one day. His wife played the organ in the chapel. He said, "Say, when did you bury this guy?" I said,

"I didn't!" He said, "Where is he?" I said, "Still in the morgue! If that bastard in Whitehorse won't pay me he can stay there for a hundred years, I don't care." So he said, "I'll fix that!"

Well, Butterworth was mixed up in politics a lot. Our Member of Parliament was a guy named Eric Nielsen, the brother of this Hollywood actor now, Leslie Nielsen, you know, the comedian. Nielsen was sitting in Parliament and Jack was a big wheel in the Conservative party, too. So Butterworth got on the phone and called Nielsen in Ottawa. He told him what happened and said: "The guy's still there and Cook is not gonna bury him!"

Nielsen later wrote a book on his life in politics and he mentioned the story that followed although it wasn't all true what he wrote. He later apologized to me that he had made up some stuff to make it sound more "Yukon-like," you know.

After Butterworth's phone call, Nielsen got up in the House of Parliament and addressed the Minister of Northern Affairs, and said, "How come the government won't pay the undertaker in Dawson to bury indigent people?" He just went after them and gave them shit, you know. There's a saying - "the shit hit the fan".

It made all the newspapers, all over the East and the Edmonton papers, headlines and everything. It was embarrassing to the Minister, you know. The Commissioner in Whitehorse in those days was a powerful man, not any more, but he was the direct representative of the federal government, you see. So the Minister of Northern Affairs got on the phone and got a hold of Gordy Cameron, the Commissioner: "What the hell is going on up there in that goddamn place?" And he told him what had happened in Parliament. Gordon said, "I don't know what the hell is going on!" The Minister said, "You get that guy buried right now, I don't give a goddamn what it costs! Just have Cook bury him, get him in the ground!" So Gordy phoned me up and said, "Goddamn it, you get that guy in the ground right now, the Minister just chewed my ass out! Next time you come to Whitehorse you bring a bill and I want to see you!"

Shortly after that I went to Whitehorse and we had a chat about it and a little laugh, I guess. He finally said, "How much do you want?" So I told him and handed him the bill. He said, "That sounds reasonable to me," and he called this guy in, the Treasurer, you know. He introduced me but I wouldn't even talk to him, I just grunted at him. So Gordy said, "This is Mr. Cook's bill for the funeral and I want you to pay it. From now on this is what he gets for a funeral!" The guy just said "Yessir!"

The whole story wasn't just for fun, you know. We had to pay the gravediggers and the casket up front, before we saw any money from the government. Once a friend of mine asked how much I was charging for the thawing process, if I would take more for two frozen arms than for one. "Well, we thaw him all at one time," I said, "No extra charges."

In the book Nielsen sent me he wrote by hand, "I hope you will overlook any license I may have taken with respect to the facts." In other words, "I hope you forgive me for bullshittin'!" That's the plain way to put it. He said

the government had a big walk-in cooler in town and I would keep the corpses in the cooler at the hospital. Well, they wouldn't let you put a corpse in with the food you're gonna eat! There was a big cooler in the hospital but I can guarantee there was no corpses in it! Unless they were animals, of course. He also said in the book that I would "often hit the bottle when I knew I had to perform my duties again." Well, he had to write something in there I guess. Anyway, now the story at last has been told the right way.

My Taxi becomes Bait in North End

I knew all the policemen pretty good; we got along good, you know. At times in the cold weather, I wouldn't put the car in the garage, I'd leave it idling outside. One time, the police were in the north end of town patrolling. That's where the grief would be. The roads weren't plowed very good so they ran off the road. The police car was stuck in a snow bank. So the police just left it there and walked home. They had to walk right by our house and they see the car sitting there so they got in and took the car! I had a sign on top "Cook's Taxi", you know, with a light inside so it would shine at night. Well, I walked out the next morning to get the car and the car was gone! So I phoned the police and said, "Somebody stole my car!" They started to laugh. They had used my car for the rest of the night. They would be driving through the north end and the drunks would see the taxi coming and wave the taxi down! They just opened the door and arrested them all because in those days you couldn't be drunk on the street. So they had the jail half full that night. The next day I went down there, they were gonna kill me! They were all my friends, you know. They gave me shit because I had given my car to the police. Of course if they'd seen the police car they would have hid in the bush, you see. The police thought it was a hell of a joke.

The Fine Art of Grave-digging

I had my regular gravediggers; they were a pretty good bunch of guys. They just liked to have their whiskey and their wine. One time a person died at the 17th of August, a big celebration, you know, so I had to wait until the celebration was over for the grave-digging. The next day, I rounded up my gravediggers; they all lived in the north end of town. I said that we had to get up there right now and get a hole in the ground to bury the guy.

I got them up the hill and showed them where to dig the grave, got them all set up. Before that they would always say: "We need a bottle of wine!" They were native guys and in those days they weren't allowed to drink, see. So you'd be in big trouble if you bought them something to drink. What I did I would give them an advance for their pay. I'd give them 20 bucks or whatever it was. They would go down and buy a big jug of wine and they'd take it up the hill to dig the grave. This time they were all hung over from the celebration anyway. A tourist came along, they were going up to the Midnight Dome. At that time the road went right by the cemetery. This tourist guy sees these guys over there, hanging around, and wondered what

the hell was going on. So he got out of his car and went over. They nailed him, you know: "Gee, we're out of booze, we have no more booze! You got some booze for us?" And the guy said "Sure!" and he went back to the car and brought them a bottle of whisky. Holy Jesus - the worst thing he could have done! I guess they really got drunk then.

Later on in the day one of the police guys was going up to the Dome and he looked over there and sees this performance. So he stopped the car and went over. One guy had passed out already. They had dug the grave down about half way. When one guy passed out the other two thought he was dead. So they put the roughbox in the hole and they picked him up and they threw him in the roughbox and they were filling it up! They said, "Well, he's dead, we might as well bury him!" If the police wouldn't have come along they would have buried him.

Our son used to go down to the police barracks to play with some of their kids, because they had nice lawns and everything. He came home at suppertime and he said, "Daddy, I'm sure Constable Anderson has your gravediggers in jail!" So I phoned up the barracks - no grave, you know - and the corporal started to laugh. I thought there was nothing funny about this, I wanted my gravediggers! I had this funeral all scheduled and everything so he said, "If they sober up I'll let them go, on one condition: they'll be charged for drinking in public and they won't have any money and you'll guarantee their fine." That was a good deal for me and everything turned out all right.

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Editor's Note:
I hope you enjoyed Fred's stories. Some missing stories, which you will find in his book are:

Just like Ben Hur
...and then the rain just stopped
I'm batting against "Satchel" Paige
A World of Trains
Hallelujah, I'm a bum!
My Taxi becomes Bait in North End
The Fine Art of Grave-digging
A Klondike Resurrection
Gold on the Hills!
First on the Top of the World
...and then there were Parties!
Of Boats, Roads, Rails and Trails
A hell of a hill
Asbestos on Ice
Mail and Oil and Government

....also, more photos