

THE

#3

YUKONER

MAGAZINE

INSIDE:

Betty Taylor

The Wedding That Wasn't

A Dog-Gone Tale

Gold Rush Letters

Wolf Encounter

Much more...

Price: \$3.95



THE YUKONER MAGAZINE



Issue No.3
February, 1997

From the Editor's Desk	3
Encounter with Wolves, <i>by Kathryn Cameron Boivin</i>	5
The Wedding That Never Was, <i>by Rev. A. Cuschieri</i>	8
The Betty Taylor story, <i>by Darrell Hookey</i>	10
A Dog-Gone Tale, <i>by Sam Holloway</i>	21
Sweater With a Story, <i>by Sheila D. Rose</i>	23
Mysterious Lady, <i>by Rev. A. Cuschieri</i>	27
Letters from the Great Stampede, <i>by Ned Hoggan</i>	30

www.yukoner.com

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

Cover photo: From Coreldraw 4 software package.



Published four times annually by:
GreenInk Publishing,
Whitehorse, Yukon.
Canadian Publications
Mail Product Sales
Agreement No. 1018000
Publisher: Dianne Green
Editor: Sam Holloway
Associate editor: Frank McLaughlin





Well, from watching the news from the south, it's great to have a good old Yukon winter. We had minus 58 degrees Fahrenheit here every morning for a couple of weeks, but other than that, it's been beautiful. Pooper (the black blob beside me in the photo above) froze her back foot but is recovering well. Old Dodgie (also in the photo) boiled over one morning because I had too much antifreeze in it and my old Homelite chainsaw almost didn't go, just when I was down to the last stick of wood. But, Pooper's fine now, the old truck should make it through another winter, and next year I'll cut some wood ahead and might even fill the woodshed.

The old press you see on your right is in the cabin you see above. Also in there is a 1940s vintage table cutter, an even older saddle stitcher and various other knick-knacks that I need to print this magazine. I have enough parts to keep everything (truck, press, gadgets) going for another 30 years so this publication should be around for some time yet.

I was asked again the other day: Why did I let *The Yukon Reader* fail? For those of you who haven't heard, that was a fairly slick national magazine in a large format with stories similar to what you'll see in this one. Counting everything, the *Reader* used to cost about \$6000 to produce and never brought in more than \$3000. Moe and I kept it going for four years and wound up so far in the hole they had to pump air down to us. I will be making payments on that debt for the rest of my life, no matter how old and stodgy I get. So that's the story, believe it or not.

In my last editorial (or maybe it was in No. 1) I bragged about how good I was getting on the old press. I wrote that before I printed the magazine. Everything went fine till I got to the cover. As you may have noticed, Issue No. 2 had some off-kilter colours on the cover. I used too much ink, some stuck to the back of the covers and all of them glued themselves into one big pile, which I had to pry apart one by one.

When they went through the press (four passes, counting the reverse side), sometimes all hell would break loose because of that excess ink. Covers went out through the front, up through the top and out the back and

littered the cabin floor with ripped up pieces of cover stock. But I kept at it and eventually wound up with enough covers to put out the magazine.

At one time, I used to write about politics, issues, religion, and the like. But somehow, perhaps because of my advancing years, I don't care about that stuff any more. So that's why you don't see any passionate editorials in this magazine.

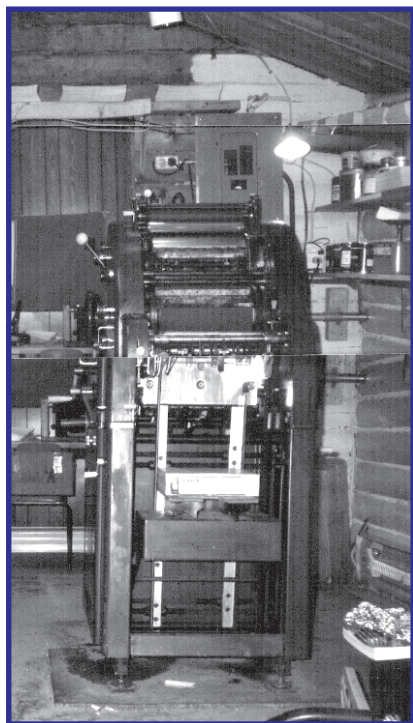
Just give me lots of wood for the fire, enough money for grub and tobacco, and the Yukon as a place to live and I won't have much to rant about.

[In the Carcross Corner Cafe the other day, a fellow from Vancouver was complaining about the air here. He wanted to go home he said so he could "see what he was breathing." Could that be why there are no mosquitoes and black flies there?]

I better be careful; we just got some new subscribers from Vancouver. In the meantime, I must put all this paper through the old beast and we'll see you here next time.

So long for now,

Sam



Addenda:

The last story in this issue consists of some remarkable letters from the Klondike Gold Rush. Marjorie Bergstrand (nee Hoggan) also enclosed some very interesting details about her family. We'll publish more of those letters in a future issue.

We will be printing enough copies of each magazine to keep a good supply of back issues on hand, so you will be able to get a complete set for quite some time.

In Issue #2, page 10, the reprinted article from Maclean's Magazine (1952) implies that Steamboat Mary was a "lady of the evening." This is absolutely false; she had problems with alcohol during her life but was well-respected in the Yukon.

In Issue #1, page 6, the caption under the photo says the building was torn down. In fact, that old house still stands.

ENCOUNTER WITH WOLVES

Story by Kathryn Cameron-Boivin

We were far in the bush at our trapline home beside clear Stewart River within a narrow, mountainous valley where Mount Ortell stood paramount. My husband Rock and I were trapping here for our second season and though we were 110 air miles from the nearest settlement of Mayo, Yukon, we were well prepared to spend eight or ten months here without a need to replenish supplies. The high cache we had built beside our 24 by 24 foot cabin was stocked heavy with flour, wheat berries, sugar, oats, butter, dried vegetables, powdered whole milk, powdered eggs, rice, toilet paper and all the other odd necessities that we might need, including ammunition for our guns.

We were well into winter so the river was frozen almost silent and the snow was deep in the bush. Most of our time was spent on the trapline trails that we were cutting out of the wilderness. Because we were in such a remote location, the only trails that were etched into the landscape were game trails and these were totally inadequate for safe travel with a rambunctious team of huskies. We did not trust travelling the river except for the odd 90 degree crossing or short distances so we spent long, laborious weeks cutting out narrow trails through the bush with the chainsaw and axe. Once the trapping began and we set up our tent camps, we were in a constant process of improving these trails and moving forward on snowshoes to extend them. Our life was simple, our tasks were straight forward and our feelings of satisfied accomplishment were great.

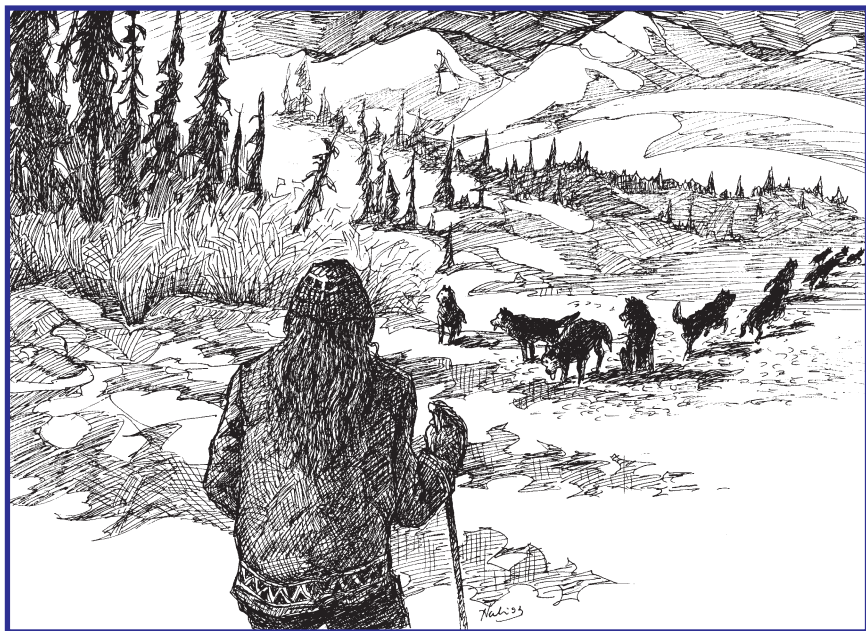
It was a relatively mild mid-winter day when I decided to opt for a change of pace so I strapped on my cross-country skis and headed upriver for some leisure. Our wood hauling trails followed the river in this direction so I had only to pack a few necessities into my small backpack before I was ready to go. The Stewart River was a meandering fool at this point with long, deep curves that saw me change directions four times in the course of a mile. Still, I was on a pleasure trip as long as the trail was hard and safe. I glided forward in rhythmic tranquillity, enjoying the mild breeze blowing in my face and the breath-taking view of the Selwyn Mountain Range cutting jaggedly into the sky.

I imagine that my progress was relatively quiet in the large scheme of things, with the wind playing through the black spruce tops and the river babbling its muffled protests from beneath the ice. As I rounded one sharp bend in the river, I found myself in direct confrontation with a large pack of wolves. They had obviously not heard my approach or had not been

concerned by it for none of the congregation of 15 seemed greatly perturbed by my grand entrance. Instead, it seemed that all life stood still for an instant as I looked at them and they *all* looked at me with their bright, amber eyes—full of surprise. In direct contrast to my paralyzed limbs, my mind raced in a pandemonium of energy. One of me—fifteen of them. Me with no gun—them fully armed, me—miles from home—them in their element... Indeed, I felt mighty small at that moment!

Then the time spent transfixed was over and I suddenly realized that I had not been the only one assessing the situation. In a flurry of movement I watched wolves of every color and size turn to flee as thirteen impressive creatures began their retreat. I should have been relieved. I would have been relieved except for the slightly disconcerting presence of the two remaining wolves who seemed to be more curious of me than fearful. I presumed them to be leaders as they stood there like statues not 100 feet from me. I felt like I was involved in some kind of strategy game. If I turn-tailed to ski away, would I be conceived as prey? Would they follow me? Were they waiting for my next move? Why wouldn't they run when the rest of their pack had almost disappeared from sight in their haste to get away from me? Whatever the outcome, I knew that I could not just stand there and wonder. I had to do something!

Taking a deep breath to muster up my courage, I skied straight towards them like a brazen bull. I was determined not to show fear, believ-



Drawings by Halin de Repentigny

ing that they could probably sense it. I pretended to chase them with a hope that they would tuck their tails between their legs and retreat. This they did, to be sure but, not in a terrified manner. Instead, with wary scrutiny, they'd run from me when I skied toward them but they'd stop immediately when I stopped then they'd turn to watch me again with their wise, golden eyes.

Time and time again I hastened toward them and time and time again they'd run away; when I skied they'd stop whenever I would stop.

Silently I cursed this ridiculous cat and mouse game that I had thought clever at first for though I was demonstrating the cat's role I felt decidedly like the mouse. If they had wanted to turn on me I was no match for them but, my absurd human antics were obviously frightening enough to them to keep them at a safe distance from me. Even so, I could not continue to bluff them into subservience, for each rampant ski stroke took me further away from home, and home was where I wanted to be!

I wheeled in a large half circle and began to flee back the way I had come with speed and skill I never knew I possessed (and most probably could never illustrate again). In my mind's eye I envisioned myself a comic book character skiing with ridiculous, exaggerated actions leaving a flaming trail of snow clouds billowing out behind me. I didn't stop though—not even once—to look back until the shape of our cabin loomed up like a vision of paradise.

Panting and wheezing, I kicked off my skis then suddenly the laughter was spilling from my throat. I detailed my clown-like antics to Rock then felt a surge of relief and gratitude fill my spirit: relief for being home like a cowering pup and gratitude for having encountered the wolves (without incident) in their natural setting.

The curiosity in their amber eyes is a vision that I will always remember and though I laugh with the memory of my fear, I will never know just exactly what those two wolves did when I turntailed to flee... Some stories are better left unfinished.



THE WEDDING THAT NEVER WAS

By REV. ANDREW CUSCHIERI

A true sourdough never panics—whatever happens—whether it is a mishap or a tragedy; for him it is never the end of the world. A pioneer has no way to check his stamina if not under duress. He is capable of taking everything in his own stride and accommodating himself to the vicissitudes of life which may be very unpleasant, embarrassing or heart-breaking. Joe who worked as a winchman on the dredges was a typical sourdough.

Joe felt that the life of a bachelor was not for him; he wanted a companion. So he fell in love with a girl in Germany by the name of Ann. After a year of corresponding with each other, the two love-birds decided that the time had come to seal their love with the bond of matrimony.

Needless to say, it was a long, long journey for the bride to travel in 1953 from Germany to Upper Sulphur, a place not far from Dawson City. Nevertheless, she managed. The poor girl could hardly utter a word in English to make known her wishes to her beloved regarding the wedding. For this reason Bea Alexandrovich was repeatedly called in as an interpreter sometimes in crucial issues.

To his amazement Joe found out that the bride's major concern was to have a fur coat and that she would like to be married in a black dress. Bea explained to her that Joe would have loved to gratify her wish for a fur coat but this was not financially feasible. It was not difficult either for Bea to convince her that any colour, other than black, would be more appropriate for the wedding feast. For the rest, things proceeded normally: the catering, hall, church, invitations, everything was taken care of. Bea and her husband were chosen as matron of honour and best man.

The big day finally arrived. Bea, her husband and Joe, all dressed up for the occasion, took off from Upper Sulphur and headed towards Dawson City where they were to meet the bride and celebrate the wedding. It was late September and the weather had already turned chilly and wet, rendering the road muddy and slippery.

They took the "Loop," a narrow and winding road, which linked the three dredges owned by the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation. Ten miles from the city, at a site called Jensen, they came across Olaf who was digging a culvert across the road to help drain glaciers during the winter months. Olaf wanted to show himself off as maintenance foreman of the "Loop" and made his au-



thority felt by capriciously refusing to cover the canal with planks so that they might pass. This incident and the slow driving put them an hour behind schedule.

On arrival, they apologized and explained to Father Desmarais, O.M.I., the pastor of St. Mary's church, the reason for their delay. "Just as well," retorted the priest, "Ann had a change of heart and decided not to go through with the wedding."

Neither the pastor nor the bride dared tell anybody and waited for the arrival of Joe to break the news to the guests who had all arrived by then and taken their places in the pews.

"Oh, she changed her mind, eh!," blasted Joe. "Well, the guests are here, the hall decorated, food, champagne, everything is ready. Let us celebrate the wedding that never was!"

The bride-to-be also joined the party. This way, no one was disappointed; everybody ate and drank and danced. The time came when Joe and Ann holding the knife together cut the wedding cake amidst the clapping of hands. At the conclusion of the party, Romeo and Juliette parted ways.

Joe later left the Yukon, married, fathered five children, and died in his fifties. It appears that Ann settled in the Yukon and stayed single all her life.



St. Andrews church in Dawson City, 1977 (SH photo).

The Story of Betty Taylor

By Darrell Hookey

She considers herself the luckiest person in the world.

Betty Taylor was born to a family full of love, music and carefree games. And she believes she may not have been so lucky if she had been born today with technology pushing our lives so fast that families cannot enjoy each other.

Instead, she was born August 18, 1915, in Dawson City. Without a washing machine, microwave oven or a family car, Betty's parents had to work harder and longer just to be comfortable. But there wasn't much work that could be done after dinner in a log cabin with no electricity or running water, so the family would gather each night to play cards and sing songs.

And how her father loved music.

Alexander Maclellan was a strong Scotsman who worked on the dredges and any other hard job that was available. He came to the Yukon on the Trail of '98 with "stars in his eyes" and met Alice Mills waiting on



Babe, Betty and Mickey Maclellan outside their Mayo home.

tables in a Silver City roadhouse. Born in Ireland, she was very gentle and quiet and had a wonderful sense of humour. They married and made a home between Dawson City and Bear Creek and filled it with music.

Betty's father taught his three daughters to dance and would wake the entire family in the morning with old Scottish tunes played loud on the gramophone.

"I thank God every day for the family I had," Betty says today. It has made all the difference in the world in her life. And she believes it was the hardships of the Yukon frontier that kept her family close and strong.

She has to laugh at herself today as she admits to owning a side-by-side fridge that automatically makes ice to help keep her drinks cold. Her mother, however, knew what to do with ice ... she would melt snow on the wood stove for bath water.

A wash tub hanging outside would be brought into the kitchen and the kids were scrubbed quick and off to bed.

Once everyone had a bath, the dirtiest clothes would be soaked in the water. Fresh water would boil the tea towels clean in a copper boiler and then the whites would be washed. And then the colours.

Water was a precious commodity and the women used it wisely. Of course in those days the scrub board was a woman's work ... but making breakfast was a man's job.

Alexander MacLennan was a real Yukon man and so it was he who first



The MacLennan home in Mayo. Betty's father, Alexander, is standing in the doorway.

laid a bare warm foot to a bare cold floor in the morning to stoke the fire.

While up and around alone, he would boil the water in a kettle to be kept at the ready all day for tea, coffee and cocoa. He'd make the porridge and crank up the gramophone with some Harry Lauder tunes. Alice would join him to make the toast and prepare the girls for another day.

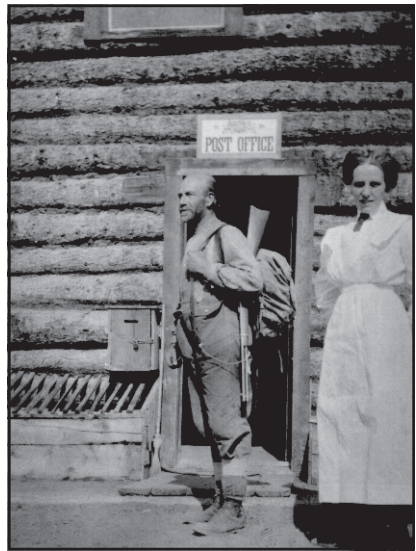
Betty had chores, too. She'd help bring wood into the house and pick blueberries for the table. They were poor, but they ate porridge every morning and always had vegetables from their garden.

Such was life for a Yukon family, but Betty would not have missed it for the world.

Her father was strict, but he let his daughters have all the fun they wanted. In the winter, they would hook up a sleigh to Timber, their big, fluffy husky. For skating, they would use hand-me-downs and skate on a cleared creek or lake.

They didn't have to worry about adults who would over-organize a game or ensure liability insurance was in place. Betty says they certainly didn't have the facilities young people have today, but they had a lot of fun anyways.

Just before she was to start school, in 1921, the family moved to Turner Street in Dawson City, just down from the police barracks. By now the family was complete with Vera (known as Mickey from the popular song "Pretty Mickey") born two years after Betty, and Alice (called Babe because she was the baby of the family) born another two years later.



Alice MacLennan, right..



During the Great Depression, many unknown white men came to the Yukon to trap and dig for gold.

Life was a little easier now. They had electricity but still no plumbing. Her mother grew sweet peas that reached to the roof and people would stop to take pictures.

As much as the family loved music, Betty says it was a major sacrifice when her parents bought her an upright piano. She took lessons at fifty cents once a week from Sister Mary Rose Eva, who was determined that her parents would get their money's worth.

Betty would play hymns on the piano and provide the music for the family's nightly sing songs. And, of course, she would play Scottish tunes for her dad.

Later on, she would take lessons from Corporal Claude Tidd in his home. He was much more modern than Sister Mary Rose Eva and funnier, too. While she was playing, he would yell at his dog team through the window.

Claude Tidd and Andy Cruikshank, another Mountie and one of the first pilots in the Yukon, would play for the dances in town.

Her father was keeping busy with odd jobs and was away when the big flood of 1925 came. Betty's mother left the children to help friends who lived close to the Klondike River--never thinking that the flood would be so bad that they would be in danger.

But it was that bad. A Mountie carried the three girls to safety and they were taken in by a family in North Dawson on higher ground. As exciting as the flood was, one memory that stands out is corn flakes. It was the first time the 10-year-old Betty had eaten anything other than porridge in the morning.

Other memories, however, include seeing her parents' wedding cake



Turner Street in Dawson City after the 1925 flood.

centrepiece in a pile of mush in their home after the flood waters drew back. Water had covered the table tops and left a thin film of silt on everything.

The next year, Betty's father took a job as Fire Chief for the Village of Mayo. He had gone ahead and the family followed aboard a paddlewheeler ... which was a great adventure. The dining room was set up with white linen and silver and the waiters were good to the kids.

Betty explains that few white people had children in the Yukon in those days, so they were considered special. The entire crew was good to their young guests and allowed them to run all over the boat. Even the Captain would take one child at a time into the pilot house and let them steer.

Mayo would become Betty's hometown as she loved it so much. It is where she and her sisters grew up and everyone was a friend. To this day anyone from Mayo is special to her.

Life pretty much centred around the tennis court in the summer. It was built from wood by the Mayo residents and most everyone bought a membership each season for five dollars. It was an enormous amount, everyone agreed, but they paid it.

The play was vigorous and exciting as spectators watched from the court house that was screened in against the bugs. Tables were set up for those who wanted to play cards between games.

On June 21, they would play tennis all night long in their annual tournament.



Betty (standing) and Mickey MacLennan and their pet, "Teddy Bear," in 1929 at Mayo.

Just across from the court was the baseball field where pick up games would find old men playing along side young girls. There were no class distinctions back then, they were all friends.

With the arrival of the "Boat Boys", the evening would get even more interesting.

All summer, paddlewheelers would make runs to Stewart stopping every week or so in Mayo. The Boat Boys would work feverishly to unload the groceries and fuel and then take wood on for the boilers. When they were finished they would be allowed into town, but not for a long stay.

Meanwhile, the men in town would pay for the rental of the Pioneer Hall for a dance while the women brought food. They would all meet for the dance that night along with anyone not working a shift at the Elsa mine.

When the music started, all the men from the one side of the hall would rush to where the ladies were sitting in chairs on the other side of the hall. They had to be quick because the men so badly outnumbered the women.

There was seldom trouble as all sorts of people would be there. Young parents would allow their children to sleep on coats while everyone, old and young, danced with each other. There wasn't much drinking since not many people could afford it.

Each of the paddlewheelers used the same crews throughout the summer and so the Boat Boys became known. Betty's parents knew the engineers and Captains, many of them Scots, and they would be invited to their home for dinner.

The Boat Boys were labourers and University students. Working on The Thistle was the teenaged son of Isaac Taylor, the steamer's co-owner. Charlie Taylor didn't have his father's permission to work on Taylor and Drury Ltd's boat while home from university, but he was full of energy and managed to get on the crew.

At the age of 12 he delivered groceries for his father's Whitehorse store. By bike in the summer and by dog sled in the winter.

Isaac Taylor had met William Drury on the Trail of '98. They decided to pitch a tent and buy equipment from frustrated would-be miners and resell them to the eager new Stampeders who were still heading North.

They bought stock and moved the tent to wherever the action was. Taylor and Drury Ltd grew to 18 locations throughout the Yukon with the longest delivery service in Canada--1200 kilometres in one direction and 750 kilometres the other.

When Charlie graduated from university, where he studied accounting, his father approached him and his brothers with news of an offer from Hudson's Bay Co. to buy the family business.

The brothers would not hear of it. And so, at the age of 19, Charlie moved to Mayo to manage the largest store in the Taylor and Drury chain.

Betty didn't remember him as a Boat Boy off The Thistle. Instead,

she first remembers seeing him weave through the cabbages in her family's garden apparently a little drunk. This was odd since Charlie had never been known as a drinker, but he was young and had consumed one or two beers.

Betty's father had brought Charlie home that night to enjoy some coffee and music. Betty, who was 16 at the time, was playing on the piano when Charlie surprised her with a very good performance on the violin. They became good friends.

He worked very hard at the store, but she would see him around at the tennis court and at the dances. Eventually they would spend more and more time together. After three years, on Betty's 19th birthday, he presented her with an engagement ring to nobody's surprise.

They were married in Whitehorse by Sgt. Withers, in charge of the local detachment of the RCMP. From there they took the train to Skagway and then on to Vancouver by ship.

The honeymooners toured and visited former Yukoners, including Sgt. William J.D. Dempster. It was the first time Betty would attend the Vancouver Yukoners meeting.

Back in Whitehorse, word had reached them that Betty's father had pneumonia which was often serious. They decided to fly and have their furniture follow on a paddlewheel. The pilot, Everett Wasson, eyed the 120-pound frame of Charlie and Betty at 105 pounds, and decided that they could bring their steamer trunk filled with clothing and wedding presents.

It was a good thing, too, since their furniture sank with the paddlewheel enroute to Mayo.

Her father died the day after they arrived home. There was no time to grieve, though, as they had to pack once again just after the funeral to escape the waters of the 1936 Mayo flood.

Only the Anglican and the Catholic churches remained dry at opposite ends of town while everyone camped at Five Mile Lake.

Some good did come from the tragedies. Nobody got sick from the



Betty and Charlie Taylor and their first car, a brand new Oldsmobile, picked up from Oshawa, Ontario.

diseases that tend to follow floods and everyone pulled together for the massive cleanup. The new house they had just bought was cleaned inside and out by the former owner and their furniture began to show up from the salvaged ship.

Charlie's pay increased from \$150 a month to \$175 now that he was married. But he still worked 65 hours a week.

He'd be home for dinner every night, though. Afterwards, they would enjoy music and games with friends until he had to go back to the store to stoke the fire.

The next year, Mickey married Sinclair Dunnett and Babe married Alex Smith in a double wedding. They were both diesel mechanics at the Elsa mine.

Almost everyone in town was involved and, as was usually the case in Mayo, everyone was invited to the shower and wedding.

Betty was one of the Matrons of Honour and the reception was held in her home. It wasn't long before the party spilled out into the yard.

In 1939, Canada joined England to oppose Hitler's Germany. Betty saw many of the boys leave for overseas as news over the short wave radio told of bombing raids on the English coast. Charlie's sister lived in London and they were very concerned. They would listen to Winston Churchill's stirring speeches and waited for the chimes of Big Ben to lead that night's news.

Betty belonged to the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire and knitted a lot of socks. They also raised money to send parcels to the servicemen overseas.

Although they were isolated from the action, everyone did what they could and they were all focused one thing: winning the war. Even having a cake was a big event since they did not waste sugar in these times. Yukoners were not rationed, in consideration of the hardships Northerners faced, but they were on their honour and they took that seriously.

With the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942, Charlie was asked to move to Whitehorse to manage the store. With 10,000 American troops stationed nearby, business was booming.

Betty remembers Mr. Atherton, who was in charge of groceries. He was a Scotsman who liked his department to be lined up perfectly. One day an American soldier bought all of his Christmas candles to brighten up the tents on the Canol Road. Mr. Atherton was "crushed" when he saw the hole in his display.

The American troops dominated the street scene in Whitehorse yet they were very well behaved and very young. Betty got to know many of them as they would fill the local churches each Sunday. After the service, she would help the minister's wife serve them tea.

Her new home in Whitehorse was above the Taylor and Drury store that Charlie managed on the corner of First and Main (now called Horwood's Mall). They first lived in the smaller apartment as the largest one was



Charlie and Betty Taylor, aka Mr. & Mrs. Yukon in 1986.

occupied by an American army major. But at least they had electricity and running water. "I thought we were well off," Betty says today.

Betty had little to do with the Taylor and Drury store. She did however, provide her father-in-law and Mr. Drury with coffee in the morning and tea in the afternoon for their breaks. She remembers that Mr. Taylor would gulp his drink down and be off again while Mr. Drury would relax more and stay for a visit.

She liked living above the store because friends would drop in for a visit before or after their shopping.

Betty didn't worry about her apartment being tidy enough for unexpected guests. She says her friends were the type of people who would grab an iron and help out.

In fact, in the Yukon in those days people were pretty casual about visiting. Even if you weren't at home, your door would be unlocked and your friends were allowed in to borrow a pound of coffee or anything else they needed.

It wasn't unusual for Betty to come home and find her old piano teacher, Claude Tidd (by now a Sergeant), playing her piano.

Besides her children, housework and friends, Betty kept busy with the Women's Auxiliary of the Christ Church Cathedral. While Charlie served on different boards, she was usually in the kitchen. "That's where I made some of my best friends," she says.

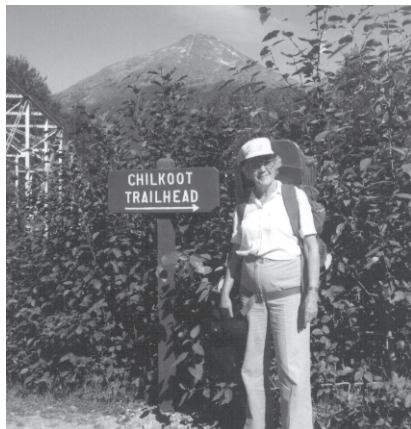
As busy as she was, she always had time for friends. At least Charlie made the breakfasts in the morning ... he was a real Yukon man, too.

Life in Whitehorse continued to be centred around family and friends, music and games. They built a house on Lowe Street and were one of the last families they know of to buy a television because they enjoyed their time together so much.

The highway had rendered the smaller and more remote Taylor and Drury stores unnecessary and so they each closed. Charlie, however, had helped build up the Whitehorse operations to gross sales of \$3 million a year by 1974 with 85 employees.

He retired at the age of 60, and ensured that the various businesses were turned over to people who would continue to run them like a family business, committed to the staff and customers.

Charlie hiked the Chilkoot Trail, entered territorial politics, took the family on a European tour and a Caribbean cruise and spent more time at



Betty Taylor hiking the Chilkoot Trail in 1975, at the age of 65.

their cabin on Marsh Lake.

Betty hiked the Chilkoot, herself, at the age of 65. She went with a friend and two 20-year-old women because it was special. Her father, husband and one of her daughters had hiked the trail so she felt she had to as well.

Charlie died in January of 1992, at 79. Betty is grateful that the extraordinary care he received in the Yukon allowed him to stay home all but one week while he battled the cancer that would take his life.

As always, however, Betty takes comfort and joy from her friends and family. She bakes a dozen loaves of bread every couple of weeks and every visitor leaves with one.

She lives in the same neighbourhood with the same families, the Griffiths, the Duncans, the Hougens (who were competitors in the Whitehorse retail business, but they were always friends and neighbours first) and the Staleys.

Betty watched her neighbours' children grow and now she's watching their grandchildren grow.

There aren't a lot of places today where a person can keep in touch with friends like that. Not even the Yukon anymore. When Betty goes to the airport, she often won't see anyone she knows. And she doesn't know anyone today who has spare time.

True, all of these busy transient people have helped keep the Yukon prosperous. But she believes a true Yukoner would have preferred the Yukon she grew up in ... a Yukon that allowed her family to sit down to three meals a day, together.



Taylor & Drury's store at First Avenue & Main Streets, Whitehorse in about 1950. (Now Horwood's Mall)

Almost True Tales of the Yukon

By Sam Holloway

A Dog-gone Tale

In '95, I had a hard winter in Dawson City. As I was climbing up to put the kettle on the stove (it was mounted high because I didn't have enough stovepipe to reach the ceiling), I noticed two dead rats on the floor of the cabin.

You know what they died of? Malnutrition. A cold winter it was, too. I threw a basin of dishwater out the door and it came down as snowflakes.

But I had an ace in the hole—a dog that would make me rich.

The dog's name was Nugget and I got him from an old geezer who passed away out on the creeks in the fall. Everybody wondered why that old man had so much gold, and just before he died he told me.

This dog was trained to fetch gold nuggets out of the creeks. All you had to do was throw in a couple of pieces of gold first and away he would go. Then you just walked beside the creek with a sack to put the gold in and waited for the dog to find some. The Klondike has lots of gold in it yet and I could hardly wait for spring.

I took him up on Me-Fix-Im Steve's ground on Glacier Creek. And by golly, old Nugget did me well. I came back to Dawson with a small fortune. I bought a pickup truck, a motorcycle, and lots of steaks for Nugget.

Feeling lucky, I strolled into Diamond Tooth Gertie's gambling hall and in there an ever-so-sweet little blackjack dealer cleaned me out of every cent I had. When I came out into the daylight, blinking and ashamed of myself, I went to check on Nugget and there he was—gone. Somebody had swiped my dog.

I got the last of my gold from under the seat of the truck and cashed it all in. Then I went on a drunk that lasted half the summer. I wrecked the pickup truck on the Dome road and decided I better leave the area before freeze-up.

On that big Harley motorcycle, I was humming along the highway



My dog Nugget

between Carmacks and Whitehorse. Since I lost my dog, I had been drinking too much and inside my jacket I had a forty pounder of Five Star whisky. I had a long straw going down under my face protector and helmet and into the whisky so I could have a sip whenever I got dry from that dusty road. As I motored along, I caught up to an ore truck hauling concentrates from the Faro Mine.

Just as I was about to pass him, a big rock that had been stuck between the dual wheels on one side of his trailer came flying back at me like a cannonball. It struck me fair in the chest just above the whisky bottle.

Off I went backward over the seat and onto the road, landing on my helmet. At seventy miles an hour, I skidded along on the helmet, upside down. The whisky poured down into the helmet until I was drowning in Five Star whisky. The only thing that saved me was the gravel road itself.

It wore a hole in the helmet and the whisky leaked out. I tumbled off into the ditch and came out of there unhurt. The Harley was all bent and twisted on the other side of the highway. I've been sober ever since; can't stand the smell or taste of booze any more.

I hitched a ride to Whitehorse and took a job at the Canadian Tire Store. I'm so reliable, they call me "Steady" but every weekend I drive around the Yukon looking for my old dog, Nugget.

I'd like to get him back and then pass him on to someone like yourself who needs a bit of luck.



A young fellow on Hunker Creek, needs some luck too. (SH photo)

SWEATER WITH A STORY DAY

(Or, what do you do when it's 40 below?)

By Sheila D. Rose

It was at the end of the first week of -40C temperatures that I first noticed the sweater phenomenon. As the mercury plummeted and the ice fog enveloped the low lying areas, many who worked at the Yukon's Department of Education decided to leave their vehicles at home, pull on their long underwear, get out the Sorrels, wrap up their faces—and walk.

The women's washroom at the Department of Education building started to look like a college dorm. There is no sense in putting on make-up or fixing your hair when you are going to be encased in toques and scarves for a one kilometre trek to work. So every morning curling irons were plugged in, skirts came out of back packs and the counter took on the colourful clutter of make-up bags.

But something else was adding to the colour—an assortment of sweaters. Not the boutique—"I paid \$300 for this in Juneau"—variety, but the "I have had this for a long time and either the sweater's shape or mine has changed" kind. Wool; cotton; darned; one sleeve rolled up, the other fine the way it is; necklines stretched; the orange and brown of the 60s; the grey of the 70s—these were definitely sweaters that have seen life and been part of it.

On Saturday, Janu-honour of Robert Service Westmark Hotel. Out-hovered around -48C. organized to pick up visions. People the ride through the hotel. One had been set aside room. As people layers of clothing and cocktail again were sweat-that barely but-ers over bare shoul-sweaters carefully arms and taken to bles—just in case nudge its way under



ary 20th, a night in was held at the side the temperature

A van service was folks in the subdi-bundled up for the ice fog to large room as a cloak-peeled off the to reveal suits dresses, there ers. Sweaters toned; sweat-ders; veteran folded over the candle-lit tawinter might the door.

Sheila Rose and Lynn Lebarge show off their old sweaters.

I was to judge the costumes people wore, as characters from Service's verses. In more than one instance a new "Lady known as Lou," slipped a sweater off her shoulders and over the back of her chair before heading for the stage. Yes, there are strange things done 'neath the midnight sun. After the judging the wine flowed and the poems were recited. At the end of the evening the parkas, boots, scarves—and sweaters—were once again donned and people trundled off to waiting vans and taxis.

Monday started week two of the cold spell. By now the cold had lost its novelty. The wear and tear of week two took its toll on equipment, the human body and the human psyche. Cars—those that would start—sounded like rattling tool boxes, bus doors wouldn't close and co-workers were called home to deal with broken water lines and faulty furnaces. After an emergency run to their brittle homes people returned in overalls, hunting parkas and dilapidated, hard-working sweaters. These were a whole new category of sweaters—pulled, gnarled, grease-stained and paint-splattered. These sweaters had probably seen and heard things under the northern lights—and in the crawl spaces under peoples' homes—that are best left to evaporate into the firmament.

On Tuesday morning as I dressed for work I reached up to the closet shelf and after a little rummaging around pulled down my old sweater. As sweaters go it is fairly nondescript. It is a cream-coloured polyester cardigan with genuine imitation wooden buttons. I can't remember when I didn't have this sweater. I believe it was bought to wear open over maternity tops. Since then it has travelled with me from Ellesmere Island to Egypt. I've worn it as a bed jacket and stuffed it in my backpack on the Chilkoot Trail. My favourite look is to wear it over a long flannelette nightgown with big wool socks and fluffy slippers. I can recall my daughter, as a teenager, being totally embarrassed by me wearing this outfit when she brought her friends home. However it was one of those stages when my mere existence was an embarrassment, one that rendered her social life completely unredeemable for ever and ever.

I pulled on my sweater and layered on the other gear—including a film of Vaseline on my face—and headed out the door. The storm door screeched and my cat Emma careened back down the hall and into the living room when she felt a blast of cold air. Another day in paradise. I had been catching little snippets of conversation at work. Someone would say, "My, uh, what an, uh, interesting sweater. Yes, uh, very interesting". So I started asking more point-blank questions like: Where did you get that sweater? How long have you had it? And I made leading comments like: I bet that sweater has a story to tell. And the sweaters, through the auspices of their human life support systems, began to talk.

Ian: "This old thing, I've had it for years. It was made for me by my ex-mother-in-law. It has lasted longer than the marriage."

Bertrand: "This sweater? I was wearing this sweater when I rescued a man from a burning air plane. It's all pulled because I ran through the woods to the site and I kept catching it on trees and shrubs."

And this is how “Sweater With A Story Day” was born. I had just scratched the surface of a rich vein of stories. On Wednesday, with the assistance of Doug, the resident computer guru, we turned out a notice to be distributed around the building:

A Proclamation

Friday, January 26th, 1996

“Sweater with a Story Day.”

Somewhere in your wardrobe,
trunk, back of the closet, is a
sweater with a story. Now is
the time to share that cozy,
tacky, colourful sweater
(or sweat top) and its story
with your co-workers.

“Why not fax it out to the schools?” a colleague asked. So at lunch time the notice started appearing on staff room tables from Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow in the north to Watson Lake High School in the south. The schools were given short notice and response would be sporadic, but “Sweater With A Story Day” was becoming a reality. People drifted by my office to say they didn’t have a sweater like that or to inquire whether T-shirts would be permissible. There was an occasional, “it must be wonderful to have free time for such frivolity. I am too busy.” But for the most part people chatted it up. Some suggested that if they were going to wear an old sweater on Friday why not jeans and moccasins as well?

Thursday dawned and people struggled through the ice fog and darkness to work. A few more mechanical systems had “temper tantrums”. The morning Canadian Airlines flight from Vancouver was diverted to Yakutat, Alaska and the marital bliss of some marriages was strained by the lament of “It was your big idea for us to move to this wasteland. I liked living in (various locations mentioned here).

Pam Buckway, host of the CBC Yukon noon hour show, called and said that she’d heard that cabin fever had finally taken hold of the Department of Education. She wanted to know more about “Sweater With A Story Day” and whether she could interview me about it on the air. At 12:10 p.m. “Sweater With A Story Day” went territory wide.

On Friday, January 26—the 14th day of record cold (-40C) temperatures descended once again. Northerners have little empathy for our neighbours to the south, especially those in Vancouver who become dismayed by lows of -1C. I wondered if anyone would be in the mood for a fun day. My partner appeared in the kitchen that morning in his sweater, a blue and white polyester, never-say-die masterpiece that he had worn for his age of majority photo an undisclosed number of years ago. In ancient Aztec times

Vicuna wool could only be worn by kings seeking eternal life. They should have had polyester. At least then their clothing would have lived forever.

Party Whitehorse" paint splattered sweatshirt. We were underway. Some of the day's highlights included

- Charlaine dropping by to show me her lucky fly-fishing sweater. The sweater is decorated with snaps and pulls but she proudly states that she always catches fish when she wears it and even the guys want to borrow it.

- Dea displaying her tiny, green and white, Angora collared baby sweater on her desk.

- Ray recounting the days of fame and glory of his 1960-61 yellow tinged white cardigan curling sweater from Winnipeg.

- Conrad sporting a recently acquired sweatshirt emblazoned with the name of the Caribbean club where he taught wind surfing.

- Another male (who wishes to remain anonymous) stealthily telling me how his sweater is made from the wool that a former girl friend knit into a sweater for him. He later unravelled the sweater but when his wife found the wool she proceeded to knit him a new one.

- Lynn showing me the yellow cardigan she's had for 30 years. The one with the buttons that a favourite cat of her youth named Foster had chewed.

- A principal calling to relate how she had a wool vest made from the fur of a dearly beloved dead pet dog. When she wore the vest to school there was a parade of staff members who stopped by her office to pant, howl or hold up one leg against her desk.

- Another anonymous male telling me how his wife gave away to a rummage sale the sweater he had purchased at university. He said that he couldn't believe that it was gone for good. One day he and his wife were canoeing on the Yukon River when they saw a group of canoeists on the shore. One of them was wearing his sweater. His wife was adamant that he wasn't going to paddle to shore and ask for the sweater back. The prospect of being dumped in the icy Yukon River probably prevented a battle of the paddling.

CBC Yukon was having its usual Friday "Trading Post" show when a First Nations elder from Pelly Crossing walked into their studio with a sweater and a story. Thirty-five years ago a rider on horseback was traveling from Texas to Alaska. He took sick outside Pelly Crossing and the elder took him to a doctor and then seeing that the traveller wasn't properly dressed for the climate gave him a warm winter coat to wear. In exchange the traveller gave the elder his sweater. There, over the arm of the elder, was the torn and tattered gift.

On Saturday the temperature warmed up a few degrees and people went on quick Saturday errand jaunts downtown. Friends stopped to share their stories and discuss the cold wave. The weather improved considerably as a new week dawned. On the Monday morning the CBC "person on the street" program was asking people "What are you going to do now that it has warmed up to -30C?"

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY WHOM CATHERINE DOHERTY MET DURING HER VISIT TO WHITEHORSE

By REV. ANDREW CUSCHIERI

Who was this Native woman carrying a child in her arms ? She appeared from nowhere, smiled at Catherine and disappeared. But before I go on with my story I believe I should fill in the reader with some historical data for a better understanding of the tale.

I believe most residents of Whitehorse have heard of "Mary House." This house was first founded by Fr. Triggs, O.M.I., in 1953, as a hospice for the Catholic, Native population. Due to scarcity of clinics, residents in the Yukon and in Northern British Columbia had no other choice but to go to Whitehorse for medical assistance. Fr. Triggs who was in charge of the spiritual welfare of the Natives, procured a lodging place for them during their stay in Whitehorse. He named the hostel after "Our Lady of Guadalupe." Moreover, in the Fifties young men reached the Yukon in great numbers. Strong propaganda was circulating in different parts of Canada that the Yukon was rich. This time the lure was not gold but oil and minerals. As in the "Gold Rush," many experienced a rude awakening on arrival. With no job, betrayed as they were by false propaganda, they soon became not only destitute but also despondent and thereby highly susceptible to crime. This type of emergency urgently needed a hostel, which still exists under the patronage of St. Joseph. During the years that followed



St. Joseph's House, Whitehorse

both "Mary House" and "St. Joseph House" accommodated also many Canadian and American travellers who found themselves stranded in Whitehorse.

I do not want to discount the fact that a similar project was already in operation by the Anglican Church for Natives of their own denomination. This apostolate, placed under the patronage of Saint Agnes, later served as hostel for Native girls attending high school in Whitehorse. One may also mention an extensive complex run by the Baptist Church. It was located where the R.C.M.P. headquarters stand today. It consisted of a school, dormitories, residence for transient Natives attending the hospital as out-patients, and a large play-ground.

Mary House prides itself as the first mission undertaken by Madonna House Lay Apostolate, founded by Catherine Doherty. This lady of towering personality was born in Russia and, like many others, escaped to the West at the out-break of the Bolshevik Revolution. She started her apostolate among the marginalized in Toronto (1930-1937), then continued her mission at Harlem in Manhattan until 1947, when she and her husband, Eddie, decided to retire in Combermere, Ontario. Ironically enough, when Catherine made up her mind to withdraw into retirement, it was then the time for her to respond to God's call. She found herself charged with the foundation of a Religious Community which throughout these forty-some years grew and spread its branches to many parts of the globe.

One can appreciate that Mary House apostolate is very demanding and therefore requires a permanent staff fully dedicated in order to accomplish its goal. Bishop I.L. Coudert, O.M.I., the Catholic bishop of Whitehorse, in October of 1953 visited Madonna House in Combermere in search of volunteers. Catherine wanted to visit the locality before she and the Directorate reached a decision on the offer of the bishop. She arrived in Whitehorse in November of that same year, and here is the assessment of the place in her own words. "I was horrified at what I saw. Whitehorse was still very much of a 'shack town,' a frontier town."

It was quite a bleak scene after flying over the gorgeous St. Elias Mountain Range. To make matters worse, the house where she lodged was cold and shabby with no indoor plumbing. The ashen sky, as if a canopy hanging from Grey Mountain, provoked a sense of suffocation and gloom. All this did not encourage Catherine to comply with the bishop's request. Her mind had already been set to decline the offer when she attended Mass the following morning at the Cathedral. During the Eucharistic celebration, however, Catherine, to her own astonishment, had a radical change of heart; she decided to accept the invitation. Father Triggs was utterly thrilled when after Mass Catherine informed him of her affirmative decision. She left the church and headed to her lodging. And here I quote the textual description by Catherine of what happened when she came out of the Cathedral on Fourth Avenue.

"I left the church with an art teacher who had knelt close to me. We saw a beautiful sight—a tall young Indian woman, dressed in a long white caribou-skin parka that fell to the tops of her beautiful white beaded mukluks. She held a baby whose face I couldn't see. It was also dressed in the white skin of the caribou. The woman smiled at me, not saying a word. She kept looking at me. I stood nailed to the snow-covered sidewalk. Gently, without haste, and with a last smile and a little inclination of her head, she walked away. She disappeared around the corner. I turned to the art teacher. She had been stirred enough to take out her sketch book. And she had drawn a picture of the woman. I mentioned how beautiful the woman was, and how lovely her clothes. The face of the art teacher looked bewildered and full of astonishment. She told me she had never seen an Indian woman so tall nor one clad in white caribou skins. She had never seen an Indian woman in such stunning attire. She was so astonished and she had sketched her swiftly. I asked her for the sketch and she gave it to me."

Still dazzled by this encounter but also uplifted, Catherine could not help not mentioning this experience to the bishop when she was invited for breakfast at his residence. A Native woman of striking beauty and grace was no news to the bishop and priests present at breakfast. But a "white parka?!!" — that was unheard of. "There is no such a thing as a white parka," pointed out the bishop. "Nobody around here wears caribou skins." In order to prove to all present that she was not delirious, Catherine showed the sketch of the woman done by the art teacher. After putting Catherine under a lengthy scrutiny, the bishop smilingly concluded, "Maybe you have seen Our Lady of the Yukon."

Catherine ended her memoir by stating: "We have the sketch in Father Cal's office; and the story is true. No one, so far as I know, ever saw this woman again. The priests tried to find traces of her, but failed. They located no one who had ever seen a tall Indian woman in white caribou skins. I leave it at that."

Some points are worth noting in this story. Neither Catherine nor the art teacher could ever figure out where the Native woman came from so abruptly. Another curious point, Catherine did not know this woman from Adam. Yet the woman stopped and smiled at Catherine for no apparent reason. After all, Catherine had arrived in Whitehorse the day before, incognito; thus the lady could never have appreciated the presence of Catherine in the cause of the Natives. It is worth noting, moreover, that Catherine wore plain clothes as, in fact, do all the lay members of Madonna House Apostolate. In this way, she could not stand out as a person inspiring certain respect and reverence.

Mamie Legris, Louis Stoeckle and Kathleen O'Herin were chosen as the first missionary team. They reached the Yukon on June 13, 1954, and they came to stay. Whether the Native woman was the Blessed Virgin Mary or not will ever remain a mystery. It is an undeniable fact, however, that forty years afterwards her house is still open to men and women in need.

Letters from the Great Stampede

By Ned Hoggan

Yukoner Marjorie Bergstrand, who was born in Dawson City, contributed these Gold Rush letters. They were written by her father, Ned Hoggan, to his mother and wife in Scotland nearly 100 years ago.

Introduction by Marjorie (nee Hoggan) Bergstrand

When Ned arrived in Montreal enroute to the Klondike where he hoped to make his fortune, little did he realize he would spend the rest of his life in the North. He would forever forsake his sea-going career and would never see his old home and folks again.

Even so, he kept in touch by letter with his mother in Scotland. He had been born to her at the age of 17 in Alleypoor, India where her husband, as his father and grandfather before him, was a major-general in the Imperial Army. Ned, wanting to see the world, broke family tradition by going to sea instead of into the army. It was on a ship that he met a Belgian who was heading for the Klondike with several dogs. Ned left his employer to take his own chances on this new adventure.

His first letter home was from Montreal but unfortunately, no letters have been found of his trip across Canada or up the coast from Vancouver to Skagway. His trek over the White Pass is well described up to Whitehorse Rapids where he later was paid \$25 a trip to pilot scows through Miles Canyon and the treacherous Whitehorse Rapids. There is also no account of his trip down the Yukon River to Dawson.

His later letters are actually the story of a Yukon family, six children having been born there. I am the youngest of those, one of two left, and was born at Sunnyvale, opposite Dawson City.

(There is quite a story in regard to my parents' marriage. My mother had two suitors who agreed that the first one to return from a voyage to South America would marry Kate and the other would be best man at the wedding. Their first child would be named for the loser, which is why my eldest sister's second name is Henrietta.)

Here is the first letter from Ned:

C.P.R. Stockyards Hotel
Holachalaga, Montreal, Canada
December 21, 1897

Dearest Mother,

Having quite got over the surprise of my last, I will now endeavour to write you a full account of my adventures as far as I have got.

I left New York at 7:30 hours, 18th of Dec. with a thermometer at 76 Degrees. It fell to 40 degrees then to 30 degrees. I then went to bed for they have beds in the trains in this country. At 6:00 a.m. I got up, temperature at 10 degrees. At 9:50 a.m. I arrived in Montreal, temperature at 5 degrees. Not bad in the way of changes?

The leader of our expedition met us at the station and between us, we carried my baggage to the St. Lawrence Hotel, at which place they charge 12 Pounds per day, room and feed. I am the second in command of this expedition. We had breakfast and then a conversation into further movements, after which I started to move myself around Montreal to visit all the principal wholesale houses, harness makers, butchers, slaughter houses, flour mills, etc.

For we have 10 dogs, and they have to be fed and exercised every day and the beasts have a strange desire to fight on the slightest provocation and they are quite a handful to look after and feeding and exercising with all the fittings, clothing and boot fitting, for they all have to be provided with sleeping coats and boots to keep their feet from freezing whilst working. They seem very much surprised with their boots but I guess they will appreciate them when the temperature falls below 50 or 60 degrees below zero. These working dogs are exceedingly ferocious when out of harness, but whilst working, they are quite amiable and work hard. So much for dogs.

After being in Montreal for seven days and on my feet from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., I got time to call on the Hendersons. My old pal Ames is still the same self face and, of course, pumped me of all the English news I had at my disposal. Her Bro. and George had been exceedingly good to me in introducing me to several people of importance. Mr. Henderson has also been very kind to me. Had asked me to come up to his house when convenient to call up there. He has also introduced me to some of the head officials of the railway who are all important people to know in an expedition of this kind. The head man is a Mr. Mc.... and he hails from Edinburgh. Mr. Henderson is an exceeding fine old gentleman, one of the old real good old sorts, and I am only sorry that I cannot see more of him as my time is so filled up, running all over the place, and by the evening I am dead beat. The two sides of my life is very amusing. In town, I am quite the business man and diplomat. Down here at the stock yard, I am the roving gold miner and dog hero.

I have left my quarters at the L. H. Hotel and am now quartered at the stockyard hotel. My associates are drivers and cow herds, etc. (Here comes the advantage of my seafaring life), and I am quite at home and get along

famously with them. As for the reason for my changing bids, I found they were neglecting the dogs and so rushing us into a lot of unnecessary expense, for 10 dogs require a lot of looking after and the feed bills run up very fast. Down here, I am paying one Pound per day bed and food. At 6:00 a.m. I am cooking the dogs' food then feeding and exercising them. Then off to town, back again to see them bedded down with straw. Can't say I care much for the pitchfork work, but it has to be done, so I go at it as my hired men have to work for shames sake when they see me at it, but I guess they do not relish my way of taking my money's worth out of them.

After bedding down, off to town again and make arrangements for next day's feed as the menu has to be varied. One brute tried to vary the diet by trying to eat me, but he got club sauce and is quite content to eat the laid down bill of fare. The weather has been splendid since my arrival, temperature varying from 20 degrees to 12 below zero, but one does not seem to feel the cold at all. I am in a dead sweat all the time. Nothing like exercise to keep one warm. The leader of my expedition is a Mr. Davis and is very good to all and makes a capital business man, so he does that part of the work and I do the rushing and bouncing so we get on favourably together. He gets rather amused at my way of dealing with newspaper reporters. I just sit down, light my pipe and tell them all the lies I can think of, which appears in the papers as his sayings and doings. I will send some cuttings one of these days.

We expect to start for Vancouver about the middle of this week, but cannot say for certain as we are trying to get the government to take a part in the enterprise. We are playing a big card and we mean to miss nothing, like hard work, neck and cheeks. You shall have the first nuggets, Mrs. Hoggan, and if you please, I am not your sailor son any longer, but the gold mining son.

But until we move out of this, Love and kisses to all dear ones at home. I thought of you on Christmas Day.

Your loving and dutiful son,

Ned the miner.

Note from Marjorie Bergstrand:

Ned, (my father) did indeed send his first nuggets to his mother, Eleanor Hoggan. She had the gold made into a bar brooch and on it spelled out in seed pearls the name of her first born son, Ned. He was born in India at Allipoor when she was 17, the second wife of Major General John William Hoggan. The complete name of the child, John Edward Farnsworth Hoggan.

When I was in Scotland, my cousin, Molly, gave me that brooch which I treasure. She told me that each morning when Granny came downstairs, she would touch it with a gentle hand and say, "Oh, my dear Ned." They never met again after Ned left for the Klondike, for he spent his life there with Katherine, my mother, and there they became the parents of three girls and three boys. The two girls born to the couple before Ned came to the Klondike stayed in Scotland and came to Canada as adult women.

April 13, 1898

Below Whitehorse Rapids

Dearest Kitty,

You must think your old man has gone out of the world. It being such a long time since you heard from him. Well, in once sense, one is out of the world in this forsaken country but still manage to live in some way or another.

Since my last, we have travelled 150 miles and brought 2 tons of provisions along with us and it has been no small task either. Wind snow, hail and frost and Canadian police restrictions, all having to fight against. The police instead of being here to protect the rights of people seem to be here to obstruct and hamper them in every way. After leaving the last place I wrote from we had to climb what they call the summit. It goes like this / and the path about 3 feet wide, one side hard rock and the other a steep precipice, in some places straight up and down, and others have a slight incline. The incline places being very dangerous for falling over, which many a poor devil did, but being so heavily covered with snow saves one's bones from being broken. The greatest danger being the sled or horse coming on top of one.

Out of all the numerous people passed up the summit, there has been no serious accident up to the time of our passing, but I am afraid that since we passed there have been one or two bad ones. But by great good fortune, we have been in good health and strength so far. After getting to the summit, the North West Mounted Police have tried to get all the duty they can get out of one for goods bought in America or any country out of Canada and the reckon of your provisions to see if you have over 1,000 pounds, or in other words, enough to last each man for one year. After all this they put a stamp on your customs papers and tell you to go, and you go as quick as you can with a lighter pack and a great desire to get away from the N.W.M. Police.

After leaving the summit, we crossed what they call Summit Lake. It is about 10 or 11 miles long and a splendid sheet of ice over which we got a good trail, 7 dogs being able to draw 800 lbs. At the end of the lake you come to what is called the canyon and that changes the state of affairs considerably, the trail being like a corkscrew up and down and around about each twist, rocks on one side and precipice on the other with 8 or 9 feet of snow. One poor devil fell over and we had to get ropes around his legs to get him out. At this beautiful place one can only get 150 or 200 lbs. along with 7 dogs. Well, we eventually got across with a few mild swear words and a few wallopings for the dogs.

Then we got to what is called Shallow Lake, another splendid sheet of ice 3 or 4 miles long. Here we got caught in a snow storm and my smoke!, if it was not cold, but after the storm we seemed to have less cold, in fact, you might say we had lost the very severe cold at Shallow Lake. Over this lake we got 800 lbs. on 7 dogs. From Shallow Lake we ran into what is called Middle Lake, another splendid sheet of ice 3 miles long. Then we

came to a little spot called the hill below the log cabin. From there we branched off to what they call the Tushi Trail.

We did this on account of hearing that the Bennet Trail was so bad (and after I was so glad we did). From the hill below the log cabin to Tushi Lake it was simply a horror, 100 lbs on 7 dogs, over all sorts of ground, up hill, down hill through snowdrifts. One minute you would be lying flat on your belly holding onto a rope attached to the back of the sled, to act as a brake, and next you would be at the front of the sled with a rope around your shoulder helping the dogs up the side of a hill. The next minute you would be under the sled, the sled having turned over on you, and this glorious state of affairs lasted for about 7 miles. We then struck what is called Lake Tushi and there we had a good run of 12 miles on ice with a good trail, and did we not appreciate it after the 7 miles of bad?

Then we had a splendid run and good weather, until the last day when we shifted camp and then we had another bad snow storm and a devil of a struggle we had to get our tent up. The storm is terrible in these snow storms and you have to get under shelter as soon as possible and get the animals under shelter of trees or rocks or it will freeze them to death in a very short time.

From Tushi Lake into what is called Windy Arm Lake, we had to make a portage of 3 miles and it was a very good imitation of the other 7 miles we had passed over. At this point we had the satisfaction of knowing we were the farthest ahead of 600 who had landed with us. Then we started over Windy Arm, our first camp being 18 miles up the lake, a splendid sheet of fine clear ice. Dogs could draw 800 or 900 pounds, a load from first camp in the next shift, we made a place called Tagish House, 12 miles from our first camp. Here we had the N.W.M. Police to contend with once more. Captain being away on some duty, a sergeant was left in charge. And he was a man who liked to show his authority, so when I went and showed him my customs paper that had been passed at the Summit, he said that our weight of provisions was short of the government regulations. I explained that the nature of the goods we had were far and away above the required weight, but like all government officials, he was troubled with what the Americans call a "swelled head" and he would not let us pass.

So the only thing left for me to do was go back to the head of Lake Bennet and see Major Walsh, head of the N.W.M. Police. This meant a journey of 80 miles there and back. So we camped and next morning I started back at 5 a.m. with one team of dogs, five days food, sleeping bag and blanket and one kettle. Had a good run for 15 miles, that was at Cariboo Crossing, and there came on a snow storm. Well I kept going till the animals refused to face it any longer, then I made for the shore and found a place where someone had sheltered a horse. So that did for the dogs and myself. Made a cozy fire and boiled my kettle, had a feed, fed the dogs and then crawled into my sleeping bag and went to sleep about 7 p.m. Snowing and blowing hard, then to zero.

Next morning awoke at dawn, found myself embedded in snow, the

poor dogs all around me. Moved about and got the snow loosened and then crawled out of bed and lit my fire once more, boiled the kettle and made a cupful of Johnston's fluid beef, fed on that and a few biscuits, rolled my bag, harnessed the dogs and drove off. Got into Bennet at 11 a.m. the same day. Went to see Major Walsh who gave me a pass without any trouble, but kept me waiting 3 or 4 hours for it. All the time, I wonder why government people have so little regard for time (something like you - no use for clocks). At 4:00 p.m. he gave me a written permit and wished me all success in my journey.

So off I started in the middle of a snow storm and at 11 p.m, made in for the shore and found shelter under a tree for the night for dogs and myself, cooked some stuff to eat, what it was heaven only knows, but it filled my belly. Fed the dogs and went to sleep.

Up at dawn the next morning and off for camp where I arrived at 4:00 p.m. and mighty glad I was of it, I can tell you, for the dogs and myself were about played out.

On account of this delay, we lost 200 Pounds so that shows you how little things mount up in this country. It costs one and a half Pounds a day to feed a dog and two and a half Pound to keep a horse. Now when we were stopped at Bennet, it threw me out of all my reckoning of food supplies for dogs and horse. We were making for the head of Lake Labarge



THE WHITE PASS. This route was ten miles longer than the Chilkoot Trail. From Skagway to Lake Bennett was a distance of 39 miles. Photo by E.A. Hegg

where the ice breaks up first and one gets clear of the Whitehorse Rapids. Now the 4 days food for the animals that was consumed at Tagish House would have just carried me to the head of Lake LaBarge whereas now I have only got clear of the Whitehorse Rapids and there all the animal food ran out, but hold on, I am going too fast.

We left Tagish House with a permit in our pockets and a great hussle on ourselves. The first day we did 14 miles over Lake Marsh and it was a tough day I can tell you. There had been a slight snowfall during the night and the snow had drifted over the trail, which made it very heavy work pulling the sleds, and at the lower end of Lake Marsh the ice was giving out and we had the devil's own job to get the dogs to face the cold water and it was no fun for ourselves, but it had to be done and we did it. Then came that weary drag over the drifted trail. We got to campground at 7 or 8 p.m. pitched our tent, fed the dogs, had supper and went to sleep. I do not remember ever being so tired as I was that night.

Next morning we went back to Tagish House for the remainder of our stuff. (It takes us 2 days to shift from one place to another.) You pile all your belongings on the trail side, take what you can and come back for it the next day. It is most amusing to see thousands of pounds worth of goods piled all along the roads in this country and nobody loses anything, for the penalty for stealing is death. Hang a thief to the first tree is the law on the trail, and very closely it is observed.

We had to stay there the night and got away the following day and had the same job as on the previous occasion, and a little more trouble with the water, for the spring is fast setting in. Reached camp at 6:00 p.m. Supper and bed.

At daylight next morning, moved off to head of Lake Marsh, 7 miles further on this day. We managed to move all the stuff in one day. Next morning we had to get down Six Mile River and the trail was in terrible condition. All over water and the ice going all over the place. Could only carry 200 or 300 lbs. at a load. That day we managed to shift everything 2 miles just across a very bad point, in fact, the last load we dragged through ice and water, tied the goods up in waterproof stuff and made a dash for it, up to our middles in water and the dogs swimming and howling. The lead dog with a rope around his neck, which one man pulled up from the safe side of the gap. As soon as we got over we built a camp fire and dried our clothes as best we could. All felt very pleased at having got over the point safely, but all felt miserable cold and no tent to sleep in that night as it was too late to pitch it, so we just had supper, crawled into the sleeping bags and went to sleep.

Up at daylight and rushed off again. This day we shifted all the stuff 6 miles down the river towards the Whitehorse Rapids and made a good campground at 11 p.m. and we all felt about played out so we made up our minds to have a day off to rest ourselves and the animals, so we slept until 9 next morning, had breakfast then one of the party started off for the Whitehorse Rapids to see what the chances were of getting past them. We

had heard very bad accounts of the river trail and two of us went back for some of the stuff we had left 3 miles back.

Next morning our advance man returned and reported the road passable but that we would have to move might quick, so up we got and at it and from that time to the time we got across the river below the Grand Canyon (later Miles Canyon) there was no rest for man or beast. It cost us our horse and 6 dogs and took all the life out of us - water, ice, snow. Axe and shovel at it we went, and we managed it. When we got to the foot of the canyon people advised us not to cross, but we were desperate and at it we went. 500 lbs. on a sled and 2 teams of dogs hitched on together and ourselves with ropes and up to our middles in a torrent of ice cold water and mighty little ice to support it all. Over we went and when we got across, we all shook hands with one another and were mighty pleased with ourselves. Camped, fed dogs, and slept at ease for the first time since we left Tagish House.

The last 3 miles of the road to the place where we made the desperate crossing is worth a better description. As far as the southern end of the Grand Canyon you come along the river bank which is solid ice 6 or 7 feet thick, but the ice all shelves to the river which is running in the centre at a very swift pace. A wide opening and you have to keep a very sharp look-out on your sleds or over you go into the river, sled and all, and then they would draw your club money in the morning. There would be no hope of rescue as you would be swept under the ice at once. After doing those miles of shelf work, you come to the mouth of the Grand Canyon and here you have to stop and carry all your worldly belongings on your back up a hill, for 300 yards the slope is at this angle / and that knocks the stuffing out of you. After all the stuff is at the top, you load your sleds and proceed for one mile and then you lever the sleds down a hill with a rope, the angle being about /, then you proceed for a mile and again lower the sleds down another hill, the worst brute of the lot, the angle being straight up and down and 200 feet long. Here one of our ropes broke and one sled had put a soft bag of sugar on the load, and that bag of sugar is there yet, much to our sorrow as sugar is one of the most precious things with us, as we brought a very small supply. This little up hill and down hill, we had to make 5 times to get all the stuff over, so you see, Kitty, Klondike is not all beer and skittles! My advice to anyone who wants to start out for this country is to stay at home, for it is simply hell on temper and constitution, in fact, unless you have the constitution of a rhinoceros, you are of no use in this country - and the digestion of an ostrich, for the feeding is simply terrible, cooked dough passes for bread, in fact belly is only a thing to be filled - get ahead is all that one thinks of.

After getting over the river, we started again next morning. We made 5 or 6 miles that just put us clear of the rapids and all our dog food was finished so we sent all the dogs to kingdom come, pitched our tent, had a days rest and a wash, the first in 40 days. How is that for the height of cleanliness?

Next day we started to build our saw pit to saw our planks for building a boat, and that we have been at for the last 4 days. This being Sunday, we stopped work and all indulged in a good sleep and wash. In fact, we all stripped off and had a bath, but it was a mighty cold work I can tell you, freezing hard, and stripped off naked rubbing yourself with soap and spraying it off is no joke. But we were so beastly dirty it really had to be done. Washed and clean and clean clothes is a fair treat. I often think of the days when I used to have clean clothes every other day at home and a clean shirt everyday. When I come home again, will have 2 per day to make up for lost time. And I will eat beefsteak, pudding all the week round and black pudding every morning and salad every evening. Now, there you are, old girl, there you have all the news of the expedition as far as we have gone. Heaven only knows when you will get the last letter as we will be very busy for the next 14 days at least and then we will be busy getting down the river to the gold fields. There we will make our pile and then we will come home and spend it like fun. After you have read this letter send it to the general and mother and when they return it, send it to Mr. Hutchinson.

Your wandering and loving husband,

Ned

Dawson, Yukon

Nov. 15, 1898

Mother does not like to be second hand so I have put her before you old man!!

Dearest Mother and Dad

Just a few lines by the outgoing mail, if one might call it so, so we get all sorts of old pages from the post office in this heaven forsaken place. All men are liars up here and every man in ten is a double liar. This Bill Davies Co. going up the spout has put me in a regular hole as regards to making a pile this year, his not having sent any supplies has fooled me as regards to working my claims, because I have to work for my money to obtain grub, instead of being out on my claims working them, but, of course, I will not hand them over to the P. O. They have failed to carry out their agreement with me and he has told me he has run out of funds. That was his lookout and not mine. The P. O. is up the spout as far as I am concerned. I am on my own now. Luckily, I met an old shipmate in here and we have become partners and work together. But poor chap, he has been down with a sharp attack of pneumonia for the last 3 weeks, but is on the recovery now and I hope he will be out in a few days. Doctors' bills in this place are 1 Pound per visit, an ordinary 6 ounce bottle is 8/, so our doctor's bill is as long as a ship's main yard. But I guess we can face the music. We have 3 good claims recorded and 2 more staked. I am going to write J.H.B. to see if he can float a loan on 3 claims. My Thistle Creek claim is a fair bird and well it need be to get me at port. My claim at Dominion Creek is worth 2000 pounds. But I would take a good bit less for it as it is a bad place to get grub out to. I have also got a nice little one on Lovett Gulch, comes in on 18 below on

Bonanza. I am claims off Discovery and Discovery is paying well. It is handy and I will work it myself. I have another one on Baker Creek and she comes in on the back of French Hill and that is a regular field of gold. Here is all the valuable property lying idle because I have not the means to work it.

Now getting these claims has required no end of trouble and hardship and many a hungry belly and back ache. Now, you are not to tell Davies anything about all this. The brute broke faith with me in the worst kind of way and the only use I have for him is a bullet. He cannot square me on any proposition whatsoever. He is a dead swindler and a hypocrite to boot, coming in for a P. O. forsooth.

My Thistle Creek claim is a fair bird, and well it need be! I will give you a description of how I got it. At 10:30, a man came to me and asked me if I felt alright for a long mush (that is a long walk). I said "I am just fit for it!" Then he told me there had been a new strike 122 miles up the Yukon River and only 35 claims staked. I said "It is a tall order, but never venture, never win." So we put up grub for 3 weeks. Tramp at 5:00 a.m. next morning, we ut our blankets and feed in the canoe and started, thermom-eter at 10 above zero. So we put up grub for 3 weeks. Tramp at 5:00 a.m. next morning we put our blankets and feed in the canoe and started, ther-mometer at 10 above zero so we had hopes of making the Indian River.

The Yukon was running big ice flows. Seven hours after we started, we punched a hole in the canoe. Having nothing to patch it with, we pulled it out, cut off a thin slab of bacon and covered the hole and then lit a fire, melted some bacon grease, poured it over the slice and the frost froze it solid. Thermometer at zero by this time, but we had our canoe in good shape for proceeding so off we started up the river again — the way we go upstream here is one man sits in the canoe and the other pulls on a tow rope and this way we make from 10 to 15 miles a day. Had no mishap and at 6:00 p.m. camped on the river bank in 3 feet of snow. The word camp does not mean pitch a tent! It means you light a big fire, throw some branches of spruce on the snow, spread a bit of canvas on the branches and that is your camp. Then at 10 below, cook supper. Supper, breakfast and dinner always consist of chappatis (called "flapjacks" here) and bacon and if you want a change of diet you have bacon and flapjacks and then flap-jacks and bacon, if you want to live high.

After supper we light our pipes, then get to work with the axes and chop up enough wood for the night. Then get all the stuff out of the canoe and pull her out of the water. Then roll our blankets around us and sleep for the night. If you get cold, wake up, get the axe and have a little exercise in chopping wood for the fire. (You are liable to get cold once or twice during the night with the temperature at 10 or 15 below zero, for you can only afford to carry two blankets, weight is everything on these quick trips. Five a.m., up again, breakfast and off again, ice very thick in the river but we held onto the canoe because as soon as we had to pull her out of the water, it meant only one blanket for the night as all had to be carried on your back for the rest of the trip. Four hours after we started, my partner

stepped off the side ice and went plunk into some quicksand. Just had time to grab him but he left his long hip boots behind him in the quicksand. On we went again, next we both got wet to the skin in scraping over a big lump of ice, so we had to camp and build a big fire and dry out. Well, we dried out then went on and camped five miles below Indian River and had supper.

Now commenced our hardship. All our worldly belongings on our backs and 87 miles of ice and snow to tramp over. Well, the first day we made eight miles on the side ice. The next day, we made a good day—12 miles. This brought us up close to the Sixtymile River post. The next day we made 10 miles—next day we made up our minds to make the Stewart River, a big job but it was getting colder and colder and we were beginning to get frightened that the river would freeze solid before we could return and that would mean walking all the way back. Well, the next morning we started and then we had a terrible time of it amongst the islands at the mouth of the Stewart River. We tussled hard with it, but got so fagged out that we were compelled to camp. Up again at five a.m. and at it again, feeling not up to much but full of heart and go. Ten a.m. got in sight of a cabin, we never spoke but we both headed for it. Eleven a.m. we arrived at the cabin, threw off our bundles and sat on them. Just then we saw a man outside the cabin and my partner said, “Good day, partner, how are times?”

“Oh, so and so,” he said. My ear detected the old Dumphreishire accent. “Well, boys,” he said, “What part of Dumphries do you come from?” “Thornhill,” I replied. Before I had got the old place out of my mouth, our hands met.

“Your name?” he said—and I said Hoggan and he said, “Ned!—by all that’s holy!”

We were at Dames School together. And well I knew him, Willie Johnson, they had a farm near Durcester. Then out came the whiskey bottle and we drank to the old folks at home and he would not let us go until next day. If ever I felt comfort, it was in the little cabin at the mouth of the Stewart River.*

He advised us not to start in the morning as the rest of the journey was a terror in the state of the river then, but being Scotch, I suppose, I was stubborn and start I did, over the hardest bit of ground a man ever travelled. Three hours after we left the cabin, it came on to snow and we went up like wildfire and then it started to rain and all the side ice began to break away then we started to climb up the hills as we could not get around the bluffs as all the ice was broken.

One hill we climbed, when we got on top of it, was the highest peak around and the snow was three feet thick and as cold as charity. We were wet through to the skin, all our clothes frozen stiff, so as soon as we got down on the other side, we had to build a fire and dry out and then it started to freeze again so we camped for the night. Next morning the same thing again. Then the next day we made the mouth of the famous Thistle Creek, cold and hungry and on our last feed of chappaties. Next morning

we bought a few pounds of flour and bacon and started up the creek. Flour at one pound and bacon at two. We staked on California Girl, she comes in on 73 below Discovery, right hand side.

Then we started down the river. We bought an old boat for 4 Pounds, jammed her in the floe ice and drifted back to Dawson. The trip took us 17 days, and yesterday a man had the cheek to offer me 400 Pounds for my claim. He heard that I was hard up and thought he had a snap on! 3000 Pounds is the lowest I would look at for that claim, and then it would require a lot of persuasion to get me to part with it at that. My claim on Dominion Creek is worth 2000 Pounds but I would take a lot less for it as it is in a bad place to get grub out to. I have also got a nice little one on Lovett Gulch, comes in on 78 below Discovery and Discovery is paying well. It is handy and I will work it myself. If I have another on Baker Creek, 23 above, she comes in on the bank of French Hill and that is a regular field of gold. Here is all this valuable property lying idle because I have not the means to work it.

I have had to finance myself, feed myself, that I would not mind, but I had to finance the other members of the company here. One man I gave all the grub to and a fist full of dollars and glad to be rid of him at that price. The other I told to go and fish for himself and I was tired of supporting him. All the agreements I have terminated. My old shipmate, Bill Woodney, and I sail this show now. Now mind, and keep all this to yourself. Business is business so just keep your head trap shut. As you kick up such a row about getting all your news through Kate, please send her this letter as writing in this country is a terrible job. One is never in the same place for two days, one wants a cast iron constitution for it. MacGregor is the only one of the home crowd who could stand it.

Love to all,

Ever your loving and affectionate son,
Ned.

[*footnote to this section]

Little did Ned know that Stewart was to become the last site of the family home. He was moved to Stewart and joined by Kate and the four youngest children.

It was also to be my mother's last resting place, till spring break-up, high water and the absence of the steamers who no longer plied the river, channels changed and the island gradually washed away to such an extent that the little cemetery was taken away (in 1989) and with it my mother's grave. I have just recently learned that the head board from her grave was found downriver at Eagle.

Such an end for the remains of a pioneer woman who came to join her husband in 1899. I feel this desecration very deeply, but that is the way of life and death in the Yukon, it was never easy. **M.B.**