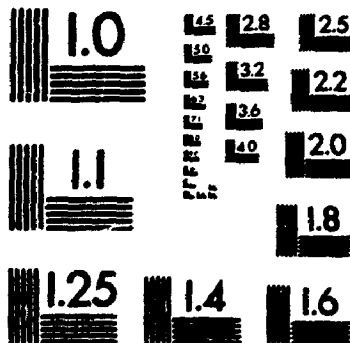


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**CULTURE, CLASS AND COMMUNITY:  
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH, 1896-1905**

by

**CHARLENE L. PORSILD, M.A.**

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of History

Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario  
1994  
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"CULTURE, CLASS AND COMMUNITY: NEW PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH, 1896-1905"

submitted by

Charlene L. Porsild, B.A., M.A.,

in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

Beginning in 1896, over thirty-thousand gold stampeders established a new community on the site of a Native fish camp. They called it Dawson City. They came to from the four corners of the world, the majority of them from outside Canada's borders. Together they built a city in the wilderness, a lasting community in which many of them permanently settled.

This study examines the experience of the ordinary residents of Dawson City during the gold rush period. It looks in some detail at four components of the new community: Native people, miners and other labourers, prostitutes and other professionals of the demi-monde, as well as the professional and business sectors.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative sources, the portrait of Dawson that emerges here is quite different from that of the popular literature. The Native community was disrupted by the stampede and its development continued separately from Dawson's. Far from being a "community of men," a surprising number of families were present and Klondikers as a whole show a surprising rate of persistence. Within the new community, a number of distinct ethnic sub-communities developed and a complex social stratification existed from the earliest period. These social distinctions, it is argued, were based on class and culture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A doctoral dissertation is never prepared by the candidate alone. In my case, I relied on the support of many people in Canada, the United States, Australia and Holland. My family and friends, scattered throughout the world, were my mainstay.

The staff of the Yukon Archives are the most knowledgeable and professional archivists I have ever had the pleasure to work with. The results of their able assistance are demonstrated in my footnotes and bibliography. I am also grateful to the staff at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and British Columbia as well as the National Archives of Canada. Financial support from the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Fund, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Carleton University and the Fulbright Program are most gratefully acknowledged.

At Carleton University, Joan Lloyd was indispensable to me as a travelling doctoral candidate. Joan made sure that all the cheques reached me and that all the forms were filled in, even when I was in the Yukon or Colorado.

At the University of Ottawa, Lorna McLean, Peter MacLeod and Michael Behiels have all provided personal and professional support over the years and I remain grateful to them for their friendship. Louis-Georges

Harvey, now of Bishop's University, wrote the computer program which facilitated data collection.

With patience and humour, William Clark Whitehorn at the University of Colorado read and re-read the thesis, correcting my overly-passive voice, and catching many errors, large and small. The final uphill climb was much easier with Clark there to hold my hand.

Dr. Kerry Abel was with the project every step of the way and her professionalism never failed me. She calmly and steadily pushed me when I needed the push and provided words of encouragement when they were most needed. She always made time to read the many drafts I submitted, and her insightful comments and suggestions kept me on track from start to finish.

Judith Sellick has been by my side throughout the process as well. Judy never doubted (as I often did) my ability to finish this project and whenever I needed anything, she was always there. Without her love, friendship and support, completion of this project would simply not have been possible.

Finally, I owe more than words can convey to my grandmother, Elly Porsild. Her love for and dedication to the Yukon over the last half-century has been my inspiration. Her warmth and encouragement have always been a joy and a comfort to me. This is for her.

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## Chapter I Introduction

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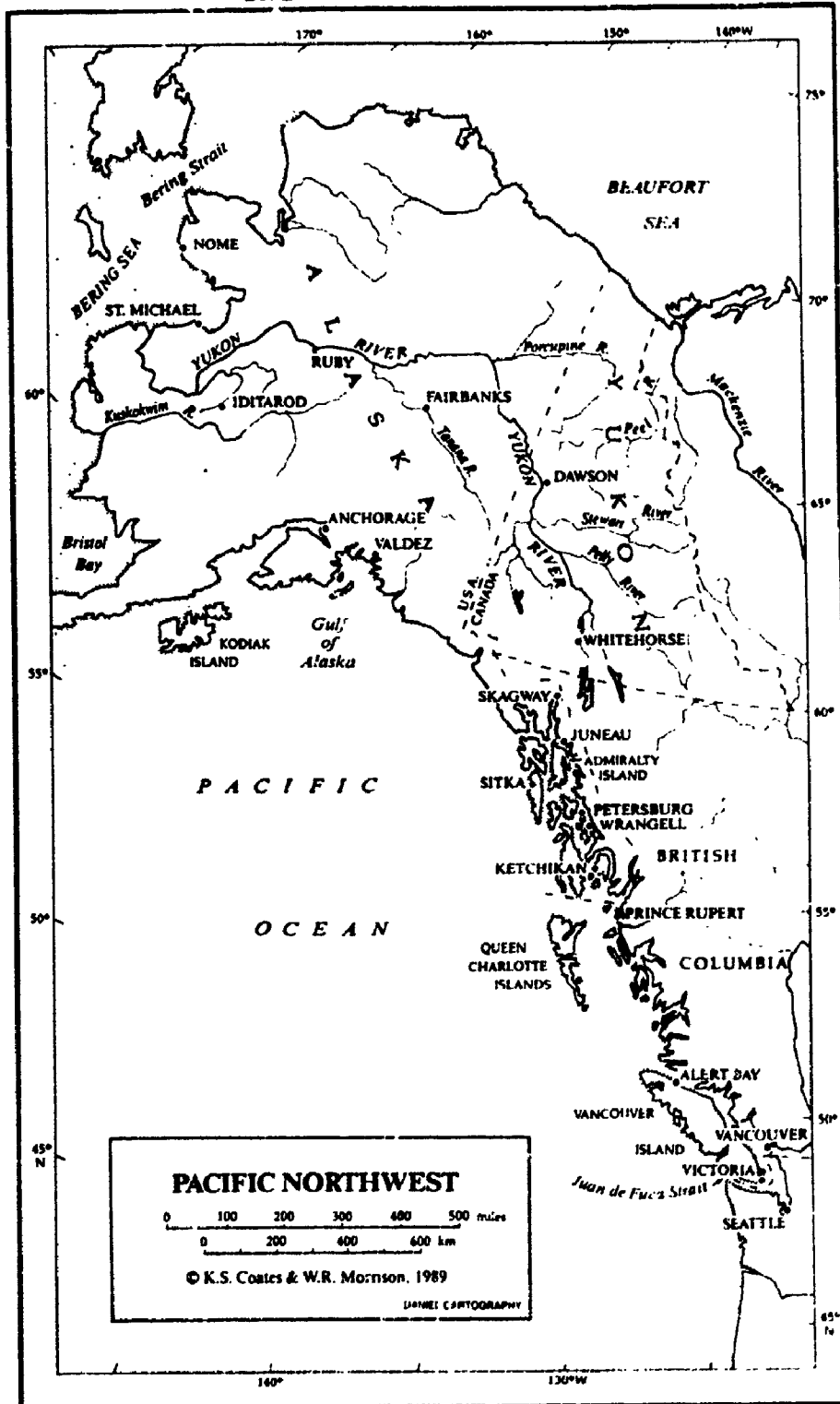
*What life have you if you have not life together?  
There is no life that is not in community.*

-T.S. Eliot

Between 1896 and 1900, nearly fifty-thousand people left offices, farms, factories and lumber camps to join in the stampede to the gold fields of the Yukon. When the first stampeders arrived in Dawson City, they found little more than a jumble of tents pitched on a mud flat. Here, a handful of North West Mounted Police attempted to maintain "law, order and good government" in the face of a human tidal wave. Within two years, this mud-flat camp transformed into an orderly and relatively stable community, complete with churches, hospitals, schools and libraries. By 1901 Dawson was "home" to a permanent population of nearly ten-thousand people.

This dissertation is a study about a community: a city created in a few weeks which over the next few years developed into a complex society. Looking beneath the surface of Dawson society, it attempts to determine what the Klondike experience was like for the men and women who lived there. It is only one community, to be sure, and therefore the thesis has the limitations of all case

FIGURE 1  
The Pacific Northwest<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Source: K. Coates and W. Morrison, *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. x.

studies. But case studies make a valuable contribution to our understanding of historical problems. Because of its unique time, place and *raison d'être*, a careful examination of Dawson can change the way we look at community formation.

Social history has taught us that we cannot understand the past unless we study ordinary people. Further, recent studies in ethno- and gender history have shown that we cannot understand the historical experience of ordinary people unless we examine the world within which they lived and worked. Making a detailed study of an individual community, like Dawson City, is one way to understand this experience.

In this thesis, I have attempted to reconstruct the community of Dawson City during its earliest period of development. Employing both qualitative and quantitative data, I have tried to examine community formation without losing sight of the individual men and women who lived and worked within that community. The experience of the ordinary Dawsonite, then, is at the very heart of this study. The results of the thesis challenge existing interpretations of Klondike social history by demonstrating the emergence of a stable, stratified, and cohesive community.

The term community is used in this study in its simplest sense: a body of people living in the same

locality at a given time.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of how social theorists may define it, a close reading of the sources indicates that the people of Dawson City understood their community as a necessary and pragmatic grouping of people, services and supplies at a practical geographic location (the confluence of two major transportation routes, the Yukon and Klondike<sup>3</sup> rivers). Dawson City was, initially at least, the collection in a single place of a large number of people who had surmounted many obstacles and who shared a common purpose: the quest for wealth. It became both a complex urban community and a supply centre that served a multitude of smaller camps on the creeks located in the wide radius of the Klondike and Yukon drainag basin.

Determining the shape and nature of this community poses a much more complex set of problems than simply defining it. Solving these problems requires raising questions about how a community is created in an isolated region and how it defines itself within the larger society. Is it more than a group of people sharing a

---

<sup>2</sup>Concise Oxford Dictionary (1985). For more detailed sociological definitions of "community," see Robert Hine's summary in Community on the American Frontier: Separate but Not Alone (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Note that I use the well-accepted "Klondike" spelling to refer to the river and the region as a whole. The old spelling, "Klondyke" appears here only when a part of a proper name (for example, the Klondyke Mining Company) or as used by another author in quotation.

common time and space? Is there more than a common setting that holds them together? What does "community" mean to the people who live there? How does the community grow and who controls the direction of this growth? Are there special "sub-communities" that gain importance at the expense of others? Indeed, is the term "community" even helpful in a context where the ebb and flow of people is extremely high?

This study asserts that the residents of Dawson City were both aware of a sense of community and valued it. In fact, the residents of Dawson City demonstrate a surprising rate of persistence, challenging previous assumptions about transience. Further, both the temporary as well as the more permanent residents played an important role in the formation of their community. Early in its formation, individuals initiated and supervised the founding of necessary services and institutions, and these generated a great deal of community involvement and commitment. Only later was the operation of such institutions given over to the external control of churches and government. Indeed, when the federal government tried to restrict the nature and level of these services, the community was quick to voice its opposition and to show vehement resistance.

In Dawson City, a combination of forces created a community that was at once unique and familiar to its

members. The primary industrial base (placer mining), while individualistic in theory, usually required partnership among producers. Yet distance from family and friends required that these partners be drawn from newly forged social and business networks. Miners and small business people alike usually made these connections with others of similar religious or cultural background. Interaction with a multitude of ethnic groups was a very new experience for many Klondikers, while the institutions they established (churches, hospitals, schools and fraternal societies) were largely familiar. The limited economic base and distance from markets restricted opportunities for diversification of labour and business alike. Mining remained the primary industry throughout Dawson's history, rivalled only in recent years by tourism. Most of all, geographic distance from other centres and an unfamiliar and harsh environment required, at least in the early years, that familiar structures and institutions be adapted to suit local conditions.

### **Historiography**

Finding an interpretive framework in which to discuss the formation and development of Dawson City is not easily accomplished. Like Voisey who encountered the

same problem when he tried to explain the development of the prairie community of Vulcan,<sup>4</sup> I found that one theory alone was insufficient. Voisey argued that in Vulcan there was a complex interaction of forces including the frontier setting, local environment, culture, as well as metropolitan influences. In part, as this study will illustrate, this complexity results from the fact that Vulcan and Dawson (indeed, probably every new community) are the sum of their individual parts. That is, each new community is unique in the mixture of ethnic, economic, and environmental conditions that give rise to it. These, in combination with a unique set of spatial and temporal factors, render the employment of any one theory impossible.

The above said, it is useful to review the main theories of development to show how they can or cannot explain the general evolution of Dawson City. The historiography of resource communities has relied heavily on two main frameworks: the metropolitan thesis and the frontier thesis. Neither of these explains the complex social development of a community like Dawson City. Rather, a combination of these theories, as well as some components of geographic determinism are necessary to explain the role played by sex, class, ethnicity and the

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<sup>4</sup>Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 248.

environment in the shaping of the new community.

George Stanley's article "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis," is one of the earliest theoretical pieces about Canadian frontier development.<sup>5</sup> Challenging the Turner Thesis' assertion that the waves of shared frontier experience shaped the American character Stanley argued that in Canada, people brought old values to the frontier and adapted them to meet the needs of the new economic and environmental conditions: that is, the influence of the metropolis was brought directly to the hinterland. He also claimed that Canadians were generally more conservative and law-abiding than Americans, and thus the settling of the Canadian western and northern frontiers was more peaceful. While Stanley largely confines himself to the transition from the frontier to agrarian settlement, he clearly sees the strong influence of the metropolis.

This "metropolitan thesis" was later expanded by Maurice Careless. While Careless accepted Turner's idea of successive frontiers of development, he argued that it was "the impelling, directing power of cities; above all the metropolis" that was the driving force behind this

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<sup>5</sup>G.F.G. Stanley, "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis," in Canadian Historical Association Annual Report (1940), pp. 105-117.



development.<sup>6</sup> For Careless, then the metropolis provided the necessary impetus for frontier development.

Unfortunately, much of the historical literature on frontier resource communities lacks a theoretical perspective. Some hope was offered by Gilbert Stelter and Allen Artibise in their article "Canadian Resource Towns in Historical Perspective."<sup>7</sup> These urban historians see resource communities as intermediary agents of the metropolis, both serving the hinterland and extracting staples from it. The generalization here, however, is both superficial and poorly documented. The "historical perspective" to which the title refers is wholly absent and little evidence is presented to support the conclusions, for the article fails to present even a case study to prove or disprove the applicability of their urban history theory to any resource communities. In addition, Stelter and Artibise claim that populations of resource communities are drawn most often from adjacent established districts. This statement is indicative of the lack of scope and limited applicability of their theory. In fact, many resource-rich regions in

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<sup>6</sup>J.M.S. Careless, Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities and Identities in Canada before 1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>G. Stelter and A. Artibise, "Canadian Resource Towns in Historical Perspective," in Stelter and Artibise (eds), Shaping the Urban Landscape (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).

Canada are sparsely (if at all) populated, and thus, there is no "surrounding region" from which to draw a labour supply.

Stelter and Artibise develop a simplistic dichotomy, classifying communities as supply/service towns and company towns. This division is problematic. Service towns, according to Stelter and Artibise, are usually short-lived boom-towns that emerge without planning and supply the resource sector surrounding them. These towns disappear once the resource is depleted. Company towns, in contrast, are created by the employer and dismantled or moved by that employer once the resource base is no longer profitable. Either way, this view assumes that the community will not survive the process of resource extraction.

Such generalizations are ethnocentric, ignoring the presence of Native communities, which existed long before and well after resource booms on their land. The village of Moosehide (adjacent to Dawson) is a good example of such a community: a community that resumed most of its pre-gold rush activities after the boom was over, but was permanently affected by it. Nor can Stelter's and Artibise's theory provide an explanation for the pattern of persistence shown by many individuals and families from resource communities in the face of resource depletion. Dawson City, as will be seen, shows a

surprising degree of such persistence after the gold boom ended, with many individuals and groups remaining to face the challenge of changing economic conditions.

Larry McCann provides a more constructive approach. Examining the physical and social characteristics of a number of resource communities, he found that certain historical patterns consistently emerged in Canada.<sup>9</sup> The nineteenth century, according to McCann, was characterized by haphazard development, a general lack of planning, and very clear physical and social class divisions. In the 1920s, changes in the nature of resource extraction (from individual effort to government and/or corporate ownership and control of land and resources) encouraged a "holistic" approach to resource town planning, which demonstrated a concern for zoning and orderly expansion. A much higher degree of government involvement (municipal, territorial, provincial and federal) characterized this period. In the post-WWII period, comprehensively planned towns emerged, including adaptations to the changing labour force. Schools, parks, apartment buildings and greenbelt provisions were developed in order to provide for the changing composition and needs of the labour force. In this later period, the service sector and business

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<sup>9</sup>Larry D. McCann, "The Changing Internal Structure of Canadian Resource Towns," Plan Canada (1978).

districts were separated from the residential districts, and both were situated away from the resource site, much as in the larger urban contexts.

While the notion of strict class division is well demonstrated in McCann's theory, the strength of the metropolis is the guiding determinant, and this model ignores the potential for communities to direct their own development. The metropolis-hinterland model does not explain how a community perseveres once the resource boom is over, when staple production diminishes and the metropolis loses interest. Nor is it equipped to trace the migration of labour from one "hinterland resource centre" to another.

Tronrud attempted to do just this in "Frontier Social Structure, the Canadian Lakehead."<sup>9</sup> By tracing the origins of the labour force in the Lakehead district in the 1880s and 1890s, Tronrud found a different ethnic composition in towns of different industries, but found the socio-economic status of such ethnic groups in the communities to be very similar. The transient nature of the population affected sex ratios and marriage patterns, but the shortage of women was common to the Native community as well. Tronrud does not explain this

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<sup>9</sup>I. Tronrud, "Frontier Social Structure: The Canadian Lakehead, 1871 and 1891," Ontario History (1987).

shortage of Native women, although this fact probably explains, at least in part, the low rate of intermarriage between Natives and non-Natives in the Lakehead. Not surprisingly, household patterns appeared more nuclear in the farming community Tronrud studied than in either the fur trade post or the road building centre. Thus, Tronrud concluded that frontier conditions themselves (the means of production and resource base, for example) affected family (and implicitly also community) formation and strategy, although again the social implications of these findings are not fully explored.

Douglas Baldwin reported similar patterns in his study of Cobalt, Ontario at the turn of the twentieth century. Baldwin argues that in Cobalt, the limited future prospects of the community prevented it from concentrating on institutional improvements.<sup>10</sup> The extremely poor living and working conditions of the silver and cobalt mining operations, according to Baldwin, resulted from a transitory labour force as well as the non-renewable nature of the resource. Even as southern, urban reformers pressured the community to improve safety standards, the local authorities refused. The implication of Baldwin's study is that the hinterland was resisting the pressures of the metropolis and acting

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<sup>10</sup>Douglas Baldwin, "Public Health Services and Limited Prospects: "Epidemic and Conflagration in Cobalt," Ontario History (1983).

according to its own concepts and needs. While these conclusions are debatable -- perhaps the companies were simply exerting their own power in order to improve profits, and thus disregarding the community's own desires and needs -- the community in this study appears to have its own distinct interests and groups, each concerned with its own survival and development. The community is not simply an extension of the metropolis in the wilderness.

Individual studies of frontier resource communities are scattered. One of the very first studies was Bradwin's The Bunkhouse Man.<sup>11</sup> This work is the product of the author's observations of Ontario railway camp life in the first decade of the twentieth century. Bradwin describes deplorable camp conditions in both privately contracted camps and government construction projects, following patterns much like those Baldwin described. The high turnover of labour and the high ethnic population meant that sustained protest for improved conditions was never attained. The nature of the work meant that the camps frequently packed up and moved, and therefore the camps themselves had no permanence. This transiency both in work and in working conditions, combined with the isolated locations, contributed to the

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<sup>11</sup>Edwin Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

workers' disadvantaged position in society. The workers were largely single men, and thus, facilities for education, health and recreation services were deemed unnecessary. Bradwin argues that this situation was exacerbated by the presence of the most rudimentary of religious, political and legal institutions. By exploring the context of the camps in relation to the multi-level system of railway building, employment brokers, community development, and other job opportunities open to the workers, Bradwin's study generally concludes that the system was set up to exploit the workers. As well, the author points out that the camp communities were highly structured by ethnicity, both in job assignment and social groupings. Because the camps were company-operated, like the town of Cobalt, development was inhibited and opportunity for change limited to the initiatives of the controlling interests.

Another study, this time comparative, of resource-based communities is Lucas' Minetown, Milltown, Railtown.<sup>12</sup> This sociological study is based on "informal chats and interviews" in three Canadian single-industry communities. From these the author attempts to illustrate patterns common to all communities of single industry in Canada. While there is, again, no

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<sup>12</sup>R.A. Lucas, Minetown, Milltown, Railtown (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971).

theoretical framework for the study, the author does present an outline of four stages of community development which he identifies in the three communities he calls Minetown, Milltown, and Railtown.<sup>13</sup> These stages are construction, recruitment of a labour force, transitional shift in authority from company to local population, and maturity (signified by the presence of retired men who choose to remain in the community). More frustrating than useful, this model of development is not clearly illustrated by his data, nor are the reasons for each stage of development and their implications explored to any extent.

In particular, Lucas does not explain the relationship between the stages of industrial development, capital investment and community formation. Furthermore, the study ignores the role of both the federal and provincial governments in these resource communities. Finally, while the author is primarily interested in the personal and social relationships within the communities, he often draws wide generalizations about their behaviour based on the oral testimony of a single person.

Particularly suspect are the conclusions Lucas reaches. For example, he asserts that by the time a

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<sup>13</sup>Lucas, Minetown, Milltown, Railtown. The actual names of the towns studied are not provided in the study.



single-industry community reaches the mature stage, residents no longer agitate for a higher level of services because they have adjusted their expectations. Further, Lucas notes that rebels who had advocated change early in the community's development, have left by the mature stage of community development. Here, Lucas overlooks the obvious point that once a community has reached the mature stage, the level of services has stabilized and probably reflects the needs of the community itself. Lucas' argument that communities resign themselves to the inevitable conditions of the hinterland remains less convincing than the possibility that the population actually shaped the development of the community to suit its own needs and values. Further, Lucas does not credit the individuals who live and work within the community (the very subjects of Lucas' interviews) with any agency in the process of maturation.

Ian Radforth addressed many of the deficiencies inherent in both Bradwin's and Lucas' works. Examining transitions in the modern logging industry, Radforth looks for and finds patterns of change.<sup>14</sup> Radforth's descriptions of mobility and transience of the early bushworkers make them similar in many ways to the railway workers described by Bradwin. Logging camps gave way by

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<sup>14</sup>Ian Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

the mid-twentieth century to a more settled pattern of community with woodworkers living in northern Ontario towns and commuting to logging operations. The communities themselves, however, are not the focus of Radforth's work. Rather, he is interested in the changing nature of the work itself. Still, this study makes clear that the loggers desired a more settled way of life, with homes and institutions for their families as well as accessibility to their job sites. In a modified frontier thesis approach, Radforth notes that the early camp workers had little impact on the existing communities of the north, while the later town loggers became active community members. Interestingly, although Radforth claims that the early loggers had limited impact on northern Native communities, he finds evidence of Native people supplying services such as laundering and cooking. The study does not discuss the impact of this interaction between the two communities. Like Lucas, Radforth also describes the transition from a migratory, seasonal workforce to a permanently settled, commuting one, but ignores the role of the loggers in the shaping of northern communities.

Like Radforth, Robin Fisher rejects the metropolitan thesis in favour of a modified frontier thesis. In his discussion of gold miners and settlers in British Columbia, Fisher sees the mining frontier as a successor

to the fur-trade frontier.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the fur-trade, however, the mining period was characterized by direct competition with the Native people. The fur trade pattern of economic cooperation with Native groups was replaced by competition for resources. Native opposition to mining stemmed from the fear that mining in the streams would disrupt the salmon runs. Furthermore, miners were trespassing on land, village sites, fishing stations, and cultivated fields of the Native people, with no regard for the disruption of Native communities. Encounters between miners and Natives were characterized by hostility and violence. Fisher then argues that with the development of mining camps, Natives were drawn to the new communities to seek work, acquire alcohol and sell supplies. The disruption to the Native community was extensive: prostitution, alcoholism and disease were the overwhelming result according to Fisher. Worse than this, the transient miners were soon replaced by settlers who intended to remain permanently on Native lands. While this transition is not fully explained, it would seem that as miners moved on to new resource sites, the settlers moved in, creating the next "frontier." Fisher does not, however, address the development of the more

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<sup>15</sup>Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977), Chapter 5. This is very similar to Webb's application of Turner's successive frontiers discussed later in this section.

permanent community.

Melody Webb looked at the Klondike from an American perspective.<sup>16</sup> Webb applied Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis of successive frontiers to the history of the "Yukon Basin." For Webb, the physical frontier became a technological frontier by the twentieth century. The frontier society that developed was the result of a westward and northward movement of people looking for new land and economic opportunity. Like Turner, Webb sees the frontier as modifying American character and culture and the frontier society as developing through successive waves of exploration and settlement. The last and "enduring" frontier in this study is fur trapping. The analysis has a strong element of geographic determinism, for Webb argues that the physical reality of the Alaska and Yukon frontier determined the character of the society that developed. Individual choice and adaptation take a back seat in this interpretation to the realities of economic and geographic determination. As in the metropolitan-hinterland approach, human agency is limited, this time by geography and economics.

S.D. Clark in his discussion of mining society in British Columbia and the Yukon almost completely ignores

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<sup>16</sup>Melody Webb, The Last Frontier: A History of the Yukon Basin of Canada and Alaska (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985).

the ethnic conflict described by Fisher.<sup>17</sup> In British Columbia, Clark found that mining was seen as temporary work and so the miners attempted to make the most of a brief period of freedom. Even among seasoned miners, the individual nature of prospecting encouraged the attitude of striking it rich and then leaving the country. The absence of women (except, it would appear, Native women who are characterized as country wives and prostitutes) contributed to the transiency of mining society in British Columbia. As the communities matured, Native women prostitutes, wives, and domestic workers were replaced by non-Native women.

Clark contrasts the situation in British Columbia with the Klondike where, he argues, disorder reigned supreme at the start of the rush. While Clark acknowledges some hostility between the more established miners and the huge mass of newcomers, he also claims that no class or ethnic division existed. Order, in Clark's view, was imposed by external or metropolitan forces in the form of the Mounted Police. The development of the hinterland community then proceeded according to metropolitan efforts and expectations. Clark claims that social tensions did not result in the

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<sup>17</sup>S.D. Clark, The Social Development of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942). See also by Clark, The Developing Canadian Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), Chapter V.

Klondike. Evidence presented throughout this dissertation indicates, however, that there were indeed very clear class divisions in Klondike society and the development of the community was directed (at least in part) by class interests. Further, the community itself initiated much of the local institutional development and simultaneously resisted the exertion of metropolitan influence.

Thomas Stone also examined structures of the early mining community of the Yukon.<sup>18</sup> Like Clark, he found that from the early 1870s to the beginning of the Rush, the Yukon district had no official forms of governmental control. In an individualistic, transient and highly dispersed population, partnerships and affiliations were frequently being formed and broken. However, Stone disagrees with Clark's picture of a disorderly frontier. Although there were no formal structures in place in the early period, Stone argues that informal structures served the purpose of maintaining order. Stone describes how the miners' meeting developed as the means to regulate this fluctuating community and to confer punishment for civil and criminal offenses.

Furthermore, contrary to Clark's

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<sup>18</sup>Thomas Stone, "Flux and Authority in a Subarctic Society: The Yukon Miners in the Nineteenth Century," first published in 1983 and reprinted in his Miners' Justice: Migration, Law and Order on the Alaska-Yukon Frontier, 1887-1902 (New York: Peter Lang, 1988).

claim that there were no social divisions in the Klondike, Stone argues that informal local leaders emerged to play a key role in coordinating community action. By the 1890s, in fact, established claim-holders and other propertied members of the community emerged at the top of a strict social hierarchy, with the new and more transient miners and camp followers at the bottom. Evidence presented later in this dissertation supports the idea that such a pioneer elite was a cornerstone in the development of the community.

Stone argues that with the increasing demands accompanying immigration came the institution of more formal controls. The first and most lasting of these came in the form of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP). Stone clearly shows, however, that in the early period of Yukon mining, the community itself created and adapted many institutions to meet its own needs and the Mounted Police found it necessary to adapt their controls to fit into this framework. I will argue that this tradition was continued by the Mounted Police even after the early period had ended.

Unlike Stone, Morris Zaslow argued that early hinterland adaptations and innovations were quickly supplanted by external institutions and structures that

resulted from metropolitan pressures.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the authority of miners' meetings gave way to that of the NWMP with little protest since the massive influx of miners and others created fears of social unrest that were beyond the capabilities of direct democracy to control. Canadian sovereignty in the face of American immigration took precedence, then, over local government. During the early rush Zaslow acknowledges that the NWMP adapted their peace-keeping practices to meet the needs and realities of the communities. Zaslow finds, as this study does, that prostitution, liquor abuse (except for sales to Natives), and gambling were largely ignored. This local initiative of the NWMP was soon redirected by the Laurier government and external pressures were placed upon the frontier to improve the moral and physical conditions of the territory. Zaslow implies that the great Canadian tradition of the metropolis imposing its values and institutions on the frontier, regardless of local or regional interests and needs, was quickly instituted to counter the fear of American frontier lawlessness, and to collect customs duties and tariffs. Zaslow, however, overlooks the local reaction to this process which resulted in the temporary staying of external control.

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<sup>19</sup>M. Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), chapters 5 and 6.



Zaslow begins his discussion of the Klondike Gold Rush with a cursory look at the make-up of the community. The wave of immigration began with miners, according to Zaslow, and was quickly followed by waves of professionals, merchants, brokers, land speculators, and entrepreneurs (ranging from the service sector to the theatre and prostitution trade). He chronicles the coming of the NWMP; their close supervision of newcomers and regulation of the mining claims. Contrary to Stone, Morris Zaslow argues rather that institutions of the metropolis were replicated in Yukon almost overnight. He thereby ignores the possibility of any local agency. The extreme disorder described by Clark never existed according to Zaslow, or if it did, it was swiftly reversed through the efforts of the Mounted Police. Within two or three years in fact, sanitation, transportation links and communications systems were in place and health, educational and religious institutions soon followed. Zaslow, while disagreeing with Clark on the speed of the process, agreed that the metropolitan influence was pervasive. The Salvation Army, the Dominion Lands Branch, the NWMP, and the churches stepped in from outside to assist in the orderly development of the community and these agents of the metropolis directed community development.

Bill Morrison agrees with much of Zaslow's

interpretation and finds many of Stone's conclusions "debatable."<sup>20</sup> In Showing the Flag he explains the formation of Dawson society completely within the metropolitan thesis, the agents of this metropolitanism being found in the North West Mounted Police. For Morrison, it was the Mounted Police who were responsible for changing the Klondike from a largely unregulated society to one that operated much like the rest of the country. The forces of metropolitanism, however, were different and less insistent in Yukon than on the prairies according to Morrison because the federal government had no long-range plan for the north's development. Indeed, the government believed that once the resource had been depleted, the non-Native community would disappear. Morrison, then, uses metropolitanism more to explain the imposition of sovereignty than to explain development. Like Zaslow, Morrison sees little room for direct influence by individuals or groups within this developing society itself.

Pierre Berton's famous description of the Yukon during the Gold Rush period paints a slightly different portrait of the community, although here the Mounties

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<sup>20</sup>William R. Morrison, Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894-1925 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), p. xiv.

appear no less heroic.<sup>21</sup> Berton sees the formation of Dawson as the successive pattern gold strike followed by the establishment of saloons, hotels, brothels, and the arrival of speculators and vigilantes. Berton chronicles this pattern before and during the heaviest rush of 1898-99.

Berton litters his largely popular account with stereotypes, while attempting to convey detail of the community. Native people are characterized as industrious to the point of being sneaky, a group who capitalized on the available opportunities to soak newcomers with exorbitant packing and boat-building rates. The Mounties magically appear to keep the overwhelmingly American immigration movement under Dominion control, maintaining British law and order in the face of the great American threat, and commanding fear and respect wherever they went. For Berton, Dawson was a gay place during the rush with only the expected corners of dirt and vice. With the arrival of larger numbers of respectable women and children near the end of the Rush, these corners were swept out and Dawson became more civilized. For Berton, institutional development was simultaneous with the arrival of larger numbers of non-Native women and the exodus of the transient, single

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<sup>21</sup>Pierre Berton, *Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush: 1896-1899* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987).

male opportunists. An orderly and peaceful society, in this interpretation, began to develop on the metropolitan model, as the height of the Rush passed.

David Morrison came to similar conclusions, arguing that as the population contracted into a smaller nucleus of permanent residents after the Rush, Dawson was no longer "imbued with that spirit of egalitarianism."<sup>22</sup> Unlike Stone, Morrison identifies the strict social hierarchy as a characteristic of the later period of the Klondike (for Morrison this begins around 1908). Like Berton, he attributes this to the increasing role played by women in what had once been a man's country. Women, the great civilizers, brought literary societies, parties, receptions and Temperance. David Morrison argued further that "men who once might have led political movements [now] seemed content with membership in Dawson's upper social circles."<sup>23</sup> Morrison sees the social hierarchy as new in the post-rush period, although as will be shown here, it was present in the very genesis of the community and men were not above creating their own hierarchical structures.

Because he is more interested in the development of

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<sup>22</sup>David Morrison, The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 92.

<sup>23</sup>ibid., p. 92.

the political sphere, Morrison overlooks the social divisions that existed before 1908 and from which the first local leaders were derived. One of the first social divisions in Dawson, for example was the differentiation of the "Sourdough" from the "Cheechako."<sup>24</sup> In a society accustomed to regular in- and out-migration, much of one's status was derived from long-term residence, as evidenced by the emergence of the Yukon Order of Pioneers (YOOP). The YOOP was a well-respected local fraternal society that gave pre-eminent status to those with the longest residence in Yukon. The YOOP was created first at the Forty Mile camp in 1893 and membership in the YOOP today remains highly sought after.

Ralph Mann was also interested in mining society, although he chose to investigate community development during and after the California gold rush.<sup>25</sup> Here, the communities of Grass Valley and Nevada City exemplify complementary principles of continuity and innovation. Both economic factors and human agency, for Mann, determined local social development. In this valuable study, the author traced the development of the two towns

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<sup>24</sup>A Sourdough was a person was an old-timer or anyone with long experience in Yukon, while a Cheechako referred to a newcomer (greenhorn). The former term carried a positive connotation while the latter carried a negative.

<sup>25</sup>Ralph Mann, After the Gold Rush: Society in Grass Valley and Nevada City, California, 1849-1870 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982).

by examining a common three-stage economic and social development. At the beginning of the rush (late 1840s) the concern was for town survival and the establishment of American "morés." The second phase, beginning in the mid-1850s, was characterized by economic depression (the end of the boom) and concern for political reorganization. The third phase, beginning in the early 1860s, saw a return to prosperity, this time in industrial mining, and the emergence of strict class and ethnic divisions.

In these two communities (the hinterland), Mann found a high degree of transplantation of Eastern political and social organization (the influence of the metropolis). The middle class maintained its accustomed social privileges. Sex roles as well as racial and ethnic stereotypes arrived in California intact. These factors were instrumental in the emerging social order of the developing communities. As the resource extraction process stabilized (as companies took over from individually-operated placer mines), the social order became increasingly rigid. Perceived threats in the form of transient labour, poor working conditions, and the absence of women and children resulted in class and ethnic conflict.

With the development of industrial mining and the presence of a more permanent population, concern over sex

roles and spatial and economic separation of ethnic groups became subjects of public discussion. Selective hiring coupled with requirements of easy access to work sites added to the ethnic residential and socio-economic segregation. Large-scale industrial mining, the last stage in community formation, improved prosperity by establishing steady production and employment, encouraging population stability and family formation. The role of women in the community quickly became centred in the home.

The pattern of metropolitan influence in resource town development outlined by Mann is not dissimilar to Lucas' maturation process in Minetown, Milltown, Railtown, but Mann's study is well documented and explained. Webb, Berton and Zaslow all allude to the fact that this was also the pattern in the Yukon, although none of these authors explores or examines these questions to any great extent. The contribution of Mann's work is the examination of the evolution of two communities, following the economic cycle of boom, bust and rebuilding.

To a large degree, Marion Goldman's study of Virginia City, Nevada supports Mann's findings.<sup>26</sup> Goldman showed that in Virginia City, the process of

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<sup>26</sup>Marion Goldman Gold Diggers and Silver Miners: Prostitution and Social Life on the Comstock Lode (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981).

transplanting metropolitan values was relatively quick. Within ten years of the first stampede, outside work for women (prostitution, dance-hall, restaurant and laundering work) became less respectable. Women's lives quickly became more constrained and centred in the home. The "passing of the frontier," Goldman and Mann both argue, meant the narrowing of roles for women. What neither of these authors addresses is the question of whether such roles had widened with the coming of the frontier in the first place. While it is true that the more settled resource towns quickly instituted controls on prostitution, signalling the coming of a more permanent community, the women affected by such "narrowing roles" were a different group. Since middle class women were not prostitutes in the first place, it is not clear that their roles became more narrowly defined. What is really at issue is the further marginalizing of a particular class of women. It was never "respectable" for women to be prostitutes, so the emphasis on narrowing roles seems somewhat misplaced. The coming of more formal structures to regulate such activities as prostitution and gambling must have, indeed, meant diminishing opportunities for "unrespectable" women, but since they were already a separate class of women, they either moved on to another locale or moved their operations to the part of town now



set aside as the red light district. This process is not well explored by either Mann or Goldman.

While much theoretical work remains to be done in the history of resource communities, there does seem to be a common pattern of development. This development proceeds, apparently, at different rates, probably (although this has not been well addressed either) based on the degree of remoteness of the community, the nature and relative value of the economic activity, and the longevity of the resource itself. But the pattern which emerges is one that begins with the individual prospecting and develops into a transitory camp community. The camp then spurs the establishment of a rudimentary town or village to supply the camps with goods and services, and develops (if the resource supply can sustain itself) into a permanent community complete with social, political and legal institutions. An alternative pattern to this last stage is the development of the company town, which is planned, controlled and (largely) owned by the employer. In either case, in the last stage of frontier resource community development, industrial capitalism is the organizing principle of the economic base.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the very idea of a "last stage" is arguable, since in Dawson and many other

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<sup>27</sup>Frank Duerden has also identified this pattern. See his "The Development of the Non-Native Settlement Pattern of the Yukon Territory," Canadian Issues, II (2), 1978.

places, towns continue to exist long after the period resource extraction has ended.

What is not clear in the historiography is the pattern of local difference. Do resource communities simply replicate patterns of the larger host society? Certainly Careless would argue that they must. Mann's evidence would support this interpretation: settlers and miners alike arrived in California with cultural baggage from the metropolis and, despite isolation from that metropolis, attempt to replicate it. To what extent do local conditions spawn the greater or lesser degree of external government regulation? Is this a national difference or a response to local conditions? Does the ethnic composition of the developing community influence local variation? In Australia, it seems clear that the composition of the growing population spawned fears of social unrest, and this in turn resulted in great regulation of mining activity.<sup>28</sup> This regulation ultimately prevented the development of permanent resource communities on the frontier. In Alaska, northern Ontario, British Columbia and California, resource communities remained relatively free of

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<sup>28</sup>See Henry Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1982), pp. 186-88. See also G.V. Portus, "The Gold Discoveries, 1850-1860," in J. Holland Rose et. al. (eds), Cambridge History of the British Empire Vol. XII, Part I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933).

government interference in the early stages. In Australia and to a lesser degree in Yukon, external powers stepped in relatively quickly to regulate development and institute controls. This suggests that the nature of the resource and the potential sources of government revenue may play a larger role than the metropolitan-hinterland model allows. The degree of remoteness, too, as in the case of the Klondike, may play a role in the perceived need for external intervention. Further studies are sorely needed to determine the reasons for the some of these different patterns of frontier resource community development.

From this overview, two ideas become clear. First, most historians, whether they accept or reject the Turner thesis, have employed the metropolitan-hinterland model to explain Canadian development in the north-west. Second, in the Yukon at least, these models can be applied with only limited success. Environment and ethnicity are two factors which neither theory adequately incorporates. Yet Yukon's severe climate, as will be seen, affected almost every facet of development. The unique ethnic component of the growing community was also critical to Dawson's development. The prevailing models, and especially the metropolitan thesis, explain the impetus for the creation of a new community better than they explain the development of that community.

Generally, the literature on the Klondike which some have described as "vast" does not address the actual development of its resource communities. Neither Zaslow nor Berton explores beyond a superficial level, the pattern of prospecting, strike, and mass influx in successive waves. Thus, the identity of the average gold-seeker has remained anonymous. The origins of the individual miners and camp followers and their patterns of migration remain a mystery. The pattern of community development implicit in the historiography is a steady progression toward the metropolitan model of urban, industrial society, with the inevitable decay as the boomed waned. This is what Zaslow refers to as the "rise and fall of Yukon society."<sup>29</sup> Clearly, however, Yukon society did not disappear. Historians have yet to ask questions about who remained, what the changing economic opportunities were, as well as how the remaining residents dealt with social, demographic and political change. The picture remains incomplete.

**Dawson City, Yukon:  
The Community in Question**

Many former residents remembered Dawson as a highly stratified society. Dr. Barrett, for many years a

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<sup>29</sup>Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North, p. 124.

physician with St. Mary's Hospital, remembered the number of wives and families growing over the fall of 1898 and spring of 1899 such that "the nucleus of '400' was established, where hospitality and good fellowship flourished to a degree unthought of in older Canadian communities."<sup>30</sup> This "nucleus of 400" seems to have been the same core of people, diminished in number but equally strong in influence, encountered by Laura Berton when she arrived in Dawson early in the new century. Mrs. Berton explained that Dawson at that time contained four social "levels." The first level included:

the commissioner and his wife, and worked its way down through the judges and officers of the police, the high civil servants, the heads of the large companies, the bishops and church people, the bankers and bank clerks, lawyers and nurses until it stopped with us teachers.<sup>31</sup>

The second level was what Berton referred to as the "downtown crowd," or commercial sector. The third level was reserved for the average citizens: miners, labourers, policemen and tradesmen "who were, in turn, several steps above the dance-hall girls and the prostitutes of Klondike City and the half-breeds and Indians."<sup>32</sup> According to Berton then, everyone fitted somewhere in the hierarchy. It is likely that Dawsonites themselves

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<sup>30</sup>ibid., p. 9. This is the only known reference to the group being so named.

<sup>31</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 46

<sup>32</sup>ibid., p. 46

were aware of these social distinctions since they were much like the distinctions at home in Ottawa, Montreal, Victoria or San Francisco. It will be argued that these patterns of social distinction, established early in the formation of the community, became only more entrenched as the community itself stabilized.

The following chapters are a detailed examination of the formation of Dawson City and the people who lived and worked there at the end of the nineteenth century. Chapter Two provides an overview of the quantitative data employed in the study. Here, the results are summarized while, for sake of the reader's sanity and for easy reference in subsequent chapters, the tables and charts illustrating quantitative results have been placed in appendices at the end of the study. The remaining chapters employ this quantitative material in combination with a wide array of qualitative sources to examine the four social levels Laura Berton identified above: the Native people, the red light district, the miners and labourers and their families, and finally, the professional and commercial sectors.

Dawson was a highly structured and cohesive community. The continuity described in the thesis indicates that many Klondikers, while they had come on a whim, stayed on to make Dawson their home. The severe climate and degree of isolation led to a cohesive

principle known locally as the "Inside/Outside" dichotomy. The very idea that everywhere beyond the coast to the west, the Mackenzie to the east and the sixtieth parallel to the south was "Outside" was a binding agent for Yukoners. The elevation of the pioneer's status, along with an emerging white collar government and professional bureaucracy also gave the community structure. Indeed, far from being a democratic mining camp where all citizens were of equal stature, social hierarchy was one of the first patterns seen in the developing community. Chapters four through six deal with the separation of the labouring, commercial and professional classes and the perceived distance between them. There were even complex sub-classes, such as the one contained in the red light district discussed in Chapter Five, a phenomenon I have called the "Scarlet Ladder." While Turner thought that frequent moves hindered the growth of community, I have found, as Voisey did, that the sense of community was as strong a force as transience and mobility. People came and went frequently, but always there remained a core of individuals and families (members of the Yukon Order of Pioneers for example, and the group locally referred to in Dawson as the "Nucleus of 400") who together made Dawson their home.

Chapter II  
More Than Another American Frontier:  
A Quantitative Breakdown of the Klondike Gold Rush

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In order to reconstruct the social fabric of Dawson City during the Gold Rush, this study employs three sets of quantitative data. These are the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) Census of 1898-99, the 1901 Manuscript Census and a composite electronic database separately compiled. The results of these data sets are presented in this chapter. Successive chapters employ this data, in association with more qualitative sources, to examine the community in more detail.

Information on the population of Yukon before the stampede of 1898 is scattered. The 1891 Manuscript Census is not helpful because the Yukon figures are lumped together with the whole "Unorganized Territory" of the northwest. It is likely, however, that there were several thousand Native people and about three-hundred miners living in Yukon at that time.<sup>1</sup> The first attempt at a census for the Klondike was made during the winter

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<sup>1</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), p. 102.



of 1898-99 by the NWMP.<sup>2</sup> The first full government census for Yukon was not undertaken until late in the summer of 1901.

### The Data Sets

The NWMP census of 1898 was undertaken as a house-to-house, camp-to camp survey of the Klondike region. This first census was undertaken for security and election purposes in an attempt to establish the number of eligible voters present in the Territory.<sup>3</sup> To this end, the NWMP census was little more than a head count, recording only the individual's sex, age, and citizenship. It is worth noting also that this census was taken over the winter months when a large number of Klondikers were "outside" in the south. This was done out of necessity, for the slow winter months freed sufficient numbers of the force from other duties to conduct the survey. The aggregate results of the NWMP census is the first data set.

By 1901, the Yukon Territory was considered a unit

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<sup>2</sup>Parliament of Canada, Sessional Papers, XXXV, 11 (1901), Appendix B, "Annual Report of Inspector C. Starnes, 01 December, 1900." The results of this census were also reprinted in Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901 (hereafter cited as the Directory and Gazetteer), pp. 42-43.

<sup>3</sup>According to the Directory and Gazetteer for 1901, of a total head count of 15,203 the NWMP reported a total of 3,584 eligible voters, 42-43.

for the purposes of the census and counted separately. From that date, routinely-generated sources are available. Until recently, however, the only figures available were the aggregate censuses for 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931. These are very useful in establishing general patterns of population change over time in Yukon.

In January 1993, the 1901 Manuscript Census of Canada became available for general consultation. The Census lists thirty-eight districts in and around Dawson City, including Dawson City proper, Klondike City (or Lousetown, as it was locally known), South and West Dawson, as well as the adjacent Native village at Moosehide.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this study, the information for each of these districts was entered and compiled in an electronic database. No sampling was used. A record was made of each Dawson resident's name, sex, date of arrival in Yukon, age, religion, place of birth, occupation and marital status (see Appendix I). Once duplicate entries had been eliminated, there was information for 7,503 people living in the Dawson area in September 1901. Census material for Dawson City and the village of Moosehide form the second data set.

The final set of quantitative data comes from an independent electronic database compiled over the course

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<sup>4</sup>NA, RG31 1901 Manuscript Census of Canada, Reels #T6555-T6556, Section 206, F-1 to F-38 (hereafter cited as the 1901 Manuscript Census).

of the research for this project. This database combines information from hundreds of primary and secondary sources, and will be referred to hereafter as the "Master Database." This set of data was compiled by entering any information available for every individual encountered in the qualitative research. When consulting a diary or letter, for example, a record was made of each individual the author reported encountering in his or her activities. Information such as the date, sex, occupation, marital status, ethnicity and age were recorded for these individuals where available. The Master Database contains information from all sources consulted (except the 1901 Manuscript Census which was compiled separately) including diaries, club membership lists, church registers, newspapers and government documents listed in the bibliography.<sup>5</sup> This "hit-and-miss" database contains information for 15,000 individuals who were documented as present at some time in Yukon between 1885 and 1914.

There are several major problems associated with the third data set. First, the data stretches over a long time period and often there is no way to verify whether an individual remained for a few days or for several years. Second, there is an inconsistent amount of

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<sup>5</sup>This database used the same entry card as the 1901 Census, reproduced in Appendix I.

information recorded, with many entries containing no more information than an individual's name and the date he or she was recorded present in Yukon. Third, the Master Database is biased in favour of the more prominent citizens, since it was taken completely from surviving written sources. For these reasons it was decided that sole reliance on the Master Database would be insufficient, rather it is used in association with numerous other sources throughout the study. Still, as will be shown, the results of the Master Database tabulations bear a remarkable similarity to those of the other data sets.

#### **Quantitative Results: The Ethnicity of Klondikers**

Accounts by travellers to the Yukon gold fields at the end of the last century are liberally scattered with references to the international nature of the rush. Klondike stampeders, in fact, regularly encountered "outfits from everywhere, North America, Australia, England and France, all fired with gold fever..."<sup>6</sup> Such people came by the thousands from all corners of the globe to the gold fields of the northwestern Yukon between 1896 and 1905.

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<sup>6</sup>PABC, AddMss 947, Edward Durban Sheringham Papers, memoir, p. 2.

Interestingly enough, while the literature generally indicates that there were representatives of almost every nation in the Klondike, it simultaneously accepts that the majority of stampeders were Americans. Thus we have an entire body of literature based on the assumption that the Klondike was "a community largely comprised of Americans and expressing the American frontier ideology."<sup>7</sup> Morris Zaslow first made this statement in 1969 and twenty years later, when his article was reprinted, its assumptions remained unchallenged.<sup>8</sup>

Much has been made of this American component of the Klondike, with writers of both the popular and academic literature accepting the prevailing myth that the Klondike Gold Rush was really an American rush played out on Canadian soil. As a result, we have at least one study that examines Yukon as an extension of Frederick Jackson Turner's expanding frontier, arguing that here the last curtains of the American frontier were pushed back.<sup>9</sup> The idea that the Yukon mining region was simply an extension of the American frontier has also led to a

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<sup>7</sup>M. Zaslow, "The Yukon: Northern Development in a Canadian-American Context," in Mason Wade (ed.), Regionalism in the Canadian Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 181.

<sup>8</sup>Reprinted in K. Coates and W.R. Morrison (eds.), Interpreting Canada's North (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1989), pp. 133-48

<sup>9</sup>See M. Webb, The Last Frontier.

lengthy debate over why the Klondike rush proceeded in a relatively orderly and non-violent manner.<sup>10</sup> The general conclusions of these studies have been that while the participants in the rush were Americans accustomed to American frontier justice, British authoritarian control, exerted from afar, prevailed to produce an orderly frontier society.<sup>11</sup>

The assumption that Yukon was an American community on Canadian soil can be, to some degree, explained. First, until recently there have been no reliable sources with which to verify earlier population estimates. Second, many of the Klondikers themselves perceived American dominance within the community to be self-evident. This perception led one Dawson miner to note that it "was well known that we Americans made up 90% of the Dawson-Klondike population."<sup>12</sup> While this figure is wildly exaggerated, it illustrates that the perception, if not the reality, of American dominance existed. There

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<sup>10</sup>See T. Stone's Miners' Justice: Migration, Law and Order on the Alaska-Yukon Frontier, 1873-1902 (New York: Peter Long, 1988) and W.R. Morrison's Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty, 1898-1925 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985).

<sup>11</sup>T. Stone, Miners' Justice, p. 2; Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) p. 139; and David Breen, "The Turner Thesis and the Canadian West," in L.H. Thompson (ed), Essays on Western History (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976).

<sup>12</sup>E.L. Martinson, Trail to North Star Gold (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1984), p. 88.

was, after all, an active American Consulate established early in 1896 in Dawson City, and the larger business interests and mercantile companies were heavily dominated by American interests. A number of the most visible members of the community then, were Americans. So has myth of the "American Klondike" endured.

But the Klondike was more than just a gang of unruly American miners tamed by the Mounties. Careful reading of the diaries and memoirs as well as the newly-available census material paints a very different portrait. These sources show that the Klondike attracted a wide range of nationalities including English and French Canadians, Britons, Italians, Belgians, French, Russian and Polish Jews, and a host of others.<sup>13</sup> Close examination of a reliable set of data reveals, in fact, that the majority of Klondikers were not Americans at all.

Although the NWMP census is cursory, it is the only tabulation available for the period before 1901. This survey reported 15,203 people to be resident in the Dawson area during the winter of 1898-99.<sup>14</sup> Asking

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<sup>13</sup>There are, in fact, forty-two nationalities reported in the 1901 Manuscript Census for Dawson City, see Appendix II.

<sup>14</sup>Note that the figure given in the Sessional Papers previously cited was 16,463. It is assumed that this figure is a typographical error, since the individual figures given equal the sum of 15,203. The Directory and Gazetteer for 1901, in reprinting the same figures give the total as 15,203 as well.

questions of sex and citizenship, the results showed that the population was overwhelmingly male and apparently American. That is, of the fifteen thousand people counted, over nine thousand were reported to be American citizens. Thirty-two percent were British (Canadians and other British subjects were counted together) and the remaining six percent were foreign citizens. This then, seems to be the basis for the assumptions about the American make-up of the Klondike.

At first glance, the results from the Master Database seem to support the idea that the population of Yukon was overwhelmingly American. The closest available figure in the Master Database to "citizenship" is "origin" (defined as a person's last stated place of residence outside Yukon). Origin could be verified for about twenty percent of the Master Database (3,299 people). Here, the results compared very closely to those compiled by the NWMP. Over two-thirds came to Yukon from the United States, one third from Canada and Britain, and five percent of the sample reported having come to the Klondike from outside North America. The results of these two data sets are shown in Appendix III.

However, comparing citizenship of Klondikers with nativity brought very different results. While the only statistics available from the NWMP census were those for citizenship, information for nativity or "ethnicity" was



available in both of the other data sets. For both the Master Database and the 1901 Manuscript Census, ethnicity was determined by the combination of place of birth, mother tongue and reported skin colour. For example, where the records showed that the person was American-born and was identified by his or her contemporaries as "Black" or "Coloured," ethnicity was recorded as African-American. Similarly, Quebec-born francophones were counted separately from Quebec-born anglophones. The results of the "ethnicity" columns from the Master Database and the 1901 Manuscript Census were then compared and it soon became clear that while the majority of these people might be American citizens, they were not Americans by birth.

Looking first at the stampeders' ethnicity as recorded in the Master Database in fact, the relative proportion of Americans shrank significantly.<sup>15</sup> Based on the sample then, Klondikers who were actually native-born Americans comprised less than half of the population of Yukon in the period (or forty-four percent). When the data on "origin" and "ethnicity" (that is, citizenship and nativity) were compared, it became clear that twenty-five percent of those who reported their last outside address as the United States were either temporary

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<sup>15</sup>Place of birth could be identified for about eleven percent of the "master" database, or 1,824 individuals.

residents or recently naturalized citizens. Correspondingly, the figure for those who last resided in other parts of Canada and those who were born in Canada remained almost the same (about thirty percent). The proportion from the British Isles, Scandinavia and Continental Europe all at least doubled when tabulated on place of birth. Overall then, the figure for the foreign born rose by the same proportion as the American citizenship/origin figure dropped (see Appendices III and IV).

The figures from the Master Database were then compared with those from the 1901 Manuscript Census with the same result. Here the results of the random sample of the Master Database again correspond very closely with the other data set. In the Census, the American-born group comprised almost exactly the same proportion, forty percent of the population, while the Canadian and British born groups accounted for an equal figure (Canadians accounted for just over thirty percent). This data also indicates that rather than diminishing, the proportion of Americans in Dawson remained constant (at around forty percent) from at least 1898 through 1901. The numerical results of the calculations on nativity are shown in Appendix IV.

The discrepancy between the results of the police census and the other data sets can thus be explained by

citizenship. The question of why so many foreign-born stampeders were reported as American citizens is also easily explained. In the period 1890-1910, American immigration law required only the briefest terms of residency for naturalization. Many Europeans, of course, had come to the United States to work in the mines and logging camps of the west coast and were naturalized here before joining the stampede to the Klondike.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the most commonly reported states of origin in the Master Database are Washington, Oregon and California.

The foreign or non-North American born component of Dawson, according to the 1901 Manuscript Census, amounted to over thirty percent of the population. A closer look at this group shows that over forty national groups are represented (see Appendix II). From these calculations, it is clear that the community that sprang up so spontaneously at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers was much more heterogeneous than has previously been assumed in the existing literature. Certainly the large number of foreign born residents makes Dawson look very different from other mining communities in the same period. For example, Cripple Creek, Colorado was

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<sup>16</sup>For example, Andrew Anderson, Robert Karlson and Charles Karlson were native Swedes who became naturalized Americans while working in the lumber camps of Washington and Oregon in the early 1890s. See: NA, RG85 Vol.664 file 3885, Northern Administration Branch Records, Lock to LeCapelain, 22 March 1950.

composed of over eighty percent American-born citizens in 1900.<sup>17</sup> What these figures mean for those wishing to argue in favour of an "American" rush played out on Canadian soil remains to be seen.

#### **Quantitative Results: Workforce Participation**

The population of Dawson City, whatever its national origins, was overwhelmingly composed of transient male manual labourers. Still, like any other Canadian community, Dawson required a core of professionals, merchants, skilled tradesmen and service personnel to sustain itself. Within the 1901 Manuscript Census and the Master Database, there were ninety-four different occupations listed by Dawson residents. These have been grouped into five general categories based, with some modification, on the classification scheme employed by Michael Katz in his study of Hamilton (see Appendix V).<sup>18</sup>

For the most part, Katz's classification system worked quite well for Yukon. Since this study is not

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<sup>17</sup>E. Jameson, "High-Grade and Fissures: A Working-Class History of the Cripple Creek, Colorado, Gold Mining District, 1890-1905," unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1987), p. 543.

<sup>18</sup>Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), Appendix Two, 343-48. See also his "Occupational Classification in History," Journal of Interdisciplinary History III, 1 (Summer, 1972), pp. 63-88.

primarily concerned with the status associated with various occupations, Katz's value-ridden labels (ie. his gradations from "high" to "low" prestige) were not found to be helpful. Instead, the five categories employed here are referred to as professional/white collar, commercial, skilled trades, semi-skilled trades, and unskilled/service sector.

Several key components of Dawson society did not fit into Katz's criteria for occupational classification. First and most important were the miners. While Katz would probably classify mining as a skilled trade, for the purposes of this study it has been classified as semi-skilled, for placer mining (the bulk of the mining performed in the Yukon basin in the early years) required few specialized skills or experience. Many Klondikers, in fact, had no mining experience prior to arriving in Yukon. Their skills were acquired on location and honed on-site and thus, they have been classified accordingly.

In Dawson, of course, the proceeds from mining could (and sometimes did) place individuals near the very top of the social order. Since mining was also the single largest occupation in Yukon<sup>19</sup>, it is somewhat problematic to group all miners together. It is worth noting that while they have been necessarily grouped together as a

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<sup>19</sup>In the 1901 Manuscript Census for Dawson City and Moosehide there were 2414 miners out of a total population of 7503, or 32%.

single occupation here, they more closely resemble farmers in Ontario in that they represent a very disparate group. Wealthier miners, for example, might own several mines and employ a number of others to help work these claims. Others had small claims which they operated alone or with their partners and families. Still others worked a "lay," mining another person's claim for a percentage of the extracted profits or they worked for wages. Like farmers, some miners became very wealthy while others went further into debt each year.

Another problem with the application of Katz's classification deals with women. While Katz found most of the occupations for women and other service sector occupations "unclassifiable," as far as possible, I have placed working and professional women with their male counterparts. Again, since this study is not concerned with the level of social prestige associated with various occupations, women's occupations have been listed alongside the corresponding male occupations of similar skill level. Thus, domestic employment such as laundry, waitressing, bartending, and housekeeping have all been included in the service sector category, alongside manual labour. Similarly, men and women teachers, nurses, and clergy are listed under "professional," while male and female dressmakers and tailors are all classified as "skilled" trades.

Other people who Katz found unclassifiable have been dealt with similarly in this study. The inmates of the Dawson jail, for example, were usually kept busy chopping wood for the police wood pile, so they have been listed alongside the other unskilled labourers. In addition to women and prisoners, Katz also found Indians "unclassifiable" in Hamilton. As will be shown in Chapter III, Native people remained relatively segregated from the city of Dawson itself in the new village of Moosehide. Here, band-members engaged in hunting, trapping, and fishing for the most part, although some participated in a limited way in the wage labour economy. Where Native persons are not reported to be employed at other wage labour, they are listed alongside non-Native trappers, hunters and loggers in the semi-skilled trade category. Chapter III looks more closely at the Native people affected by the Gold Rush.

As the following chapters will show in more detail, the so-called "frontier" society in Yukon offered few new opportunities for minority groups. Women, Native people, and other ethnic minorities all show a strong tendency to cluster in particular occupations. The nature of this clustering indicates that few new opportunities presented themselves in the Klondike. Single women, for example, were relegated almost exclusively to service sector employment with the exception of a very few professional

positions and the needle trades. Even here, as will be discussed in Chapter VI, there is evidence that many so-called dressmakers, in fact, made their living at prostitution.

African-Americans, as well as Japanese, Scandinavians and Germans also displayed a high degree of occupational clustering in Yukon. African-American men, for example, were concentrated in the barber trade while women of the same ethnicity displayed a similar pattern in domestic service. Japanese men were almost exclusively concentrated in restaurant and domestic service. Scandinavians were highly concentrated in skilled and semi-skilled trades such as carpentry and mining. French-Canadians were highly concentrated in mining and manual labour with almost no participation in the commercial sector (see Appendix VII). Another ethnic group to demonstrate such occupational clustering were the Jewish Dawsonites. An overwhelming majority of the Jews in Dawson by 1901 were involved in the mercantile sector. This group was also foreign born in the majority, being evenly split between Russian and Polish nativity. Subsequent chapters examine these patterns in greater detail.

The commercial sector, as noted above, was dominated by Americans. This group, in fact, was a powerful political and social force in Dawson, and as noted above,



this may account for their assumed majority in the community as a whole. Chapter VII examines this issue in more detail, and also examines the predominance of Canadians in the professions.

Gender and the family are critical components of any community. As Appendix VIII illustrates, over half of the women of Dawson reported their occupation as "wife." It should be noted here that it is likely that many of these "wives" also engaged in other occupations. Many for example, probably sold baking, sewing or laundry services without reporting such activities to the census-taker. Just as farm wives did, many mining wives also performed innumerable tasks on the family claim in its everyday operation. This is problematic, of course, but is a function of the bias in the sources, thus "wives" have been listed separately.

For the women reported to be engaged in wage labour, the largest group reported service sector employment. The remaining women were almost evenly split between the semi-skilled, skilled and professional sectors, as also shown in Appendix VIII. Among traditionally female employment nursing, teaching, and the needle trades predominated.

**Quantitative Results:  
Gender, Family and Persistence**

The sex ratio of Yukon was always the figure most in flux. In the period before 1896 there are no reliable figures, but the number of women was very low in proportion to men. By the time of the NWMP census there were 1,195 women (eight percent overall) in the Territory, while within Dawson City itself this proportion was slightly higher (twelve percent, or five adult men to every woman). This figure climbed steadily as the community developed and matured reaching nearly twenty percent in 1901, although by 1921 women still remained in the minority (see Appendix IX).

Such demographic factors made Dawson look rather different from more southern communities. In 1901, for example, there were 4,202 single people and 3,899 of these were men. That is, there were almost 13 single men for each of the 303 single women in town.<sup>20</sup> The problem of high male to female ratios, as discussed in later chapters, was exacerbated by the absence of "respectable" places where both sexes could socialize.

The figures for the "conjugal condition" or marital status of Klondikers, where available, were also

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<sup>20</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. Within this pool of single adults, over seventy-five percent were in the marriageable age group of 20 to 39 years of age.

calculated (see Appendix X). While single people were indeed the majority, a surprisingly high proportion (thirty-two percent) reported themselves married in this remote mining community. As will be discussed at further length in Chapter IV, closer examination also reveals distinct patterns of family strategy. For example, rather than waiting for their husbands to establish themselves before sending for their families, women and children were more likely to travel with their husbands or to follow very shortly afterward. Indeed, just as others have found, in Dawson there was a surprisingly large number of families.<sup>21</sup> As well, certain cultural groups such as the French Canadians and Eastern European Jews tended to settle in clusters of families, thereby providing a linguistic and cultural enclave from which social, religious and business relationships were cemented.

Such networks, I believe, fostered a sense of community among Dawson's residents and encouraged people to stay and to invite others to join them. Most people who have written about the Klondike have assumed a high rate of transience. However, a close reading of the

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<sup>21</sup>See for example, Blaine Williams, "The Frontier Family: Demographic Fact and Historical Myth," in Harold Hollingsworth and Sandra Myers (eds), Essays on the American West (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), pp. 63-65 and Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community, p. 18.

sources indicates the opposite. In fact, transience was tempered by widespread persistence in Dawson. Indeed, as will be discussed in Chapter IV and VI, miners, merchants and professionals all demonstrated persistence.

Persistence is a concept fraught with many historiographical pitfalls. I use it here much as Thernstrom used it, to analyze the degree of commitment residents demonstrate toward their community.<sup>22</sup> In the case of Dawson I was able to avoid many of the problems of persistence studies in "matching" data from one data set to another,<sup>23</sup> for I have used figures from a single source.

The 1901 Manuscript Census recorded each individual's date of arrival in Yukon -- that is, the census itself asked about persistence. Further, the census recorded this information for men, women and children alike, and this allowed me to compute both the family strategy statistics discussed above, and figures for persistence. For the purposes of this study, I have taken three or more years as evidence of an individual's

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<sup>22</sup>S. Thernstrom, The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 6-7. Thernstrom also concluded that those who acquired property and/or upward mobility persisted longer within a given community, although he only looked at the men.

<sup>23</sup>See for example, Leanne Sander, "'The Men all Died of Miners' Disease'," (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1990).

persistence. Using this criteria, sixty-five percent of the residents in Dawson could be said to show persistence (see Appendix XIII).<sup>24</sup> Thus, while it may be true that people continued to come and go (indeed, sixteen percent of the population in 1901 had been resident in Dawson only a few months), people who persisted were much more common.

### **The Quantitative Results: Religious Life**

The religious sphere in Dawson was a fiercely competitive one. The first churches in the Yukon basin were the Russian Orthodox (on the Alaska side) and the Church of England (more or less on the Canadian side). Through the missionary and fur trade period, these two groups divided the work of saving the souls of the Native peoples. Before 1898 in Yukon, the Church of England was predominant. When the Rush began in earnest, the mainstream churches and other social institutions quickly followed. By 1901, there were over a dozen churches in Dawson, with many other smaller sects represented (see Appendix XI). The total number of religious groups, including Protestant denominations was nineteen. The

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<sup>24</sup>This compares with Katz who found a persistence rate of less than fifty percent over a year and a half (see his The People of Hamilton, p. 20), while Ralph Mann found persistence of only fifteen percent (see his After the Gold Rush, pp. 210-12).

competition between Protestants and Catholics for dominance was an important factor in the establishment of the city's infrastructure and the very quick result was the construction of two hospitals, several wooden churches and a shelter for the poor. This development is discussed at greater length in Chapter VI.

The Church of England's stronghold on the Native community prevailed even after the rush began, and all the Han listed at Moosehide in the Census are recorded as Anglicans.<sup>25</sup> The Roman Catholic Church registers for many of the outlying Native communities, however, list a number of baptisms and marriages (often with both rites being performed for an individual on the same day).<sup>26</sup> Most western religious denominations were well represented in Dawson, and there was a strong ethnic component to the congregations. For example, almost all the Scandinavians listed were Lutheran and all of the Russians were Jews. Similarly, the French, Irish, and French Canadians were, not surprisingly, overwhelmingly Catholic. These religious and ethnic affiliations provided an important forum for the forging of social and business networks, a pattern that will be seen in

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<sup>25</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>26</sup>See M.F. Beauregard, Baptêmes, mariages, sepultures de Ste. Marie de Dawson City, Yukon, 1898-1956 (Montreal: Editions Bergeron et Fils, 1976).

subsequent chapters.

### Conclusion

The community of Dawson City, then, from the earliest period of settlement has several distinguishing characteristics. First, the ethnic component is approximately evenly split between those of American and those of Canadian and British birth. While there is no doubt that Americans were prominent and numerous in Dawson City, they did not constitute a majority of the population. The foreign-born proportion is significant, accounting for about twenty percent. While it is clear that there was a preponderance of males, this situation was balanced by a large number of families. Wives and families follow their men in large numbers, although the population remains male in the majority until at least the 1920s. In the absence of established networks, ethnicity formed the basis for a number of occupational clusters, providing at the same time a business and social network for particular groups. There was also a strong ethnic clustering in the religious groups, and this, it will be shown, reinforced informal networks for work and social life.

Who was the "average" Klondiker in Dawson then? In 1901, he was likely to be a single, English speaking,

Protestant, native-born American or Canadian male. He was also likely to be employed at some aspect of the mining trade and to have been resident in the Dawson area for three or more years. He was likely to live with or near other people from either his religious affiliation or from his last stated place of residence (or both). His contribution to and experiences in the larger community will be the focus of subsequent chapters.

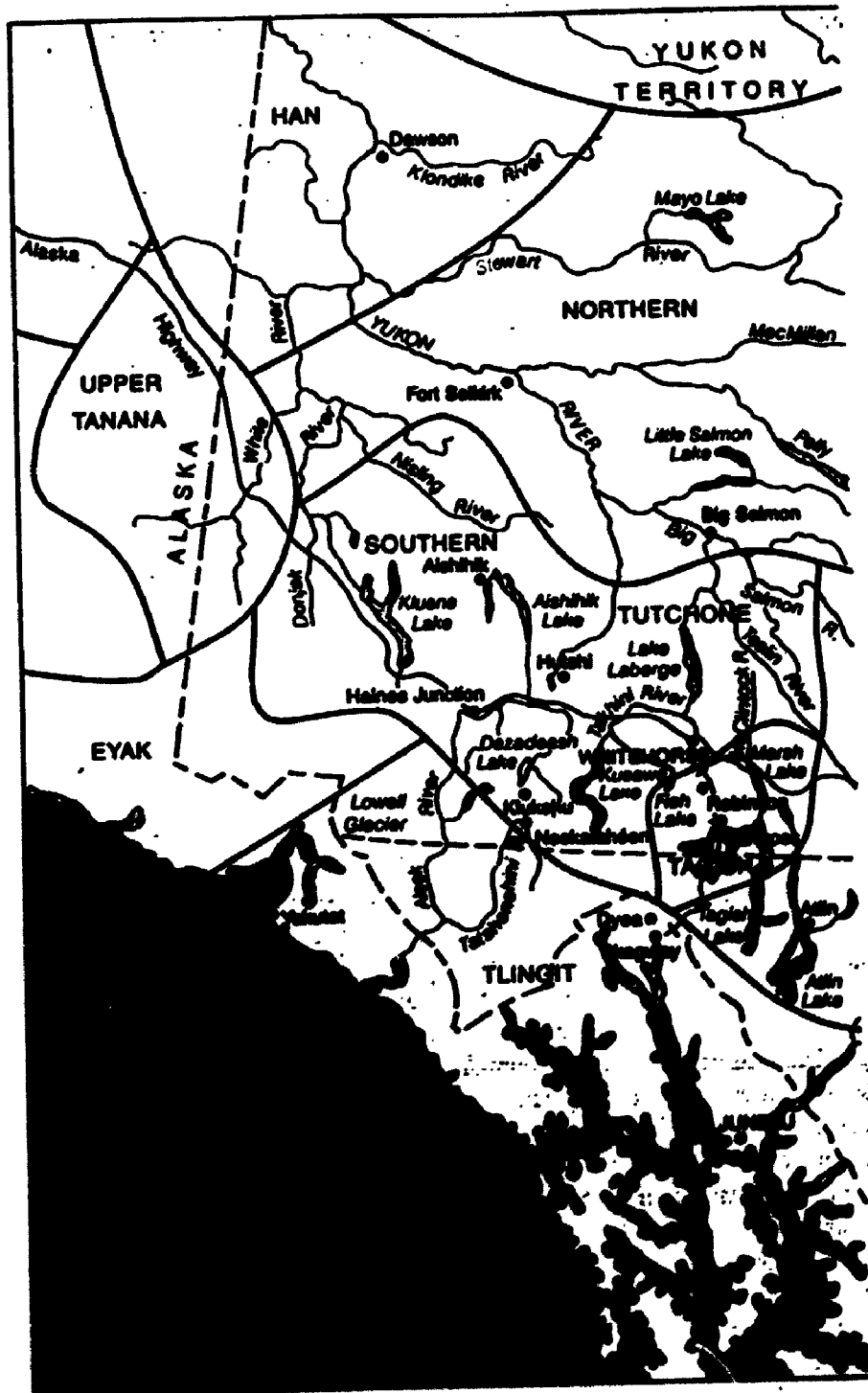


**Chapter III**  
**"This is my Father's Country"**  
**Native People of Yukon and the Gold Rush**

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The Native people of Yukon were severely and permanently affected by the gold rushes of the late nineteenth century. This chapter examines the impact of successive waves of explorers, traders, missionaries and miners on aboriginal communities along the Yukon River. As the human flood to the Klondike intensified, direct and lasting contact was made, starting on the Alaska coast and continuing along the Yukon River in both directions from its source to its mouth. This contact affected Native communities from one end of the river to the other. Ultimately, however, the mass of newcomers settled in the territory of the Han, the people of the middle river, and it was they who had the dubious honour of having three major gold discoveries made in their territory. The Han also accommodated the first permanent non-Native settlements in Yukon. They continued, as did the other Native groups, to be heavily involved in the fur trade while simultaneously participating in the new mineral-driven economy. This process of accommodation and adaptation that is the focus of this chapter.

**FIGURE 2:  
Map of Tribal Areas<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Source: Julie Cruikshank, Life Lived Like a Story (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), p. 6.

**"Part of the Land, Part of the Water"  
The Original Yukoners**

There are seven distinct groups of aboriginal people in Yukon. These include the Tlingit, Tagish, Kaska, Tutchone (southern and northern groups), Han, Gwich'in<sup>2</sup> and Inuit (see Figure 1). All but the Tlingit and Inuit are Athapaskan speakers, although all five Athapaskan groups have distinct languages. Each of these groups was in turn affected by the waves of immigration experienced in the late nineteenth century.

In the pre-mining Yukon economy, there were two major lines of trade. From the southwest, the coastal Tlingit groups of the Chilkat, Chilkoot and Taku travelled over the mountains to the interior to trade eulachon oil, shells and cedar bark baskets for caribou hide, fur garments and native copper. The bulk of this trade involved the Tagish and southern Tutchone people. In the northern Yukon, the Gwich'in dominated as middlemen, trading goods obtained from other Gwich'in, Han and northern Tutchone for oil, bone and tusks from the Koyukon and Inuit people.<sup>3</sup>

Although they had been trading on the Alaskan coast

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<sup>2</sup>Gwich'in people are also referred to in the literature as Kutchin and/or Loucheux.

<sup>3</sup>J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices / Dän Dhá Ts'edenintth'sé: Oral and Written Interpretations of the Yukon's Past (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 1991), p. 78.

for many years, it was not until 1834 that the Russians established a trading post and mission at St. Michaels at the mouth of the Yukon River. For the next decade they set about exploring the lower river, expanding their trade inland from the coast. In 1839 the smallpox virus, brought in by the Russians, exterminated more than half of the Koyukon people in the St. Michaels area.<sup>4</sup>

In the same period, Russian Orthodox Church missionaries worked among the surviving people in the St. Michaels area. In 1845, another mission was built further up the Yukon River in the interior. Here at Russian Mission, Iakov Netsvetov built a church in 1851, and had nearly two-thousand reported 'converts' by 1855. Netsvetov, a priest born of Russian and Koyukon parentage (referred to in Alaska as "Creole") set about vaccinating the natives against smallpox whenever they would assent.<sup>5</sup> Russian fur traders also visited this mission, using it as a post from which to penetrate the northwestern interior.

At the southern end, the Tlingit controlled access to the interior through the mountain passes before

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<sup>4</sup>A. McFadyen Clark, "Koyukon," in June Helm (ed). Handbook of North American Indians: Subarctic, Vol. 6 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1981), pp. 585-86.

<sup>5</sup>P.A. Tikhmenev, A History of the Russian American Company, translated and edited by Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), pp. 383-84.

Russian contact. Maintaining this control, they were able to ensure their monopoly on the interior trade. They established an extensive fur trade network, bringing furs from far up the Yukon River for trade first with Russian, then with British traders. By the time British traders arrived in the southern Yukon interior in the 1840s, the trade between the Tlingit and the Athapaskans was highly developed.

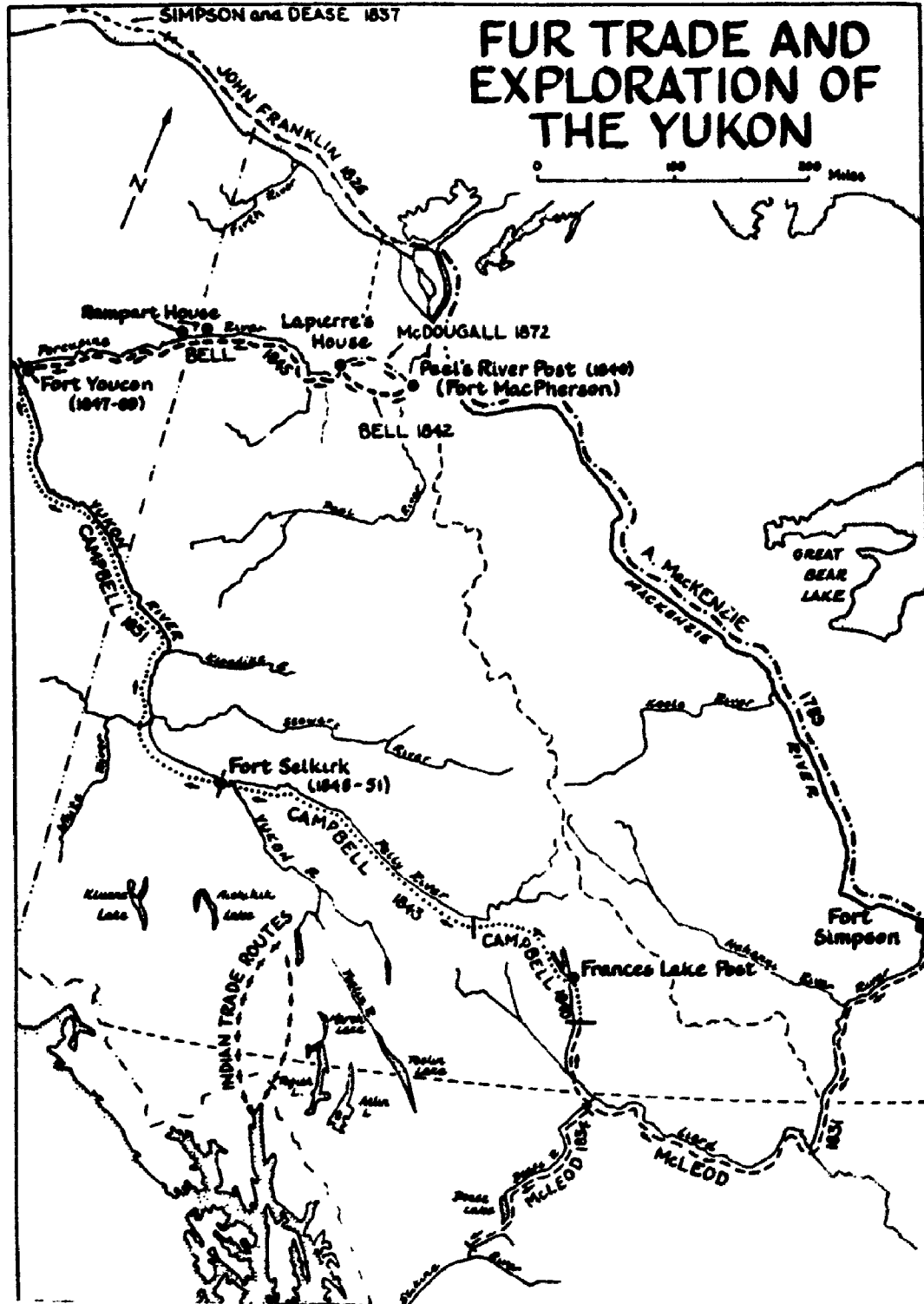
British traders and missionaries also pushed into Yukon from the east, where they were already involved in the Mackenzie River basin. Direct trade began with the establishment of LaPierre House in 1846 on the Bell River. The British conducted trade from a series of posts established along the Yukon River between 1840 and 1890. For most of the inland people, this new trade system brought the first direct contact with Europeans. The trader Robert Campbell, for example, recorded that when he encountered a group of Northern Tutchone in 1843, they were taken "completely by surprise, which almost amounted to awe, as they had never seen white men before."<sup>6</sup>

This new group of traders, here as elsewhere, also disrupted the existing trade networks. Campbell, for example, was thwarted in an early attempt to challenge

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<sup>6</sup>C. Wilson, Campbell of the Yukon (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), p. 70.

FIGURE 3  
Fur Trade and Exploration of the Yukon<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup>Source: K. Coates, *Best Left as Indians* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1991), p. 18.

this system of alliance, when the Chilkat destroyed his newly established post at Fort Selkirk.<sup>5</sup> The Chilkat, still jealously guarding the mountain pass, were not easily usurped from their role as middlemen and maintained control of this pass for another forty years.

The Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) began its long association with the people of Yukon when the Reverend W.W. Kirkby visited the Yukon River Valley in 1861. This marked the first foray of the Protestant churches. The following year, Kirkby was joined by Robert McDonald, a Métis missionary from Red River recruited by Kirkby to work among the people of the subarctic forest. McDonald settled into northern missionary life, serving among the Gwich'in at Ft. Yukon, LaPierre House, and Fort McPherson. Like many other CMS missionaries, McDonald made his permanent home among the people to whom he ministered (the Gwich'in), marrying one of his parishioners, translating parts of the Bible and teaching the people to read in their own language.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the CMS proselytized among the people of Yukon, establishing missions and counting converts. In many cases, it was the clergy who moderated and directed the relations between the Native people and the developing mining society. The Reverend

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<sup>5</sup>J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 83. Fort Selkirk was established in 1848 and destroyed in 1853.

William Carpenter Bompas, arriving initially in the Mackenzie district in 1865, played a critical role in this mediation, first at Forty Mile and later at Dawson City.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to bringing new goods and new religions, traders and missionaries brought epidemics. These spread in successive waves, decimating the people of Yukon as the nineteenth century progressed.<sup>10</sup> No Native community went untouched by European disease, and the Reverend McDonald's journals bear sad testament to how smallpox, whooping cough, tuberculosis, polio, and influenza devastated the Gwich'in.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Looking for the Yellow Rock: The Coming of the Early Gold Prospectors**

Private traders and prospectors began arriving in the Yukon Valley in the mid-1870s. The first were two *coureurs du bois*, François and Moise Mercier, who

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<sup>9</sup>See Kerry Abel, "William Carpenter Bompas," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, XIII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp. 92-94; and H.A. Cody, An Apostle of the North: The Memoirs of the Right Reverend William Carpenter Bompas, (Toronto: Musson, 1908).

<sup>10</sup>Catherine McClelland, Part of the Land, Part of the Water (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1987), pp. 76-77. McClelland notes that the coastal people had suffered smallpox epidemics in 1838 and again in 1862. Cruikshank describes the effects of the influenza epidemics of the 1890s on the Tlingit and Tagish people. See her Reading Voices, p. 129.

<sup>11</sup>J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 104.



established themselves as the Alaska Commercial Company representatives at St. Michaels and Fort Yukon respectively. Three Americans soon joined this group. Leroy McQuesten, an American miner and trader, was a veteran of the California and British Columbia gold fields. Arthur Harper, also a veteran prospector, was an Irish-born American who had followed the Rocky Mountains from the gold fields of British Columbia, while Alfred Mayo was a former circus performer and prospector originally from Kentucky. These men arrived in 1873 and by the following year had set up a post called Fort Reliance on the Yukon River, a few miles downstream from the mouth of the Klondike.<sup>12</sup> Harper and Mayo stayed here, while McQuesten moved further downstream to Fort Yukon. Here in Han Territory, they found promising prospects and a lucrative fur trade. Largely through the encouragement of this trio other prospectors soon followed. The supply base thus established, the private traders could now support the prospecting ventures of others. Harper, Mayo and Laude became not only fur traders, suppliers and prospectors, but grub-stakers.<sup>13</sup>

The arrival of these private traders further upset

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<sup>12</sup>Ironically, this early post was almost on top of what twenty years later became the townsite for Dawson City.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Stone, Miners' Justice: Migration, Law and Order on the Alaska-Yukon Frontier, 1873-1902 (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 8.

the Native system of trade and their social relationships. Under the new system, traders advanced food and goods to Native trappers in anticipation of their fur production. Unfortunately, often the Native trappers used up the supplies before the pelts were ever brought in. This system also placed greater stress on the animal populations, for more than ever the trapper was bound to the demands of a single trader and his market. Often of course, this meant travelling further distances to trap animals that were no longer abundant in the usual hunting grounds.<sup>14</sup> George Snow noted some of the negative effects when he remembered his first encounter with the Tagish people of the Upper Yukon in 1888. He claimed that in the autumn, the Tagish people would bring in most of their dried meat and fish with their furs to trade for tobacco, tea, sugar, blankets and cloth. In severe winters, when larger game was scarce, these practices led to severe hardship and starvation.<sup>15</sup>

The coastal Tlingit controlled the mountain passes near the southern Alaska coast, and until 1840 they limited access to the interior Yukon via this route. The Tlingit maintained this control through the first forty

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<sup>14</sup>J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 91. See also, R. McCandless, Yukon Wildlife: A Social History (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985), p. 32.

<sup>15</sup>YTA, MS 80/89, Reel 47, "George Snow Papers," p. 38.

years of European trading and proselytizing, even as prospectors sent word out that they had found gold in the river beds of the interior. After forty years of denying passage, for reasons that are unclear, a prospector named George Holt received permission to cross the coastal mountains and his party arrived on the other side at Lake Marsh in 1878.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after Holt's trip to the interior, American prospectors on the coast made an agreement with the Chilkat and the first organized non-Native expedition went over the Chilkoot without hindrance in June of 1880.<sup>17</sup> The interior of Yukon was now accessible from all directions: upstream from the mouth of the Yukon at St. Michaels, downstream from its headwaters at Lake Lindeman, and from the Mackenzie basin from the west. The floodgates were open.

**"Indian No Want Him, White Man No Want Him:"  
Social and Cultural Interaction in Yukon**

The mixed blood people of Yukon have a long history, although very little is known about them. Koyukon women

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<sup>16</sup>George Dawson, Report on an Exploration in the Yukon District, 1887, Reprint of 1889 edition (Whitehorse: Yukon Historical Museums Association, 1987), p. 179. This date is an estimate.

<sup>17</sup>Allen Wright, Prelude to Bonanza: The Discovery and Exploration of the Yukon (Sidney: Gray's Publishing, 1976), p. 137. The terms of this agreement are not known, and the reason that the Chilkat relinquished control of the pass and what they received in exchange remain a mystery.

on the Alaskan coast, for example, entered into sexual relationships with the Russian traders at St. Michaels from the earliest contact. "Creoles," the children resulting from these unions, played an important role as guides and interpreters in the early exploration period. From the 1830s on, Creole men were instrumental in the exploration of the Yukon River from St. Michaels to Fort Reliance. Creole women often married Russian traders or Creole men, further enlarging the sub-community of people of mixed blood.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, many of the so-called 'Russian' traders were actually Creole men, themselves products of the trade relationships between Russian traders and Native Alaska women.<sup>19</sup>

The trader at Nulato in 1867, for example was Ivan Pavaloff, son of a Koyukon woman and a Russian trader. Pavaloff married a Nulato Koyukon woman named Mlanka and together they had nine children, several of whom became well-known Creole guides and traders. Pavaloff later

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<sup>18</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier, pp. 26-37, 47. Two of the better known Creoles were Andrei Glazunov, who was educated by the Russians in Alaska and also spoke the 'Kodiak Eskimo' language, and Semen Lukin. These men and others acted as interpreters and guides for the Russian traders and explorers and made a good living for themselves. Much of the early exploration and mapping of the interior of Alaska was facilitated by Creoles.

<sup>19</sup>For a detailed discussion of how this process of alliances worked, see Sylvia Van Kirk's Many Tender Ties: (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980) and Jennifer Brown's Strangers in Blood (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980).

acted as interpreter for Mike Lebarge in his explorations of the upper Yukon River basin.<sup>20</sup> As well, in 1878 an American trader named James Bean reportedly travelled with a twelve year old Creole girl who acted as a servant and interpreter.<sup>21</sup>

Other traders and explorers, William Dall, Moise Mercier and Arthur Harper employed Creole guides and interpreters.<sup>22</sup> Sergi Cherosky, for example, acted as Mercier and Harper's interpreter at Belle Isle. Cherosky was also a prospector, and it was he and Pitka Pavaloff who discovered gold at Birch Creek in 1892.<sup>23</sup> Creole opportunities were not limited to trading and mining, however, for several Creole men found their calling in the Russian Church, including Iakov Netsvetov who established Russian Mission, and Zachary Belkhov, a lay priest who served the Native villages of the lower Yukon

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<sup>20</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier, p. 64.

<sup>21</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier, pp. 64-66. Webb notes that there were a number of Creoles who found work as interpreters and guides. By 1880 there were reported to be five Creoles at St. Michaels, five at Russian Mission, and three at Nulato. These probably included Ivan Korgenikoff, John Minook and Pitka Pavaloff, as well as Sergi Cherosky. Cherosky, in fact, married Pavaloff's daughter Erinia.

<sup>22</sup>Dall, Lebarge and a Creole guide named Ivan Lukin, for example, travelled from Nulato to Fort Yukon and back in 1860. See M. Webb, The Last Frontier, p. 55.

<sup>23</sup>E. Callahan, "A Yukon Autobiography," Alaska Journal, 5 (Spring 1975), pp. 127-28.

River from 1868 to 1896.<sup>24</sup>

Within the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) country marriages were also common. The records from Rampart House, for example, show that between 1890 and 1892 alone, six children lived with Native mothers and HBC fathers.<sup>25</sup> Although the written record does not always reflect this, such unions also occurred among the missionaries, private traders, and prospectors. Fort McPherson's first missionary, Robert McDonald, himself a Métis from Red River, married Julia Kutug, a Gwich'in woman, and together they had at least two children. The Church of England's own Bishop Bompas, albeit reluctantly, arranged for the marriage of the Reverend Benjamin Totty and a Native woman.<sup>26</sup> The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England later began a school for the children of such mixed blood unions in Forty Mile.

Unlike the Creoles of Alaska and the Métis of the Canadian prairies, no identifiable 'mixed blood' group

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<sup>24</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier, p. 172.

<sup>25</sup>K. Coates, Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1990), p. 77.

<sup>26</sup>NA, MG17 B2, "Church Missionary Society Papers," Bompas to Gould, 13 January 1896. Bompas noted that while he disapproved of such matches generally, Native wives often encouraged missionaries to remain for long periods, while non-Native wives generally encouraged the opposite. See also, J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 6.

emerged in the interior Yukon. Ken Coates argues that this was because, barred from the non-Native community, Yukoners of mixed blood remained within Native society.<sup>27</sup> While this appears to be true after 1896, the evidence indicates that in the earlier period, this was not always the case. For example in the early 1890s, there were eleven Métis children living in the mission house at Forty Mile. One of the Han trappers explained that the children lived with the missionary because the community considered them neither Han nor "white:"

Indian boy, Indian want him, white boy, white man want him. Half breed no Indian, no white man. Indian no want him, white man no want him.<sup>28</sup>

Native society absorbed some of the children of these alliances as adults, but little is really known about most of the Métis of Yukon. Charlie Isaac of the Moosehide band, when interviewed in 1963 remembered that his grandfather had four wives, one of whom was of mixed blood.<sup>29</sup> Other women married non-Native men or (at least

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<sup>27</sup>K. Coates and W.R. Morrison. "More than a Matter of Blood: The Federal Government, the Churches and the Mixed Blood Populations of the Yukon and the Mackenzie River Valley, 1890-1950," in Barron and Waldram (eds), 1885 and After (Saskatoon: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1986), p. 263.

<sup>28</sup>NA, MG29 C92, "Reverend Richard J. Bowen Papers," memoir, p. 99. Quoted also by Coates, Best Left as Indians, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup>Cornelius Osgood, The Han Indians: A Compilation of Ethnographic and Historical Data on the Alaska-Yukon Boundary Area (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971),

reportedly), made up a ready pool of camp followers:

Half a dozen half-breed women, with more or less of the blood of Russian fur traders in their veins, composed the demi-monde of either camp [Circle City and Forty Mile]. Full-blooded squaws performed the household duties in some cabins for a civilized lord and master. But the 'squaw man' was the exception. In no part of the world where isolated white men live among aborigines was the man who had a native mistress held in greater disrespect than here.<sup>30</sup>

However unrespectable, sexual relationships between Native and non-Native people existed. And while the extent of the "disrespect" is unclear, attitudes about such relationships were probably closely linked to the arrival of the wives of the missionaries and Mounted Police officers in the mid-1890s for such statements do not occur earlier. Clearly it is no accident that intermarriage seems to have decreased at the same time that improved communication and transportation networks made reliance on Native linguistic and geographic skills unnecessary. Native and Métis women became, in modern terms, redundant. One study, in looking at this issue concluded that:

short-term affairs were defensible, if not entirely laudable, but those few white men, like George Carmack, ... who lived with the Indians, had moved beyond the pale. They were 'squaw men,' an epithet of particular virulence which signalled the intense distaste in the white community for their social

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p. 17.

<sup>30</sup>Frederick Palmer, In the Klondike (New York: Scribner, 1899), p. 70.



preferences.<sup>31</sup>

It would seem then, that the period when a Métis group could have emerged to become quite important, it was eclipsed by the deluge of non-Native stampeders.

The emergence of a distinct group of Métis aside, "country marriages" were extremely important to Native people, traders, miners and missionaries until after the turn of the century. Closer examination of some of the so-called "squaw men" indicates that white perceptions were only a small part of a much more complicated portrait. There was an informal network of cross-cultural alliances operating in Yukon from the earliest period. As already stated, the traders and missionaries, in the years before 1896 made strong and lasting alliances with Native groups and often their marriages (as well as non-sexual friendships between men) reinforced these alliances.<sup>32</sup> Traders and prospectors too, made such alliances with reciprocal benefits. George Carmack is the most often cited example of the prospecting "squaw men." He is also a good example of extended alliances.

Carmack was an American prospector who spent much time among the Tagish people of the upper Yukon hunting,

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<sup>31</sup>K. Coates and W.R. Morrison. "More than a Matter of Blood," p. 263.

<sup>32</sup>R. Slobodin, "The Dawson Boys," Polar Notes, Vol. 5 (June, 1963), p. 28.

prospecting, and trapping. He became the constant companion of Keish (known also as Skookum Jim) during the late 1880s. Soon after their meeting, Carmack married one of Keish's sisters. When this woman died, Carmack married another sister, Shaaw Tlâa (subsequently known as Kate Carmack), in a pattern commonly followed by the Tagish people. Carmack's relationship with Kate and Jim's family continued for many years. The men packed supplies for other miners, hunted, fished, and prospected together and Kate and George had a child together. Kate performed the multitude of never-ending tasks of tending the fires, melting snow and ice for water, gathering and preparing food, and dressing skins to make the family's clothing.<sup>33</sup> Carmack and Skookum Jim, along with Jim's nephew Charlie, together claimed the discovery that started the Klondike stampede. All three men staked claims on the creek called Bonanza, as did another of Jim's nephews, Patsy Henderson. At the same time, other non-Natives, notably Robert Henderson were deliberately excluded from the find.<sup>34</sup> Here then, was a strong and

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<sup>33</sup>Kitty Smith remembering Kate Carmack's life, as told to J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup>Henderson, so the story goes, was not informed of the strike, for he had offended Carmack by behaving rudely toward the Carmack's Tagish wife and friends. This story is related in many memoirs, including William Ogilvie, Early Days on the Yukon and the Story of its Gold Finds (Toronto: Bell & Cockburn, 1913), pp. 125-131 and George Carmack's own, My Experiences in the Yukon (n.p.: Marguerite Carmack, 1933), p. 9.

reciprocal relationship based on friendship and family ties.

The American and British traders also recognized that Native wives could be very important to their success. As Kitty Henry remembered, "She does everything, that Indian woman, you know:"<sup>35</sup> It is no accident that Harper, Ladue and McQuesten, the most successful and long-lasting of the Yukon traders, all had Native wives.<sup>36</sup> Leroy McQuesten went to Dawson too late to stake, but acquired a claim, built a new warehouse for the Alaska Commercial Company and prospered. Retiring to California, he built himself "a luxurious house ... and live[d] out his days with his Indian wife in well-earned comfort under warm southern sunshine."<sup>37</sup> Although there is almost no information about the other Native wives of the traders, as a bridge between the trader and the people who brought in furs, these women were probably invaluable assets.

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<sup>35</sup>Kitty Smith remembering Kate Carmack, quoted in J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 132.

<sup>36</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier, p. 62. A. Wright notes that Harper went outside in 1897, sick with Tuberculosis and died from it the following year. The fate of his wife is unknown, although a man named Henry Harper (presumably Harper's Métis son) was interviewed in the 1930s at Moosehide. Wright also notes that Joe Ladue, another trader who died from Tuberculosis shortly after the Rush also married a Native woman. See Prelude to Bonanza: The Discovery and Exploration of the Yukon (Sidney, B.C.: Gray's Publishing, 1976), pp. 292-93.

<sup>37</sup>A. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, p. 293.

**The Deluge Begins:  
The Beginning of Non-Native Settlement**

The coastal Tlingit had been in direct contact with non-Native traders and sea-farers from at least 18th century. Nothing, however, could have prepared them for the commotion caused by the Klondike Gold Rush. The Tlingit had jealously guarded the mountain passes until the early 1880s when, for reasons not entirely clear, they allowed non-Natives to use the passes for the first time. This may have been in part, profit-motivated because the Tlingit and Tagish found a lucrative trade in packing supplies for the prospectors. After large gold deposits were discovered at Forty Mile in 1886, there was a regular stream of prospectors through the passes, culminating in the Klondike Stampede of 1898. Between 1885 and 1900 then, tens of thousands of people passed through the Tlingit villages of Dyea (at the foot of the Chilkoot Pass) and Skagway (at the foot of the White Pass) before crossing the mountains to the northeast.

It is impossible to imagine the impact of the stampede on Native people, states Yukon anthropologist Julie Cruikshank, "because so few travellers even mentioned Native people in their journals."<sup>38</sup> This is a curious statement from a scholar who has so painstakingly gathered the oral tradition of the people of Yukon, for

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<sup>38</sup>J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 121.

the diaries and memoirs of the stampeders are liberally sprinkled with commentaries on the aboriginal people of the subarctic. William Elliott, for example, began his diary at Dyea and kept it throughout his journey into Yukon to Dawson, chronicling his perceptions of at least nine native villages along the way.<sup>39</sup> The Tlingit of Dyea and Skagway, as noted above, had been in contact with non-Natives for over a century when the rush for gold began in earnest in the late 1890s, but for most of the men and women of the Klondike stampede, the journey to Dawson constituted their first encounter with Native people. This probably accounts for the detailed and voluminous writing about the aboriginal people of Yukon found in the diaries and memoirs of the Klondike period.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>NA, MG30 C41, "William R. Elliott Papers," diary entries for August through October, 1902. See also, Frederick Palmer, In the Klondike, Including an Account of the Writer's Journey to Dawson (New York: Scribner, 1899).

<sup>40</sup>The coastal Tlingit, probably because they are the first group encountered, are the most often described, with over a dozen diaries and memoirs remarking on them in some detail, see: YTA, MS 78/18 John Grace Papers; PABC, AddMss 1158, "Ronald E. Weir Papers" (John McGregor memoir); NA, MG29 C62 Clayton Scoins Collection (Alden Smith diary); PABC, Add.MSS 1323 Thomas Wilson Papers; YTA, MS 80/89 Reel #47 George Snow Papers; YTA, MS 82/53 F-5, Georgia White Papers; Della Murray Banks, "Rainbow's End," Alaska Sportsman, Vol. 1-35, No.9 (February, 1945):14-15, 21-27; William Haskell, Two Years in the Klondike and Alaska Goldfields (Hartford: Hartford Publishing, 1898); John Secretan, To the Klondike and Back (New York: Hurst and Blackett, 1898); Robert Oglesby, The Klondyke Gold Region (n.p: s.n., 1899); Robert Kirk, Twelve Months in Klondike (London: William Heinemann, 1899); A.E.I. Sola, Klondyke: Truth and Facts

The mountain passes separating the interior of Yukon from the Alaska coast were long and steep. Travellers, each with a necessarily large amount of supplies, faced a formidable task in hauling these over the passes on foot. The shortest route, the treacherous Chilkoot Pass, was too steep and narrow for dogs or other pack animals, so goods had to be carried in numerous relays. Here, for more than a decade, the Tlingit carried out a lucrative packing business, collecting steep fees for hauling the supplies of prospectors and other travellers.<sup>41</sup> Tlingit dominance in the transportation trade was not eclipsed until the completion of the White Pass railway in 1899.

All prospectors with sufficient means then, hired the Tlingit packers (and often their Tagish relatives)<sup>42</sup> to carry their goods to the summit of the passes. In 1897 the four young men in John McGregor's party, for example, hired all the Chilkat packers available to move

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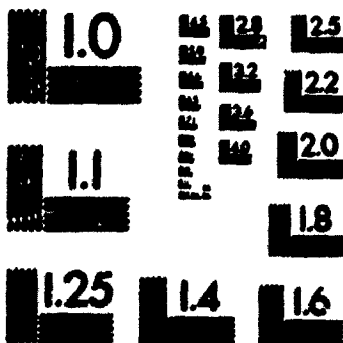
(London: Mining and Geographical Institute, 1897.; and F. Palmer, In the Klondike (New York: Scribner, 1899).

<sup>41</sup>The earliest references to this new trade is made in the late 1880s. See YTA, MS80/89, Reel #47, "George Snow Papers," Memoirs, p.4. Snow remembered hiring Native packers in 1888 on his first trip over the Chilkoot. William Ogilvie also discusses the Tlingit and Tagish packers he hired during his 1887 and 1888 trips inward in his Early Days on the Yukon, pp. 153-57.

<sup>42</sup>As will be shown, a number of Tagish men came to be involved in the packing trade, most notably Skookum Jim and his brother and nephew, both of whom were married to Tlingit women. Three of Jim's sisters also married Tlingit men.

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PM-1 3 1/2" x 4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET  
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"at least half of our outfit to the summit."<sup>43</sup> Unable to afford any more help, they packed the rest on their own backs.

Frank LaRoche, one of the many photographers of the period, captured an image of this business. In Dyea in the summer of 1897 he photographed "Don-a-Wok, Old Chilkoot Chief and Chief Isaac" in front of a wooden building with a sign reading "Isaac Chief of Chilkoot Packing and Specialty." Don-a-Wok, he reported, was eighty years old and ruler of "all the Chilkoots." Isaac was described as the "active" chief and general contractor for the packing trade.<sup>44</sup> The photo shows the two men posing with a young boy, all three the very essence of dignity and prosperity.

And prosperous the business was, although reports vary as to the rates charged. The Englishman Robert Kirk stated that the Chilkat were charging forty cents per pound to carry supplies to the summit during the summer of 1897.<sup>45</sup> John Secretan, a man less impressed than most by the Klondike generally and the Native people in

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<sup>43</sup>PABC, AddMss 1158, "Ronald E. Weir Papers," John McGregor memoir. McGregor and his party had left Nanaimo, BC in late July 1897 and crossed the summit early in August 1897.

<sup>44</sup>F. La Roche, En Route to the Klondike: Chilkoot Pass and Skaguay Trail (Chicago: Henry Shepard, 1897), unpaginated.

<sup>45</sup>Robert C. Kirk, Twelve Months in the Klondike, p. 42.



particular, was also at Dyea in 1897. He reported that the people he referred to as "beasts of burden"<sup>46</sup> would charge ten cents per pound to "stagger over mountain passes" with the heaviest of loads. Robert Oglesby, the same summer, claimed he paid his packers fourteen cents per pound.<sup>47</sup> It is quite likely, of course, that the price fluctuated according to seasonal conditions, the number of packers available, and the size of the loads to be packed.

Of the people themselves and their village, there was also a wealth of reports. Robert Kirk wrote that the people of Dyea were "smaller in size than the average white, but they are strong and are able to carry surprisingly heavy packs across the mountains to Lake Lindeman, a distance of twenty-seven miles."<sup>48</sup> The weight of the packs varied, according to the reports, but seem to have ranged from between sixty to one-hundred pounds. Other stampeders recorded, with some shock, that young girls were also employed in the packing business, working alongside their brothers and fathers.<sup>49</sup> Native wives and mothers were also reported working either as packers or ceaselessly busy in the village drying salmon and

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<sup>46</sup>J.H.E. Secretan, To Klondyke and Back, p. 41.

<sup>47</sup>Robert Oglesby, The Klondyke Gold Region, p. 523.

<sup>48</sup>R. Kirk, Twelve Months in the Klondike, p. 41.

<sup>49</sup>ibid., p. 42.

preparing hides.<sup>50</sup>

Another industry, of course, was the whisky trade and this could apparently interrupt the packing business. One stamperder recorded that while he was in Dyea in 1896, the steamer "Katie" arrived and the captain did a brisk trade in selling whisky to the Tlingit. The villagers then went on a spree that frightened most of the non-Natives in port. This argonaut was stranded for almost a week afterward as he failed to engage any of the people in packing -- they were still recovering from their "spree."<sup>51</sup> The whisky trade was one of the negative side effects of the new economy on the coast.

The Tlingit/Tagish held a monopoly in the packing business in the early period, for there was limited labour available. When Native men were busy with the fall hunt or when the whole village was preoccupied with marriage or other celebrations, work could effectively cease. As well, since the Tlingit and Tagish people were the only source of labour available, they could and did effectively negotiate their own terms of work. This could even lead to a strike, much to the inconvenience and annoyance of their clients. When Josiah Spurr's party, for example, discovered that the trail past Sheep

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<sup>50</sup>See W. Ogilvie, Early Days on the Yukon, p. 153; J. Secretan, To Klondyke and Back, p. 56 and F. Palmer, In the Klondike, pp. 8-9.

<sup>51</sup>A.E.I. Sola, Klondyke: Truth and Facts, p. 55.

Camp was too rocky and steep for their pack horses, they attempted to engage a group of Chilkat packers to carry their freight. Spurr's group offered to pay six cents per pound. Knowing full well that with the freight half way up the mountain-side, Spurr's party was helpless without them, the Chilkat held out for nine cents. The stale-mate held for a week, when another party came along offering to gladly pay the packers a higher wage. Grudgingly, Spurr negotiated the Chilkats' terms and their goods were packed to the summit. Wrote Spurr, "It was a genuine strike -- the revolt of organized labor against helpless capital."<sup>52</sup> This, it is clear, was a business, and the Chilkat had plenty of experience at negotiating trade, as they so ably demonstrated.

The Tlingit people had permanent dwellings near the beach of Dyea, as we learn from Kirk, for he could see "the Indian huts and hovels of Dyea"<sup>53</sup> from the steamer before setting anchor in the harbour. Upon closer examination, what had appeared to this Englishman to be huts and hovels he later described as "cabins" seemingly filled with "squaws and Indian children."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Josiah Spurr, Through the Yukon Gold Diggings: A Narrative of Personal Travel (Boston: Eastern, 1900), p. 46.

<sup>53</sup>R. Kirk, Twelve Months in the Klondike, p. 25.

<sup>54</sup>ibid., p. 42.

Of course, the people had an intimate knowledge of their territory, its dangers and secrets. They maintained a close relationship with and respect for their environment. Just two hours before an avalanche killed dozens of argonauts in April of 1898, for example, the "old Indian chief went up and drove all his people down the trail on a run."<sup>55</sup> As noted above, they were also of great assistance to the early prospectors and traders who explored and charted the country and its rivers. George Snow, an early prospector remembered that on his 1888 trip down the Yukon, his party shot the rapids at Miles Canyon because they had not known they were approaching. After a good scare, they sat on the bank and consulted the map "drawn with a pencil on a piece of wrapping paper by Billy Dickenson, a half-breed Chilkat"<sup>56</sup> and proceeded through the Whitehorse Rapids without mishap.

The coastal Tlingit then, were the first Native group encountered by the great Chilkoot stampede. Moving inland, the Tagish people were the next group to receive the wave of prospectors. The Tagish had a long history of trade and intermarriage with the coastal Tlingit, and although the opening of the mountain passes in the 1880s

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<sup>55</sup>NA, MG29 C62, "Clayton J. Scoins Collection," Alden Smith to Mother, 08 April 1898.

<sup>56</sup>YTA, MS 80/89, Reel 47, "George Snow Papers," memoir, p. 11.

severed the Tlingit monopoly on inland trade, the customary pattern of marriage between the coastal and interior people continued. As noted above, Tagish people also participated in the packing business over the trails, although the extent of this participation is not known. Certainly Skookum Jim (Keish) and his brother (Tlákkwshaan), Tagish men who married coastal Tlingit women, worked as packers at Dyea in the late 1880s as did Charlie, Keish's nephew.<sup>57</sup> The Tagish people also engaged in business with the prospectors at lakes Bennett and Tagish, the men selling timber and building boats, the women making and selling moccasins, mittens, and other garments.<sup>58</sup>

Many stampeders remarked on the people they met around lakes Tagish and Bennett as well. At Tagish Lake, the people's Long House was cause for much comment by the stampeders who passed it. In 1893 Frederick Funston's party was as fascinated by the Long House near their camp, as they were amused by the curious children of the Tagish families fishing nearby.<sup>59</sup> Later, the North West Mounted Police established Tagish Post in 1898 to register the boats proceeding downstream to Dawson,

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<sup>57</sup>J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, p. 129.

<sup>58</sup>J.H.E. Secretan, Klondyke Truth and Facts, p. 59.

<sup>59</sup>Frederick Funston, "Over the Chilkoot Pass to the Yukon," (Canadian Historical Images on Microfiche, No. 14295, 1896), unpaginated.

adding yet another unaccustomed presence in the area."<sup>60</sup>

The successive waves of non-Natives throughout their territory had mixed results for the Tagish people. Like other inland Yukoners, the Tagish had participated in the new fur trade relationships of the 1870s and 1880s, but until the opening of the mountain passes, few had any direct contact with more than one or two whites at a time. When the trickle of prospectors became a stream and the stream became a flood, the result was that at times their communities suffered. The combination of disease and new economic activities proved particularly dislocating. Skookum Jim's (Keish) family provides a clear example of this pattern. Of his seven siblings who survived childhood, three (a brother and two sisters) died in the influenza epidemics of the early 1890s. Keish survived as the only male sibling while, of the remaining four sisters, one perished on the Chilkoot and two married white prospectors and left the community. The remaining sister married a Tlingit man in the customary alliance and settled at Carcross.<sup>61</sup>

From lakes Bennett and Tagish, the 'golden highway' led the stampede north out of Tagish country and

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<sup>60</sup>William Morrison, Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty, 1894-1925 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), p. 36. <sup>61</sup>2

<sup>61</sup>J. Cruikshank, Reading Voices, pp. 129-31.

through the Southern Tutchone, or Stick Indian territory. Wilson Veazie who passed them at Lake Labarge in 1894 on his way to Forty Mile noted with some surprise that they had adopted European dress. He photographed the scene of trade, the Stick people receiving "tobacco, whisky, guns and ammunition" for their furs and dried meat.<sup>62</sup> The Tutchone also found a lucrative trade in piloting the stampeders through some of the Yukon's most difficult waters. While these pilots saved many boat-loads of people and supplies from being lost, not all the stampeders were grateful for the availability of a Native pilot. John Secretan who was unfavourably impressed with the people of the coast, was even less impressed by those he encountered on the river:

The emaciated Indian pilot ... is one of the most contemptible creatures imaginable. Presuming upon his superior knowledge, he looks proudly down from his elevated pilot house position and despised his white employer, for whom he has a thorough contempt. White pilots being unobtainable, this aboriginal abomination is ... almost unendurable.<sup>63</sup>

Such remarks illustrate the unwillingness of many Klondikers to accept Native authority over matters geographic. Aboriginal knowledge, however, was ignored only at one's peril for the river was treacherous in many places. Racism aside, the Southern Tutchone found a

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<sup>62</sup>Veazie Wilson, Glimpses of the Yukon Gold Fields and Dawson Route (Vancouver: Thompson Stationery, 1896), unpaginated, photo #47.

<sup>63</sup>J.H.E. Secretan, To Klondyke and Back, p. 138.

lucrative trade in supplying wood to the passing steamers, and as pilots to assist in the navigation of the Yukon River.

The Northern Tutchone, most notably those of the Pelly River, were next to receive the wave as the stampeders worked their way down the Yukon River. At the confluence of the Yukon and Pelly rivers was a trading post (Fort Selkirk) and here many travellers stopped over. Thus, many of them had a chance to record their impressions. In 1894 the post included a Tutchone village, the non-Native trader's store and cabin, as well as the Anglican church. The people of the Pelly River, reported one observer, were heavily involved in the fur trade, both as producers and as middlemen, and doing very well.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, stampeders often found Fort Selkirk deserted, for the Tutchone were always highly mobile, a lifestyle that neither the fur trade nor the gold rush changed.<sup>65</sup> The Northern Tutchone people also found a lucrative trade in the sale of meat to the prospectors who came down the river each year. Robert Kirk's party, for example, purchased moose meat from the Tutchone

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<sup>64</sup>A.E.I. Sola, Klondyke: Truth and Facts, pp. 66-67.

<sup>65</sup>NA, MG29 E105, "Edward Lester Papers," diary entry 10 March 1899. See also F. Palmer, In the Klondike, pp. 4-7. For a discussion of the Tutchone mobility see C. McClelland, "Tutchone," in June Helm (ed), Handbook of North American Indians: Subarctic (Vol. 6), p. 493.



camped at the mouth of the Big and Little Salmon rivers in September of 1897. As at Tagish, the women at Fort Selkirk made "moccasins, fur caps and mittens to sell to the travellers."<sup>66</sup>

**"The People of the River:"  
Gold Discoveries in Han Territory**

Of all the aboriginal groups in Yukon, it was probably the Han who were most deeply and permanently affected by the swelling tide of humanity that moved from the coast toward the junction of the Klondike and Yukon rivers. When Alexander Hunter Murray first tried to establish Fort Yukon in the 1840s, for example, the Han people were the largest group in the area. There were at least three Han bands at this time with an estimated population of one thousand people.<sup>67</sup> This relatively large population was supported by the abundant fish and game of the Han territory. Their three villages became the sites of the mining communities of Forty Mile, Eagle

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<sup>66</sup>R. Kirk, Twelve Months in the Klondike, p. 82.

<sup>67</sup>C. Osgood, The Han Indians, p. 25. This is only a rough estimate and conflicts with Alexander Murray's observations that while the Han were the largest group in the area, there were only two-hundred men in the four bands in the late 1840s. See his Journal of the Yukon, 1847-48 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1910), p. 82.

and Dawson.<sup>68</sup> European contact, late though it came, delivered its usual devastating blows and by the time of the gold rush in the late 1890s, epidemics had reduced their numbers to a few hundred.

The 1886 gold strike at Forty Mile, near the Han's "Charlie Village" is important for two reasons. It marked the first of three major gold strikes in Han territory and also the beginning of large, permanent communities in Yukon. The nature of the gold discovered at Forty Mile led to the development of year-round, sedentary operations. The result was a concentration of mining activity in the district drained by the Forty Mile River and also that drained by the Klondike -- Han territory.<sup>69</sup>

For the Han people along the Yukon River, this new pattern of mining meant prolonged contact with miners. Before the Forty Mile strike, prospectors had traversed the region in small groups or in pairs, working the rivers and creeks as they went. Traders established posts that did double duty in furs and supplies with the Indians, as well as grub-staking and supplying the prospectors. The non-Native population remained

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<sup>68</sup>C. Osgood, The Han Indians, pp. 25-28. There may well have been four bands, although there has been some trouble distinguishing between "Charlie Village" and "Johnny Village" of the lower river before 1890.

<sup>69</sup>T. Stone, Miners' Justice, p. 13.

transient, and no settlements, other than the missions, developed prior to 1856. The gold find at Forty Mile, however, demanded new mining techniques -- shifting from bar mining to gulches. Bar mining (that is, mining the gravel found on sand bars in the river) was often a risky venture, as bars were easily flooded or washed away, while gulches (ravines or trenches for run-off and/or small tributary creek beds) contained small amounts of water that could be easily diverted in order to access pay dirt. Placer mining in gulches then, could be carried out year round, using new techniques to thaw the permafrost.<sup>70</sup> A supply and service community could now be established, as there soon developed a semi-permanent market. Unlike the highly individualistic and nomadic prospecting that had been carried out in Yukon in the preceding decades, the very nature of the Forty Mile discovery fostered the establishment of a longer-term community.

The Han people were severely and permanently affected by these changes. For just as mining activity was now concentrated in a limited area, so was non-Native hunting. Game depletion soon followed, disrupting the people's hunting and trapping patterns in the Forty Mile district. An almost immediate shift to a cash economy occurred as the Han relied less on salmon and devoted

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<sup>70</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier, pp. 82-4.

more time to supplying meat and furs to the non-Natives.<sup>71</sup> Availability of alcohol and a stronger reliance on non-Native food sources accompanied these changes. This cycle was repeated in the Dawson area ten years later, and shortly afterward at Eagle as well. In addition, the Han communities were weakened by epidemic disease, particularly diphtheria but also smallpox and typhoid.<sup>72</sup>

Forty Mile then, gained the distinction of being the first semi-permanent mining community. Abandoning Fort Reliance to follow the miners, traders Leroy McQuesten and Arthur Harper quickly set up a post at Forty Mile in 1887. The sudden and unexpected change in trading policy created by the closing of Fort Reliance (as well as the one at Belle Isle, which Mercier abandoned the same year) was a serious blow to the Han. For the people near Fort Reliance (later known as the Moosehide band) had become dependent on European goods, but now faced long and often dangerous journeys to the Forty Mile post.<sup>73</sup> When the

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<sup>71</sup>For a general survey of this pattern of wildlife depletion in Han territory, see Robert McCandless, Yukon Wildlife, pp. 30-33 and J.R. Lotz, The Dawson Area: A Regional Monograph (Ottawa: Department of Northern Affairs, 1966), pp. 150-51.

<sup>72</sup>Crow, John R. and Philip R. Obley, "Han," in June Helm (ed), Handbook of North American Indians: Subarctic, (Vol. 6), p. 511.

<sup>73</sup>M. Webb, The Last Frontier, p. 78. The dangers came in the spring and fall when the river either broke up or froze. Getting caught in either could mean weeks

Reverend Richard Bowen visited Nuklako (later Moosehide), the village at the mouth of the Klondike in 1895, there were no non-Natives in the neighbourhood, even though the Han people were heavily dependent upon the fur trade. In fact, the nearest trader up-stream was Joe Ladue at the Sixty Mile post, while Forty Mile mining camp was fifty-three miles down-stream.<sup>74</sup>

By 1893 two adjacent communities were well-established at Forty Mile, the Han remaining segregated from the miners. Here, about two-hundred miners and one-hundred Han spent the winter of 1892-93. This pattern of segregation was one that had developed around the posts in the rest of Yukon and would continue at Dawson City. In Han territory, this was in part due to the efforts of the Reverend William Carpenter Bompas of the Church Missionary Society, who arrived to minister to the Native people of Charlie Village (Forty Mile) in 1892 and who insisted on the separation of the two communities.

Bompas felt very strongly that the miners were having a negative effect on the Han. In 1893 he wrote twice to Ottawa asking for the regulation of liquor traffic for the sake of Native-white relations.<sup>75</sup> When the government acquiesced and sent a contingent of

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of walking either to or from the post.

<sup>74</sup>NA, MG29 C92, "Reverend Richard J. Bowen Papers," memoir, p. 188.

<sup>75</sup>NA, MG30 E-2 Vol.3, "Constantine Papers," Bompas to Daly, May 1893 and 09 December 1893.

Mounted Police, however, it was for sovereignty and security reasons rather than for Native welfare.<sup>76</sup> While the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) immediately imposed an interdiction on Native drinking and especially on the sale of alcohol to Natives, their attitude was less than sympathetic to the people of the river. Commanding Officer Charles Constantine in fact, regarded the Han as a nuisance, calling them "a lazy, shiftless lot [who] are content to hang around the mining camps. They suffer much from chest trouble and die young."<sup>77</sup> He proceeded to ignore them as far as possible.<sup>78</sup>

The Mounted Police did, of course, exert control over the sale of liquor to Natives soon after arriving at Forty Mile. Ironically, as Ken Coates pointed out, this had the effect of concentrating alcohol consumption in the Native villages and in the miners' cabins.<sup>79</sup> Further, Constantine soon found that when the people could not buy

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<sup>76</sup>For full discussion of this see W.R. Morrison, Showing the Flag.

<sup>77</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to the Commissioner, 05 January 1896.

<sup>78</sup>These were, for all intents and purposes, Constantine's instructions from Ottawa. See NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Ogilvie, 19 November 1896: "when I came to this country [my instructions were] that the Indians were not to be recognized in any way which would lead them to believe that the Government would do any thing for them as Indians."

<sup>79</sup>Coates, Best Left as Indians (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1990), pp. 82-85.

commercial liquor, they consumed a home-brew made from molasses, sugar and dried fruit. Bompas, for all his efforts to keep contact between the two groups to a minimum, reported to his dismay that the "Indians have learned from them to make whisky for themselves, but there has been much drunkenness of whites and Indians together with much danger of the use of fire arms."<sup>80</sup> Constantine too, noted that the liquor intoxicated the Natives, made them violent, and poisoned them.<sup>81</sup>

Alcohol abuse was not the only negative outcome of the new and prolonged contact between the Han and the miners. When the Reverend Bowen returned to Forty Mile in December of 1895, he found the Han there were all sick with typhoid. Their numbers steadily diminished from this and other diseases. As well, the Bishop's efforts notwithstanding, there was at least some social and sexual interaction between the two groups, for there were at least eleven Métis children living in the mission house in 1895.<sup>82</sup>

In the hopes of establishing good relations between the aboriginal residents and the newly arrived Mounted

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<sup>80</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Bompas to T.M. Daly, May 1893.

<sup>81</sup>NWMP, "Report of Inspector Constantine, 1894," in Parliament of Canada, Sessional Papers (1895), p. 76.

<sup>82</sup>NA, MG29 C92, "Reverend Richard Bowen Papers," memoir, p. 99.

Police, Bishop Bompas organized a meeting of Han people near Forty Mile with Constantine. This first meeting set the tone for further relations between the two groups. When the Han expressed their discontent with the miners selling their people whisky and shooting their dogs, Constantine merely directed them to tie up their dogs and avoid whisky. This did not set the stage for good relations between the non-Natives and the Han, or between the Bishop and Constantine.

The cultural segregation established at Forty Mile continued at Dawson. Just as the Han of Charlie Village remained separate from the miners in the Forty Mile camp, Bompas ensured that the people at Nuklako at the mouth of the Klondike River were also isolated from the new town after 1896. Here, however, the Han had to be relocated, for their original summer village was incorporated into the new townsite of Dawson. At the request of Bompas, and over the objections of Inspector Constantine and William Ogilvie, the Department of Indian Affairs reserved a small parcel of land (one-hundred and sixty acres) for the Han, situated safely three miles downstream from their previous village and the site of the new city of Dawson.<sup>83</sup> This became the village of

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<sup>83</sup>Note that the issue of where the Han were to be relocated is complicated by the fact that Bompas first relocated them to the government reserve -- the land where Constantine planned to build the NWMP Barracks. Constantine claimed that the Bishop relocated them to the



Moosehide.<sup>84</sup>

By relocating the Han the Canadian authorities saw their responsibilities toward them fulfilled. For although the people of Moosehide repeatedly requested an extension of this reserve land, they were unsuccessful. Commissioner Ogilvie, in fact, advised the Department of the Interior that the extension should not be granted until the gold had been taken out of the area.<sup>85</sup> This then became the pattern of dealing with the question of land and treaty rights throughout the period, the government reluctant to grant Native people any land title for fear that gold would be discovered on their

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government reserve deliberately to annoy him and get his claims addressed. Wrote Constantine: "I don't propose to be bluffed ... by an arrogant Bishop who thinks the only people worth considering are a few dirty Indians too lazy to work, and who prefer starvation." See NA, RG18 A-1 Vol. 140, Constantine to Commissioner Herchmer, 06 December 1896.

<sup>84</sup>YTA, CR81/16 f. 73-77, "St. Paul's Anglican Church Papers," J.A. Smart to Bishop of Selkirk, 12 August 1897. Constantine and Ogilvie objected to the idea of a special land allocation, so the Department of Indian Affairs compromised by granting the new site to the villagers while requiring them to "relinquish any claim, so far as the Department is concerned, to the site of the old Indian village at Klondak."

<sup>85</sup>Gold was discovered on Moosehide Creek and adjacent gulches in 1900. YTA, YRG1 Series 1 Vol.7, file 1187, Ogilvie to Secretary of the Interior, 11 December 1900; Ogilvie to Bompas 27 September 1900. For a fuller discussion of federal government policies and Yukon Native people, see K. Coates, Best Left as Indians, pp. 159-86.

land.<sup>86</sup>

Relations between the Han and the developing mining community then, were characterized by segregation more than accommodation. The Han community at Dawson, by removing to a site several miles downstream, remained separate from the developing city throughout the boom period. The Han adapted their customary hunting and fishing practices to encompass the ready cash market for meat and dressed skins. And while the Han seemed willing and able to accommodate the mining centre that sprang up on their old fish camp, the developing new community ignored their presence as far as possible.

As previously noted, Cornelius Osgood, the anthropologist who first studied the Han, estimated that at the time of contact in the late 1840s, there were approximately one-thousand "People of the River" living in three bands of roughly equal size. In Dawson by 1901, there were eighty-one Native people (mostly Han) living at Moosehide, including eighteen families, as well as one household which contained six single men and two women all in their teens or early twenties (possibly Peel River Gwich'in people).<sup>87</sup> When Joseph Spurr visited Fort

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<sup>86</sup>For a discussion of how this complicated the comprehensive land claim negotiations ever after, see: Council for Yukon Indians, Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow (Whitehorse: Council for Yukon Indians, 1977).

<sup>87</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

Reliance in the spring of 1896, about two-hundred Indians were living in a village of cabins at the mouth of the Klondike, salmon fishing.<sup>88</sup> This indicates that the Moosehide band was diminished by at least one-half, and perhaps by more than two-thirds in the initial years of contact. Disease, brought by the massive influx of non-Natives and a contaminated water supply (the village of Moosehide was relocated down-stream from the new metropolis), was presumably the largest factor in this diminution of the Han.<sup>89</sup>

Han participation in the mining economy remained, for the most part, "tangential and seasonal."<sup>90</sup> Hunting, trapping, and fishing remained the central and permanent male occupation. Indeed in 1901, all thirty adult men in the Moosehide band reported their main occupation to be hunters and fishermen. Meat supplying was a big industry for the people of the river, and the miners relied upon the Han (as well as other groups such as the Gwich'in) to

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<sup>88</sup>J.E. Spurr, Through the Yukon Gold Diggings (Boston: Eastern, 1900), p. 105.

<sup>89</sup>Although the public health ordinance of 1899 forbid Dawson residents from taking their water supply from downstream, the new village of Moosehide was located within the downstream flow area identified as contaminated. Epidemics of smallpox and diphtheria at Moosehide are also mentioned, although the number of deaths is not documented for this period. See Crow and Obley, "Han," p. 506.

<sup>90</sup>K. Coates, Best Left as Indians, p. 46.

provide a fresh supply during the long winter months.<sup>91</sup> The depletion of game which accompanied the miners and competition from non-Native hunters, however, required at least occasional participation in a host of other economic activities.<sup>92</sup>

In the early days at Forty Mile, most of the Native miners were Creoles and other mixed blood men. At Dawson, the few Native we know anything about were Tagish, not Han people. These include Skookum Jim, Dawson Charlie, Patsy Henderson and Caribou John, all of the Carcross band. Native women were not represented in mining in any formal way in the records. Of course Native women, as discussed above, continued to play an important, albeit almost invisible role as general labourer, wife, companion, mother, and camp cook in both Native and non-Native households, but Native women do not appear to have recorded any claims themselves.

The Han then, did not participate in any significant way in mining, a situation that involves several factors. The first was probably the influence of Bishop Bompas.

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<sup>91</sup>NA, MG29 C91, "W.C.E. Stewart Papers," McDougal to Stewart, undated (ca. November 1899), p. 6. McDougal's company employed at least two mixed blood men who kept the camp "supplied in fresh moose meat". See also NL, G36 Reel #1, "Despatches from United States Consuls," McCook to Moore, 31 March 1899. McCook notes that there was in fact an over-supply of meat due to moose and caribou which had been "brought in by the Indians in large quantities."

<sup>92</sup>See R. McCandless, Yukon Wildlife, p. 32.

Bompas spent much time at the beginning of the rush discouraging contact between the miners and the Han for moral reasons. As well, the Bishop's animosity toward all "whites," including the Mounted Police, discouraged non-Natives from attempting to recruit a Native labour supply. Second, if other non-Natives shared Constantine's opinion that the Moosehide people were "lazy," this perception was probably another factor which inhibited recruitment. Third, the physical isolation or segregation of the Native village discouraged in a physical way the direct interaction between the two communities.

Finally, the most important factor was that the seasonal economic pattern of the Han did not fit very well with that of mining. Thus, they engaged in wage employment but in a way that fit into their existing seasonal cycle. When the gold rush began in earnest, the Han were still heavily engaged in the fur trade. During the winter when the miners were thawing and digging on their claims, the Han were either preparing for or engaged in the winter hunt, an endeavour that took many of the men away from the village for extended periods. The miners' busiest period, spring clean-up, also occurred at the same time that the Han at Nuklako (and later Moosehide) were busy preparing their nets for the salmon run. From July until September the people

harvested and preserved the running salmon. The year round hunting and fishing cycle, then, did not correspond well to that of mining. Thus, when men from the village did participate in mining ventures, it was most often done only on a casual basis.

Much work remains to be done on the issue of sexual interaction between Han women and the miners at Forty Mile and Dawson City. The sources suggest that Native prostitution occurred occasionally at Forty Mile but did not develop at Dawson, and that intermarriage between Natives and non-Natives was also uncommon by the time Dawson City was established. Research presented in Chapter V of this study confirms this, at least in Dawson itself, for none of the prostitutes identified in Dawson were Native women in the period and only three mixed marriages were in evidence in Dawson and Moosehide at the time of the 1901 Census.<sup>93</sup> Julius Price noted in 1898 that Klondike City (Lousetown), the site of Dawson's red light district, was "a dirty little place, half mining camp and half Indian village, either half dirtier than the whole..."<sup>94</sup> In fact, few Natives lived in Lousetown,

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<sup>93</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. The only non-Native person living at Moosehide in 1901 was the Reverend Totty who was then resident with his Native wife and their children. Note that it is highly likely that many couples of mixed marriage made their homes on the creeks and in the bush.

<sup>94</sup>J.M. Price, From Euston to the Klondike (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1898, p. 191.

and by the time of the 1901 census this was limited to the two Métis families in town, the Buteaux and the Drugals as well as one Steve Mattler (a miner).<sup>95</sup> None of the "working girls" were Native, thus indicating that sexual interaction was indeed limited. Beyond these two families, there is one other example in 1901. Jennie Sicke, a twenty-nine year old Tagish woman was a resident of South Dawson in 1901. Sharing the same address were John Charles, a carpenter from Sweden; Thomas Graham, an Irish miner; and Fred Styker, an American carpenter. While it is possible that Jennie was employed to tend house for these men, it is more likely that she was cohabitating with one of them for her occupation is listed as "beadwork" rather than the usual "housekeeper" reported by so many others in similar situations.<sup>96</sup>

Ken Coates posits two possible reasons for the low rate of mixed marriages between Natives and non-Natives at Dawson. First, the social stigma placed on men who consorted with Native women (the so-called 'squaw-men)' discouraged intercultural sexual relations. Second, the relative availability of non-Native women within a few

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<sup>95</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. No instances of mixed marriages were found at Moosehide with the exception of the missionary Totty and his wife who were stationed there.

<sup>96</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. Sicke reported no real estate or mining claims, but she held personal property (including three dogs) valued at two-hundred, seventy-five dollars.

years of the gold discoveries prevented the miners from taking Native wives and mistresses."<sup>7</sup>

While these explanations seem to have some application, they are not sufficient explanation in this case. Social stigma, for example, has rarely prevented men from entering into at least casual sexual encounters with women, Native or otherwise. A number of the traders and prospectors from the period before 1896, for example, lived with Native women for extended periods, and these unions were important for personal, social, and economic reasons. George Carmack, for example, refused to apologize for his Tagish wife and partners, even though some of his mining colleagues disapproved. Miners and businessmen who remained in such relationships may be under-represented in Dawson because they preferred to live in the bush and on the creeks. That is to say, perhaps the so-called 'squaw men' were less disposed to settle in or near the new metropolis of Dawson, and are thus less visible. Since this study did not consult census returns for the creeks and valleys of the surrounding mining districts, it cannot claim any hard evidence for such a hypothesis. Still, this question warrants further research.

The Han played a large role in determining the

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<sup>7</sup>K. Coates, Best Left as Indians, pp. 84-85. See also Coates and Morrison, "More than a Matter of Blood," p. 155.



extent and the nature of the contact with the newcomers. Sex ratios did not approach equilibrium in Yukon until well into the twentieth century, thus the simple presence of non-Native women does not explain the apparent low incidence of sexual relations between the two cultures. Rather, additional social pressure to minimize sexual contact between the Han and the mining communities probably came from within the Han community itself. In August 1895, for example, the Reverend Bowen reported that the Chief of Charlie Village (near Forty Mile) had prevented a "massacre of the white prospectors, who had been thoughtless enough to lure the Indian squaws into their homes and into the dance hall."<sup>98</sup> Here, while the miners showed themselves undaunted by any social stigma attached to these women, they also displayed a blatant disregard to the objections of the women's families. The men of Charlie Village, however, became violent over the misuse, or perhaps abduction of their wives and daughters. Rejection of sexual interaction then, was not restricted to the non-Natives, but came also from the Han themselves. Here again, the influence of Bishop Bompas must be taken into account, for he was very influential. At Dawson certainly, such contact was kept to a minimum, probably through a combination of the above factors.

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<sup>98</sup>NA, MG29 C92, "Reverend Richard J. Bowen Papers," memoir, p. 56.

Although the Han participated little in the mining economy other than as primary producers of meat, furs and fish, other Yukon Natives participated to a greater extent. As noted earlier, the Tlingit, Tagish, and southern Tutchone all participated in the fields of transportation, navigation and communication. Men from all parts of the river found employment as pilots and navigators on the steamers, as well as guides and packers for miners and non-Native hunters. Constantine noted in 1896 that the Alaska Commercial Company was paying an Indian five hundred dollars to take the mail out, presumably over the Chilkoot Pass.<sup>99</sup> Even young and disfigured Natives could find employment on the river, for Robert Oglesby was "accompanied by a hunch-backed Indian boy" as his pilot when he went to Circle City in late August, 1897.<sup>100</sup> The steamers regularly employed native pilots in order to navigate the Yukon River.<sup>101</sup> As one pioneer remembered,

Indians had a lot to do with traffic on the river in the early days. Stern wheel steamboats in the late '80s and early '90s would always pick up an Indian at different camps to pilot with the captain. The Indians knew the channel and they would stand at the wheel and advise the Captain.... They always knew

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<sup>99</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Commissioner, 24 March 1896.

<sup>100</sup>R. Oglesby, The Klondyke Gold Region, p. 530.

<sup>101</sup>See for example, William Haskell, Two Years in the Klondike, p. 217 and J. Secretan, To the Klondike and Back, p. 138.

the water in their district.<sup>102</sup>

Native men found employment also on river steamers as deck-hands, wood suppliers and stevedores.<sup>103</sup>

In studying the Gwich'in of Peel River, anthropologist Richard Slobodin discovered that a number of the members of the community had participated in the gold rush economy at Dawson City. Although Slobodin refers to these as the "Dawson Boys" it is clear that this group also included women. Slobodin learned from the Peel River people that they had participated in at least fourteen major summer occupations, including deck-hand, scow pilot, carpenter, motorboat mechanic, pool-hall handyman, licensed trader, laundress, and mining camp cook.<sup>104</sup> These findings compare well with the results of the Master Database which shows that Native people in and around Dawson were similarly employed.<sup>105</sup>

While the master database and the results of Slobodin's study indicate that there were a number of

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<sup>102</sup>YTA, GR82/86 Vol. 1313, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Historic Sites, Victoria Faulkner Files, Oral Interview with Ray Stewart, n.d.

<sup>103</sup>NAUSA, State Department Records, "Despatches from United States Consuls in Dawson City, Canada, 1898-1906," Reel #1, "Information and Complaint," sworn before S. Steele, 28 June, 1899. See also R. Slobodin, "The Dawson Boys," p. 29.

<sup>104</sup>R.Slobodin, "The Dawson Boys," p. 29.

<sup>105</sup>Note, however that the census-taker in 1901 reported all the Han men as "hunters and fishermen." See 1901 Manuscript Census.

occupations open to Native men, these are not reflected in the 1901 Census. The informal policy of segregation, begun for the benefit of the Han, seems to have continued throughout the period. In addition to residents of the village of Moosehide, only six Natives resided in Lousetown and four in Dawson City proper at the time of the Census in 1901. Of the four adult men, two reported employment as trappers, one as a miner and one as a steamer pilot. Of three adult women, one was employed at "laundry," one at "beadwork" and one as "wife."<sup>106</sup>

Of course, Natives did not always engage in legal activities. Henry Easton Phillips a Chilkat Tlingit from Alaska, was in Dawson in July 1901, when he was arrested for selling liquor to Indians. His liquor business was doing well, however, for he paid his fifty dollar fine rather than serving a one-month jail term.<sup>107</sup> Other Native people presumably became active in the liquor trade, although this has not been documented.

There are several possible explanations for the relatively low participation rate of Native people in the Dawson economy by the turn of the century. First, perhaps as the rush waned, greater competition in the

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<sup>106</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>107</sup>NA, RG18 D4 Reel C2152, "North West Mounted Police Gaol Register."

labour market diminished the opportunities for Indians. Certainly by 1901 there was a good deal of seasonal unemployment in Dawson. Second, racism as exemplified in the numerous references to "lazy and dirty Indians" surely limited opportunities for Native workers. Third, Native wage labour participation was probably under-reported since it is highly likely that the census taker did not ask individuals at Moosehide to state their occupation, rather, he or she just assumed that none participated in the wage labour economy. Fourth, the seasonal patterns of hunting and fishing, along with their previous experiences with non-Natives and the encouragement of the missionaries probably combined to discourage large-scale wage labour participation. Finally, it is certainly possible that the People of the River were simply uninterested in gold rush activity and preferred life on the land.

Unlike the Han, the Peel River people reoriented their seasonal pattern of activity with the advent of the gold rush. Although they continued to hunt and trap during the winters, they made frequent trips to Dawson to sell meat at inflationary prices. By 1901, the majority of the Peel River band was trading in Dawson and spending part of the summer at Moosehide engaged in casual wage labour.

When we came we didn't stay right here  
[Moosehide]. We come, go back, and stay at the head

of the Blackstone, other side from here a hundred miles. We come to Dawson in winter to sell meat. We'd come with our dog teams and we were very busy selling meat. We were trapping, got some little fur, too. We camped sometimes eastward toward the Bonnet Plume Flats. Summertime, though, everybody come down here. Even the old people. They got Communion right here. We would stay in June and July, sometimes only one month, sometimes half a month. They we go back again, using dog packs all the time...<sup>108</sup>

The Peel River presence could actually explain why one of the households in Moosehide contained only one generation at the time of the census. Some of the Peel River made Moosehide their permanent home, as in the case of Richard Martin, a Gwich'in man from Peel River and an Anglican Minister.<sup>109</sup>

Because the Han did not become integrated in the mining economy during the boom period, it might be expected that they escaped the effects of the inevitable bust. This however, is not the case. By 1900, the effects of instant and mass contact had taken their toll on the people at Moosehide and they suffered both disease and famine. With the corruption of the water supply and increased contact with large numbers of non-Natives, dysentery, diarrhoea and tuberculosis had severely harmed

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<sup>108</sup>Reverend Richard Martin, oral testimony collected by Richard Slobodin, "The Dawson Boys," p. 33.

<sup>109</sup>When Slobodin visited Moosehide in the early 1960s, the Reverend Martin was still living there. See his "The Dawson Boys," p. 33.

the people of Moosehide.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, the people at Moosehide were increasingly unable to sustain themselves as the gold rush waned. In part this was because, while demand for meat and skins remained high, competition for the severely depleted game had increased. In fact, by September of 1901, there were reported "fully a thousand men ... engaged in hunting and trapping, exclusive of the Indians."<sup>111</sup> In addition, forest fires destroyed hundreds of hectares of game habitat in the summer of 1898, the result of gold stampeders' carelessness.<sup>112</sup> These factors produced difficulty for the Han not only in the cash economy but also in their very subsistence. The NWMP, as representatives of the Government, were eventually forced to step out of their passive role and disburse food at Moosehide in 1904. This was done to avert a potentially severe famine, although as a rule, they usually required Natives and non-Natives alike to exchange labour for such relief.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>NA, MG17 B2 Series C.1/0, "Church Missionary Society," Reeve to Gould, 23 July 1900.

<sup>111</sup>NL, G36 Reel #2, "Despatches from the United States Consulate, Dawson City," McCook to Hill, 19 September, 1901. The Han also experienced competition in the salmon fishery, their main food source.

<sup>112</sup>See for example: NA, MG 29 C88, "Ernest F. Keir Papers", journal entry p. 41; Josiah Spurr, Through the Yukon Gold Diggings, p. 102; Julius Price, From Euston to the Klondike, pp. 248-49.

<sup>113</sup>K. Coates, Best Left as Indians, p. 173.

### Conclusions

The search for gold proceeded in waves from the middle of the nineteenth century in Yukon, culminating in the stampede of 1898. Successive waves of missionaries, traders, and prospectors moved from the Alaskan coast to the interior, leaving (quite literally) no stone unturned in their search for the yellow metal. First to be affected were the coastal groups, the Koyukon at St. Michaels and the Tlingit at Dyea and Skagway. These people took advantage of the early rush, providing a ready labour force of packers (Tlingit) and river pilots (Koyukon). As the prospectors moved eastward, the interior people built boats, acted as guides and pilots, and provided meat, skins, clothing and wood. In return, their land burned under raging forest fires (started by careless stampeders' camp-fires) their game was over-hunted, their drinking water was contaminated and by 1914, huge tailing piles lay where creek beds had been.

In 1847, the Han were one of the last North American Native groups to experience European contact. Fifty years later their territory was host to the 'largest city north of Winnipeg.' The Han people participated in a limited way in the economy of Dawson, but remained separate from it. Unfortunately, this strategy did not prevent their community from being stricken by disease or



from feeling the effects of the boom and bust economy.

**Chapter IV**  
**"The Fortune Which Ever Eluded Us:"**  
**Miners and Other Labouring People in Dawson**

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The economy of the Klondike depended upon the fortunes and labours of working women and men. From laundress to miner to longshoreman to wife, the semi- and unskilled workers made up sixty-five percent of Dawson's workforce (see Appendix II).<sup>1</sup> Almost half of this group were miners.<sup>2</sup> In the early years of Dawson City, manual labour and service sector employment was almost always available, although never steady. Workers were often able to draw high wages, but in a resource-based community work was rarely steady and job turnover was very high. Workers also faced extremely high costs of living in Dawson, offsetting many of the benefits of high wages. For many miners the situation was slightly different, as profits from one endeavour were often sunk into the next or gambled off in a spree in town.

In the placer mines of the Klondike District, anyone

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<sup>1</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. 4,604 of a total workforce of 6,832 were employed in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations.

<sup>2</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. 2414 of 4604 people in this category were miners.

could become a miner. Doctors, lawyers, loggers, farmers, accountants and waitresses who could afford the \$10 fee for a license, all became miners overnight. By the same token, these same people, if disappointed in their ability to stake a mining claim, could just as easily be found working on the docks, cleaning houses, chopping wood or tending bar in town. It was on the labour of these people then that the gold rush depended. This chapter examines the experiences of the working people of Dawson City and the obstacles they faced.

People came from all over the world to seek their fortunes in the Yukon. Most had little money and the high cost of living in the Yukon quickly drained their resources. Those who stayed beyond a few weeks were usually willing to put their hand to anything in order to participate in the economy and there was rarely a shortage of opportunity.

One of the earliest forms of wage labour in the Yukon was found in the packing trade since all goods and supplies coming into the Yukon by land had to be carried over the mountain passes. Prospectors and traders who could afford to do so hired packers to carry their supplies as early as 1885.<sup>3</sup> For this, the Tagish and

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<sup>3</sup>William Ogilvie, Early Days on the Yukon (Toronto: Bell and Cockburn, 1913). During the height of the rush, every stamper was required by the NWMP to carry with them one year's supply of food.

Tlingit people who lived on either side of the passes provided a ready pool of labour. Although the Native people had the monopoly on packing and demanded steep wages (especially before 1898), a few non-Native men and women also performed this work in the later period.<sup>4</sup> George Carmack for example, cemented the bonds of his long partnership with the two Tagish brothers Dawson Charley and Skookum Jim by spending several summers packing with them on the Chilkoot Pass.<sup>5</sup>

A few women also earned money as packers. A woman known as Texas Bill worked during the summer and fall of 1897 on the Chilkoot Pass. Undaunted by Victorian notions of womanhood, witnesses noted that she was one of the most reliable packers on the trail and "carried goods over the pass the same as men."<sup>6</sup> Harriet Pullen also saw opportunity in the packing trade. Pullen arrived in Skagway in 1897 with three small children whom she supported first by selling bread and pies. Having saved

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<sup>4</sup>Among the many stamperders to comment on this at length is J.E. Spurr, Through the Yukon Gold Diggings (Boston: Eastern, 1900), pp. 39-42.

<sup>5</sup>William Ogilvie, Early Days on the Yukon, p. 133. See also A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, 1892-1917 (Hamden: Archon, 1992), pp. 51-56 for discussion of hiring of young non-Native men as packers during the rush of '98.

<sup>6</sup>PABC, AddMss 1188 file 1, "George R. Pattullo Papers," Duff Pattullo to G.R. Pattullo, 27 September 1897. This same witness also observed that Bill's "dress was of the bifurcated pattern and she had also the wild western swagger."

enough money to pay the freight on a team of horses, she began a successful packing operation between Skagway and Lake Bennet over the White Pass.<sup>7</sup> Native and non-Native packing alike was rendered redundant when the White Pass railway was completed in 1899. The Tlingit returned to trapping, trading and fishing for their livelihood, while Mrs. Pullen opened an inn near the railway terminal at Skagway.<sup>8</sup> Others in the trade were similarly forced to adapt or move on.

Many early Klondike diarists noted that anyone with a strong back and willing disposition could have all the work he or she wanted in the Yukon.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, there was no shortage of work to be done in creating a viable wilderness community that could serve the tens of thousands of stampeders flocking toward it. Along the routes inward, men who set up whipsawing pits to saw

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<sup>7</sup>Wendy Jones, Women Who Brave the Far North (San Diego: Grossmont, 1976), p. 96. The White Pass was the longer, less steep route from the Alaskan coast to the headwaters of the Yukon River and therefore the only suitable route for pack animals.

<sup>8</sup>One contemporary remembered that Mrs. Pullen was still running her hotel in Skagway in 1910 where she "went through hardships aplenty, but was never daunted. If a stableboy got drunk and failed to show up, she would hitch up the horses and take the bus to the train or boat to get the passengers." See A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, pp. 123-24.

<sup>9</sup>See for example, YTA, MS 79/98, "Dorothy Wass Papers," Joseph Tanner to Mother, 24 June 1901; and also NA, MG29 C92, "Reverend Richard Bowen Papers," memoir, p. 180.

lumber for sale or who built boats on commission quickly earned wages far exceeding rates in the south.

Similarly, many enterprising women set up cook-tents along the trail and on the creeks where their beans, bread, and pies brought high returns. One woman who operated "Mary's Coffee House" on Bonanza Creek reportedly left Dawson after seven years with fifty-thousand dollars.<sup>10</sup>

Once in Dawson, the same held true. Men were needed to build hotels, saloons, warehouses and cabins, replacing the city of tents and lean-tos. Jobs as woodcutters, sawyers and carpenters were readily available. Even after the rush had slowed to a trickle, numerous fires kept sawn lumber and tradesmen in high demand throughout the period.

As one of Canada's busiest inland ports in the period, Dawson's docks provided many men with work. The many boats arriving daily had to be loaded and unloaded, warehouses had to be stocked, and fuel for the steamers had to be supplied. Frank Mortimer was a dock-worker who arrived with his wife Grace in 1900. Supporting his wife and two-year old son on his salary with the Aurora Dock Company, the family assets consisted of a total of \$50 in personal property.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, p. 106.

<sup>11</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

Longshoremen could make good money while navigation was open, bringing in seventy-five cents per hour and working long hours. Other dock-work such as running a hoisting engine could bring six dollars per day and command a seven-day work week.<sup>12</sup> Wages for labourers on the creeks hovered around six to seven dollars per day throughout the period.<sup>13</sup>

The disproportionate number of single men (three men to every woman as late as 1901, and thirteen to one in 1898) created a huge demand for the service sector. Not surprisingly, restaurants, saloons and dance halls thrived. This sector also required a large number of men and women as barmen, wait staff, dancers, musicians, and cleaning staff. These jobs paid much better in Dawson than they did in the south, although employers found that staff members were easily drawn to the gold fields at a moment's notice.

At its peak Dawson boasted scores of restaurants and cafes, all requiring cooks, wait staff, and cleaning crews. As late as 1901, when the population of Dawson had shrunk to about eight thousand people, almost four-

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<sup>12</sup>YTA, MS 79/98, "Dorothy Wass Papers," Joseph Tanner to Mother, 24 June 1901.

<sup>13</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 1608 file 7034, Northern Administration Branch Records, William Galpin, Report Regarding the Mining Operations on Quartz Creek during the year ended 1st November 1909.

hundred people were employed in this industry.<sup>14</sup>

Restaurant work did not bring wages as high as other unskilled work such as longshoring, for example, but it could net an employee twenty-five dollars per week plus meals. Such wages prompted one restaurant helper to boast: "This is the best country to work for wages. I was wise when I left Boston for the West, the east is no place to make money."<sup>15</sup>

Truly there was work for everyone. Commercial laundries found a steady market for their services in the mostly-male community. Just as in the south, laundry was often an ethnic occupation. Dawson had at least two Asian laundries in the early period and a number of black women were also employed in the trade.<sup>16</sup> One laundry, operated by three Japanese men, demonstrates that the chain migration patterns that were so common in North America were also at work in the Klondike. George Omura was twenty-five when he arrived in the Yukon from Japan

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<sup>14</sup>Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901; and 1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>15</sup>YTA, MS 79/98, "Dorothy Wass Papers," Joseph Tanner to Mother, 24 June 1901. Joe was working in a restaurant at this time, but had also been employed at several forms of manual labour prior to this. He enclosed forty dollars for his mother in this letter.

<sup>16</sup>Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901; and Canada, 1901 Manuscript Census. As discussed in Chapter V, many so-called "laundresses" and "housekeepers" were actually prostitutes and it is not always possible to verify which trade was actually practised by an individual.



in 1899. Establishing a laundry there, he took on Yetara Ishikaro and Takeyero Kaku as partners when they arrived the following year.<sup>17</sup> There were also two Chinese men operating laundries in Dawson by 1901.

Unlike the Chinese and Japanese launderers, all of the African-American laundry workers were women. Of these there were six in 1901, representing about ten percent of all Dawson's African-Americans. These women showed a surprising rate of persistence, all of them having worked in Dawson three or more years.<sup>18</sup>

Josephine Phillides was a Belgian-born woman who had arrived Dawson with her Greek husband Anthony in 1898 (they were both naturalized Canadians by 1901). Together they ran Dawson's French Laundry, a business that Josephine reported was "doing well" in 1901.<sup>19</sup> The Phillideses subsidized their living costs by taking in a lodger, a forty-five year old waitress named Elizabeth Daly in 1901.<sup>20</sup>

Taking in laundry on a piece-work basis was also

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<sup>17</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>18</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. Josephine Arnold, Millie Brown, Josephine Hanly and Molly Brown all arrived in 1898, while Mrs. Agu had arrived in 1897 and Martha Daniels in 1899.

<sup>19</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City," McCook to Hill, 12 September 1899. See also McCook to Adee, 09 September 1901.

<sup>20</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

lucrative work in Dawson in the early period. While this could be very successful, it was tiresome work because wood and water had to be hauled, and soap, starch, and even washboards were scarce and therefore very dear. In the early period laundresses also made their own decisions about working conditions, and often miners found that getting their shirts cleaned depended on "inclination" of a laundress to accept more orders.<sup>21</sup>

Although few got rich, there was no shortage of work, and one "coloured" woman was reported to have made \$5000 as a laundress during the winter of 1897-98.<sup>22</sup> Another enterprising laundress set up a bath tent on Dawson's river front in 1897. Charging one dollar for a hot bath in one of Dawson's only full-size tin tubs, she also provided a laundry service to her clients. Within two years she was reported to have made ten thousand dollars.<sup>23</sup>

Domestic servants were hard to find in the Yukon from the earliest period and, it seems, even harder to keep. Anna DeGraf recalled for example, an Irish "girl" she met in 1895. The woman "had been a servant in the family of a storekeeper at Fortymile" but had left that

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<sup>21</sup>Sam Dunham, "The Alaska Gold Fields," Alaska Journal, Volume 14, Number 1 (Winter 1984), pp.7-64.

<sup>22</sup>Yukon Midnight Sun, 11 July 1898.

<sup>23</sup>A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, p. 106.

position to marry a miner "who afterward struck it rich."<sup>24</sup> When domestic servants could be found, the wage was roughly double the going wage in the south.

According to one Dawson resident:

it is not possible to get an ordinary servant for less than seventy-five dollars per month and usually the wage is one-hundred dollars. Mr. Girouard's servant was brought in by Mrs. Girouard from Quebec under contract [at \$50 per month], and this accounts for the low sum paid her.<sup>25</sup>

This servant was Marie Lemieux who had arrived with Madame Girouard in 1901.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to discern whether domestic service contracts were common in Dawson, for this is the only such reference. Certainly, as noted in Chapter V, some female "housekeepers" and sexual companions could and were employed on a contractual basis by men who could afford them. But of the 'respectable' servants, little is known, although it is likely that if one government official engaged a servant this way, some of his colleagues probably did likewise. No instances were found of legal action for breach of such a contract, though, indicating either that contractual servants willingly accepted their much lower pay or that the Girouard household was highly unusual. Certainly Lemieux seems to have been satisfied to remain under contract

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<sup>24</sup>ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>25</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 655 file 3005, Congdon to Sifton, 21 March 1904.

<sup>26</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

from 1901 until at least 1904. The opportunities such servants seized once their contracts had expired is not known.

Before 1899, when women were particularly scarce in the Klondike, domestic work could bring a considerable wage. Anna DeGraf, a widow who went north looking for her son in 1894, put her hand to numerous jobs over the next fifteen years in the Yukon. In 1894 in Circle City, some miners asked Mrs. DeGraf to care for a "sick girl." For three weeks of light nursing care, Mrs. DeGraf received three-hundred dollars.<sup>27</sup> When she attempted to return to the Yukon in 1898, she was stranded in Skagway without supplies because her cargo had been left on the dock in Seattle by the Steamer company. For two weeks she worked at a lunch counter in exchange for board and lodging until her provisions arrived.<sup>28</sup> When she eventually settled in Dawson, she worked as a seamstress and dressmaker before returning to the United States in 1917.

With plenty of job opportunities in other areas, many women apparently found domestic service an unattractive option. Elizabeth Jones was a single woman who had been working for more than a year as a household

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<sup>27</sup>A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup>ibid., p. 50. Mrs. DeGraf was almost sixty years old in 1898.

servant when the Dawson census was taken in 1901.<sup>29</sup> By the following year she had quit domestic service and was working in "Mr. Murry's" saloon, an establishment which she praised highly. Never part of the more respectable social circles in town, Jones accompanied her boss's wife to Mass on New Year's Eve and reported her surprise at not being "struck dumb either for being such heathens."<sup>30</sup>

Employment, however high the wage, was not always steady and many Klondikers found themselves repeatedly out of work. Georgia White was one Klondiker who discovered this situation first-hand. White was a young mother who ventured to the Klondike to earn some extra money to support her family. Leaving San Francisco in February of 1898, she worked at whatever she could find - hotels and restaurant jobs and whenever possible as a private duty nurse -- first at Dyea and then in Dawson. Between the lack of steady work, distress at being separated from her children and contracting typhoid, White spent a very difficult four months in the Yukon and left as soon as she was well enough in September of the

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<sup>29</sup>Elizabeth Jones was a twenty-three year old, Ontario-born servant who professed "no religion" when s<sup>t</sup> arrived in Dawson in 1900. See 1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>30</sup>YTA, MS 87/83 F-198, "Elizabeth Jones Papers," Elizabeth to Bertha, 10 January 1902.

same year.<sup>31</sup> In many ways Georgia White was typical of the many Klondike stampeders whose brief sojourn lasted less than a year, returning south without ever having made their fortunes.<sup>32</sup>

For men, semi- and unskilled work was also readily available, from logging and chopping wood to hauling water, unloading steamers and mining. This work, like service sector work, was also often ethnically divided, although the nature of the division varied over time and depended on a number of factors. In 1895, for example, with a flurry of intensive mining activity going on around Forty Mile, it was impossible to obtain labour for non-mining work. This was particularly problematic for women. At least one woman who was unable to do her own heavy wood chopping could find no one in camp to hire. Eventually she managed to find a young Native man who was glad to have the work.<sup>33</sup> In this constantly fluctuating economy, such Native workers were periodically supplanted by non-Natives when the mines were slow. In Dawson

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<sup>31</sup>YTA, MS 82/53 F-5, "Georgia White Papers." Between March and June 1898 White sent a total of \$80 home in support of her children. In August she had to stop working as she had contracted typhoid fever.

<sup>32</sup>*ibid.*, diary entries 21 February to 29 June 1898. Tappan Adney states that the vast majority of Klondikers in fact, never actually mined, rather they worked at manual labour or in the service sector in town. See his The Klondike Stampede of 1897-1898 (New York: Harper, 1900).

<sup>33</sup>A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, p. 22.

during the winter of 1898-99 there was a surplus of cord-wood in town from the large number of unemployed would-be miners.<sup>34</sup>

As more stampeders arrived and had difficulty staking claims, many realized that a living could be made from manual labour. The long and severe winters required every Yukon household to keep a large supply of cord wood for heating and cooking. While coal was increasingly used as mines were developed along the Yukon River, in the early years wood was readily available and used in vast quantities. It is not surprising then that one of the most commonly reported occupations of male labourers in Dawson was "wood chopper."<sup>35</sup> So great was the need for an ample supply of fuel that the North West Mounted Police used the judge's sentence of "hard labour" to keep the government wood-pile well stocked.<sup>36</sup>

Wage labour formed a large portion of mining work since in order to maintain their placer claims, miners had to keep their property worked for a portion of each year. For miners who owned several claims, or for those

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<sup>34</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City Yukon," Report of the Meeting of the Citizens' Relief Committee, 21 December 1898.

<sup>35</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. Nearly one-hundred men reported this as their occupation in 1901.

<sup>36</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City," McCook to Hill, 24 May 1899. McCook reported that "terror of 'sawing wood' for the Government" acted as an effective deterrent in Dawson.

who were otherwise absent from their mines, workers had to be paid to perform the representation work. Labour on a placer mine included cutting, hauling and sawing wood for the building of cabins and sluice boxes. Once the construction projects were complete, a miner had to dig prospect holes and sift and sort the resulting gravel. During the winter months, miners had the laborious job of tending fires in an effort to melt the frozen earth in order to keep digging and sorting the 'dumps' of gravel. Here then was the bulk of the Yukon demand for labourers, for all of this required manual labour. Thus, work was readily available and the wages usually high, although this varied with the labour supply.<sup>37</sup> Etta Endl, for example, hired Ed Morrison, a former Dawson stableman to represent her mining claims while she went to work as a cook for another outfit. For a period of just over three months, Morrison billed Endl for two-hundred and fifty dollars.<sup>38</sup> Like so many other Klondikers, however, Morrison soon discovered that getting paid was often a

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<sup>37</sup>YTA, MS 79/98, "Dorothy Wass Papers," Joseph Tanner to Mother, 24 June 1901. Joe noted that wages for manual labour tended to be lower in town where labour was more readily available, and higher on the creeks where it was scarce.

<sup>38</sup>YTA, MS 82/190 F-18 file 47, "R.L. Ashbaugh Papers," Morrison to Ashbaugh, July 1901. It is not clear how much work had been done for this fee, but at approximately seventy-five dollars per month (the same wage he had been making previously as a stableman) he was probably working full-time.



bigger problem than finding work and resorted to legal action in order to receive his wages.<sup>39</sup> Others, like Elbridge Bartlett entered into a contract where his wages were "payable at washup."<sup>40</sup>

The creeks then, provided a large number of jobs for manual labourers. Many of these labourers came, like John Grace, from the lumber camps of the lower west coast. Grace, as had so many others, travelled from one part of the United States to another before finally finding work in a lumber camp near Tacoma, Washington. When news of the Klondike Strike reached him, Grace and two other woodsmen laid down their axes, bought supplies in Seattle, and started for Dyea.<sup>41</sup>

While some miners found casual wage work on the creeks, others obtained a "lay" instead. Working a lay meant that a miner worked a claim for an absentee owner, receiving either a percentage of the gold removed or a cash sum for the work under contract. Marie Richer, another Dawson woman with mining interests hired, George

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<sup>39</sup>*ibid.*, Etta Endl to Ed Morrison, n.d. (ca. summer 1901). Endl was late paying Morrison because she herself was waiting for the Treadgold Company to pay her wages.

<sup>40</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City," W.P. Clement to H. TeRoller, 26 November 1900.

<sup>41</sup>YTA, MS78/18, "John Grace Papers," memoir, pp. 1-3.

Rice<sup>42</sup> to work her "lay" in 1901. Under the terms of their specific agreement, Richer leased a claim on Moose Creek to Rice for one dollar. He was to do all representation and mining work, and give Richer twenty-five percent of the "whole of the gold or gold dust extracted from the said claim".<sup>43</sup>

### **The Men of Chance: Placer Miners in the Klondike**

In the placer mines of the Klondike District doctors, lawyers, loggers, farmers, waitresses, and bartenders all rubbed shoulders. Mining was a hard way to make a living, and one at which the chance of success was not always high. As a rule, only those who arrived in the Klondike gold fields very early managed to stake prosperous claims. While the majority of stampeders arrived in 1898, most of the ground had been staked a year earlier.

Thousands of men and women who struggled against great odds to reach the Klondike arrived only to find the gold fields completely staked. Disappointed and in debt,

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<sup>42</sup>According to the Census George Rice was an unmarried, American-born miner who had come to the Yukon in 1898 when he was 36 years old. See 1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>43</sup>YTA, MS82/390 F-119, "James Edward Beatty Papers," Certificate of Indenture between Marie Richer, Dawson, owner and George Rice, 'layman', 31 January 1901.

thousands of disheartened stampeders turned around and went back out over the trail of '98. Henry Dow Banks, for example, left with nine other men from his home state of Massachusetts, along with six from California, four from Vermont, six from Connecticut and several others in March of 1898. Banks reminisced that the going got very rough as the party penetrated further into the north country, and they sold all but their most necessary goods.<sup>44</sup> Men like these rarely lasted more than a year in the Yukon, for when they arrived in Dawson and discovered that all the claims had been staked, a combination of depleted resources, severe climate and acute disillusionment forced many to leave. As with the Banks party, most Klondike stampeders "never did get any gold."<sup>45</sup>

There was a second "trail of '98," and that was the line stampeding out in the fall. Many stampeders remarked in their diaries and letters that during the voyage inward, they passed large numbers of these people coming out disgusted, having "worn themselves out trying

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<sup>44</sup>YTA, MS 82/240 F-39, "Henry Dow Banks Papers," diary.

<sup>45</sup>*ibid.*, Elisabeth Banks Nichols to W.D. McBride, 20 September 1960. See also YTA, MS90/56, "Andrew Norelius Papers," memoir.

to get claims with gold."<sup>46</sup> Oddly, such encounters seem to have had little impact on those who were on their way to Dawson, except perhaps to further their resolve. Still others became disillusioned and turned back before ever arriving in Dawson. Worn down by the travails of the trail, they returned home never realizing the dream.<sup>47</sup> This was the case with the twenty-member Garner Party which left Fresno, California in August 1897. Leaving late in the year, and heading overland through Edmonton, the party was forced to winter at the Métis settlement at Spirit River. Two members of the party contracted scurvy here and by mid-July the following summer, "at a point estimated to be 110 miles to [the] summit of Sifton Pass," the party turned back and returned to California.<sup>48</sup>

Many other everyday stamperers died in the struggle to reach the fabled gold fields. Such was the fate of one man who had left Sault Ste. Marie for the Klondike via the Athabasca Landing Trail in the fall of 1897. His diary indicates that he had frozen his foot in December,

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<sup>46</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City," McCook to Hill, 08 June 1899. See also: PABC, AddMss 2719 Reel # A-1659, "James Cran Papers," diary entries 07 July and 23 July 1898; YTA, MS 87/104, "Albert Edward Hetherington Papers," diary entry 09 March 1899; and YTA, MS 82/53 F-5, "Georgia White Papers," diary entry 08 July 1898.

<sup>47</sup>See A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, p. 54.

<sup>48</sup>YTA, MS 82/224 F-1 pt.1, "Garner-Knott Family Papers," recollections.

and since he could no longer walk, his partner went on ahead, taking with him most of their provisions.

Abandoned, this unfortunate argonaut froze to death, and his body was not discovered until almost a year later.<sup>49</sup>

This anonymous gold seeker was not unique, for many others perished on this route.<sup>50</sup> The Stikine route through northern British Columbia was also perilous, its dangers prompting one stamper to blaze the following ditty into a tree:

And this is the grave the poor man fills  
After contracting fever and chills  
From tramping over the Stickeen [sic] hills  
Leaving his family to pay his bills.<sup>51</sup>

Of course, while thousands of Klondikers came and went rather quickly, thousands more stayed to make Dawson their home. Not surprisingly, of those who stayed,

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<sup>49</sup>PABC, AddMss 2711 Reel A-1650, "A. Scott Gillespie Papers." At the beginning of the microfilm reel of the Gillespie papers, there is the two page diary of an unnamed man who had started out from Sault Ste. Marie to the Klondike Overland. This man was found frozen to death "in a small tent, with stove, a few sticks of wood and small bag of flour, 1/2 blanket overcoat, axe, gun ammunition and five dollar bill. Fifteen miles below Devil's Portage, about 03 November. Such are the gruesome tales of the Liard. Many of which never came to light."

<sup>50</sup>YTA, MS82/224 F-39, "Garner-Knott Family Papers," memoir entitled 'Klondike Gold Rush Prospectors Through Edmonton by Land and Water Routes, 1897-1898.' See also J.G. MacGregor, The Klondike Rush through Edmonton, 1897-1898 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970).

<sup>51</sup>YTA, MS82/390 F-119, "James Edward Beatty Papers," diary entry undated, entitled "written on a tree near Moss Lake on the Teslin Trail, 1898."

miners constituted the single largest occupational group.<sup>52</sup> They also formed a rather representative cross-section of Klondikers. Miners had almost identical ethnic backgrounds to the general Klondike population. Thirty percent were Canadians and an equal portion were American-born. An additional fifteen percent were British, six percent were Scandinavians, eight percent were Continental Europeans, and others foreign-born made up eleven percent. Over half were under forty years of age, and the vast majority (over seventy-five percent) were unmarried.<sup>53</sup> They were also even more overwhelmingly male than the general population (ninety-nine percent compared to eighty five percent overall).<sup>54</sup>

There was nothing representative, however, about the life of a miner. It was a hard, dangerous, and often heart-breaking way of life and one that rarely produced the wealth sought. Still, as one wife of a miner put it, although the "fortune ever eluded us ... the chase was

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<sup>52</sup>See Appendix I. In 1896, probably close to ninety percent of the non-Native population of the Yukon were engaged in mining, while by 1901 this figure had stabilized at about 35% -- still by far the largest single occupational group.

<sup>53</sup>This figure is considerably higher than the general population which the 1901 Manuscript Census shows is 56%.

<sup>54</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

far more interesting and exciting."<sup>55</sup> And a chase it was, for many of them had followed the gold camps through California, Australia, Colorado, and British Columbia before coming to the Yukon. Speculation followed by hard work was the only way to see if a claim would pay, and disappointment was often the only tangible result of months of hard labour.

Because the Klondike District was mostly placer mining in the boom period, it was "every man's gold rush" in a real sense -- at least in the beginning. Indeed, part of the appeal of the Klondike Rush was the low capital investment required in the actual mining. After the costs of the journey had been taken care of and a claim had been secured, little capital was necessary to set up a mining operation. A gold pan, axe, pick and shovel cost a few dollars and these, along with adequate provisions were sufficient to get started. In most areas, the richest dirt tended to be forty to sixty feet below the surface. This was located by sinking a number of prospect holes in different parts of the claim to determine the extent and thickness of the "pay streak." The pay dirt was then lifted out, "rocked" and "sluiced"

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<sup>55</sup>YTA, MS 83/156 F-8, "Mabel Moore Papers," notes written in 1937 by Moore about her life in Alaska and Yukon.

to sift the heavier ore from the soil, silt, and gravel."<sup>6</sup>

The nature of the mining and the labour associated with it changed after 1905 in the Yukon. After most of the creeks had been thoroughly staked, a fiercely competitive market was created for the sale and resale of claims. This meant that wealthy investors increasingly became involved, and these people often leased out their claims or hired casual labourers to perform the heavy work. After 1905 when placer mining had extracted the bulk of the gold along the creeks, claims were bought up in blocks by large companies and dredges were used to extract the rest. By 1914 it was clear that individual operators were becoming less numerous and their holdings were increasingly merged with the larger companies.<sup>7</sup> In the Klondike River valley, for example, four dredges were being operated by the "Canadian Klondyke Company" alone, each dredge employing about 300 men for most of the year. Smaller hydraulic operations employed four to five men each, but could work only in the spring when water was available. The small operations worked usually May to October. During the winter men and teams of horses and

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<sup>6</sup>NA, MG30 C49, "Elia Hall Papers," memoir. This remembrance of life in Dawson in 1898 (unpaginated) contains an excellent description of the work entailed in placer mining.

<sup>7</sup>NA, RG85 Vol 1608 file 7033, Northern Administration Branch Records, John Fraser, Annual Report of the Mining District of Dawson for Year Ending 31 December 1914.



dogs were employed to haul wood for the steam dredges.<sup>58</sup>

Every Yukon miner was required to purchase a free miner's license before he could stake a claim or perform mining work in the Klondike.<sup>59</sup> Then he could prospect as he pleased. When he found a spot he wished to mine, he marked its parameters by driving in four stakes and then journeyed to the nearest mining office to record his claim. In return for his fifteen dollar recording fee, the miner received a one-year lease on the claim.<sup>60</sup> This system did not always operate smoothly and there were numerous allegations of corruption in the Gold Commissioner's office in the early period.<sup>61</sup> Also, because there were often great distances between the

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<sup>58</sup>NA, RG85 Vol 1608 file 7033, Northern Administration Branch Records, John Fraser, Annual Report for the Mining District of Dawson for Year Ending 31 December 1914.

<sup>59</sup>The male pronoun is used here advisedly, for ninety-nine percent of Dawson's miners were male, even as late as 1901.

<sup>60</sup>NL, G36 Reel#1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City," McCook to Hill, 08 June 1899. The mining license cost \$10 and the usual recording fee was fifteen dollars.

<sup>61</sup>Sir Charles Tupper, Charges Against the Government and its officials in Connection With the Yukon Administration (Ottawa, 1899). This was a speech given in House of Commons, 14 April 1899. See also, D. Morrison, Politics of the Yukon Territory (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), pp. 10-17 and M. Zaslow, Opening of the Canadian North (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 113. For a more scathing attack by a contemporary Dawsonite, see Labelle Brooks Vincent, The Scarlet Life of Dawson (San Francisco: Brown, Meese and Craddock, 1900).

claims and the recording offices and because of poor communication facilities, discrepancies resulted and there were occasions when whole creeks had to be re-staked. Thomas Wilson's party, for example, attempted to claim Discovery and six other claims on Barlow Creek after mistakenly hearing that no one else had recorded there. When they arrived at the recording office at Stewart River, they found that while the Discovery claim had not been recorded at that office, it had been done at Dawson almost a month previous. They were also informed that two of their most promising claims were on crown property and therefore not available.<sup>62</sup> Disappointed, the party was forced to return to Barlow Creek to restake all of their claims.

Recording a mining claim carried a fifteen dollar fee, and often miners lacked the necessary cash. In the case of Wilson's party, rather than record all the new claims, a group decision was made to work the most promising claims until they had taken out enough gold to

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<sup>62</sup>PABC, AddMss 1323 file 1, "Thomas Wilson Papers," diary entry 27 July 1898. In addition to Wilson and Lawson, the two men whose claims were on Crown land, the other members of the party included Duncan Ross, C. Truelove, G.C. Howell, J. Campbell, J. Curry, Dr. McArthur and H.J.T. Jones. In January 1898 the new mining regulations called for claims to be staked in blocks of ten, alternate blocks being reserved for the crown, see T. Adney, The Klondike Stampede, p. 435. The party had to return to Barlow and restake their claims.

be able to record the others.<sup>63</sup> This system also required watching over the unrecorded claims to ensure that no one else seized the opportunity to record them. Indeed, the first United States Consul in Dawson noted that he spent most of his time the first year, "listening to grievances in regards to persons who stake claims and afterwards cannot get them recorded".<sup>64</sup>

It was the wives of miners, however, who were called upon for perhaps the greatest amount of work. Kate Carmack and other Native wives of miners were perhaps best equipped to survive the harsh conditions and isolation of the mining life. Tagish women like Kate were accustomed to summer trips for the salmon runs and worked tirelessly to preserve fish and fruit for the winter's supply of food and working skins for the family's clothing. Still it was a hard life, and one usually lived far from family and friendship networks. Non-Native women too, recalled a lonely, difficult life on the creeks, endlessly doing laundry, repairing clothing, splitting wood, and preparing makeshift meals with few provisions. Joining in their husbands' quests, these women repeatedly packed up and moved from one creek

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<sup>63</sup>PABC, AddMss 1323 file 1, "Thomas Wilson Papers," diary entry 09 August 1898: "Buy a license for Curry today and arrange so that the claims are kept for us, not having enough cash to record at present."

<sup>64</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City," McCook to Moore, 06 August 1898.

to another. Again, separated from family and friends, often separated for months even from other miners, making a home for their families was a very difficult task.

Just as elsewhere in North America, the Klondike did not erase race or class divisions -- this was still the Victorian era after all. One mining wife told another miner in the early period that it had been three years since she had seen another white woman, and although she had heard that there was another woman several miles away on a neighbouring creek, she had heard that she was a bad woman so she could not visit her.<sup>65</sup> Isolation was apparently not a strong enough bond between women of differing backgrounds. While many miners lived with their Native wives and families on the creeks, nowhere was there any evidence of non-Native women befriending the Native wives of prospectors. Frederick Palmer noted, in fact that mixed marriage couples tended to socialize together. Joe Powers, for example, had a claim near George Carmack's and "as both had squaw wives there was a bond of union between them, and they visited back and forth a great deal."<sup>66</sup> Presumably, just as "bad" women were not spoken to, neither were Native women.

Women of all ethnicities had a difficult time on the

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<sup>65</sup>Spurr, J.E. Through the Yukon Gold Diggings, p. 134: Spurr described her as looking tired and lonely.

<sup>66</sup>F. Palmer, In the Klondike, p. 140.

creeks, especially in winter. Food was kept in a cache to protect it from animals, and was always frozen solid. Cabins were cold and drafty and wood stoves had to be constantly fed. Thawing ice and snow for cooking and washing was time-consuming and tiresome work, which, like all chores during the long dark winter months, had to be done by candle and lamplight.<sup>67</sup> During lean times, miners' wives often had to "make do" with what was available, however foreign the source. During the scarce winter of 1898, for example, one miner's daughter remembered her mother serving "rabbits, rabbits rabbits . . . . We lived well, but mama never ate rabbit after we left the Klondike."<sup>68</sup>

During the long days of summer, women and children often subsidized family fortunes with other activities. Berry-picking, for example, brought in food for both the family and for sale. For those willing to brave the sun and the bugs, cranberries could bring in five to ten dollars for a long day's work.<sup>69</sup> Other women baked bread and doughnuts (once they had mastered the intricacies of the Yukon stove and non-yeast raising) and sold these

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<sup>67</sup>Ethel Berry, "How I Mined for Gold on the Klondyke," The Examiner Sunday Magazine, 01 August 1897, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup>Ethel Anderson Becker, "Little Girl on the Klondike," Alaska Sportsman (November 1962), p. 36.

<sup>69</sup>PABC, AddMss 698 Vol. VI file 4, "J.B. Clearihue Papers," Joseph to Annie Clearihue, 08 September 1901.

with baked beans to the miners.

Most families probably made a living at mining, although few became wealthy. Isabel and John Crawford were an American couple, both in their early twenties when they arrived in 1898. Three years later the couple had yet to make their fortune, and although together they claimed a total of five-hundred dollars in personal property and eighteen hundred dollars worth of real estate, and they held no mining claims of any value.<sup>70</sup>

Married and single miners alike came from all walks of life. Many miners were career prospectors and veterans of the gold camps that abounded in western North America. Nevertheless, on the creeks and in Dawson itself veteran prospectors were likely to have a greenhorn as a neighbour in the next cabin. Accountants, farmers, dentists, and lawyers all abandoned their southern livelihoods to join in the mad rush for gold in the Yukon, and these men worked shoulder to shoulder with the sourdoughs who had devoted years to the search. The irony of the Klondike was that the greenhorns or "cheechakos" were equally likely to strike it rich as the oldtimers.

For many sourdoughs, the Klondike rush was one of a long line of stampedes which they joined. John Finlayson was a Scottish-born explorer and prospector who had come

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<sup>70</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

to the Fraser River country in 1858. One of the first to prospect in the Stikine and Cassiar districts, he also joined in the rush to the Yukon, although he was by then nearly eighty years old. Finlayson, "while he never made a big stake, ... always had plenty of money for his immediate needs until a short time before his death."<sup>71</sup> Like so many of his confrères, Finlayson died a pauper, dreaming yet of making his big strike.

Nellie Cashman was also an old hand at mining, coming to the Yukon in 1897 from the Cassiar district. Cashman, like so many others, arrived too late to stake on the rich ground, but managed to both stake a "fraction"<sup>72</sup> and to purchase a claim. Cashman mined her own claims, side-by-side with her male colleagues, although like Finlayson she never made the big strike. She later operated a grocery store in Dawson.

As a veteran miner Cashman was the exception, for very few miners were women in the Yukon<sup>73</sup> and references

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<sup>71</sup>PABC, AddMss 698 Vol. I file 10, "J.B. Clearihue Papers," John Finlayson obituary (news clipping no title or date, probably the Victoria Colonist ca. 1918).

<sup>72</sup>A fraction was a sliver of ground or a partial claim. A fraction was produced when the Dominion Land Survey measured a group of claims and found one to have been staked on the wrong dimensions, thus throwing off all the other claims. Rather than restaking all the other claims, the "fraction" in question was usually made available for staking.

<sup>73</sup>Although the evidence is scattered on the subject it would seem that women never constituted more than one percent of the region's miners. 1901 Manuscript Census.

to women miners are few and far between in the sources. The local newspaper, for example, reported that Mrs. Butt's claim on Gold Run Creek was earning one dollar per pan in 1899, although the account does not specify whether Mrs. Butt was doing her own work on the claim.<sup>74</sup> Jane Clifford arrived in the Yukon when she was 31 years old in 1898. Listing her occupation as "miner," Clifford was apparently doing poorly at the trade, for she informed the census taker that she held personal property valued at \$1000, including a dog, but no real estate. The column for "value of claims" was left blank, indicating that she was working as a miner for wages.<sup>75</sup>

Life as a miner, and especially as a single woman miner, was not easy and few followed Cashman and Clifford's lead. A significant number, however, owned mining property. In fact, nearly seven hundred mining claims (three percent) registered in the period were located by women. These claims were located by 527 women, indicating that many women located several claims.<sup>76</sup> A few, like Nellie Cashman worked their own claims but these women seem to have been the exception.

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<sup>74</sup>Dawson Daily News, 15 December 1899.

<sup>75</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>76</sup>B. Kelcey, "Lost in the Rush," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1989), p. 30. This figure is based on the Index to Original Locator Claims (to 1901) held by the Yukon Territorial Archives.



Although evidence is sparse, the largest group of women probably staked claims in order to increase the family's mine holdings. These women rarely performed the day-to-day business of mining, there being little time left after food preparation, child care and laundry.<sup>77</sup> This was the case of Ella Shand, who accompanied her husband and friends on a prospecting trip up the White River so that her husband could obtain a second copper claim near his first.<sup>78</sup> Shand ran a roadhouse that formed the mainstay of the family's existence, providing a relatively steady income in comparison with her husband's constantly-failing mining ventures.

Other women confined their mining interests to investing or 'grub-staking' and many of these did quite well for themselves.<sup>79</sup> The Klondike Nugget reported, for example, that Mae Melbourne invested five-thousand dollars in claims on several creeks in the Dawson area in 1899. Described as the "richest woman in Dawson," her worth was estimated to be in the neighbourhood of one-

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<sup>77</sup>See for example, E.A. Becker, "Little Girl on the Klondike Gold Fields," Alaska Sportsman (November, 1962), p. 36.

<sup>78</sup>M. Shand and O. Shand, To the Summit and Beyond (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1959), pp. 167-69.

<sup>79</sup>YTA, MS82/327 F-59 pt. 2, "Blanche Pépin Lambert Papers." Gédéon Pépin remembered several "mature women with a sharp eye for [the mining] business," including Carrie Lowe and Margaret Mitchell.

hundred thousand dollars.<sup>80</sup> More common was a situation like that of Violenia Evans, a widow who was the sole owner of number of claims and held a one-third interest in a claim on Quartz Creek. Evans' partners on the Quartz Creek claim retained "all gold taken out" on it in exchange for representation work done on her other claims. A similar agreement was reached between Margaret Mitchell who paid Duncan McPhail fifty cents per cubic yard of gravel taken out of her Hunker Creek claims.<sup>81</sup>

While not all the argonauts made their fortunes, some of course did. Many who arrived very early or who were already prospecting in the region claimed ground that yielded thousands of dollars in gold. This was the case for three young men, Andrew Anderson, and the brothers Robert and Charles Karlson. All three men were born in Norway and had migrated while in their teens to the logging camps of Santa Cruz, California in the early 1890s. Together the trio went north in 1894, first to Juneau and later up the Yukon River. Dreaming of making

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<sup>80</sup>Klondike Nugget, special edition, 1899, p.31. Cited also in Kelcey, "Lost in the Rush," p.152.

<sup>81</sup>YTA, MS82/190 F-18, file 7, "R.L. Ashbaugh Papers," Ashbaugh to anonymous, 28 April 1909. Evans' partners actually retained "all proceeds in excess of \$200 per year." Also file 6, Agreement between Mitchell and McPhail, 1909. Ashbaugh was a prominent lawyer who had many women clients with mining interests, including Annie May Enright, who often required his services for the buying and selling of claims on Hunker, Bonanza and Sulphur creeks between 1906 and 1910, see file 24 in this series.

their fortunes, the trio alternately prospected and worked as wood-cutters to earn money for mining supplies and provisions.

In the fall of 1896 Robert Karlson was one of the first to stake on Bonanza Creek after Carmack's discovery. Robert quickly sent for his brother and Anderson. The following spring, after taking out over \$7000, the Karlson brothers sold their claims to 'Big Alex' McDonald for fifty thousand dollars.<sup>82</sup> Planning to take their fortune home to Norway, the Karlson brothers first went into town to celebrate the end of their years of poverty. Sadly, their spree in town left them both ill with typhoid fever and they died shortly thereafter.

Bad luck continued to plague the Karlsons even after their deaths. While their estate was being settled, the Department of the Interior deposited the money in trust. Unfortunately, the trust company went bankrupt before the estate was settled and money was never recovered.<sup>83</sup> Not only did the Karlson boys perish before enjoying their windfall, but neither Anderson, their partner and friend

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<sup>82</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 664 File 3885, Northern Administration Branch Records, Thomas Fawcett to Deputy Minister of Interior, 16 July, 1897. They had staked on Bonanza and had an interest in another on Eldorado, two of the richest gold-bearing creeks in the district.

<sup>83</sup>Settling the estate was a lengthy process, for Anderson and the Karlsons like so many miners had never drawn up legal papers documenting their partnership, and affidavits had to be obtained in order to determine Anderson's share of the estate.

of many years, nor their family ever received any profit from the boys' big strike.<sup>84</sup>

While the Karlson story is rather an extreme example, many Klondikers risked and lost everything in the stampede for gold. Yet few seemed unprepared to take that risk, giving credence to the argument that miners and gamblers in many ways shared a single profession.<sup>85</sup>

Others fared similarly. 'Big Alex' McDonald, known in the early part of the rush as the King of the Klondike went from rags to riches and finally back to rags. A born speculator, he prospected and did well in the Yukon, but made most of his fortune by buying up promising claims (including the Karlsons') in the early years. Like so many other miners, McDonald was always generous with a windfall, and he donated the bulk of the amount needed to reconstruct the Catholic Church after it had a fire in 1898. Ten years later, the boom had bust and so had Big Alex's fortune. He died in the winter of 1909 on one of his creek claims. While the sum of his properties amounted to about \$30,000 when his estate was finally

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<sup>84</sup>NA, RG85 Vol.664 file 3885, Northern Administration Branch Records, Lock to LeCapelain, 22 March 1950.

<sup>85</sup>For a full discussion of the complexities of the relationship between mining and gambling, see John M. Findlay's People of Chance: Gambling in American Society from Jamestown to Las Vegas (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 79-109.

settled it did not cover all of Big Alex's debts.<sup>86</sup> Buried with his confrères in the Dawson cemetery, the grave of the man who was once King of the Klondike remains today marked only by a simple and dilapidated wooden marker.

Others did well also, especially in 1896, the summer of the big discoveries. The Berry family took out one-hundred and forty thousand dollars in one year, while George Carmack and his Tagish partners each took out similar amounts. John Miller, a neighbouring miner took out forty-thousand dollars after expenses, and many others took out between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars that first year.<sup>87</sup> By the summer of 1898, the region was almost completely staked and output was steady.

For the men of chance, it was never too late to make good and the hope of discovering a new strike or even the fabled "mother lode" kept sourdoughs prospecting for years. Well after the boom for example, a Finnish miner washed up over \$70,000 worth of gold on a hillside claim

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<sup>86</sup>YTA, MS 82/1 pt.2 file 2, "Margaret Waddington Collection," petition by Robert Craig to probate will, 22 January 1909; Also see the affidavit of Edward O. Finlaison and R.J. Love to Lawrence Lake, 28 December 1940. The list of mining properties owned by McDonald at the time of his death included claims on Clear, Eldorado, Squaw, Granite, Hunker, Adams and Sheep creeks.

<sup>87</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Commanding Officer, 15 August, 1896.

which "had been prospected for many years and given up as almost worthless."<sup>88</sup> Indeed, it was exactly this "chance" that brought them to the Yukon and it was the same chance that kept them there for many years.

The records indicate that many who "struck it" followed the Berrys' lead and returned to their places of origin with their fortunes. But many people stayed and made Dawson their home, putting down roots even though the big strike continued to elude them. Long after the rush was over, for example, Adolph Dominy continued to prospect the creeks of the Yukon. Dominy was an Austrian-born miner who had made Dawson his home in 1898. In the summer of 1915 his body was found up the Hootalingua River where he had been pursuing his quest. One of the many who never made his fortune, the balance of Dominy's estate totalled four dollars and fifty cents.<sup>89</sup>

Just like Dominy, Frank Breau was a career prospector who was convinced that his fortune lay buried somewhere in the creek beds of Yukon. Breau, like so

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<sup>88</sup>NA, RG85 Vol.1608 file 7034, Northern Administration Branch Records, William Galpin, "Report Regarding the Mining Operations on Quartz Creek during the year ended 1st November 1909." The mines on Quartz Creek were about 30 miles from Dawson, served by this time by a government road and a small railroad.

<sup>89</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 658 file 3318, Report of Receipts and Disbursements of the Public Administrator's Office, 1917 and 1901 Manuscript Census.

many other French Canadians, had come to the Yukon in 1897 as a miner. Also like so many others, Breau died in the Yukon in 1912 still dreaming of finding the mother lode. At the age of sixty, Breau left his heirs a grand total of twenty-four dollars and fifteen cents.<sup>90</sup>

Although the Klondike Gold Rush had ended almost a decade earlier, many sourdoughs had never given up the quest.

As noted in Chapter II, a large number of French-Canadians came to the Klondike and the majority of these were miners (over fifty percent) and labourers. A number of these did very well in the Yukon, one old-timer remembered that Monsieur Mercier from Ste. Anne des Plaines had "un tres bon claim," and that a Monsieur Picotte "et trois ses freres se sont aussi enrichis."<sup>91</sup>

Several contemporaries noted the propensity of the French-Canadians to settle in small enclaves, a fact which is born out in the census.<sup>92</sup> For example, a number of French-Canadian miners were residents of the Ottawa Hotel on Third Avenue, owned by Joseph Cadieux. These men included Pierre Treufe, Charles Renaud, Cyrus Sicotte, Pete Sutherland (francophone despite his name),

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<sup>90</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 658 file 3318, "Report of Receipts and Disbursements of the Public Administrator's Office, 1912-13," and 1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>91</sup>NA, MG29 C27, "Joseph Charles Dubé Papers," transcript of oral interview with Dubé.

<sup>92</sup>1901 Manuscript Census, section F-17 of Dawson City. In Dawson alone there were 412 French-Canadians.

and Jean Daumay. This group, all in their early forties in 1901, were doing well. Treufe and Sicotte each had claims worth \$5000 and real estate worth \$2000 after four years in Dawson. The rest claimed assets of about \$2000 each.<sup>93</sup>

This ethnic clustering was even more noticeable on the creeks and the phenomenon continued well into the early years of the new century. The village of Paris, for example, was almost completely French, a fact which convinced the local blacksmith to leave in 1905 because he was "tired of baching and living among the Frenchmen."<sup>94</sup> That the "Frenchmen" also included women and children is evidenced by the fact that six French-speaking children from Paris attended the school at Caribou Creek in 1905.<sup>95</sup> On Glacier and Miller creeks too, there were French-Canadian enclaves. Here in 1907 were engaged miners by the names of LaFortune, Lesperance, Demaray, Chantelois, Lemieux, Paradis, Bourdelais and Paquin. Steady and strong, this group was doing rather well, for their combined gold yield was

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<sup>93</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>94</sup>YTA, MS 82/32 F-1 pt. 2, file 4, "Winifred McLellan Papers," Winifred McLellan to Maggie Electa, 08 September 1905.

<sup>95</sup>ibid



nearly sixteen-thousand dollars.<sup>96</sup>

It also appears that the French-Canadians quickly formed a strong network, looking after each other by sharing information about mining prospects and assisting each other in finding work. The musician Gédéon Pépin, for example, set about getting several of his fellow Quebecois acquaintances positions on the creeks when he first arrived in Dawson.<sup>97</sup> Joseph Dubé also remembered that Alfred Leblanc and Michel Poliquin both went to work representing the claim of their friend Mercier for fifty dollars per month.<sup>98</sup>

#### **Whither Thou Goest... Women and Families in Dawson**

Most of the popular literature notes that the usual family strategy of Klondikers was for male stampeders to travel to the Klondike and get themselves established in the Dawson area before sending for their wives and families. This idea seems to have been based on impressions, and until the release of the 1901 census, there was no way to verify the pattern. Data from the

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<sup>96</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 1608, file 7036, Northern Administration Branch Records, "Report by Fiset for Glacier Creek, 1907-1908."

<sup>97</sup>YTA, MS82/327 F-59 pt. 2, "Blanche Pépin Lambert Papers," memoir.

<sup>98</sup>NA, MG29 C27, "Joseph Charles Dubé Papers," transcript of oral interview with Dubé.

census, however, does not bear this out. The most common strategy, in fact, was for the families to migrate together. Of the 526 families for whom there was information in the 1901 census, almost half of the wives and children arrived the same year as the male head of household. Less than one-quarter arrived a year later, and the remainder arrived two or more years after the male head of household. Families who were intent on being together, then, tended to travel as a group (see Appendix XII).<sup>99</sup>

Despite the high number of employment opportunities, the largest number of women reported their occupation to be "wife."<sup>100</sup> This category is rather misleading, however, for no single term can encompass the myriad of jobs women performed. Mabel Moore, for example, wrote that she and her husband had been mining at Douglas Island, Alaska when word of the Klondike strike reached them. Her husband went up river to Dawson in the fall of November 1897 and she followed in January. Prospecting on the streams of the Klondike watershed, Mabel cooked and repaired clothing, while "Jim my husband, Arthur his brother, and Jack a friend of his would hunt, fish and

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<sup>99</sup>1901 Manuscript Census of Canada.

<sup>100</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. There were 1145 women over the age of 16 living in Dawson at the time of the Census. 401 of these were single women, while 744 women married. This group almost invariably listed their occupation as "wife".

prospect."<sup>101</sup> This type of familial travel and prospecting arrangement was quite common among Klondikers, for it allowed a small party to pool resources and labour along the way.

In 1897 Della Murray Banks accompanied her prospector husband on yet another leg of the "perennial search for fortune in which my husband never lost faith, though my faith grew small." Mrs. Banks negotiated a contract for herself with her husband's party at \$50 per month. She justified this by stating that she knew full well that the task of cooking would fall to her as a matter of course and so she thought she might as well be paid for her labour.<sup>102</sup> A veteran of bush and camp life, Banks was the very personification of self-confidence and perseverance:

We made camp in the rain at the head of the delta, having gone about seven miles [through salt-water marshes all day]. I got supper in the rain, by the light of a candle. Kneeling on the ground, I mixed biscuits -- ninety of them, baked fifteen at a time in the sheet-iron stove. Thompson watched, saying that if he had to get supper that night there wouldn't be any. Well, I had walked as far as he had.<sup>103</sup>

The Banks party was on the trail for almost two years before they reached Dawson, and Austin Banks sent his

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<sup>101</sup>YTA, MS 83/156 F-8, "Mabel Moore Papers."

<sup>102</sup>Della Banks, "Woman on the Dalton Trail," Alaska Sportsman (January 1945), p. 27.

<sup>103</sup>Della Banks, "Woman on the Dalton Trail," pp. 27-28.

wife home in the middle of the trip, fearful that they had insufficient winter provisions. Mrs. Banks later rejoined her husband in Dawson, where he mined but never made his fortune. They eventually settled in Seattle.<sup>104</sup>

Ethel Berry accompanied her husband over the Chilkoot as a new bride in 1895. Fortunate in being in proximity when news of the Klondike strike broke, the Berrys staked the lucrative claim number Forty Above Discovery on Bonanza Creek. Ethel cooked, cleaned and laundered for the miners in a primitive cabin, while her husband cleaned-up over one-hundred thousand dollars the first year. The Berrys were one of the few couples who left home with nothing and returned very wealthy.<sup>105</sup>

George Snow, one of the original sourdough miners, also migrated with his family. Snow first prospected in the Yukon in 1888 and again in 1892. In 1894, he returned for a third time, this time combining prospecting with his profession as an actor. His "Company of Players" included his wife Anna, their two children and his brother Joseph. All family members participated in the theatre in the gold camp of Forty Mile before relocating to Dawson after the new strike in

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<sup>104</sup>Della Banks, "Woman on the Dalton Trail," part two (February 1945), p. 34.

<sup>105</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Commanding Officer, 15 August, 1896. See also P. Berton, Klondike, p. 76.

1896.<sup>106</sup> The Snows migrated back to Seattle in 1898 where George died in 1925. Snow was also one of the organizers and founders of the Yukon Order of Pioneers.<sup>107</sup>

Another example of family migration is the case of Mae and Arthur Field. This couple came to the Klondike as newlyweds in 1898, when Arthur staked a lucrative claim on Bear Creek. The first year the claim yielded \$100,000. After the claim was worked out, Arthur lost the fortune in a series of bad business ventures and then deserted Mae. Destitute, she turned to the Flora Dora dance hall for employment. Talented and attractive, Mae Field was soon one of the most popular and famous dancers in Dawson.<sup>108</sup>

Amanda Forget was a French-Canadian widow, who with her two daughters had come to join her son in Dawson in 1900. Eugene had come the previous year and was employed for wages on a claim. Eugene's income, however, was insufficient to maintain the family and the women also went to work in Dawson. Madame Forget obtained work as a

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<sup>106</sup>YTA, MS 80/89 Reel #47, "George Snow Papers," brochure advertising Snow's Company of Players from Victoria, Sacramento and San Francisco (n.d.), featuring Mr. George T. Snow and Miss Anna Edes Rablen, along with "a strong company of undoubted reputation".

<sup>107</sup>YTA, MS 82/454, "Yukon Order of Pioneers Collection," article from The Pathfinder (February 1922). See also A. DeGraf, Pioneering on the Yukon, pp. 33-34.

<sup>108</sup>Helen Berg, "The Doll of Dawson," Alaska Sportsman (February 1944), pp.26-30.

cook for one-hundred dollars per month, while Della worked as a sales clerk and Georgene as a waitress. The total family income was four-hundred dollars per month and even this proved little enough, for the "value of personal property" for the whole family amounted to a mere one-hundred and forty-five dollars.<sup>109</sup>

To place such wages in a larger context, these figures were compared with those reported by Michael Piva in his study of Toronto workers between 1900 and 1921. According to Piva's calculations, the average wage of a blue-collar worker in Toronto in 1901 was just over thirty dollars per month.<sup>110</sup> This compares with Madame Forget's one-hundred dollars per month or the roughly two-hundred dollars per month earned by dance hall performers and bar tenders (see Chapter V) in Dawson. Piva also calculated the cost of food, shelter, light and fuel for an average Toronto household of five members to be about thirty-eight dollars per month.<sup>111</sup> That the Forget family was barely making ends meet on a combined income of four-hundred dollars per month indicates

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<sup>109</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. Madame Forget was forty-five years of age and the daughters were nineteen and fifteen respectively.

<sup>110</sup>Michael J. Piva, The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto, 1900-1921 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979): p. 52.

<sup>111</sup>M. Piva, The Condition of the Working Class, p. 45.

indeed, the extremely high cost of living in Dawson in 1901.

Some families endured separation throughout the Klondike experience, while others were not willing to do so. Such was the case of Mrs. P.B. Anderson who arrived completely unannounced at her husband's claim on Eldorado Creek with their three young children in tow late in the summer of 1898. Mrs. Anderson had boarded a steamer in Seattle and spent the following days continually seasick, then took the new tram from Skagway to Whitehorse before boarding another steamer for Dawson. Having accomplished her goal and reuniting her family, Mrs. Anderson set about selling bread to the miners on the creek to supplement the family income.<sup>112</sup>

Other wives found their husbands less than pleasantly surprised when they arrived in Dawson. Minnie Wilkensen for example, came to Dawson in search of her husband who had stopped sending support some time previously. She found him in Dawson where he was earning three-hundred dollars a month and living with another woman. Her fate after this discovery is unknown, but the author of the letter reporting the affair commented that this "is the case with a good many married men here, who have nice families on the outside and who ought to have

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<sup>112</sup>Ethel Anderson Becker, "Little Girl on the Klondike," Alaska Sportsman (November 1962), p. 36.

more respect for their children and themselves if not for their wife."<sup>113</sup> Sarah Patchell's experience was very similar, although her husband seems to have abandoned her in favour of prospecting rather than womanizing.<sup>114</sup>

The Forrest family also arrived in Dawson in stages. Joseph Forrest was supporting his wife and four children as foreman of a small gold mine in Grass Valley, California when news of the Klondike reached him in 1897. Sending the rest of the family home to Trois Rivières, he went to Dawson. Joseph spent the winter of 1898-99 in Quebec with his family and then returned to Dawson with his eldest son Paul in the spring of 1899. In 1901 his wife and remaining children joined them.<sup>115</sup> Here the family remained until the First World War.

### Conclusions

The vast majority Klondikers made a living through some form (or combination of forms) of semi- or unskilled labour. While labour was scarce and wages generally high

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<sup>113</sup>PABC, AddMss 698 Vol. VI file 4, "J.B. Clearihue Papers," Joseph to Annie Clearihue, 18 September 1901. Clearihue was himself separated from his wife Annie and hastened to assure her of faithfulness.

<sup>114</sup>See Sarah E. Patchell, My Extraordinary Years of Adventure and Romance in Klondike and Alaska (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, n.d.).

<sup>115</sup>YTA, MS 80/503 Box 2 file 3, "Emil Joseph Forrest Papers," recollections, unpaginated.



throughout the period, these factors were offset by the high cost of living and repeated periods of unemployment. Certain ethnic groups showed a propensity for certain occupations, including French Canadians in mining and manual labour and Asians in laundry and food service. Women remained concentrated in what could be described as conventional female occupations for the nineteenth century: domestic and food service, the sex trade, laundry work, as well as wife and motherhood. Far from being a community of single workers, Dawson boasted a large number of families by the turn of the century. These families often migrated together as a unit and made Dawson their home for extended periods. Few of the thousands of migrant workers and their families got rich in the Yukon, rather they were typical of most working class families in North America, and used a combination of strategies to "get by."

**Chapter V**  
**The Scarlet Ladder:**  
**Life and Social Distinction Within Dawson's Demi-Monde**

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The demi-monde of Dawson was established as quickly as the city itself and between the summer of 1896 and 1905, Dawson City became the home of hundreds of women and men involved in the entertainment and sex trades. The Mounted Police early noted that "fast women" and the "sporting fraternity" accompanying them arrived within a few weeks of the Bonanza Discovery.<sup>1</sup> Camp followers from the adjacent mining districts were soon joined by their colleagues from the cities of the south-western seaboard and beyond. By the summer of 1897 dance halls, brothels, saloons and gambling arenas were thriving.<sup>2</sup> Two years later, several hundred people were employed in

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<sup>1</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Walsh, 17 March 1898. William Haskell also noted that shortly after the strike, one of the dance halls from Circle City relocated to the new town, threw up a building and set up "about a dozen" women and a piano. See his Two Years in the Klondike (Hartford: Hartford Publishing, 1898), pp. 371, 377.

<sup>2</sup>Haskell, Two Years in the Klondike, p. 355. When Haskell arrived in 1897, he estimated that the population of the red-light district of Lousetown alone was about three hundred people. There were two red-light districts in the early years. One in Lousetown or Klondike City (across the Klondike River from Dawson, and Paradise Alley in the city itself.

entertainment and prostitution.<sup>3</sup>

Prostitutes and dance hall performers were a visible and important component of this northern mining community, and the overwhelmingly male population provided a receptive atmosphere for the trade. Early trade in sex, like all other commerce in Dawson, was conducted in tents and small cabins. In the earliest days of the rush, prostitutes were allowed to walk the streets and frequent the saloons to solicit clientele. In fact, there is no record of any arrests for prostitution-related offenses until the spring of 1898. As the community evolved from a mining camp to a city, the activities of the demi-monde also became more structured and controlled. Sexual commerce became less public, moving to dance halls, brothels, cigar stores and alleyways. Legal and social structures were established, the sex trade was increasingly removed from the more public places -- first off the streets, then into formalized districts, and finally, out of the limits of the city itself.<sup>4</sup> The position of the local authorities to sexual commerce within the community then, moved from a system of almost outright "licensing" to almost

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<sup>3</sup>See Henry Guest, "City of Gold: Dawson, Yukon Territory, 1896-1918" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manitoba, 1982), p. 245.

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of this process, see H. Guest, "City of Gold," Chapter VIII.

complete suppression. This had severe ramifications for both the women who worked in this sector and for their clientele.

Prostitutes and dance hall performers were a visible and important part of the mining community. This chapter is an examination of Dawson's demi-monde and the women who lived and worked within it. Women in this sector were, on the whole young, poor and from a wide variety of ethnic groups. Here, this complex sub-community and its relationship to the larger one it served are examined.

#### **Dawson's Scarlet Ladder: Social Hierarchy in the Demi-Monde**

There was a definite hierarchy among the women of Dawson. From the earliest arrival of non-Native women, the strictest separation was made between the "respectable" and "unrespectable" women.<sup>5</sup> Although little examined, the world of the "unrespectable" was a complex and hierarchical one, depending on a variety of

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<sup>5</sup>Perhaps the clearest description of how women themselves perceived these distinctions is found in Martha Black's autobiography, My Ninety Years (Edmonds: Alaska Northwest, 1976). Despite much recent interest in women of the Klondike, a wide berth has been left around those involved in the sex trade. These studies have largely limited themselves to an examination of the so-called 'respectable' women. See M. Mayer, Klondike Women (Ohio: Swallow, 1989); B. Kelcey, "Lost in the Rush," (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1989); and F. Backhouse, "Women of the Klondike," Beaver, 68, 6 (Dec/Jan 1988-89): 30-36.

factors including race and ethnicity, as well as social and sexual skills. The venues from which various types of sexual commerce were carried out reflect this stratification. The hierarchy determined each woman's experience and carried with it its own set of advantages and restrictions.

Kate Rockwell, a notorious dance hall performer of the period, commented at length on the strict hierarchy of the dance halls and brothels of Dawson's "scarlet" side. From her testimony it seems clear that for "unrespectable" women, the hierarchy started with the dance halls. Here, the top place was reserved for the headline performers. Beneath these were what might be termed the middle class of the unrespectable women. These were the chorus girls, singers and performers of lesser talent and renown, as well as the private mistresses of the local elite. Next came "working girls" from the more expensive brothels and the independents who often ran what they called "cigar stores". Further down the ladder were the poorer brothels and hurdy-gurdy houses. Finally, at the bottom of their own social scale were the women who lived and worked in the cribs of the Paradise Alley.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Mary Murphy found evidence of a similar stratification among prostitutes in Butte, Montana, in "The Private Lives of Public Women: Prostitution in Butte, Montana, 1878-1917," in Armitage and Jameson, The Women's West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,

The highly-paid, top-billed actresses, performers and courtesans enjoyed a prominent position in both the demi-monde and the larger community. Headliners like Rockwell and Cad Wilson were salaried employees of the dance halls, often with long-term contracts, who enjoyed a more stable and comfortable standard of living than the chorus girls. They were given the choice numbers in the performances; were provided accommodation by the theatre company, and had the lucrative job of entertaining men privately in the "boxes" between shows. Men paid a fee for being so privately entertained and were encouraged to buy exorbitantly priced drinks; drinks for which the women received a commission. Legendary for sporting thousand-dollar Paris gowns in their performances, these dance hall "queens" also acted as hostesses in the dance halls after the shows, often wearing respectable full-length black skirts and white shirt-waists.<sup>7</sup> Also due to their position, headliners enjoyed a degree of selectivity, having the option of becoming intimate with their admirers, but did not necessarily engage in sexual intercourse for money.<sup>8</sup>

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1987).

<sup>7</sup>This costume gave the illusion of "respectability" to the hostesses, presumably to attract a higher class of clientele and present a more "respectable" image.

<sup>8</sup>Ellis Lucia, Klondike Kate, 1873-1957 (New York: Hastings House, 1962), p. 73. Government officials were also well aware of this ambiguity, for as the

Next down the ladder were the chorus line dancers. These were the women who "worked the floor" after the stage show, dancing with the miners and encouraging them to buy drinks. The dancers, like the headline acts, were also paid employees, and likewise received a percentage for drinks sold. Chorus "girls" sometimes -- although not always -- held contracts and thus could obtain some degree of job security. Like the headliners, the chorus line women might or might not be prostitutes, for as Rockwell herself noted, the line between performers and prostitutes was a fine one and "sometimes a girl blended".<sup>9</sup>

Dance hall women, however glamorous they may have appeared to their customers, worked gruelling hours. In order to receive the high wages -- averaging two-hundred dollars per month plus commissions -- these women worked six nights a week, often in twelve hour shifts, ending at seven or eight in the morning. According to one male contemporary, the women's usual duties consisted of performing on stage, then "rustling the boxes" which was

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commissioner explained to the Minister of the Interior, closing the dance halls would "throw a lot of women into a more vicious life, as many of these women would not resort to ordinary prostitution." See NA, RG85 Vol. 658 file 3417, Ogilvie to Sifton, 14 August 1900.

<sup>9</sup>E. Lucia, Klondike Kate, p. 74. This is supported by the NWMP records which show that a number of dance hall performers were arrested for prostitution. See NA, RG18 D4, Reel #C2152, Dawson Gaol Register (hereafter referred to as simply the Dawson Gaol Register).

described as entertaining a miner in a private box and encouraging him to order drinks. After the show (around midnight), the "girls" were expected to mingle with the crowd on the floor, partnering dances for \$1 each and selling more drinks. Remarked a sympathetic young man from Ottawa,

...these poor devils keep this up night after night, all year round, drunk every night as they cannot help it if they want to do business. Some of them I am told make as much as \$40 to \$50 per night in commission.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, it was a gruelling lifestyle. The dance halls were closed only on Sundays. These then, were the women who danced all night.

As noted above, some of these women were prostitutes as well as vaudeville performers, but it is impossible to state with any certainty what proportion practised both trades. Several of the women inmates of the Dawson gaol were both dance hall employees and common prostitutes. Kitty Henry was charged with being Drunk and Disorderly one evening in 1902 and was arrested in company with her pimp Felix Duplan. Henry was convicted and received the usual sentence of one month at hard labour. Duplan was acquitted after the testimony of another prostitute was

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<sup>10</sup>NA, MG29 C91, "W.C.E. Stewart Papers," undated letter from John McDougal to Stewart, undated (written during his trip to the Yukon in the summer and early fall of 1899).



found to be in contempt.<sup>11</sup> Jennie Mack was another "dance hall woman and prostitute" living in Dawson in 1900. Before arriving in Dawson, she had operated the Pioneer Lodging House, a small brothel in Seattle. No stranger to the NWMP, she spent two years in the Dawson gaol after being arrested for "theft from the person" of one George Blondeau.<sup>12</sup> Many of the dance hall women lived in rooms over the dance halls and saloons, where they supplemented their incomes by prostitution.<sup>13</sup>

Also within the dance hall were "girls" employed strictly to work the floor after the show for a small wage and commission. These women were hired on a casual basis by the dance hall managers and were recruited from the "working girls" of Lousetown and Paradise Alley.<sup>14</sup> These women also encouraged men to buy drinks before offering them "other" entertainments in the rooms upstairs. These women were open prostitutes, a fact

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<sup>11</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 25 March 1902. Kitty Henry Howard was described by the arresting officer as a camp follower, lately of Cripple Creek, Colorado. Her occupation was "soubrette and prostitute". The Parisian Duplan was arrested for living off the avails of her prostitution.

<sup>12</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 11 September 1902. Jennie Mack was well known to the NWMP, and they listed several aliases for her, including Mrs. Warnick, Mrs. McSwain and Mrs. C.H. Furrar.

<sup>13</sup>NA, RG85 Volume 658, file 4316, Wood to Sifton, 30 November 1900.

<sup>14</sup>E. Lucia, Klondike Kate, pp. 71, 73.

which the NWMP were well aware, as the correspondence over the liquor licensing of dance halls and their eventual closure makes clear.<sup>15</sup> Taken as a group, it is easy to see how dance hall performers and prostitutes "blended" in the eyes of the public.

The majority of the sex trade, however, was probably conducted outside the dance halls. Here the hierarchy of the demi-monde continued. In the more expensive brothels and parlour houses, madams presided and men were first entertained with cigars, liquor and light entertainment before more intimate entertainments were provided. Women who worked in the higher priced establishments gained a degree of privacy and "refinement" and charged higher prices for services. Less "refined" brothels offered their clientele a variety of lower class entertainments and a wide assortment of nationalities of women. The Bartlett, for example, was a Dawson brothel which specialized in exotic women. Kept by a French couple Luceille Martin and Jean Lucin Robert, the Bartlett employed the services of three other French-born women, one English, one Japanese, one African-American and a Hungarian.<sup>16</sup> In the competitive market of Dawson's demi-

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<sup>15</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 658, file 3417, Wood to Sifton, 22 November 1900.

<sup>16</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. These women were identified as Rose Schneider, Lilli Gilmore, Ida Mason, Fannie Ave, Nellie James, Louise Coragod and the two Martin sisters. Mary Murphy also found a number of the brothels in

monde, the Bartlett offered what the NWMP described as "grossly indecent" burlesque shows in addition to the more private entertainments. This type of entertainment was apparently beyond the limits of Dawson City moral tolerance, for three women were arrested, as well as the proprietor.<sup>17</sup> Even in Dawson City, the community had limits to the indecencies allowed.

Next were the "cigar stores" where prostitutes plied the trade, often independently, but sometimes with the aid of a procurer. "Cigar stores" as a rule, were very small operations, usually with a single woman proprietor. Often they were private apartments or cabins with a simple advertising sign. As liquor licenses could not be obtained for such premises, cigars were advertised as the commodity for sale, hence their euphemistic title. These women set their own conditions, and presumably their own fees. Camille Léonard for example, worked as a dancer and also ran her own "cigar store".<sup>18</sup> Camille, who had arrived in Dawson in 1899, was by 1901 residing on Second Avenue and earning a monthly salary of \$200 per month as

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Montana similarly specialized in exotic women in this period. See her "The Private Lives of Public Women," p. 201.

<sup>17</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, May 1903. The women were each convicted on the charge of being a "prostitute participating in exhibitions of a grossly indecent nature" and sentenced to two months at hard labour. The pimp and proprietor was convicted of "vagrancy (Macque)."

<sup>18</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

a dancer. It would appear, however, "French Camille" was employed in two of the local evening occupations, for the city directory for the same year lists her as the proprietor of the Seattle Cigar and Tobacco Store at the same address. That she was getting rich at either occupation is doubtful, for after three years in the Yukon, Léonard had accumulated only \$100 in personal assets and held no real estate or mining property.<sup>19</sup> The mounties, for the most part, turned a blind eye to the trade, as the lesser of several of the evils in town.

Perhaps the best known of the local tobacconists was Marguerite Laimee. Laimee was an American woman who had followed the mining camps from California where she was born, to Idaho, South Africa and Australia. Arriving in July, 1898 from Sydney, she at once opened a "cigar store" first in the Green Tree Hotel on Front Street, and then when the red-light district was relocated, at the corner of Second and Lane where, she was apparently known to the NWMP as "Biddy McCarthy."<sup>20</sup> The trade was lucrative, for she later testified under oath that she

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<sup>19</sup>Léonard, a French-born woman, was 24 years old when she arrived in Dawson in August, 1899. See the Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Business Directory and Gazetteer, 1901 and 1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>20</sup>J.A. Johnson, Carmack of the Klondike (Seattle: Epicenter, 1990), p.115. There is no evidence in the police records, however, that Laimee (or McCarthy) was ever arrested.

made \$60,000 in two years at her Dawson trade.<sup>21</sup>

If Laimee made a substantial sum of money as a prostitute in Dawson, she would appear to be the exception. Few of the women identified in the census as prostitutes reported assets or property over four-hundred dollars in value. This of course, is a matter for speculation, because prostitutes' incomes are rarely reported. It is possible that women who made substantial sums of money left the Territory quickly and re-established elsewhere. Kate Rockwell's biographer also stated that at the height of her Dawson career, Rockwell was pulling in "thousands of dollars a month"<sup>22</sup> but even if this was true, it was also an expensive lifestyle to maintain, and few women reported any real property or assets.<sup>23</sup> Rockwell herself lost what savings she did have in bad business ventures with her lover, Alex Pantages.

Last in the hierarchy were the women who plied their

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<sup>21</sup>Johnson, Carmack of the Klondike, p. 215. In 1901 Laimee met and married George Carmack, co-discoverer of the Bonanza strike. She apparently abandoned all connection with prostitution upon her marriage. Later, during the contest over Carmack's will, she gave testimony to her own financial situation at the time of their marriage.

<sup>22</sup>E. Lucia, Klondike Kate, pp. 85, 87.

<sup>23</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. The census lists Rockwell's salary at \$200/month. That this "salary" does not include her commissions seems clear, although there is no way of knowing what the additional income would have amounted to. Her personal assets at that time were reported to be \$100.

trade from the rows of cribs or hutches that lined the streets and alleys of Lousetown. These working women are the most difficult to document, for they, above all the others do not speak for themselves in the sources. Early photographs of Lousetown show approximately sixty cribs side by side.<sup>24</sup> Contemporaries noted that each hutch was a room occupied by a single prostitute, each with her name clearly painted over the door. Blinds were drawn when the woman was with a client, and up when she was available. Business was brisk in the boom years, and it was reported that at least one of the more popular prostitutes often had a queue of men waiting outside her door.<sup>25</sup>

Some of these prostitutes, as noted above, worked the floors of the dance halls to supplement their income and solicit clients. Others worked at other service sector employment and supplemented their wages through prostitution. Elizabeth Davis Brooks, for example is listed in the 1901 census as a self-employed "seamstress" earning one-hundred and seventy-five dollars per month. Residing on Third Street in South Dawson, she listed

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<sup>24</sup>One of the more commonly reproduced photographs of the "White Chapel" or alley of cribs in 1899 appears in Anne Butler's Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), insert before p.25; and also in Stan Cohen's Queen City of the North (Missoula: Pictorial Histories Co., 1990), p. 116.

<sup>25</sup>E. Lung Martinson, Trail to North Star Gold (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1984), p. 82.

assets of \$200 in personal property. Brooks was arrested the following year on a charge of being an inmate in a house of ill fame, and the NWMP list her as a "prostitute by occupation"<sup>26</sup>, leaving little doubt that the needle trades were not the main source of her income. Like many prostitutes of the nineteenth century, Brooks was a highly transient woman. Born in Meritz, Germany she arrived in New York, in 1877. The following year she went to Minneapolis, and from there to the silver camps of Colorado. Here she remained until setting out for Dawson, in 1898. In the usual manner, she was given a fine of fifty dollars plus court costs, and for reasons unknown, she received an additional two months at hard labour.<sup>27</sup>

Brooks was arrested and charged in company with two black women, Josephine Arnold and Millie Wallace Brown. In the census, Arnold and Brown both listed their occupations as laundress. Indeed, it would appear that they were employed in two trades, for the jail records state that each was a "prostitute and laundress" by

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<sup>26</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 18 April 1902.

<sup>27</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 18 April, 1902. The two black women who were arrested with Brooks were given lesser sentences of one month hard labour in addition to their fines. The reasons for this discrepancy are unclear. H. Guest in "City of Gold," p. 248, claims that black women were treated more harshly than were non-blacks in their sentencing, but the evidence (Brooks was Caucasian, or "neutral" complexion) seems to indicate the contrary.

occupation. Arnold and Brown were sisters, who had arrived in Dawson in 1898. At the time of the census they were living together on Third Street, in the cabin next to Elizabeth Brooks. Like Brooks, these women had moved frequently, although they had been living in Dawson for four years by the time of the census. Arnold resided in Arizona prior to coming to the Klondike, and listed an estranged husband in Vancouver. Brown reported coming to Dawson with her husband, having last resided in California.<sup>28</sup> Again, their existence was tenuous, the census showing that among the three, Brooks, Wallace and Brown had a total of four hundred dollars in personal property.<sup>29</sup>

**Scarlet Culture:  
Ethnicity in the Demi-Monde**

If the demi-monde was hierarchical, it was also an overwhelmingly international, persistent, and impoverished group of people. While the dance hall performers were overwhelmingly American, the prostitutes

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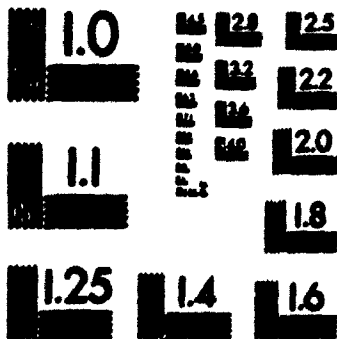
<sup>28</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 18 April 1902. Brown's husband, Charles Wallace, according to the census also resided at the same address on Third Street and is listed as a bartender, a common euphemism for pimps. He was probably also acting as Brown's procurer.

<sup>29</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.



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PRECISION<sup>SM</sup> RESOLUTION TARGETS

and their procurers in Dawson were largely European.<sup>30</sup> Gamblers, musicians, bartenders and other "sports" associated with this sub-community were similarly of an international background. Very few members of the demi-monde accumulated any wealth while in Dawson, and most stayed only for one or two summer seasons. In short, they bear a general similarity of appearance to the rest of the community.

Although there are many estimates regarding the number of people who belonged to the demi-monde, there are no reliable figures. In the dance halls alone, this figure was estimated to be the neighbourhood of three to four-hundred.<sup>31</sup> By the fall of 1901, there were one hundred and ten persons employed as performers and entertainers according to the census. Just over half of these were women. The vast majority of these were young Americans, but there were also a number of French, Belgian, German, English, Mexican, Austrian and Spanish women employed in this sector.<sup>32</sup> Just over half the men

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<sup>30</sup>This contradicts Henry Guest's assertion that the majority of prostitutes, like the majority of Klondikers, were Americans. See his "City of Gold," p. 148.

<sup>31</sup>L. Brooks-Vincent, The Scarlet Life of Dawson (San Francisco: Brown, Meese and Craddock, 1900), p. 77.

<sup>32</sup>NA, MG29 C27, "Joseph Charles Dubé Papers," transcript of oral interview with Dubé. Dubé was among several old-timers who recalled that a large group of French-speaking Belgian prostitutes were brought to Dawson in 1898.

employed as entertainers were American, with thirteen other nationalities also represented.

As a group the performers were slightly younger than the prostitutes, the average age being 26 (ranging from 18-40). They were also slightly more affluent, earning an average salary of two-hundred dollars per month. Their incomes came and went just as quickly, however, for over seventy percent claimed personal assets equalling no more than one-hundred dollars. Although one might have expected them to display a high degree of transience, this group showed a persistence remarkably similar to the community as a whole. Of those who remained in Dawson in the fall of 1901, about two-thirds had been residents for three or more years. Only a handful had been resident less than a year, or longer than four years.<sup>33</sup>

Migrant working women found limited economic opportunities in the Yukon. For some, prostitution was the best or perhaps only alternative. Some had worked as prostitutes in other frontier communities, others who had come to the Yukon, perhaps with the goal of marrying a wealthy miner, resorted to prostitution in order to keep the proverbial wolf from the door. Whatever the motivation, it was hard work and work done under trying conditions.

In the fall of 1898, sixty-nine women and some

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<sup>33</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

eighty men were arrested in a police raid in Dawson's red light district. Each woman was convicted and fined for being an inmate of a house of ill fame and each man for vagrancy.<sup>34</sup> This indicates that a significant group was living and working in "houses of ill fame" in Dawson, a fact that numerous diaries and memoirs corroborate.<sup>35</sup> Building a profile of these women's lives and work proves difficult, however, for it is only when such women came into prolonged contact with the law (that is, when they were sentenced to prison) that there are detailed records for them.<sup>36</sup> None of the clients of these women left any written records of their experiences. As well, because the 1901 census did not list "prostitute" as an

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<sup>34</sup>Canada, Sessional Papers, Volume XXXIII, No.15 (1899), "Reports from the North West Mounted Police at Dawson," Appendix L, Return of Criminal and Other Cases Tried in the Yukon Territory, 1 December to 30 November 1898. Men and women alike were given the same sentence, a fine of fifty dollars plus court costs. Included among the men in this list were several saloon owners and bartenders, presumably those who had been sanctioning prostitution or procuring on their premises. It is probable that the remaining men were a mixture of pimps and clients of the prostitutes.

<sup>35</sup>See Laura Berton, I Married the Klondike (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985); Martha Black, My Ninety Years; Mary Lee Davis, Sourdough Gold (Boston: M.A. Wilde, 1933); and William Haskell, Two Years in the Klondike among others.

<sup>36</sup>For the eighty-seven women arrested in September 1898, there is only a list of names. Because they were simply fined and released, their records are incomplete. None of these women appear in the gaol registers, even at a later date. This would indicate either a high transience rate or a low rate of repeat offenders.

occupation, they are difficult to identify in that source.

Close examination of the records, however, provides detail for fifty-eight women prostitutes in the period. The Dawson Gaol Register contains very detailed information for fifteen prostitutes incarcerated between 1898-1903.<sup>37</sup> By cross-referencing the police court and gaol records with the 1901 census, details were located for another forty-three prostitutes, including seven of those who had been arrested in 1898. Together, there was a group of fifty-eight women about whom there was more information than simply a name.<sup>38</sup>

Looking more closely at this group of fifty-eight women, much can be learned about the experience of prostitutes in the Klondike. First, as a group they were older than the dance hall performers, the average age being slightly over 29 years, and ranging 20 to 43 years.

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<sup>37</sup>The Dawson Gaol Register provides rich detail for inmates, including birthplace, dates and places of residence before arriving in the Yukon, medical and family history and physical descriptions.

<sup>38</sup>Although the 1901 Manuscript Census does not list "prostitute" as an occupation for any woman in Dawson in 1901, forty-three women were identified in the census as being prostitutes through a common residence with a known prostitute, pimp or brothel keeper through cross-referencing with the police and gaol records. Most of these women listed their occupations as the usual euphemisms: dressmaker, housekeeper, or tobacconist. Those employed as actresses and vaudeville performers are not included in this figure, although presumably many of these women were also involved in the sex trade.

The prostitutes were probably the most transient group of Dawsonites, yet they too demonstrated a surprising rate of persistence. While many prostitutes followed the miners from camp to camp, providing the services they knew to be in high demand, like the dance hall performers, many prostitutes called Dawson their home for extended periods. Twenty of the fifty-eight prostitutes -- a full thirty-five percent -- had lived in Dawson for four years or longer at the time of the census. Another nine percent had been residents for three years, and twenty-four percent for two years. Approximately thirty percent had been resident for a year or less.<sup>39</sup> Hundreds more came and went every summer, of course, never spending a winter in the Yukon, for high costs of living were prohibitive features of northern life.

Ethnically, the prostitutes represented an ethnic diversity of significantly different proportion to the general population. Over half of the women were European born; a full thirty-one percent born in France.<sup>40</sup> The French women were slightly offset by the African-

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<sup>39</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>40</sup>This figure is supported by a NWMP survey of forty-three newly relocated prostitutes on Fourth Avenue in 1899, where it was found that the majority of the women residents there were "French". See NA, RG18, Vol. 1445, f.181, pt.6, McPhail Report, 10 November, 1899. E. Lung Martinson, in Trail to North Star Gold (p. 82), also notes that the majority of the prostitutes were French and Belgian.

Americans and Euro-Americans (each representing about fifteen percent). The other women represented a variety of nations, with Germans, English, Belgians, Swedes, Canadian, Irish, Hungarians and Japanese together making up forty percent. Significantly, Native women were not found in association with any of the known brothels, prostitutes or procurers during the boom period.

This ethnic balance favouring French women is a curious aberration in the ethnic break-down in Dawson. This phenomenon, however, appears to have be similar to other frontier mining communities. During the same period, a large proportion of prostitutes on the Comstock in Nevada were also French-born women, a pattern that was apparently established in the 1850s in California, where French prostitutes were the most highly favoured.<sup>41</sup>

That women were recruited outside and brought into the Yukon seems evident in a number of cases. In Dawson, the French component seems to have had as much to do with recruiting as it did with market preferences. Although evidence is scarce on the procurers as a rule, four of the seven men arrested in connection with prostitution in Dawson City were French-born.<sup>42</sup> The Bartlett, for

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<sup>41</sup>M. Goldman, Gold Diggers and Silver Miners, (Ann Arbor, 1981), p. 71.

<sup>42</sup>The Dawson Gaol Register shows that these men were Felix Duplan, Clement Laborde, Jean Lucin Robert and Frank Salets.

example, was a local brothel described by the Mounties as "a notorious house of assignation giving exhibitions of a disgusting nature."<sup>43</sup>

This brothel, as noted above, was kept by the Parisian Jean Robert and his lover Luceille Martin. When Luceille and two other French employees of the house were arrested for their "exhibitions", Robert was charged with living off the avails of prostitution. According to his gaol record, Robert claimed to have been a banker in Paris, but was actually believed to have "been engaged in present occupation ["macque"] in London, England."<sup>44</sup>

Given the common dates of arrival in the Yukon, it is almost certain that Robert had recruited a number of the women who were among the "inmates" of the Bartlett.<sup>45</sup>

Another member of this French connection was the "macque" Felix Duplan. Duplan, a Parisian-born man was arrested for living off the avails of prostitution in 1902. The prostitute arrested in this connection was dance hall performer Kitty Henry, who was simultaneously charged with being Drunk and Disorderly. Duplan had first come to Dawson in February 1898, the same time Kitty

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<sup>43</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 12 May 1903.

<sup>44</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 12 May 1902.

<sup>45</sup>According to the Dawson Gaol Register, Luceille and Marcelle Martin arrived from France in February 1902, the same date as Jean Robert and another Parisian pimp named Felix Duplan. Louise Coragod, another French prostitute arrived a few weeks later.



Henry arrived. In 1900 he returned to Paris, arriving back in Dawson on 25 February 1902.<sup>46</sup> That his return from France corresponds exactly with the arrival of Jean Lucin Robert and three French prostitutes subsequently employed by the Bartlett indicates that he had been on another recruiting mission. At Duplan's trial for living off the avails, in fact, one of the women from the Bartlett gave testimony against him.<sup>47</sup> It is likely that Duplan and Robert, as well as Clement Laborde and Frank Salets, all French born "macques" were also responsible for bringing at least some of the other fourteen French women to Dawson for the sex trade. It seems likely that men like Duplan and Robert "fronted" the travel expenses in return for a percentage of the women's earnings in Dawson.

About the other men who controlled and did trade in these women, there are few references. It seems clear, however, that procurers were early on the scene, for one stamperder noted that in Dawson a number of the first prostitutes were brought in by "polygamous bar-tenders" in March of 1897.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 12 May 1902.

<sup>47</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 25 March 1902. Louise Coragod was found to be in contempt and her testimony was thrown out of court. Duplan, the "macque" was released.

<sup>48</sup>J.H.E. Secretan, To the Klondyke and Back (New York: Hurst and Blackett, 1898), p. 58. Secretan had been shocked while on the trail by finding himself surrounded

The NWMP found it difficult to prosecute men on charges of procuring, for it was very difficult to obtain the testimony necessary from prostitutes. This is not surprising, since the women relied on these men for protection and security. Many of the women were to some degree indentured for their passage inward. The charge of living off the avails was thus either dropped or reduced to vagrancy. Since "vagrancy" was a charge for a host of undesirable activities, it is very difficult to distinguish the procurers from among those arrested on a vagrancy charge.<sup>49</sup> Between 1898-1903, there were five inmates of the Dawson gaol whose vagrancy convictions specifically state that the prisoner had been living off the avails of prostitution or was known to be a close "associate" of prostitutes.<sup>50</sup> These include Robert, Duplan, Frank Salets and Clement LaBorde, all of French birth, and John Henry Kimball, an American "mulatto" and "morphine fiend." Others, like Enoch Emmons, were said to allow their wives to be harlots with their permission.<sup>51</sup>

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by "contraband whisky pedlars, gamblers, Jews, Gentiles, [and] ladies whose briefness of skirt barely equalled the briefness of their characters..." ibid., p. 52.

<sup>49</sup>The eighty-two men who were arrested in the Lousetown raid in September 1898, for example, were all charged with vagrancy.

<sup>50</sup>Dawson Gaol Register.

<sup>51</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 10 December 1902.

It was noted above that in the autumn of 1898, a large number of prostitutes were rounded up and fined. Significantly, on the same date, 15 September 1898, eighty-two men were charged with vagrancy.<sup>52</sup> This, is an inordinately high number, and it seems likely that this group included men who were associated with the sex trade, either as procurers, bartenders, waiters and possibly even clients, although there is no further detail available. Some of these were probably liquor related offenses as well. Kelcey also cites this figure on vagrancy, noting that other authors like Guest have not seen them as examples of legislating male morality, although clearly this was in practice being carried out.<sup>53</sup> Throughout the campaign, it is interesting to note that there is record of only one man (one F. Brown) being arrested and convicted for "frequenting" a house of ill fame.<sup>54</sup>

If the prostitutes were ethnically diverse, they were also overwhelmingly poor. The legends of the Klondike have often conjured up images of wealthy miners freely distributing their wealth among prostitutes, dance

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<sup>52</sup>Canada, Sessional Papers, "Return of Criminal and Other Cases Tried in the Yukon Territory, 1 December 1897 to 30 November 1898."

<sup>53</sup>See B. Kelcey, "Lost in the Rush," p. 13.

<sup>54</sup>Canada, Sessional Papers, "Return of Criminal and Other Cases Tried in the Yukon Territory, 1 December 1897 to 30 November 1898."

hall women and faro wheels. A closer examination of the women prostitutes in Dawson, however, shows that while the trade was freely practised, the women lived in almost universal poverty. Financial information for these women, taken from the 1901 census, shows that the vast majority were barely making ends meet.<sup>55</sup> Over eighty percent of the prostitutes identified through the census declared personal and real estate assets valued at less than three hundred dollars. Most of these reported assets totalling only one-hundred dollars or less.

It was not impossible to make money in this sector, of course, and the census shows that a handful of prostitutes held assets valued at over four-hundred dollars.<sup>56</sup> Given the extraordinary cost of living in Dawson, however, even this amount of income would have

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<sup>55</sup>This degree of poverty is supported by the findings of Butler in Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery; and Marian Goldman in Gold Diggers and Silver Miners (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981). There are, of course, no official figures for the cost of a visit to a prostitute in Dawson. In all the diaries and memoirs, only one reference was found, stating that the price was four ounces of gold dust (about sixty-four dollars) for what was apparently a "very hurried entertainment." See E.C. Trelawney-Ansell, I Followed Gold (New York: Lee Furman, 1939), p. 171.

<sup>56</sup>The 1901 Manuscript Census for Yukon contains several columns for assets, including value of real estate held, value of mining claims held, personal property, and value of dogs. Seven of the prostitutes identified held property valued at between \$300 and \$1500. Mining claims were held by less than one percent of prostitutes, real estate was owned by two percent, and dogs were owned by another two percent.

easily been disposed of, leaving little or no security. In an economy where fuel for the winter months could easily exceed one-hundred and fifty dollars, the existence of a Yukon prostitute was tenuous at best.

Given the high cost of living, many Dawsonites combined more than one occupation in order to support themselves and their families. Many women combined incomes drawn variously as laundresses, dressmakers, waitresses, performers and prostitutes. Elizabeth Brooks, for example, listed her occupation in the census as self-employed seamstress, although her trade was described in no uncertain terms as "prostitute" by the arresting officer.<sup>57</sup> Whether she worked at both trades or only the latter is difficult to ascertain. Others certainly combined their activities and earned wages at other service sector trades as well.<sup>58</sup>

Some women combined the sexual trade with domestic service by becoming mistresses. As one woman contemporary noted, many of the men in Dawson had live-in "housekeepers or cooks" who were really their mistresses, often making it impossible to distinguish the

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<sup>57</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 18 April 1902.

<sup>58</sup>According to the Dawson Gaol Register, for example, Josephine Arnold and Millie Wallace Brown both worked as laundresses as well as prostitutes, while Annie Gallina worked variously as a "dining room girl and prostitute".

"respectable" from the "unrespectable" domestics.<sup>59</sup> This is remarked upon often enough in the literature, and for Jeremiah Lynch the matter was clear: "There was no honest occupation for women [in the Klondike]. Many went professedly as housekeepers to miners who were rich enough to employ one; but it was only another name."<sup>60</sup> For many Dawsonites then, there was no need to sort out which "dressmakers" and "housekeepers" really practised a trade that involved no needles and very little soap: they were all whores.<sup>61</sup>

A number of prostitutes supplemented their usual wages with proceeds from other illegal activities. Butler found, in her study of frontier prostitution, that the dynamics of the demi-monde encouraged women to indulge in dishonesty and crime.<sup>62</sup> It is perhaps not surprising then, to find that a number of Dawson prostitutes were also arrested for thieving. Maggie Richardson, who "maintained herself at different periods

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<sup>59</sup>L. Brooks-Vincent, The Scarlet Life of Dawson, p. 73.

<sup>60</sup>J. Lynch, Three Years in the Klondike (London: Edward Arnold 1904), p. 58.

<sup>61</sup>Although a large number of women reported their occupations to be housekeeper, dressmaker or laundress, for the purposes of this discussion, only those women found to living with known prostitutes or procurers were presumed to be prostitutes.

<sup>62</sup>A. Butler, Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery, p. 45.

by prostitution" in Minnesota, Vancouver and Seattle, was arrested for theft in 1903.<sup>63</sup> Annie Gallina -- Dawson's "Irish Queen" -- was twenty-five years old when she was arrested for theft in August 1900. A naturalized American, Gallina left an estranged husband in Seattle in 1900 to come to Dawson, making it the eighth in a string of cities in which she had lived since 1887.<sup>64</sup> Several other women, including Eva Terry Emilson, Stella Freudenthal and Jennie Mack were similarly convicted of theft, usually from their clients, although these seemed somewhat reluctant to report such crimes.<sup>65</sup>

Financial security was a critical issue for working women in the Yukon, especially as the long, harsh winter approached. For women in the sex and entertainment trades, the winter months marked a long slow season when there was little work, for the proceeds from the winter diggings were not available until spring clean-up. Indeed, when spring clean-up came, many of the prostitutes migrated to road-houses along the creeks, in

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<sup>63</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 11 February 1903. Richardson was convicted of relieving Edward Lecernes of one-hundred and eighty-five dollars in excess of her established price.

<sup>64</sup>Dawson Gaol Records, 14 October 1900.

<sup>65</sup>See Dawson Gaol Register. Eva Emilson Terry and Stella Freudenthal, for example, were charged with theft, 20 March 1902; Jennie Mack on 11 September 1902; Amanda Manson on 25 August 1900; Maggie Johnson and Maud Westwood on 11 February 1903.

order to gain the gold closer to its source.<sup>66</sup> Scarce supply and exorbitant cost of fuel and provisions required a good deal of advance planning and stock-piling for winter survival -- something not easily accomplished in the unstable demi-monde.

Prostitutes used a variety of strategies to survive the Yukon winters. Mabel Larose got around her problem of seasonal unemployment by auctioning herself off for the winter of 1897-98 in the Monte Carlo Saloon. Larose reportedly received room, board and \$5000 in exchange for her exclusive domestic services.<sup>67</sup> Another account claims there was a case where a Dawson paramour received twenty-thousand dollars for spending two winters with the same miner.<sup>68</sup> More commonly, prostitutes who could afford the passage went outside in the winter, plying their trade in the more hospitable climate along the American west coast. The remaining women found work as laundresses, waitresses and housekeepers, managing, more or less, to survive until spring cleanup and the busy season recommenced.

Women in the Klondike were a scarce and valuable

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<sup>66</sup>L. Brooks-Vincent, The Scarlet Life of Dawson, p. 74.

<sup>67</sup>P. Bertor., Klondike (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 172.

<sup>68</sup>M. Parrish, Nine Pounds of Luggage (London: Hutchman 1940), p. 21.



commodity. Just as Mabel Larose was able to capitalize on her sex and auction herself off for winter room and board, there are numerous stories of men offering to buy women for "their weight in gold"<sup>69</sup> or some such seemingly preposterous sum. A woman then, regardless of her respectability, was a commodity that could bring high returns in Dawson. For the women who came in under long-term theatre contracts, for example, while they ensured themselves winter salaries and employment, they were often considered the personal property of their managers. Just as the European prostitutes who were recruited by French pimps, these women's personal and professional lives were circumscribed by their relationship with their employers and lovers.

The hazards of the scarlet life were many in Dawson. Poverty, disease, violence, drugs and alcohol were all a part of a young prostitute's world. Typhoid epidemics were indiscriminate in their victims, but struck especially hard those living in the close quarters of Lousetown. Venereal disease, always a professional hazard, reached epidemic proportions in 1899. Other malaises were evidenced in the demi-monde as well. Josephine Arnold's wrists bore the distinct scars of

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<sup>69</sup>YTA, MS 82/97, "R.W. Cautley Papers," memoir, p. 53. Cautley remembered Bob Ensley offering the soubrette known as 'Little Blanche' her weight in gold if she would marry him. "The scales were set up in the M&M Saloon and the transaction completed."

knife slashes; a silent testament to the despair of a young black laundress and prostitute.<sup>70</sup> Another, Annie Gallina was committed for insanity in 1902.<sup>71</sup>

Personal relationships between men and women were difficult to maintain in the demi-monde of Dawson. Kate Rockwell herself reported that most of her colleagues in the dance halls were trapped by unsteady employment and by turbulent, often violent relationships with men.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, a number of violent incidents involving women of the demi-monde were reported in the local newspapers. Stella Hill committed suicide by swallowing strychnine in December 1898, after being jilted by a local bartender.<sup>73</sup> Myrtle Brocee shot herself in her room over Sam Bonnifield's saloon after an argument with her lover Harry Woolrich.<sup>74</sup> Libby White, a forty-three year old "promiscuous" woman, was shot by her jealous lover who then killed himself in 1898.<sup>75</sup> Such acts of violence and desperation were the extreme, but they indicate the potential dangers of the Scarlet Life.

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<sup>70</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 18 April 1902. Arnold's Gaol record shows detailed drawings of her wrists, showing scars of two distinct knife slashes.

<sup>71</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 11 July 1902.

<sup>72</sup>E. Lucia, Klondike Kate, pp. 98-100.

<sup>73</sup>Klondike Nugget, 24 December 1898.

<sup>74</sup>Klondike Nugget, 10 December, 1898.

<sup>75</sup>Klondike Nugget, 4 February 1898.

Many dancers and prostitutes had lovers who were also their theatrical agents, managers or pimps. Others, like Rockwell herself, took up with the gamblers, bartenders and musicians they worked with in the dance halls and saloons. Indeed, Rockwell knew whereof she spoke for she invested her savings in theatrical endeavors, first in Dawson itself and then in Victoria and Seattle with her lover, the penniless Alexander Pantages. She eventually lost it all, including Pantages himself.<sup>76</sup>

The benefits were not always negative, however, and in many instances women negotiated good terms for themselves. One wealthy Italian miner in 1897 reportedly entered a written contract to pay his "housekeeper" five hundred dollars a week. This same man was also reported to have "cleaned the town out of silks and satins" in order to indulge this housekeeper's tastes.<sup>77</sup> What she was required to do in return and the degree to which these were her own terms is unknown, but it seems clear that as short-term employment, this was a lucrative contract.

Of course, such "housekeepers" held their employment quite literally at the pleasure of their lovers. If a woman behaved inappropriately, she could be thrown out

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<sup>76</sup>E. Lucia, Klondike Kate, pp. 86-112.

<sup>77</sup>W. Haskell, Two Years in the Klondike, p. 359.

onto the street without recourse. This was exactly the fate of Babe Pyne, who had been living with Jack Glover in Dawson in 1899. When he tired of Babe's habit of "constantly drinking Absynthe and Whiskey", he threw her and all of her belongings unceremoniously out of his cabin.<sup>78</sup>

The community of the entertainment and sex trade was a large one, full of social networks. Within this network, many women found marriage partners and lovers -- for better or worse. As noted above, Marguerite Laimee gave up her evening profession to marry George Carmack. This was not an unusual occurrence, by all accounts. Many women of "questionable" backgrounds married well in the Klondike. For Laimee, it was financial security, rather than social acceptance that was gained, for Carmack the notorious "squaw man" was of questionable "respectability", despite his great wealth.

Lulu Eads was a dance hall performer who was brought in by a Mexican trumpet player named Lopez in 1900. She married Murray Eads, proprietor of the Monte Carlo dance hall and together they operated a Dawson hotel for the next twenty years. Never very "respectable" Lulu Mae was charged in 1907 with allowing loose women to frequent her

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<sup>78</sup>Klondike Nugget, 16 August 1899.

premises.<sup>79</sup>

Signor Lopez played in the orchestra led by Adolph Freimuth, a German-born musician who came to Dawson in 1900 with a theatrical troupe that included Kate Rockwell. Nellie Falk James, an English dance hall performer in Lousetown<sup>80</sup>, married Freimuth shortly after his arrival. Freimuth was, at the time of his marriage, making \$90 per week at the theatre, but managed to double his salary by also giving lessons and playing special engagements.<sup>81</sup>

One sourdough noted later that many of the dance hall "girls" married in Dawson and lived respectable lives and "people were not aware of their background."<sup>82</sup> This was true of Babe Wallace, who married then divorced Hill Barrington and "Dirty Maude" who married Sid Barrington. Dolly Mitchell, another dance hall performer met and married William Crawford Sime, who had arrived as a clerk for the Bank of Commerce in 1898.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>According to Coates and Morrison, the Eads ran the Floradora, later renamed the Royal Alexandra Hotel, but Lulu Mae was never accepted by "polite" Dawson society. See their The Sinking of the Princess Sophia (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 12.

<sup>80</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>81</sup>YTA, GR 82/86, Vol. 1313, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Historic Sites, Victoria Faulkner Files, oral interview with Adolph Freimuth (undated).

<sup>82</sup>ibid., Victoria Faulkner oral interview files.

<sup>83</sup>ibid.

Nor did marriage always ensure escape for women of the demi-monde. Gussie Anderson, born Lillian Green, was a performer who worked at the Palace Grand Theatre. Like Lulu Mae, she married her boss, the Palace Grand's proprietor James Hall. This match, although probably worse in the long run for Gussie than for Hall, was objected to by Hall's friends at the time. Those who opposed the union appealed to the NWMP who had him arrested and declared insane two days before his marriage.<sup>84</sup> The couple were wed, but Hall was a heavy drinker and the match was marked by violence and general unhappiness. Hall eventually committed suicide. Gussie Anderson's fate is not known.<sup>85</sup>

For prostitutes then, family and home life were almost non-existent. Not only did these women travel a significant distance to reach the Yukon, but most of them were alone. A few, like Josephine Arnold and Millie Brown, and Lucielle and Marceille Martin lived and worked as sisters. Another, Annie Gallina had a brother who was working for the White Pass Railway in Alaska. But most of the women were far from home, family and friends. A number cohabited with male lovers, but few were married. Those who were married, seemed to enjoy little conjugal

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<sup>84</sup>Dawson Daily News, 9 December 1899. Presumably this action was to allow Hall a "cooling off" period to reconsider.

<sup>85</sup>Dawson Daily News, 9 December 1899.

bliss. Significantly, only one of the fifty-eight prostitutes identified had any children living with them in 1901.<sup>66</sup> As will be shown, this is not surprising, for less than one third of all married women in Dawson had children living with them. It is likely that, similar to other stampeders, women who worked as prostitutes went to the Klondike seeking higher wages, and dependents were left in the care of family or friends outside. There is evidence of such a strategy for at least one known prostitute. Stella Hunter Freudenthal, a divorced prostitute from Minneapolis left her child in her home state of New York in 1900 when she set out for the Klondike. She spent the winter of 1901-1902 in Washington, either visiting family or supporting herself during the slow winter season outside Dawson. Freudenthal returned to Dawson in March of 1902 shortly before being arrested for theft.<sup>67</sup> Like the more "respectable" women, family visits for prostitutes were probably made only when the means were available, and what little money was available was probably sent south for their welfare.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. Olive Detling was a young prostitute who was living with her three year old daughter in Lousetown in 1900.

<sup>67</sup>Dawson Gaol Register, 20 March 1902.

<sup>68</sup>Georgia White (YTA, MS 82/53 F-5, "Georgia White Papers,") and Martha Black (My Ninety Years) are two examples of the many 'respectable' women who left their

**The Clientele:  
Patrons of the Demi-Monde**

If it is difficult to distinguish dressmakers from prostitutes and prostitutes from stage performers, it is even more difficult to establish the make-up of their clientele. It seems safe to say that it was male. Beyond that, there is little evidence to establish what proportion of the clientele was made up of merchants, professionals, tradesmen or labourers. Of course, it seems likely that the miners and labourers, especially during the peak period (after a long winter, with the product of the spring clean-up), were the largest group. Additionally, there is widespread agreement among the contemporary chroniclers that the clientele came from every strata of Dawson life, from the highest ranking officials to the lowest of the down-and-out.

There were, in fact, allegations of Canadian officials being seen in the company of (and even cohabiting with) women of questionable background, a source of yet another headache for the Laurier administration in Ottawa. Notable among the charges were that Commissioner Lithgow could be found in company "with harlots in the dance halls" and that the civil servant M.

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children in the care of others in the south for some or all of the time they were in the Yukon.



Girouard was living in "open fornication" with one Marie ("Montreal Marie") Lambert.<sup>89</sup> Not to be outdone, the American Consul was known for his frequent bar room visits, and was a frequent visitor to Lousetown himself.<sup>90</sup>

The average, steady customer, however, remains anonymous. Occasionally, miners like Frank Ogren, George Blondeau, and Edward Lecernes pressed charges of theft against the women after finding themselves relieved of gold dust exceeding the established price, but these are the exception.<sup>91</sup> In fact, when a number of old-timers in Dawson were interviewed many years later, many claimed they went only to the theatres of the later period, and knew little about the "goings-on" in the dance halls and cigar stores. Then, as now, few people admitted to associating with prostitutes and other people of the demi-monde, and so the clientele remains, as always, much

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<sup>89</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 659 file 3632, Rev. Pringle to Frank Oliver, January 1904. See also Pringle's of 31 July, 1907, regarding the "drunkenness and lust in official circles."

<sup>90</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City," McCook to Moore, 31 January 1899. Colonel McCook the first US Consul to Dawson fell into a snow bank and froze his hand on a trip back from Lousetown one night in January 1899. In his correspondence he refers to various business meetings which he held in Dawson saloons. One of these meetings in fact, resulted in a law suit. L. Brook-Vincent, in her Scarlet Life of Dawson, pp. 48-49, notes that McCook's (she calls him McDuff) exploits were well known to the locals.

<sup>91</sup>The Dawson Gaol Register shows four instances of men charging prostitutes with theft, only three list the men by name.

more shadowy than the women themselves.

#### Conclusions:

The demi-monde of Dawson then, bore a striking resemblance to the city itself. Its residents were multi-ethnic, hard-working, and poor. In the complex hierarchy of scarlet life, an intricate web of social networks was established. These stretched beyond the Yukon, encouraging others to join those already there, and provided the basis locally for meeting potential clients, business partners and lovers. From the vantage point of the rest of Dawson, women of the demi-monde were seen as parasites, waiting to relieve the miners of their new-found gold.<sup>92</sup> Although some working women married well, Dawson "society" was reluctant to accept them. The line between the "respectable" and the "unrespectable" was one that was sharply drawn.

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<sup>92</sup>J. Spurr, Through the Yukon Gold Diggings, p. 74.

**Chapter VI**  
**Missionaries, Mandarins and Merchants:**  
**The Professional and Mercantile Sectors**

Early in the formation of the community of Dawson City there emerged an élite that was perceived (and perceived itself) to be the upper echelon of Klondike society. Far from being a frontier town where all citizens were created equal, a social order developed in Dawson based on ethnicity, family, and occupation. Throughout the period, "society" drew its constituents from the clergy, government officials, and the growing commercial and professional sectors. It excluded Native people, miners, labourers and working women.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of churches, hospitals, schools and charitable associations provided forums for both social and philanthropic activity, establishing the line between the providers and recipients of charity and social reform. The development of a government bureaucracy, in addition to a stable commercial and professional sector, provided a pool of individuals not only accustomed to the strict social divisions so common

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<sup>1</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 46. In a passage quoted in the introduction to this dissertation, Berton gives a lengthy description of the components of the four main social classes in Dawson.

in more southern nineteenth century communities, but also eager to replicate them. This chapter traces the development of Dawson's professional and mercantile sector, and examines how these groups came to dominate and control the shape of the city itself.

**"Like Flocks of Migrating Geese:"  
The Klondike Clergy**

The first (quite literally) white collar work in Yukon was missionary work. Proselytizing first among the Native people and later among the miners, the Church of England held a monopoly on the souls of Yukoners throughout the early period. After the Bonanza Strike the Roman Catholic Church and the other Protestant denominations quickly followed.

Throughout the 1880s the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England established its presence in Alaska and Yukon in the form of the reverends Kirkby, McDonald, Bompas, Sim and Canham. These missionaries, their wives and assistants formed a small but close community of educated social leaders, although they lived separately in their respective missions. They also lived separately from both the Natives and the miners and prospectors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>See S.A. Archer (ed.), A Heroine of the North: Memoirs of Charlotte Selina Bompas (London: MacMillan, 1929). There were, of course exceptions to this, see the

As discussed in Chapter III, the Reverend William Carpenter Bompas was the missionary who perhaps had the most impact on the development of Dawson City. It was Bompas who established the mission for the Han near the Forty Mile mining camp in the late 1880s and later also served the Han at Moosehide and Dawson. When the young Richard Bowen arrived in 1895, Bompas' mission included Bompas, his wife, two young missionary women, as well as a number of Métis children.<sup>3</sup> One of the two young women was Miss Mellett, a Dublin-born school teacher who had come to the North in 1893 and spent her first year with Bishop and Mrs. Bompas at Forty Mile. Part of the larger community of northern missionaries, she then spent two rather rough years at Rampart House with the Archdeacon and Mrs. Canham. Mellett returned to Forty Mile in 1896 where she met and married the newly ordained Bowen. The community of missionaries provided itself then with a social network -- small though it was -- from which formal and informal networks were forged among colleagues who were also white, educated and "genteel."<sup>4</sup>

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discussion regarding reverends McDonald and Totty in Chapter III who both had Native wives. No clergy were appointed by any church to attend the spiritual needs of the non-Native miners and traders until 1896.

<sup>3</sup>NA, MG29 C92, "Reverend Richard J. Bowen Papers," memoir, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup>*ibid.*, p. 100. This group was also predominantly British-born.

In 1896 in response to the growing population of the area, the CMS appointed Bowen the first missionary to work among the non-Natives in Yukon. Bowen later remembered that Bishop Bompas was only too happy to delegate responsibility for the spiritual care of the miners, since he wanted nothing to do with the men he considered to have had an overwhelmingly negative impact on "his beloved Indians."<sup>5</sup> Thus when it became clear that a non-Native church was necessary, Bowen was the logical choice. Bowen opened St. Paul's log church and gave the first service in July 1897.<sup>6</sup>

Bompas was democratic in his disdain for the non-Natives of Yukon. Superintendent Charles Constantine of the North West Mounted Police noted soon after his arrival in Dawson in 1896 that the Bishop "has no use for any person unless he is an Indian. [He] has the utmost contempt for the whites in general and myself in particular."<sup>7</sup> Bompas was the exception, however, for disputes over land grants and Indian policy were eventually resolved, and subsequent clergy formed a close relationship with the Mounted Police and government

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<sup>5</sup>By Bowen's own admission, Bompas had by this time "lost both touch with and regard for the white people he met." See ibid., p. 100.

<sup>6</sup>ibid., p. 101.

<sup>7</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol. IV, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Commissioner, 05 January 1896.

officials for practical, benevolent, and social purposes.

Bowen was the first in a long string of clerics of all denominations who soon flocked to Yukon to minister to the miners and their community. When the rush began in earnest and families began arriving in the district, the other churches quickly established themselves in Dawson.

As one school teacher later remembered, the Protestant ministers in Dawson:

came and went like flocks of migrating geese in the fall. (The Roman Catholic priests, on the other hand, hung on for decades.) It was often said that the White Pass Railway and steamship line existed entirely on fares sold to the ever-changing procession of ministers, nurses, teachers and mounted policemen.<sup>8</sup>

The Presbyterians were close on the Church of England's heels, sending three ministers in 1897. One of these, the Reverend Andrew Grant was particularly well suited to Dawson life for he was also a medical doctor and could thus wear two greatly needed hats. Grant, unlike many of his colleagues, called Dawson his family's home for over a decade, and was a constant fixture among its social set. Grant built St. Andrew's Church and was instrumental in founding the Good Samaritan (Protestant) Hospital in Dawson. He also served as hospital

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<sup>8</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 17.

Superintendent for the first several years.<sup>9</sup> The Presbyterian Church was the only one that from the beginning carried on services regularly on the creeks.

As was the case in many southern Canadian cities, the Presbyterian Church and its Anglo/Scots members seem to have been front and centre in the "social" world of Dawson. In November 1900, for example, the St. Andrew's Ball was described as the "greatest social event ever recorded in history."<sup>10</sup> The soirée began with a march, complete with two pipers and led by the Commissioner of the Yukon, William Ogilvie. The toastmaster gave a Highland toast and the list of the invited included the local justice and his wife, the top-ranking NWMP officers, and other Yukon officials as well as a number of prominent lawyers and doctors and their wives.<sup>11</sup> That the Presbyterians were well represented in the social hierarchy of Dawson is also demonstrated by the membership list of their Board of Managers of the Presbyterian Church between 1898 and 1900. This list included several of the top Yukon brass including Gold

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<sup>9</sup>PAA, MSS 75.387, Fol. 171, file 5121, "Dawson City United Church Papers," essay by D.E. McAllister, Recording Steward, Whitehorse United Church, n.d. The Good Samaritan Hospital was built on land granted to the Presbyterian Church.

<sup>10</sup>Klondike Nugget, 30 November 1900.

<sup>11</sup>YTA, MS 77/51 F-59, part 2, "Walter Hamilton Papers." There were no francophones found among the names on this list.



Commissioner, Thomas Fawcett, the top Dominion Land Surveyor, J.B. Tyrrell, several lawyers, two doctors (besides Grant) and two prominent merchants.<sup>12</sup>

A typical example of a Klondike minister is perhaps best found in the person of the Presbyterian Alfred Hetherington. He arrived in 1898, the same year in which the contest for the souls of Dawson was entered into by the Methodists who sent the Reverend Turner northward from the mining camps of British Columbia in 1898. Reverend Hetherington supervised the building of a new log church and parsonage on a building site granted from the government reserve. Hetherington was typical of Dawson ministers in that he moved in a social circle that included other clergy, government officials and professionals. From among this circle, much as Bowen had done, Hetherington found a marital partner -- his organist -- Alberta Swan.<sup>13</sup> Like the other Yukon clerics, Hetherington soon found himself providing a wide array of services from visiting scurvy victims on the creeks to performing baptism and funeral services in town. It was a difficult and demanding life and the

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<sup>12</sup>YTA, CR 82/51 pt.2, reel #57, "United Church Papers," Session Record, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Dawson, 25 May, 1898. See also Minutes, 29 January 1900.

<sup>13</sup>PAA, MSS 75.387 Vol. 171, file 5121, "Dawson City United Church Papers." Swan had come in with her brother Anson a mining engineer and their mother and sister.

Hetheringtons returned south in 1902.<sup>14</sup>

With the arrival of the mainstream churches, a forum for respectable, middle class social and philanthropic activity was created in Dawson. This advent helped both to create and maintain social distinctions within the community. The Presbyterians were leaders in this move. In 1898 they formed one of Dawson's first charities, the Christian Endeavour Society. This group, probably the pre-cursor to the Ladies' Aid society, included a number of prominent Dawson men and women.<sup>15</sup> The Methodists established their own philanthropic Epworth League in 1898 and a Sunday school the following year.<sup>16</sup> By 1899 the number of women and families was rapidly increasing, not just in the Methodist congregation but in the community as a whole. By December of the same year there were forty children in regular Sunday attendance, a

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<sup>14</sup>ibid., essay by D.E. McAllister, Recording Steward, Whitehorse United Church, n.d. In 1916 Dawson's Methodist and Presbyterian churches combined because of dwindling numbers in the congregations.

<sup>15</sup>YTA, CR 82/51 part 2, reel #57, "United Church Papers," Minutes, 10 January 1899.

<sup>16</sup>PAA, MSS 75.387 Vol.171, file 5114, "Dawson City United Church Papers," Minutes, 31 October 1898. The Epworth League appointed sub-committees to organize prayer meetings, organize missionary and evangelistic activities, relief and visiting the sick, as well as for "Temperance and Social Purity."

number that soon increased to sixty.<sup>17</sup> Here then, was an opportunity for "respectable women" to participate in the public arena as Sunday School teachers and distributors of relief and visiting the sick.

One of the more unusual facets of frontier proselytizing was the insistence on holding to southern patterns of organization. For example, in order "to do efficient work,"<sup>18</sup> the Methodists created a Ladies' Aid Society at the outset. Unfortunately, in 1898 there were only nine women who qualified as "ladies" in the entire congregation, so the Dawson City Ladies' Aid Society for the first two years was "largely composed of men."<sup>19</sup>

The Ladies' Aid, its membership aside, was successful in raising money from the community for the hospital, repairs to the church, while at the same time looking after the needy and destitute.<sup>20</sup> Why Methodists felt they must call the sub-group thus charged the "Ladies' Aid," is unclear, although perhaps the above-outlined duties had long-been the responsibility of the women of more southern congregations. It is also possible that more women were expected to join the

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<sup>17</sup>YTA, MS 87/104, "Albert E. Hetherington Papers," History and General Information Booklet, First Methodist Church, Dawson City (undated pamphlet, ca. 1901).

<sup>18</sup>ibid.

<sup>19</sup>ibid.

<sup>20</sup>ibid.

congregation as the community continued to grow. Indeed, it would appear that this is exactly the case after 1899, for there is no further mention of male membership in the Ladies' Aid after this date. The Presbyterian Church also organized its own Ladies Aid but not until 1899 when it had a sufficient number of women to do so. As noted above, the "Christian Endeavour Society" organized in 1898 was probably the fore-runner of the Presbyterian Ladies' Aid. The Church of England also established its own Women's Auxiliary for philanthropic and social endeavours.<sup>21</sup>

Dawson's Roman Catholic Church was founded in 1897 by an American Jesuit named William Judge. Judge arrived in Dawson from Alaska and began his work in Dawson in a tent in the spring of 1897, moving by mid-summer to a two-storey log building that served as both a mission and a hospital. To raise money for the building, the hospital committee sold tickets for fifty dollars entitling subscribers to medical services at any time over the following year. Many Dawsonites found reason to

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<sup>21</sup>Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901, p. 58. The Directory lists four churches in town: the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist. Each congregation was reported to have a women's guild, which "accomplished much good last winter by furnishing various wards in hospitals and supplying necessary linen." Here also the presence the Salvation Army, Christian Scientists and Theosophists is noted.

cash these in the following summer.<sup>22</sup> Over the winter of 1897 Judge cared for up to fifty patients at a time, many of them suffering from scurvy. The hospital committee raised enough funds over the winter, however, to complete a three-storey addition to the hospital the following summer just as the Sisters of Ste. Anne arrived to assist in the typhoid epidemic. During this epidemic in 1898, the hospital accommodated as many as one-hundred and forty patients at a time.<sup>23</sup> After Judge's death in 1899, Father P.E. Gendreau of the Oblate Order arrived to preside over the parish and he remained the parish priest for a number of years.

One of Dawson's early doctors, W.B. Barrett, also arrived that same summer in time to assist in the epidemic. Within a few weeks Barrett had taken over the supervision of medical services at St. Mary's. He was soon joined by a second Canadian, Dr. J.O. Lachapelle and the two men remained fixtures in Dawson for many years.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>YTA, MS 78/18, "John Grace Papers," memoir, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup>PABC, AddMss 686, "Otto Nordling Papers," unpublished essay on St. Mary's Hospital by O. Nordling. See also clipping from Montreal Gazette (n.d., ca. 1948) The Sisters of Ste. Anne arrived in summer of 1898 and took over the operation of the hospital begun by Father Judge.

<sup>24</sup>YTA, CR81/45 pt. 2, "Sisters of Ste. Anne Collection," St. Mary's Hospital, Dawson, 1897-1898 to 1847-48 (unpaginated pamphlet), 1948. Dr. Lachapelle, one of the few French-Canadian professionals in Dawson, drowned in the Yukon River in 1924. See L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 163.

The arrival of Barrett and Lachapelle was a great relief to Father Judge who had been in a constant state of worry because the two doctors he had on staff were Americans and not licensed to practice in the Dominion.

The formation of a white, (largely) anglophone social elite in Dawson can be seen in the establishment of both hospitals. Here the complex network made up from the ranks of the clerics, civil servants, and professionals of Dawson can be clearly seen. The year after Father Judge founded St. Mary's Hospital, the Sisters of Ste. Anne sent four women trained as nurses, and these became the staff of St. Mary's Hospital and later also of the Roman Catholic School.<sup>25</sup> Sister Mary Zeno, for example, had gone to Juneau in 1886 where she founded Ste. Anne's Hospital and served as its head for 12 years before coming to Dawson to assist in the new hospital there.<sup>26</sup> The Sisters were not certified nurses, but "were extremely competent in caring for the sick, the result of long experience as missionary teachers ..."<sup>27</sup> These women also came to Dawson well-acquainted with the conditions of northern outpost nursing.

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<sup>25</sup>ibid., pt. 1, file 6. These were: Sister Mary Joseph Calasanz, Sister Mary Jean Damascene, Sister Mary of the Passion and Sister Mary Prudentienne.

<sup>26</sup>ibid., clipping, Whitehorse Star, n.d.

<sup>27</sup>ibid., pt. 1, file 3, essay of reminiscences by Dr. W.B. Barrett (undated), p. 6.

The first Board of Managers for the Good Samaritan Hospital was made up of prominent local Protestant men. Included in the list were Bishop Bompas, the Superintendent of the NWMP, two doctors, a lawyer, the Protestant clergy and several merchants.<sup>20</sup> It was this group who decided that the present level of medical services proffered in Dawson was insufficient and set about taking the necessary steps to create a second hospital.

Social status aside, there was in fact a real need for the creation and maintenance of social services. The Roman Catholic hospital, established in 1897, was sorely overloaded in its first year of operation. Thus it was that in the fall of 1898, partly in response to the great need and partly because it was the usual fashion, the Protestants built their own -- the Good Samaritan Hospital. Far from causing the usual southern Protestant-Catholic conflict, the founding of the Protestant Hospital was welcomed by all. It was also highly beneficial to the community as a whole, as one of St. Mary's physicians explained:

Both hospitals were carrying a capacity load during the following two or three years, while the greatest harmony existed in a friendly rivalry -- each

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<sup>20</sup>YTA, CR 81/16 folder 75, "St. Paul's Anglican Church Papers," Minutes of the Board of Managers for the Good Samaritan Hospital, 12 February 1898.

stimulated by the other to improve its services.<sup>29</sup>  
 This sentiment was supported by the Protestants in their own statement when they set about raising money for the endeavour:

While we admire and highly commend the noble efforts being made on behalf of the sick and disabled by the Catholic Church in the hospital already in our midst, at the same time we cannot but realize its inability, by lack of room and other facilities, to supply the needs of those unfortunates among us who require medical attendance and skilful nursing.<sup>30</sup>

Under the direction of Reverend Grant, the Good Samaritans opened their doors on the eleventh of August, 1898 with two nurses (members of the newly arrived contingent of Victoria Order of Nurses) and ten patients. Two years later, Grant was assisted by a matron named Miss Smith who managed a staff of seven nurses through the typhoid and pneumonia epidemic in the fall of 1900.<sup>31</sup> Between scurvy -- referred to by the English stampedeers as "Canadian black leg"<sup>32</sup> -- and typhoid, both hospitals were full through both winter and summer for the first

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<sup>29</sup>YTA, CR 81/45 pt. 1, file 3, Sisters of Ste. Anne Collection, essay of reminiscences, by W.B. Barrett, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup>YTA, CR85/22, "Good Samaritan Hospital Papers," open letter from the Board of Managers to the People of the Klondike, 31 January 1898.

<sup>31</sup>PAA, MSS 75.387 Folder 171, file 5121, "Dawson City United Church Papers," essay by D. J. McAllister, Recording Steward, Whitehorse United Church (undated).

<sup>32</sup>PABC, E/E C81, "Ernest Corp Papers," memoir (undated), p. 15.



two years.

Unfortunately, many of the victims of these epidemics were unable to pay their medical bills, and both hospitals operated "in the red" for much of the early period. From September 1897 until December 1898 St. Mary's Hospital treated 726 patients, less than half of whom were able to pay.<sup>33</sup> Some were able to work out an agreement with the hospital while others were not. Mrs. S.J. Taylor, for example, paid off the amount she owed St. Mary's for her care during the typhoid epidemic by working as a cook for the hospital.<sup>34</sup> Some people purchased limited medical insurance in the form of "tickets" in the fund-raising drive for the new Protestant hospital building. Thus, their fifty-dollar "donation" made them eligible for a week's hospital stay and medical care should the need arise.

Others made other arrangements whenever possible. When Martha Black found out she was pregnant Father Judge explained that including doctors fees and hospitalization, it would cost approximately one-thousand dollars to deliver her baby. Black, estranged from her

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<sup>33</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City Yukon," Statement from St. Mary's Hospital, submitted by Father Judge to American Consul, 01 December 1898.

<sup>34</sup>Sister Mary Joseph Calasanctius, Report to the Reverend Mother Superior, February 1900. Cited in B. Kelcey, "Lost in the Rush," (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1989), p. 119.

husband and unable to afford such a fee, decided she would cope on her own, and like so many other Yukon women, she delivered her son alone and unattended in her cabin during the winter.<sup>35</sup>

While women with limited resources struggled, women of the upper echelon used philanthropic endeavours as a forum for participation in the public affairs of the growing community. After the first major typhoid epidemic in 1898, the "ladies of Dawson" organized a month-long bazaar to raise money for St. Mary's Hospital debt. The "ladies" of the non-sectarian committee were drawn from the highest levels of the community and included the wives of local NWMP officers, prominent civil servants, lawyers and merchants. Only one of the organizing ladies was the wife of a miner. Mrs. McDonald was married to Big Alex McDonald, "King of the Klondike," a highly celebrated miner and speculator who was also the chief patron of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. The group was also largely anglo, with the exception of the wife of Justice Dugas, and her position was of an honorary nature in any case. Faith Fenton represented another exception, as the sole professional woman, but as the Toronto Globe correspondent, she was something of a celebrity and also accustomed to moving among the "upper

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<sup>35</sup>M. Black, My Ninety Years (Edmonds, Washington: Alaska Northwest, 1980), p. 44.

echelon. It is interesting to note that while Justice Dugas, probably the most influential Catholic in town was named Patron of the Bazaar, there were only two other male francophones involved. These were François-Xavier Gosselin, a senior government official, and a "Monsieur De Lobel" whose occupation is unknown. The rest of the group was made up largely of English Canadians and British (about seventy percent), with a number of prominent anglo-Americans also welcomed. Social status and ethnicity then, were closely connected factors in Dawson's social structure. The profits from the Bazaar totalled twelve-thousand dollars, clearing the hospital's debt and adding a much needed (albeit short-lived) surplus to its accounts.<sup>36</sup>

In further response to community need came the Salvation Army. Rebecca Ellery and the other members of the Klondike Brigade came to the Yukon with signed contracts to serve and save the community for a period of twelve months and they hastened to build a hostel in the first two.<sup>37</sup> Like many other Dawsonites, the Salvationists worried about the residents of Dawson in the coming winter of 1898-99 for, despite the NWMP order

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<sup>36</sup>YTA, CR 81/45 pt. 1, file 4, "Sisters of Ste. Anne Collection," reminiscences of Sister Mary Joseph (undated).

<sup>37</sup>G. Bloss, "Saga of the Klondike: The Diaries of Rebecca Ellery," Canadian Home Leaguer (April 1972), p. 10.

to the contrary, many people had either not arrived with a year's supply of provisions, or had sold them upon arrival. The Salvation Army built a shelter to alleviate some of the distress, with thirty bunks and meals furnished at "bedrock prices." At first they even attempted to offer food and shelter in return for work at chopping wood, but there was not as much demand for wood as there were men eager to chop it and they could not sell it all.<sup>38</sup> Unlike the other clergy and philanthropists, there is no reference to the Salvationists being included among Dawson's social circle.

**A Ruler and a Good Evening Dress:  
Public Education in Dawson**

Part of creating a permanent community, of course, was establishing schools. As early as 1896 Inspector Constantine noted that miners at Forty Mile were bringing in their families, "some leaving them in the settlement, others taking them to the creeks with them."<sup>39</sup> He remarked then that within a year it would be necessary to open a school for non-Native children and that this might

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<sup>38</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City Yukon," Report of the Meeting of the Citizens' Relief Committee, 21 December 1898.

<sup>39</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Lieutenant Governor MacIntosh, 25 June 1896.

induce still more families to follow. He cautioned his superior, however, on the question of staffing the new school:

Wages are very high, consequent on the cost of provisions. Salaries paid to a teacher in the east would be of no use here, a teacher would starve on it, and as most males get gold fever, sooner or later, the salary would require to be ... extravagant."<sup>40</sup>

Constantine's advice was heeded, although it was three years before a school was established, and one old-timer later noted that the finest teachers in Canada were drawn to work in Yukon "because of the large salaries and adventurous atmosphere."<sup>41</sup>

Similar to the pattern in which churches and hospitals developed, the first schools in Yukon served the Métis and then the Native populations. Schools for non-Native children were begun first by private individuals, then by the Catholics and Protestants. By 1901 there were three private and two publicly supported schools in Dawson City and by 1907 the total number of "white" children in school in Yukon was approximately three-hundred and twenty-five.<sup>42</sup>

One of the first private schools operated in the new

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<sup>40</sup>ibid., Constantine to MacIntosh, 25 June 1896.

<sup>41</sup>Martha Black, My Ninety Years, pp. 68-9.

<sup>42</sup>PABC, AddMss 1950 Vol. 141, file 6, "K.R. Genn Papers," Stringer to O'Meara, 27 July 1907. The full attendance was 500, but "many of these were in attendance for only a few days" each year.

Anglican Church and began receiving students in August 1898.<sup>43</sup> Lulu Craig, a Missouri teacher, operated this school which she advertised in the local newspaper. Craig had come to Dawson with her brother and family earlier that summer. Not content to sit idly, she seized the first opportunity to offer her services to the younger residents of Dawson.<sup>44</sup> By 1901 there were three such private schools operating in Dawson, although they are not listed individually in the Directory.<sup>45</sup>

The Sisters of Ste. Anne established St. Mary's Roman Catholic School in 1899, which, in spite of its name operated as a non-sectarian institution. In its first year of operation, St. Mary's registered nearly sixty children of all faiths. Sister Mary Joseph Calasanz was the first teacher and she was assisted by a lay teacher by the name of Miss Marie Connor.<sup>46</sup> Sister

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<sup>43</sup>Klondike Nugget, 27 August 1898.

<sup>44</sup>See her memoirs: L.A. Craig, Glimpses of Sunshine and Shade in the Far North (Cincinnati: Editor Publishing, 1900).

<sup>45</sup>son City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901, pp. 57, 66. Enrolment figures are not listed in the directory, but the Catholic school reported about fifty students and there are 84 pupils shown in Protestant school photo. The Directory and Gazetteer for 1902 states that there was an average attendance of 91 students in the Protestant School.

<sup>46</sup>Sister Mary Joseph remembered that she shared her salary of \$180 per month with the lay-teacher, see YTA, CR81/45 pt. 1, file 4, "Sisters of St. Anne Collection," reminiscences by Sister Mary Joseph Calasanz.

Mary Edith and Sister Mary Zenaide took up the teaching at St. Mary's in 1900 and were followed by reinforcements sent periodically from the Mother House in Montreal.<sup>47</sup> The staff at St. Mary's had "Quebec certificates," and while they probably also taught most of the French Canadian children in Dawson, it is unclear whether French instruction was ever the norm. The Protestants soon followed the Catholic lead, opening a public school the following year. The public school was the larger of the two, boasting almost two-hundred students in its second year of operation.<sup>48</sup>

The schools in town were fed and supported by small schools on the creeks, for many families continued to live on or near their mining claims well into the twentieth century. Serving these families were small schools at Grand Forks, Bonanza, Gold Bottom, Hunker and Gold Run creeks.<sup>49</sup> Teachers for the creek schools often seemed to come to their positions by accident. In the summer 1899, for example, Miss Lind arrived at Eldorado Creek near Dawson to visit her sister, wife of one of the miners there. She did not return to her teaching job

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<sup>47</sup>YTA, CR 81/45, part 2, Sisters of St. Anne Collection, St. Mary's Hospital, Dawson, 1877-98 to 1947-47 (unpaginated and undated pamphlet).

<sup>48</sup>Whitehorse Star, 24 March 1960 (clipping) contained in PABC, AddMss 686, "Otto Nordling Papers."

<sup>49</sup>ibid.

outside that autumn, rather she stayed to teach the children on Eldorado Creek in a tent schoolhouse. Among her charges were the Becker children, Willie Mellish, James Gibbs and Harry Arndt -- all offspring of local miners.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, Winifred McLellan, a young Nova Scotia teacher, came to join her brother Gordon in Dawson in 1900. He had recently established a grocery business in Dawson and Winifred "kept house for Gordon in the apartment over the store."<sup>51</sup> She later gained employment as a teacher on the creeks. In 1905 she was on Caribou Creek, where she had about a dozen pupils. McLellan was among the many commentators who noted the propensity of French-Canadian Klondikers to settle in groups. The village of Paris was three miles from her school at Caribou, and she expected to gain six "French children" the first semester.<sup>52</sup>

Not all the teachers were women, of course, and a number of men who were not persuaded by the mines were thus employed. The teachers, nurses, and clergy in fact made up a small social group of their own, as McLellan

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<sup>50</sup>E. Becker, "A Klondike Woman's Diary," Alaska (June 1970): 18-19, 38-41.

<sup>51</sup>YTA, MS82/32 F-1 pt. 2, file 4, "Winifred McLellan Papers," biographical sketch of Gordon McLellan by Walter Hamilton, n.d.

<sup>52</sup>ibid., Winifred McLellan to Maggie Electa, 08 September 1905.



also noted:

The gentlemen teachers had returned a few days before I left [Dawson] -- one of them Mr. Smille brought back a wife. Miss Zinkan is not going out as she intended, much to her sister's delight. The two nurses left last Sunday. Bella and I went down to see them off. So you see our crowd is somewhat broken up."<sup>53</sup>

Laura Berton, perhaps the most famous Dawson teacher, was one of many public school teachers to travel to Dawson under contract.<sup>54</sup> With the rush well over by the time Berton arrived in 1907, she found Dawson a rather settled and stable community. It was also a community with a well-developed social life, and a former prominent Dawsonite advised Berton to be sure to take a "good evening dress."<sup>55</sup>

Berton was accompanied on her trip to Dawson by a number of other professionals who would soon become part of her social set. These included the new science master, two other women teachers (there were four women teachers in the public school in Dawson that year), as

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<sup>53</sup>ibid., Winifred McLellan to Edna, 08 September 1905.

<sup>54</sup>There does not appear to be any formal channel for this recruitment. The Yukon Superintendent of schools contacted the superintendent of Toronto's kindergartens who in turn asked Berton if she was interested in the position of kindergarten mistress in Dawson. Berton agreed to try it for a year, at more than four times her Toronto salary. See I Married the Klondike, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup>Laura Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 15. Berton's memoir stands as the most detailed commentary on the social life of Dawson after the turn of the century.

well as three new nurses for the Good Samaritan Hospital, three Protestant ministers, the Anglican Bishop and a government telegrapher.<sup>56</sup> Here then were members of the flock of "migrating geese" who came and went in service of Dawson's residents.

Dawson was a place of propriety, whatever its reputation, and Victorian rules of behaviour were not abandoned with the rush. "Respectable" single women did not live alone, and the women teachers and nurses generally lodged together. Locating adequate housing was often a problem for such single women, although by the time Berton and company arrived in 1907 there was an abundance of properties for rent.<sup>57</sup> However, once this was accomplished, the women could and did entertain gentlemen callers, for there were few other respectable arenas available for such activity.

This is not a trivial observation, for just as the absence of men's clubs had the effect of leading all men, regardless of social status or ethnicity, to congregate in dance halls and saloons, there were few places for respectable young couples to socialize, and even fewer to court. It was unseemly for respectable women to visit

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<sup>56</sup>ibid., pp. 16-18.

<sup>57</sup>The population by this time had dropped from nearly 30,000 to 12,000 and the 4 women teachers secured a five-room, two story log house, fully furnished for \$25 per month. See L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 32.

men in their boarding houses, and of course, unheard of for them to enter a saloon.

Many Klondikers commented on the problems this created for both social and business life. As late as 1901, Henry Woodside estimated that fifty percent of Dawson's residents kept house only as a place to sleep; for they visited the city's restaurants and saloons for their meals and entertainments on a daily basis.<sup>58</sup> If Arthur Godfrey's testimony is anywhere close to typical, this was largely due to the poor accommodation available. He and his partner were sleeping in an attic which was "the coldest place I've ever seen."<sup>59</sup> Men like Godfrey lined up for invitations to respectable women's homes, although Martha Black remembered that the number of single women with homes in which to entertain were "so few that our number could be counted on the fingers of one hand."<sup>60</sup> As well, United States Consul McCook, a man accustomed to the privileges of the Philadelphia Manufacturers Club, conducted a number of his business meetings in local saloons and dance houses, a practice

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<sup>58</sup>H.J. Woodside, "Dawson as it is," Canadian Magazine Vol. 17 (1901), p. 409.

<sup>59</sup>YTA, MS 81/37, "Alexander Godfrey Papers," Godfrey to Hat, 27 November 1900.

<sup>60</sup>M. Black, My Ninety Years, p. 72.

that landed him in hot water on at least two occasions.<sup>61</sup>

As noted in Chapter II, class and ethnic divisions were strict in Dawson, and many occupations were dominated by particular ethnic groups. Like the clergy, the lay teachers were predominantly Protestant, anglo-Canadian or British and (in 1901 at least) about evenly split between males and females.<sup>62</sup> Many of the Anglo-Saxon, anglophone professionals employed domestic help who were from other ethnic groups and black housekeepers and Japanese cooks were symbols of status in Dawson society from the earliest period. As late as 1907, even the teachers "had a Japanese cook, as many Dawson people had."<sup>63</sup>

Automatic membership to the inner sanctum of Dawson society was part of a young school-teacher's package. This membership came, however, with certain responsibilities, including that of "holding a day." Every woman in the social set held a day and her measure of social success

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<sup>61</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City, Yukon," McCook to Hill, 13 April 1899.

<sup>62</sup>St. Mary's Roman Catholic School, of course, was staffed by the Sisters of Ste. Anne who were predominantly French-Canadian women.

<sup>63</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 31. The "little Japanese cook" soon left the teachers' employ and was replaced by a "stolid Swedish woman named Ida." The commissioner and his wife also had "immaculate" Japanese servants to serve at Government House functions in the opening years of the twentieth century.

was calculated in direct ratio to the number of people who turned up. Thus it was possible to compute the social standing of the entire upper crust of Dawson mathematically.<sup>64</sup>

This must have been a rather cumbersome obligation for the Dawson women who, like the teachers, put in a full day's work before coming home to entertain.

Still, the women moved within a social world similar to the one they had been accustomed to outside, and several of them found marriage partners from within their new circle. Laura Berton was one of these, although Frank Berton, as a miner and lowly government clerk, had little standing, a fact which her friends hastened to point out. Similarly, Ida Hastings, also a young school teacher met and married Walter Hamilton, a former miner turned postal clerk.<sup>65</sup>

**"Many Heartrending and Sickening Sights:"  
The Medical Profession and Public Health in Dawson**

Professions for women were almost as limited in Yukon as they were in the more southern parts of Victorian North America. In addition to teaching and missionary work, nursing was one of these limited options. As noted above, the Sisters of Ste. Anne

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<sup>64</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 31 (emphasis added).

<sup>65</sup>YTA, MS 77/51 F-59, pt. 2, "Walter Hamilton Papers," clipping from Vancouver Province, 07 July 1962.

arrived during the summer of 1898 to assist Father Judge's year-old hospital. The newly organized Victoria Order of Nurses (VON) also sent several women to assist in the care of the sick and injured in Dawson, and these also arrived in 1898, having accompanied the Yukon Field Force on a good portion of their journey.<sup>66</sup>

The VONs had come to the Klondike under contract, much as the public school teachers would later. These women, Georgia Powell, Rachel Hanna, Margaret Payson and Amy Scott had all signed up for two-year terms before leaving the south in May 1898. Once in Dawson, Powell and Hanna went to work at the Good Samaritan Hospital, as matron and duty nurse respectively. Payson was put in charge of the small hospital at Grand Forks, while Scott was despatched to the NWMP barracks hospital to assist the government surgeon. It was difficult and demanding work, even for these well-trained nurses and their duties were performed under less than ideal conditions. Powell herself noted that "we worked, witnessing many heartrending [sic] and sickening sights, improvising and planning, teaching and tending, night and day."<sup>67</sup> Powell,

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<sup>66</sup>NA, MG28 I71 Vol. 8, "Victoria Order of Nurses Collection," Georgia Powell to Annie Pride, 10 June 1898. See also NA, MG29 E105, Edward Lester Papers, diary entry 22 July 1898. Lester notes that the women who accompanied the Force were an unwelcome encumbrance as far as the men were concerned.

<sup>67</sup>NA, MG28 I71, "Victoria Order of Nurses Collection," Report of Miss Powell, District 44, 1898-99.

like many Yukon professionals, remained in Dawson for several years beyond her original term.<sup>68</sup>

Beyond the two public hospitals, there were other options for Yukon nurses. A few women in the early period ran small nursing homes with a few beds, operations which were reportedly less lucrative than private nursing.<sup>69</sup> Yet private nurses seem to have made very good wages, for in two separate instances, nurses earned ten dollars per day.<sup>70</sup> Still, this was never steady work, as the case of Georgia White indicates. White worked as a private duty nurse whenever she could find employment, but as noted in Chapter IV, she was often forced to work as a waitress to sustain herself.<sup>71</sup> This situation reflects the difficulty of finding steady employment in Dawson society and the problems associated with attempting to categorize people (especially women) by class and occupation.

Klondike nurses were not always women of course. During the typhoid epidemic of 1898, St. Mary's hospital employed any man who claimed even the smallest amount of medical training. An American veterinarian and an

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<sup>68</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>69</sup>YTA, CR81/45 pt. 1, file 3, "Sisters of Ste. Anne Collection," reminiscences by Dr. W.B. Barrett, p.6.

<sup>70</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 657, file 3232, Smart to Major Snyder (NWMP), 05 October 1902.

<sup>71</sup>YTA, MS82/57 F-5, "Georgia White Papers," diary.

English nurse -- both men -- were thus recruited and took their orders from the nuns and doctors.<sup>72</sup> Another young man, one Mr. Cunningham, was fired by the Good Samaritan Hospital on September 1898, less than a month after the institution opened its doors. He was soon replaced by one "Miss Latta" who was engaged at a salary of one-hundred dollars per month.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to creating an impetus for establishing a network to provide medical services, the epidemics of 1897 and 1898 resulted in attention to public health and sanitation. In an attempt to prevent another epidemic like that of the summer of 1898, the federal government appointed J.W. Good as Medical Health Officer for Dawson. Beginning in the spring of 1899, Dr. Good quickly began a campaign to improve sanitation and the water supply. Public notices went up ordering that:

No water for domestic purposes shall be SOLD or DELIVERED from the Yukon or the Klondyke Rivers unless from a point one-half mile above the mouth of the Klondyke on the Yukon River, or from a point on the Klondyke above the mouth of Bonanza Creek.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>YTA, CR 81/45 pt. 1, file 3, "Sisters of Ste. Anne Collection," reminiscences by W.B. Barrett, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup>YTA, CR 81/16 folder 75, "St. Paul's Anglican Church Papers," Minutes of the Board of Managers for the Good Samaritan Hospital, September 1898. This compares with office clerks who made one-hundred and fifty dollars per month. See NA, MG29 C91, "W.C.E. Stewart Papers," John McDougal to William Stewart, 10 September 1899.

<sup>74</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City, Yukon," Order of J.W. Good, M.D., Medical Health Officer, Dawson, 15 March 1899 (original



The same rule applied to the taking of ice, while the public was informed of the necessity of boiling all water taken from other sources for personal use. The Health Officer also instituted new rules for the cleaning of privies and for garbage removal, with sanitation officers "ever vigilant" in their enforcement.<sup>75</sup> Good also ordered the immediate construction of board side-walks and a system of drainage to prevent the knee-deep mud in the streets in the spring. Generally, these orders greatly improved transportation and public health simultaneously. Dr. Good was also the man responsible for ordering the medical examinations of prostitutes (see Chapter V as a part of his plan to promote and maintain the health of the community.

In the summer of 1898 the local doctors formed Yukon College of Physicians and Surgeons. The College subsequently required the registration of all "qualified" physicians.<sup>76</sup> This had the benefit of formally establishing the profession and regulating fees for services in Dawson. Creation of the College also had the effect, however, of barring many local doctors from practising since it admitted only a few Americans.

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emphasis).

<sup>75</sup>ibid., McCook to Hill, 28 July 1899.

<sup>76</sup>YTA, CR81/45 pt. 1, file 3, "Sisters of Ste. Anne Collection," reminiscences by W.B. Barrett. There were fifty members in the College in 1898-99.

American-trained physicians then, could not practice "as their licenses did not bear the stamp of the Crown,"<sup>77</sup> and many qualified doctors were barred from their profession. By the time of the Census in 1901, for example, there were fourteen doctors practising in Dawson City and only one of these was an American, Dr. U.F. Horn, who had been a resident since 1898.<sup>78</sup> This may well have been a deliberate attempt by the Canadian professionals to increase their own status and prestige while at the same time diminishing the competition for clients.

Dr. Luella Day was one of many American doctors barred from practising medicine in the Klondike. A graduate of the Chicago Medical school, Day had come to Yukon in 1897. Here, in May of 1898 she had attempted to deliver the baby of a miner's wife. The woman died and while the Crown dropped the charges against Dr. Day, she was prevented from practising medicine in Yukon after that date.<sup>79</sup>

The new licensing system for physicians was not

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<sup>77</sup>E. Becker, "A Klondike Woman's Diary," Alaska (June 1970), p. 36.

<sup>78</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. Of the remaining thirteen, ten were Canadian-born and three were originally from the United Kingdom. The Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1902 states that there were eighteen physicians licensed to practise in town.

<sup>79</sup>Klondike Nugget, 17 March 1898. I could not establish whether or not this case prompted the creation of the College of Physicians and Surgeons a month later, although this seems likely.

particularly problematic in town, where there was a good number of Canadian and British-trained physicians,<sup>60</sup> but on the creeks where scurvy, typhoid, smallpox and measles outbreaks were common, there was a definite shortage of medical help. As a result, many miners suffered alone in their cabins while many women delivered their babies without attendance or travelled outside in order to avoid exorbitant delivery and hospitalization fees.

Most of the local physicians moved among the social set of Dawson. Indeed, of the eighteen physicians and surgeons listed in the 1902 directory, six are immediately recognizable civic leaders. Dr. Bourke, for example was also the proprietor of Hotel Metropole, one of the better establishments in town. Drs. Cassels, Grant, Richardson and Thompson were all prominent members of local churches and charities. All of these men remained in Dawson for many years, as did one of the best-known local physicians, Dr. Lachapelle, who drowned in the Yukon River in 1924.<sup>61</sup>

Like so many other professional men, doctors were not immune to the opportunities of the mines. Dr. Randy McLennan, a local doctor of many years, gained his patients' respect for both his medical and mining

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<sup>60</sup>There were fourteen physicians still practising in 1901.

<sup>61</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 163.

expertise. He was appointed mining recorder for the Duncan district in 1909 and was still mining and doctoring when he moved to the Mayo district in 1915.<sup>62</sup> That McLennan was not unusual in his dual occupation is supported the reports of the first U.S. Consul who noted that "in Dawson and at the mines one finds Doctors, Lawyers, professional men of all descriptions, U.S. politicians out of jobs all found working at anything they can find to do."<sup>63</sup>

If Dawson society was choosy about who was invited to its social events, it was less so about mining partners. Dr. Alfred Thompson, one of the leading members of Dawson society and later a Member of Parliament, was President of the Eldorado Dome Quartz Mining Company in 1910. Among his partners were two brokers, a jeweller, a hotel keeper, a merchant and a dance hall proprietor.<sup>64</sup> Such partnerships indicate that while Dawson City drew very clear lines for social circles, it threw a much wider net for business purposes.

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<sup>62</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 658, file 3283, Wilson to Secretary of Interior, 15 November 1909. See also Dawson Daily News, 28 September 1915.

<sup>63</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson City, Yukon," McCook to Hill, 24 May 1899.

<sup>64</sup>NA, RG91 Vol. I, file 39, Reel M2826, Articles of Corporation for the Eldorado Dome Quartz Mining Company, Dawson City, Yukon, 23 December 1909.

**Mining the Miners:  
Lawyers and Surveyors**

While a gold rush conjures up images of masses of labouring men toiling on the creeks and digging shafts, gold rushes also created a high demand for a number of professionals. One of the most necessary was the lawyer. While it is often said that the prostitutes and camp followers "mined the miners," in Dawson at least, much of the miners' dust ended up in lawyers' pockets. And legally too! Witness the report of one lawyer's brother:

Frank has already located the pay streak and is fast approaching bed-rock .... I would venture to say (between ourselves) that his business for this year will be much larger than that of any lawyer or law office in Ottawa ... and I see no reason why it should not increase in the future.<sup>85</sup>

Of course, running an office was expensive in Dawson, no matter the profession. Often, office space could not be had at any price and staff for office work, when they could be obtained, drew wages of \$150 to \$200 per month.<sup>86</sup> It was a good thing then, that Frank McDougal's legal practice (referred to above) was doing well, for indeed, he found that he was obliged to pay his "office boy" one-hundred and fifty dollars per month. McDougal was still

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<sup>85</sup>NA, MG29 C91, "W.C.E. Stewart Papers," John McDougal to William Stewart, 10 September 1899.

<sup>86</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records," McCook to Hill, 04 September 1901.

practising law in Dawson in 1901.<sup>87</sup>

Dawson lawyers found much of their work settling suits for defaulted wages. This was a problem from the earliest period, when Inspector Constantine noted that there was no "machinery by which small debts may be collected except that of force."<sup>88</sup> Indeed, one of the earliest legal conflicts in the Yukon dealt with just this issue in the summer of 1896 at Forty Mile.<sup>89</sup> Throughout the period, the Yukon courts were clogged with cases for "nonpayment [of] wages."<sup>90</sup> In addition, since mining claims were, in effect, real estate, many transactions transferring ownership, surface rights, work contract, and partnership papers had to be prepared by a lawyer.

Like the medical professionals, it is no accident that most of Dawson's lawyers were Canadians or British subjects. For, just like the physicians, most American lawyers were not authorized to practise in the Dominion.

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<sup>87</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. McDougal's income, because he was self-employed, is not given in the census.

<sup>88</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Lieutenant Governor Macintosh, 25 June 1896.

<sup>89</sup>See for example YTA, MS82/190 F-18, file 5, R.L. Ashbaugh Papers, correspondence and affidavits in the case of Duncan MacKenzie vs. Albert McLeod.

<sup>90</sup>NA, RG18 Reel C2152, Dawson Gaol Register and Whitehorse Court Docket. See also NA, MG30 C43, "W.L. Phelps Papers." Phelps represented a number of these cases.

As a result, eighty percent (thirty out of the thirty-seven listed in the censuses) of Dawson's lawyers were either Canadian or British-born, and most of them Protestant. Among these were some of the most prominent men in town, including George Black, F.C. Wade, Bert Pattullo, W.C.W. Tabor and Harry Ridley.<sup>91</sup>

Members of the legal profession also participated in the social whirl of Dawson. Ridley and his wife were members of Dawson's early "upper crust" and it was Mrs. Ridley who, once back in Toronto, informed Laura Berton of the need to take an evening gown on her trip north to teach school. Indeed, Mrs. Ridley apparently showed Berton a whole rack of evening gowns she had worn in Dawson. Accustomed to taking a prominent role in civic affairs, the names of lawyers litter the list of board members of the churches and hospitals of Dawson, and their wives were well represented among the charitable dames of the women's auxiliaries.

As in most nineteenth century Canadian cities, the men of Dawson also divided among themselves along political lines. Because it was a federally administered territory, the Yukon's inner sanctum was usually dominated by the stripe of the reigning party in Ottawa. In Dawson, where so many Laurier faithful found themselves appointed, the stripe remained Liberal until

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<sup>91</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

after the election of 1911.<sup>92</sup> These included many friends of Laurier and Sifton themselves.<sup>93</sup> The Pattullo brothers, for example, both obtained promising positions in Dawson through the connections of their father in Ontario. Dufferin Pattullo, for example, accompanied Major Walsh to the Yukon as his secretary and was appointed clerk in the Gold Office after arriving. Here he moved steadily up in the ranks of the civil service over the next several years.<sup>94</sup> Dufferin's brother Bert was also promoted to the position of Crown Prosecutor through his father's Liberal connections in Ottawa.<sup>95</sup> All

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<sup>92</sup>There was a general purge of this group of patronage appointees shortly after the defeat of Laurier. See for the series of letters in NA, RG85 Vol. 663. For example, file 3879, Cory to Rowatt, 18 Apr/1912: "It has been decided to appoint Mr. Albert E. Lamb, B.A., L.B., of Dawson, as Registrar in the Gold Commissioner's Office there, in place of Napoleon Laliberte, whose services are to be dispensed with for political partizanship [sic]."

<sup>93</sup>PABC, AddMss 3, Vol.I file 9, "T.D. Pattullo Papers," Laurier Subscription List, 1904. This list reads like the payroll list of the civil service.

<sup>94</sup>PABC, AddMss 188, file 6. George Pattullo was an influential man who both Wilfrid Laurier and Oliver Mowat address in their correspondence as "my dear Pattullo." See also Robin Fisher, Duff Pattullo of British Columbia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

<sup>95</sup>PABC, AddMss 188, file 5, "George R. Pattullo Papers," J.B. to Father, 19 January 1903, "it occurs to me now that I ought to make a stab for the position [of Crown Prosecutor] permanently. . . . I don't know what strings can be pulled, but I wish you would take the matter up & see what you can do." See subsequent letter, J.A. Ross, Dept of Interior, to George Pattullo, 04 April, 1903: "I have recommended your son, Mr. J.B. Pattullo, for the position of Crown Prosecutor."



of the Yukon Commissioners and their top assistants before 1912 were Liberal party faithful, including William Ogilvie, James Ross, Thomas Fawcett, François-Xavier Gosselin, Napoleon Laliberte and others.<sup>96</sup> From the day of his arrival in 1897, the New Brunswick lawyer George Black led the small core of Dawson Conservatives.<sup>97</sup>

A number of lawyers, like so many other Klondikers, remained to establish themselves permanently in Dawson. Charles Tabor, for example, was a New Brunswick-born lawyer who arrived in Dawson at the height of the 1898 rush. Tabor maintained his well-respected law firm and was still living in Dawson nineteen years later when he was killed in an accident. Tabor married while living in Dawson and his wife continued to reside at Dawson after his death.<sup>98</sup> Likewise George Black, also from New Brunswick, maintained his law practice after the boom waned and went on to become both a Member of Parliament and Commissioner of the Yukon.

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<sup>96</sup>See E.F. Bush, Commissioners of the Yukon, 1897-1918, Canadian Historic Sites Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History No. 10, (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1974).

<sup>97</sup>In her memoir, My Ninety Years, Martha Black commented that there were so few Tories in the early years that the two-party system in Dawson was referred to as "the Liberals and the Blacks."

<sup>98</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 658, file 3318, Report of the receipts and disbursements for the office of the Public Administrator, Dawson, 1917. See also, 1901 Manuscript Census.

Roderick Ashbaugh was a similar case. Ashbaugh was a young Winnipeg lawyer who gave up his practice in that city to try his luck in Dawson in 1899. Here he remained for the rest of his life, establishing a successful practice that specialized in mining matters. Ashbaugh committed himself to the community as an active member of the Methodist congregation and the Liberal Party. He was elected to serve on the first wholly-elected Yukon Council in 1909, although he died in Dawson the following year before he could fulfil his term.<sup>99</sup> Ashbaugh was probably typical of Dawson lawyers who represented claim owners, for in addition to acting on their behalf in sale and acquisition of claims, he owned several himself.<sup>100</sup>

Surveyors also made a good living from the mining industry in Yukon. One claim owner reported, in fact, that he had paid one-hundred and twenty dollars to have a forty-six foot fractional claim surveyed in 1899. This caused him to remark, "By Jove, I would like to be a good lawyer or a good ... DLS [Dominion Land Surveyor] for the next two years out here..... The surveyors have more than

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<sup>99</sup>NA, RG91 Vol.1, file 66, Reel M2826, Smith to Henderson, 21 February, 1911 re. the vacancy on Yukon Council "due to the death of R.L. Ashbaugh who represented the Bonanza District."

<sup>100</sup>YTA, MS 82/190 F-18, file 24, "R.L. Ashbaugh Papers," Bill of Sale, #5 Above Hunker Creek, Anrie May Enright to Roderick Ashbaugh, n.d. (ca. 1907).

they can do here at \$50 per day."<sup>101</sup>

They were not all in it for the money, however, as the case of William Cautley clearly shows. Cautley was a twenty-four year old Yorkshire-born man who was working as a Dominion Land Surveyor near Cranbrook, B.C. when he was sent to Yukon in 1897 with the back-up contingent of NWMP. When the Department no longer required his services as a surveyor, Cautley took an appointment as the Mining Inspector for the Indian River District, even though he could have tripled his salary by working at his profession in the private sector.<sup>102</sup> The DLS men were appointed at a wage of one-hundred and fifty dollars per month, in addition to a living allowance (sometimes in the form of free room and board, sometimes in the form of money).<sup>103</sup> Although a surveyor by profession, Cautley took his government appointment seriously and he helped Thomas Fawcett in the chaotic Gold Commissioner's Office, sometimes acting as Administrator on intestate deaths.<sup>104</sup>

Private surveyors had plenty of work, surveying contested mining claims, residential and commercial lots

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<sup>101</sup>NA, MG29 C91, "W.C.E. Stewart Papers," John McDougal to William Stewart, 10 September 1899.

<sup>102</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 657, file 3072, Ogilvie to Smart, April 1900.

<sup>103</sup>NA, RG85 Vol.655, file 3005, Smart to Rinfret, 18 January 1900.

<sup>104</sup>YTA, MS 82/97, "R.W. Cautley Papers," memoir, p. 52.

and even timber berths.<sup>105</sup> Six of these advertised themselves as actively seeking business in the 1901 City Directory, and their advertisements indicate that many of them were themselves involved in mining as well.<sup>106</sup> One, the Canadian James Edward Beatty, since he was also civil engineer, worked on the construction of Yukon rail lines.<sup>107</sup>

#### **Capturing the Era: Artists in the Klondike**

A number of artists caught the gold fever as well. These people often did not really "fit" in with the social élite, yet they were definitely not labourers by nature. Often though, artists came to the Klondike as entrepreneurs, as in the case of Ernest Keir. Keir was a photographer from Wisconsin who combined mining with his trade as a professional photographer. Over the winter of 1898-99, Keir took photographs of the claims, cabins and businesses up and down Hunker, Dominion and Bonanza creeks, selling the prints back to the owners. Many photographers, in fact, found the Klondike a lucrative

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<sup>105</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 1523, file 3303, Affidavit of John William Renell, 29 October 1909.

<sup>106</sup>Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901.

<sup>107</sup>YTA, MS 82/390 F-119, "James Edward Beatty Papers."

place for business, and as late as 1901, there were six well-established photographers in Dawson who were advertising for clients.<sup>108</sup> Although large numbers of stampeders brought along their newly-acquired Kodaks to take their own photographs, the services of professional photographers remained in high demand. Testimony to this can be found in the large number of studio portraits taken in Dawson which survive. As well, several of the professional photographers produced published albums which sold very well in the south.<sup>109</sup>

Other artists were part of the general crowd of argonauts who simply caught the gold-fever. Guy Lawrence's father was one of these. Mr. Lawrence was a portrait painter and gambler who set out with his son for the Klondike from England in 1898. The Lawrences set about working a claim, but bad luck plagued the venture and the claim did not pay. Always a gambler, Lawrence senior took a serious risk when he wrote to his wife that he had just had his picture taken with "Ruth" (a river steamer). Mrs. Lawrence, convinced that her husband was

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<sup>108</sup>Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901.

<sup>109</sup>See Dianne Newell, "Klondike Photographer's Lode," Historic Preservation, 29, 2 (1977), pp. 15-21. Examples of these albums are: E.A. Becker, Klondike '98: Hegg's Album of the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush (Portland: Binford's and Mort, 1949); and anonymous, The Papers and Photographs of P.E. Larss, Klondike Photographer and Miner, 1898-1904. Juneau: Alaska Division, State Libraries and Museums, 1978.

"sleeping with a dancehall girl," set about selling the family home in England and coming to Canada. Realizing his folly almost too late, Mr. Lawrence quickly cabled his wife, sold his claim and returned to England with his painting supplies.<sup>110</sup> This incident indicates the sense of insecurity many men left behind when they dropped everything to join the gold stampedes. Given the slow and unreliable communication facilities of the period, such misunderstandings were probably not unusual.

Access to Dawson's conservative inner sanctum, as a rule, was not extended to artists. Certainly Guy Lawrence's father was not extended any invitations to society functions. The famous poet Robert Service was also largely unknown in Dawson except to those who knew him as the clerk at a downtown bank. The "bard of the Yukon" was widely acclaimed in the south, but it was only at the request of honoured guests from outside that he was occasionally invited to attend social events.<sup>111</sup>

#### **Accidental Tourists: Ladies and Gentlemen of Leisure**

In addition to the large professional sector, the upper echelon of Dawson City included a number of "ladies

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<sup>110</sup>PABC, E/E/ L43, "Guy Lawrence Papers," memoir, p. 21.

<sup>111</sup>This is noted by Martha Black as well as Laura Berton in their memoirs.

and gentlemen." These might be described as those people who did not work but who were unlikely to be picked up by the Mounties for having "no visible means of support." Two of these were sisters from Boston, Ella Hall and Lizzie Cheever. These two young socialites left Boston (and Cheever's husband) behind in March 1898 amid much fanfare. When they arrived at Dyea, they joined forces with several other people with means and together the party hired packers to transport their goods over the Chilkoot. This left the women free to enjoy the trail, and Ella Hall's account of her climb over the Chilkoot is unique among hundreds only in that she reported that their "sides ached from laughter" from rolling, tumbling and sliding down the other side of the Chilkoot.<sup>112</sup>

Ten miles upstream from what they decided was a very dirty Dawson, these two "hired a cabin built" obtaining the only two window panes in Dawson for its construction. Here they apparently established a restaurant and remained for at least two winters. Hall remembered it all as a great adventure, and noted that they suffered few real hardships:

We were not entirely cut off from the fashionable world. People were coming in all the time, and we received fashion papers a few months old to be sure, but they kept us fairly well in touch with our sister countries. We didn't change our way of

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<sup>112</sup>NA, MG30 C49, "Ella Hall Papers," memoir, unpaginated, undated.

dressing in particular.<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, Nevill Armstrong was of that class of men "manifestly unused to the life of a miner."<sup>114</sup> Armstrong, an English gentleman through and through, was more excited by the "first blood" drawn in Yukon (a seagull shot from the deck of river steamer) than he was by the gold fields.<sup>115</sup> He was so unimpressed with Dawson, in fact, that he remained only a few weeks.

Two of Armstrong's companions on the river steamer were Edith Van Buren and Mary Hitchcock. These two wealthy New York women went to Dawson much as wealthy adventure tourists travel today. Decked out in the most ludicrous costumes, they spared no expense in pursuing their Klondike adventure. Once in Dawson they established themselves in a huge circus tent on the banks of the Yukon River. Here they set about entertaining "Dawson's finest."<sup>116</sup> Such statements indicate that even in the earliest and most chaotic period of Dawson's development (at least among those who "counted"), a perception of class existed.

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<sup>113</sup>ibid.

<sup>114</sup>ibid.

<sup>115</sup>NA, MG30 Vol. II, "Nevill Alexander Drummond Armstrong Papers," diary entry for 14 July 1898.

<sup>116</sup>Mary Hitchcock, Two Women in the Klondike (London: Putnam's Sons, 1999), p. 166. Among those on their guest list was the American Consul and the Commander of the NWMP.



**The Downtown Crowd:  
The Commercial Sector of Dawson**

The mercantile sector of Alaska and Yukon was dominated by two large trading companies. Throughout the period, The North American Trading and Transfer Company and the Alaska Commercial Company owned the majority of the steamers and therefore held an advantage in supplying goods. The two big companies together, by one observer's estimates, accounted for about half of all the trade along the Yukon River.<sup>117</sup> Because the transportation season was so short (approximately four months), Dawson's merchants not only relied on the larger companies to transport wholesale goods, but also for storage, since they also held a monopoly on the warehouses lining the river front.<sup>118</sup>

Individual traders and merchants always existed, although often the pressure from the commercial companies forced them to the more remote outposts and mining camps. Joseph Ladue was Dawson's first commercial entrepreneur. Ladue was an American-born trader and grubstaker who had come to Yukon in 1888 when he was forty-two years old.

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<sup>117</sup>Tappan Adney, cited in M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store: Supplying the Klondike, 1897-1907, Canadian Sites Occasional Papers No. 26 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1981), p. 37.

<sup>118</sup>M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store, p. 49.

When he heard about the Bonanza Creek strike in 1896, he immediately moved his saw mill from the Sixty Mile camp to the junction of the Klondike and Yukon rivers. Here, instead of staking a placer claim, he staked claim to one-hundred and sixty acres of swampland and applied to have a townsite surveyed on it. The first lots were sold for fifty dollars each and by the following year the remainder were selling for up to three-hundred dollars. Ladue had an enviable monopoly, owning not only the lots on which to build a town but also the sawmill to supply the lumber.<sup>119</sup> In partnership with Arthur Harper, also an old-time trader, he formed the Harper-Ladue Townsite Company and quickly erected a two-storey cabin. This served as a trading post, saloon and real estate office during the winter of 1896-97.

Not surprisingly, Ladue did very well with this business and two years later he was ready to expand. With backing from New York financiers, Joe established himself as President and Managing Director of the Joseph Ladue Gold Mining and Development Company in 1898.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Deputy Minister of the Interior, 04 December 1896. The townsite was patented and ready for surveying by 01 September, a mere two weeks after the Bonanza Creek discovery. See also J.W. Leonard, Gold Fields of the Klondike: Fortune Seeker's Guide to the Yukon Region of Alaska and British North America; the Story as Told by Ladue, Berry, Phiscator and Other Gold Finders (London: T.F. Unwin, 1897), p. 132.

<sup>120</sup>Klondike Nugget, 17 August 1898.

They opened the company store in Dawson in September of 1898, and although Ladue did not survive to see the enterprise mature, the firm remained "Dawson's [most] reliable general supply firms and steam sawmills" for another thirteen years.<sup>121</sup> Neither Harper nor Ladue, after many years of prospecting and trading in the harsh Yukon environment, survived the rush to enjoy their wealth. Arthur Harper died of tuberculosis the year after the Bonanza Strike and Ladue of the same disease four years later.<sup>122</sup>

Subsequent Dawson merchants varied in size from the substantial general merchants to the small specialty store-owners. Joseph Gandolfo, for example, was a well-known fruit and candy merchant formerly of the Cripple Creek gold camp in Colorado.<sup>123</sup> Gandolfo did well in Dawson where in 1898 his "first shipment of eight tons of oranges, lemons, bananas and cucumbers arrived in an untouched market at \$1 apiece."<sup>124</sup> In a city where people

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<sup>121</sup>M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store, p. 37.

<sup>122</sup>YTA, MS 82/454, Yukon Order of Pioneers, D.E. Griffith, biographical sketch of Leroy McQuesten (clipping, n.d.).

<sup>123</sup>Mabel Barbee Lee, Cripple Creek Days (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984). According to the 1901 Manuscript Census, Gandolfo was a naturalized American of Italian birth. He had arrived in Dawson in 1898 when he was 52 years old and was joined by his younger brother Alexander in 1901.

<sup>124</sup>M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store, p. 38.

were dying of scurvy every winter, Gandolfo established his niche in a highly lucrative market. Running a business, however, was not cheap and Gandolfo reportedly paid one-hundred and twenty dollars per month to rent five feet of street frontage in his first quarters in 1898.

Insurance rates were high (in some cases insurance could not even be obtained) as a result of Dawson's frequent fires, further adding to merchants' overhead.<sup>125</sup> Fires destroyed large districts several times. The fire of 26 April 1899 was one of the worst, with one official estimating that in buildings and property, the damage totalled over one million dollars. The fire in 1899 destroyed the Bank of British North America and several of the hotels and commercial buildings such as the McDonald block.<sup>126</sup> Still, despite high insurance rates and the costs of rebuilding after fires, a good profit could be turned by capturing a corner in this highly competitive market. One of Dawson's long-time grocers later recalled that in the early years he did a brisk trade in import luxuries like canned oysters and salted almonds.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>ibid., pp. 40, 49.

<sup>126</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson," McCook to Hill, 27 April 1899.

<sup>127</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, pp. 35-6.

Little was really known about Dawson's merchant class until Margaret Archibald produced a detailed study of the commercial development of the Klondike for Parks Canada in 1981. In this study, Archibald speculated that most of the three-hundred stores and saloons operating in Dawson during the summer of 1898 probably came and went that same season.<sup>128</sup> Careful examination of the newspapers, city directories, and now the 1901 Census, however, indicates that there was a relatively high rate of persistence in the mercantile sector. Of the nearly three-hundred Dawsonites who reported themselves merchants in the 1901 census, sixty-two percent had arrived in 1898 or earlier. This is consistent with the persistence patterns of Dawson's population as a whole (see Appendix XIII).<sup>129</sup>

Local butcher Christophe Authier, for example, came to Dawson in 1898 and never left. Authier, one of a very few French-Canadian merchants, established a butcher shop in Dawson during the summer of 1898 when he arrived from Quebec. Here, like many other tradesmen, he remained for seventeen years, raising his own meat and dabbling in

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<sup>128</sup>M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store, p. 38.

<sup>129</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. 168 out of 269 merchants had been Yukon residents since 1898 or earlier.

mining investments on the side.<sup>130</sup> Likewise, Albert Lobley went to Dawson in 1897. He established a produce business and operated scows on the Yukon River between Dawson and Whitehorse until 1916 when he moved outside.<sup>131</sup>

The mercantile sector, like the others, also shows a high degree of ethnic clustering. Over ninety percent of Dawson's male Jewish population, for example, reported themselves "merchants" and nearly seventy percent of these men were European- or Russian-born.<sup>132</sup> This group tended to show clustering in their living arrangements, much like the pattern observed among French Canadian miners at Paris Creek. Local merchant Abraham Isaacs, for example, was a young Jewish-American merchant who came to Dawson in 1900. At the time of the census he was living with three other single Jewish men, Max Steinfeld (an egg candler), Daniel Levy and Max Krause (shop clerks). That these men were living collectively was probably as much a function of economics as it was culture, for except for the cabin owned by Isaac, the

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<sup>130</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 658, file 3318, Report of the Receipts and Disbursements for Office of the Public Administrator, Dawson, 1917. Authier's estate amounted to little more than the proceeds from the sale of some hay and two almost-worthless mining claims.

<sup>131</sup>YTA, GR 82/86 Vol. 1313, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Historic Sites. Victoria Faulkner files, oral interviews.

<sup>132</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. There were thirty-eight Jewish merchants in Dawson according to the Census.

group had between them four-hundred dollars in personal property. Levy and Steinfeld had arrived in 1897 and 1898 respectively, while Krause had only just arrived in 1901.<sup>133</sup> Isaacs became a leader within the Jewish community of Dawson, and acted as secretary of the "Hebrew Congregation of Dawson" in the opening years of the twentieth century.<sup>134</sup>

Many merchants who established themselves at the height of the rush became fixtures of the social and political core of Dawson City. Henry Macaulay, a "wholesale importer" from Ontario, for example, established his business in Dawson in 1898 and three years later became the city's first Mayor. The following year P.H. McLennan, local hardware merchant, became mayor by defeating general merchant Thomas Adair for the post.<sup>135</sup> In addition to the mayor, fifty percent of the first elected city council was composed of merchants.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>1901 Manuscript Census. The cabin was valued at \$5000.

<sup>134</sup>N.B. Stern, "The Jews in Yukon Territory and their Cemetery," Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly, 14, 4 (1982), p. 358. See also 1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>135</sup>M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store, p. 69; and 1901 Manuscript Census. McLennan and McFeeley established a new branch of their Vancouver hardware business in Dawson in the summer of 1898.

<sup>136</sup>Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1902. These were: Horace Norquay, James F. McDonald and Thomas Adair. The other councillors were Peter Vachon (bookkeeper), Thomas G. Wilson (miner), and George Murphy (occupation unknown) .

In fact there is a high degree of overlap between the early lists of members of the early city councils and those for the Dawson Board of Trade, including both of the above-mentioned mayors.<sup>137</sup>

From the earliest date, the commercial sector was concerned with promoting Dawson's reputation as a viable and healthy place to do business. To this end, the merchants gave aid generously in hard times. During the winter of 1898-99, when a combination of high costs of food and fuel, epidemic disease, and seasonal unemployment created a pool of destitute families and indigent sick, the commercial sector readily donated time, money and goods. Dr. Bartlett of the Relief Committee reported that Dawson's merchants were quick to respond to requests for donations, because they were adamant that appeals for government funds be avoided. Insisting that it was bad for the city's image (and therefore also for business) to accept government relief, the merchants insisted that Dawson was willing and able to look after its own.<sup>138</sup> This in spite of the fact that

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<sup>137</sup>Directory and Gazetteer, 1902.

<sup>138</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson," clipping from Yukon Sun (n.d.) and report on meeting of "Finance Committee." This committee was appointed to raise funds for the needy Americans suffering from sickness and unemployment.



"the season's output of gold was largely sent out,"<sup>139</sup> leaving few resources on which to rely in order to relieve distress within the community.

Other businesses also did their part to off-set some of the social problems associated with high seasonal unemployment. Saloons and dance halls provided shelter at night for the "hundreds of idle men [who] have been in Dawson during the winter."<sup>140</sup> After the last drink had been served, cold and hungry men were allowed by many local saloon owners to sleep on the warm floors, bars, and gaming tables.

The commercial sector could also form a powerful lobby on issues which affected their businesses. In 1900 for example, local merchant Charles Reichenbach spear-headed a lobby in favour of maintaining theatres and dance halls in Dawson. Reichenbach, who arrived in Dawson in 1898, was a German-born Jewish merchant operating a prosperous clothing business with his son.<sup>141</sup> The petition accompanying his letter to the commander of the NWMP was signed by nearly one-hundred local business men, including most of the city's merchants, hotel

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<sup>139</sup>ibid., Thomas McGill (Salvation Army) to McGowan, 01 December 1898.

<sup>140</sup>ibid., McCook to Moore, 31 March 1899.

<sup>141</sup>Reichenbach was one a large network of Jewish merchants in Dawson, who numbered at least thirty-five in 1901, sixty percent of them European or Russian-born. See 1901 Manuscript Census.

proprietors and contractors.<sup>142</sup> The merchants immediately protested interference with the operation of the dance halls, arguing that their businesses would be sorely hurt should this element be thrown out of work. Seven years later it was again the merchants who exerted the extra pressure required to gain (at least temporarily) a reprieve in the closure of the dance halls in Dawson.<sup>143</sup>

In a similar battle, the commercial sector lobbied on its own behalf for fair freight rates. After the completion of the White Pass and Yukon Railway in 1900, the Alaska Commercial and the North American Transfer and Trade companies shared the transportation monopoly on the river during the summer while the White Pass Railway took most of the business during the rest of the year. Taking full advantage of their monopoly, the White Pass and Yukon hiked freight rates in 1899 and again in 1900. Together the merchants boycotted the railway, forcing both government intervention and a lowering of rates in November 1901.<sup>144</sup>

Of course, just as lawyers and doctors dabbled in various other businesses in Dawson, the merchants also

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<sup>142</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 658, file 3417, Reichenbach to Major Wood, 26 November 1900.

<sup>143</sup>*ibid.*, letter for petition from Dawson merchants to Minister of Justice 25 April 1907.

<sup>144</sup>M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store, pp. 49-50.

tended to engage in diversified activities. Several merchants, including McLennan and TeRoller [sic], sat on various boards of directors in trust companies, stage transfer lines, power, and telephone companies. Nellie Cashman mined her own claims and operated a small grocery store at the corner of Second Street and Third Avenue in 1901. She was one of two women grocery store proprietors (there were twenty-nine groceries listed in 1901 city directory). Others, like Joseph Gandolfo were shrewd real estate investors,<sup>14</sup> while still other small business owners continued the age-old practices of grub-staking miners in exchange for partial interests in a paying claim.

The men and women who came to Dawson to establish businesses, like those who came to mine, probably failed as often as they succeeded and numerous accounts relate the stories of fortunes never realized. Also like the miners, entrepreneurs landed in a highly competitive market and most had to make it or break it in relatively short order.

Perhaps a typical small entrepreneur was Billy Nightingale. When Nightingale "made a failure of

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<sup>14</sup>According to the 1901 Manuscript Census, Joseph Gandolfo and his wife Josephine owned \$15,000 worth of real estate, \$8,000 worth of mining claims and held \$10,200 in personal property.

Mining"<sup>146</sup> in 1900, he started a modest hotel in Dawson. Nothing fancy, he rented out bunks at fifty cents per night for guests with their own blankets and two dollars for those without. He seems to have "made a failure" of hotel-keeping as well, for by the following year he was working for wages as a clerk.<sup>147</sup> Like so many others, Nightingale had been seeking his fortune in the Klondike since 1897 and the struggle had taken its toll, for although he was only forty-five, one of his friends wrote that Billy was "looking very old."<sup>148</sup> This was probably not an uncommon progression of affairs, for many an unsuccessful entrepreneur worked for wages long enough so that he or she could pay for a ticket homeward.

Arthur Godfrey from Vancouver was a hardware merchant who suffered the separation from his wife and children in order to try to support them. He established his hardware business in Dawson in the summer of 1900 and was satisfied that he was doing well, averaging one-hundred dollars per day. He was optimistic that in Dawson he "was bound to make a living" for his family. Unfortunately, his goal was never realized for he died

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<sup>146</sup>YTA, MS 81/37, "Alexander Godfrey Papers," Godfrey to Hat, 27 November 1900.

<sup>147</sup>1901 Manuscript Census.

<sup>148</sup>YTA, MS 81/37, "Alexander Godfrey Papers," Godfrey to Hat, 27 November 1900.

suddenly of pneumonia in 1901 before returning home.<sup>149</sup> Presumably many wives waited back home for fortunes and husbands that never re-materialized.

A similar fate befell Joseph Clearihue. He had been supplying miners in Glenora and the Stikine during the rush of 1898 before establishing a general merchandise store in Dawson in 1900. Like Godfrey, Clearihue was attempting to support his wife and children, as his letters show: "I have got to provide for you all and I must not throw up the sponge ..."<sup>150</sup> Unfortunately, Clearihue got "fixed pretty good" by his manager, who sold all the stock while Clearihue was out of town and then absconded with the profits. Discouraged, Clearihue sent his wife his last thirty dollars and assured her he wanted "no more of the Klondike."<sup>151</sup>

Many stampeders who were disillusioned with the prospects of the Klondike sold their outfits soon after arriving in order to buy their outbound passage. Overnight then, dozens of commission agents were born, clearing great profits through "buying from the

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<sup>149</sup>ibid., 27 November 1900.

<sup>150</sup>PABC, AddMss 695 Vol. VI. file 4, "J.B. Clearihue Papers," Joseph to Annie Clearihue, 29 September 1901.

<sup>151</sup>ibid., Joseph to Annie, 26 June 1901 and 01 September 1901. Their luck was not improving, for the thirty-dollar money order went down with the ship the Islander. Clearihue later successfully re-established his business in Victoria.

downhearted and selling to the stouthearted."<sup>152</sup> These businessmen did very well, and by the end of the summer of 1898, in fact, the market was completely flooded with merchandise ranging from rubber boots and woollen drawers to caviar.

A small but equally hard-working group of women operated their own businesses in Dawson's competitive market. Serving the needs of Dawson's growing female population, there were eight clothing and hat shops owned and operated by women in 1901.<sup>153</sup> Mary Anderson, for example, had been a retail grocer and provision dealer in Chicago before the gold rush. Anderson had come to Dawson with her husband in 1899 where he opened a Lodging house. The marriage, never very stable, did not survive the relocation and Mary started her own business, a ladies' clothing shop on Second Avenue, which she ran from 1901 until 1905.<sup>154</sup>

Another well-known millinery and dress shop was Summers and Orell. Catherine Summers was a young

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<sup>152</sup>This, in fact, was the motto on which the firm of Taylor and Drury based its business at Bennett in 1899. See M. Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store, p. 72.

<sup>153</sup>YTA, MS 86/83 F-198, "Isabelle Reid Papers," Isabelle Reid to Archivist, 21 August 1986. See also 1901 Manuscript Census and Dawson City, Yukon and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer, 1901.

<sup>154</sup>YTA, MS82/190 F-18, file 13, "Roderick Ashbaugh Papers," Anderson divorce case notes, 22 January 1903; 10 August 1905.

seamstress who came from Ontario to join her sister Mrs. Jane Orell in 1900. Orell had arrived the previous year to establish a millinery and dress shop in Dawson. The sisters lived together with another seamstress, Minnie Walker (who presumably worked for them), also from Ontario.<sup>155</sup>

Just like Dawson's ethnic groups, women tended to cluster in certain occupations. Women entrepreneurs in particular concentrated their efforts in the restaurant and lodging businesses, most likely because minimal capital outlay was needed for such operations. Women established these enterprises first as a small enterprise from their homes and, as the business grew, expanded into more commercial surrounds. The City Directory for 1902 shows, for example, that 11 out of the 16 lodging houses were operated by women, as were seven restaurants, cafés, and lunch-counters in the Directory of the previous year. Lodging houses, of course, were small operations, run from the women's homes. Only two women owned "hotels" in the usual sense of the word by 1901. Needless to say, none of the women merchants sat on the Dawson's Board of Trade or held any political office in the period.

The professional and mercantile groups overlapped socially and commercially. Managers and owners of the

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<sup>155</sup>1901 Manuscript Census and YTA, MS 86/83 F-198, "Isabelle Reid Papers," Isabelle Reid to Archivist, 21 August 1986.

large commercial companies, for example, gained automatic entrance to the inner circle of Dawson society, as did many of the smaller but equally influential businessmen in town.<sup>156</sup> Members of the professional and mercantile class reinforced their relationships through social and familial connections. The Yukon Tennis Club, formed during the summer of 1900, illustrates this relationship very well. The members of this exclusive club were all either merchants, professionals or wives of the same. Nellie McLennan, for example, the wife of local merchant James P. McLennan, played tennis with Maria Starnes, wife of the commander of the NWMP. Links between the "downtown" crowd and the civil service élite then, were common occurrences.<sup>157</sup>

The union of dentist A.J. Gillis and lodging-house keeper Francis Dorley also illustrates the connection between the professional and commercial sector. Alexander Gillis was a Nova Scotia-born dentist who came to Dawson in 1898. Here he established a successful practice and through it, met and married Francis Dorley. Dorley was a Seattle dressmaker and milliner who went to

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<sup>156</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 31.

<sup>157</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 1523, file 3323, Yukon Lawn Tennis Club, Petition to Crown Timber and Land Agent, 15 September 1900. The list also included the NWMP Commanding Officer himself as well as several other prominent merchants and civil servants and/or their wives.



the Klondike on her own at twenty-six in 1898.<sup>158</sup> At the junction of Eldorado and Bonanza Creeks she started a roadhouse where she "baked tons of bread and pies and made millions of doughnuts."<sup>159</sup> Moving back to Dawson in the spring of 1899, she invested her roadhouse profits in the Professional Men's Boarding House, "a pleasant hostelry which catered to the more respectable element of Dawson commerce."<sup>160</sup>

That Francis Dorley Gillis saw herself as having married "up" seems clear. After they were married, she wrote that they were "an active and happy part of Dawson society" until 1918. The couple continued to form a bridge between the professional and commercial sectors, claiming among their close friends Dr. Alfred Thompson as well as Belle and Marie McCormick, daughters of the proprietor of the Portland Restaurant. Prominent himself, Alexander Gillis was instrumental in founding the first Masonic Lodge in Dawson City, and Francis became the first officer of the women's auxiliary, the

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<sup>158</sup>F. Gillis, "The Lady Went North in '98," Alaska Sportsman, (February 1948), p. 12. Dorley had made an exploratory trip to Skagway in February 1898 before making the decision to return to Seattle to get an outfit together for the Klondike.

<sup>159</sup>F. Gillis, "The Lady Went North in '98," p.31.

<sup>160</sup>F. Gillis, "The Lady Went North," p.31. Her partner in this venture was another woman named Mrs. Moore.

Daughters of the Eastern Star.<sup>161</sup>

Martha Black, like Dorley, also entered Dawson society from the commercial sector. Tagging along with her brother on his mining ventures, Black went on to manage a saw and quartz mill established by her father in 1901. Raising two young boys and managing the mill, there was no doubt of her social class, for Black employed a "French housekeeper, wife of the mill watchman."<sup>162</sup> Black was also part of the "set" in Dawson, attending card and skating parties in the winter and playing tennis in the summer. Like Ella Hall and Lizzie Cheevers, Black had the latest and "most beautiful clothes" which she purchased from a local dress shop in Dawson.<sup>163</sup> Many social events, including the annual Arctic Brotherhood and St. Andrew's balls, required elaborate fashion. These, like the Commissioner's dinners, were black-tie affairs attended by everyone of good social standing. Presumably the ability to both obtain and afford such attire was a means of establishing the hierarchy of the social elite, for it is mentioned often in the women's memoirs. It was from among this social set that Martha chose her second husband, the New

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<sup>161</sup>YTA, MS 82/40-2, "Gillis Family Papers," archivist's notes in finding aid. Membership lists for the Mason's Lodge were not located.

<sup>162</sup>M. Black, My Ninety Years, p. 68.

<sup>163</sup>ibid., p. 69.

Brunswick lawyer George Black.

The mercantile and professional communities became bound together by common interests as well as by family and church connections. Gordon McLellan, a Nova Scotian and small businessman, for example, was a pillar of the Presbyterian Church. Starting out as a miner in 1898, he went on to become the proprietor of "Mac's Grocery." McLellan also brought his sister Winifred to the Klondike, and she became one of the first school teachers on the creeks, as noted earlier. Winifred, Gordon and many of their friends were active members of the Church and thus became good friends with the Reverend Pringle. Gordon was superintendent of St. Andrew's Sunday School for many years.<sup>164</sup>

**Sterling Reputations & Golden Opportunities:  
The Civil Service of Dawson**

The first civil servants sent to Yukon were George Dawson and William Ogilvie in 1887. The Canadian government had commissioned these men to survey the area drained by the Yukon River. Because of the large degree of mining activity in the area, Ogilvie and Bishop

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<sup>164</sup>YTA, MS 82/32 F-1 pt. 2, file 4, "Winifred McLellan Papers," biographical sketch of Gordon McLellan by Walter Hamilton, n.d.

Bompas both suggested in 1893 that the government establish a presence there. For this end, both men provided different rationales. The Bishop saw the need to control the selling of liquor to Indians, while the Dominion Land Surveyor advised a force for general law enforcement and collection of customs. As a result of their proposals, the federal government sent the first permanent representatives of the Dominion in the form of the North West Mounted Police under Charles Constantine.

Arriving in 1894 to administer sovereignty over the territory, Constantine was both commander of law enforcement and general government administrator for the next three years. Constantine's wife, along with the wives of his fellow officers and the clergy then also formed a tiny group of genteel women who "helped for the betterment of the social and religious life" in the region.<sup>165</sup> These were the forerunners of Klondike "society."

Constantine and his men set in place a system for the collection of customs and established British law in the region.<sup>166</sup> By 1896 Constantine found himself so

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<sup>165</sup>NA, MG29 C92, "Reverend Richard J. Bowen Papers," memoir.

<sup>166</sup>William Morrison, Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894-1925 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985), Chapter 3. For a more detailed discussion and interpretation of the establishment and eventual displacement of frontier justice and the miners' meeting, see Thomas Stone,

weighed down with administrative duties that he had little time to oversee his police force. He reported to his superiors the urgent need for civil and criminal courts to be established and an office "for the registration of deeds of title, Bills of Sale, Chattel mortgages and papers of that description."<sup>167</sup> Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, created this office as the Office of the Gold Commissioner the following summer.

The federal authorities reinforced this early contingent of police with a second contingent sent in under Colonel Sam Steele and also by the newly-created Yukon Field Force. The Yukon Field Force was a force of two-hundred regular army men sent in to maintain order and sovereignty. NWMP Superintendent P.C.H. Primrose reported from Dawson that the Field Force "assisted us by furnishing sentries in the guardroom and Bank of Commerce, head office, gold escorts and sometimes prisoners' escorts, which duties, with the small numbers of our men in Dawson, it would have been impossible for us to perform."<sup>168</sup>

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Miners' Justice: Migration, Law and Order on the Alaska-Yukon Frontier, 1873-1902 (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), Chapter 2.

<sup>167</sup>NA, MG30 E55 Vol.4, "Constantine Papers," Constantine to Lieutenant Governor McIntosh, 25 June 1896.

<sup>168</sup>p.C.H. Primrose, Report, cited in William Morrison, Showing the Flag, p. 35.

Of course, members of the police and field forces were not exempt from the temptations of the frontier life. William Morrison, in his study of the northern NWMP, notes that the "letter-books of the Dawson detachment are full of records of police who were punished for visiting brothels, being drunk in dance-halls and the like."<sup>169</sup> Indeed, the NWMP surgeon noted that venereal disease was common among the members of the force. Such behaviour on the part of the renowned Canadian police did not seem to draw much criticism from the community, a fact which has two possible explanations. Morrison claims that such "crimes of the flesh" (drinking and consorting with prostitutes) were easily tolerated within the frontier atmosphere of the Klondike. This explanation is rather simplistic, for it seems likely that such behaviour would breed resentment among, at the very least, those citizens who were themselves being arrested for drunkenness and for visiting disorderly houses. Rather, a more likely explanation is that the community trusted the commanding officer to deal with such offenders appropriately. The police records show, in fact, that recalcitrant constables were generally fined fifteen dollars, suspended from duty and given two months hard labour (chopping wood) for being found drunk and disorderly or

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<sup>169</sup>W.R. Morrison, Showing the Flag, pp. 66-7.

consorting with known prostitutes.<sup>170</sup>

In 1896, just in time for the Bonanza strike, Ogilvie returned and was kept busy surveying building lots and mining claims. Constantine and Ogilvie were joined by Thomas Fawcett in June of 1897. Fawcett took over the supervision of mining matters as Yukon's first Gold Commissioner, relieving Constantine of these extra duties. For the next two years the Gold Commissioner's office was the centre of political and administrative conflict. Establishing as it did a central place for miners to purchase licenses and register claims, it processed tens of thousands of people in a very short span of time and without a coherent plan. Thus, as one writer has noted, many of the mining disputes which arose in connection with this officer were a result of sheer chaos:

Records were lost; claims were recorded in the names of two different miners; and on occasion the Gold Commissioner actually registered two discovery claims on one creek.<sup>171</sup>

Laurier and Sifton filled the Gold Office and most of the subsequently created government offices through patronage appointments. Realizing the importance of the new region, Laurier sent a small group of hand-picked

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<sup>170</sup>ibid., p. 67.

<sup>171</sup>David Morrison, Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 13.

officials to provide administration late in the summer of 1897 with James Walsh as the first Commissioner. Walsh was a prominent ex-mountie, Liberal, and personal friend of Clifford Sifton, minister of the Department of the Interior. Walsh was accompanied by Judge T.H. McGuire, entrusted with the responsibility for the establishment of the new Provisional District Court of Yukon. J.E. Girouard, "Laurier's old friend"<sup>172</sup> was appointed Registrar of Lands in 1898.

Mutual friends notwithstanding, this first group of mandarins was not always congenial. With Major Walsh came a Liberal lawyer named F.C. Wade, another friend of Sifton's. Wade was an outspoken critic of Walsh, condemning him for wintering at Tagish and not arriving with the others in Dawson the previous fall. He criticized Fawcett for the disorganization and ineffectiveness in the gold office. It was also Wade who came into conflict with NWMP Inspector Constantine over liquor licensing and reportedly called him down. When another member of the group attempted to pull Wade into line, this man also became a subject of Wade's acid pen.<sup>173</sup> Such internal conflict within the new

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<sup>172</sup>ibid., p. 15.

<sup>173</sup>ibid., p. 13. Wade criticized Walsh for not reaching Dawson until late May 1898, and Judge McGuire for having the "unhappy faculty of sticking his nose into everything that does not concern him."



administration did little to instill confidence in the locals and there were daily complaints heard of fraud and mismanagement of government affairs. A number of scandals followed, implicating even some of the highest ranking officials, including Walsh and Wade himself.

That many allegations of fraud and bribery were substantiated is perhaps not surprising. The cost of living was high in Dawson, and Yukon officials were paid only slightly higher wages than civil servants in the south. The usual salary for a junior clerk in the Gold Commissioner's office, for example was nine-hundred dollars per year while a more senior clerk could draw twelve-hundred dollars. This was only ten dollars per month more than a comparable clerk drew in the south.<sup>174</sup> The officials did much better than the clerks, of course. James Langlois Bell of Quebec, for example, was appointed Assistant Gold Commissioner in 1899 at a salary of four-thousand dollars and twelve-hundred dollars annual living expenses<sup>175</sup> and by 1901, the Commissioner was receiving a

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<sup>174</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 656, file 3045, Hall to Conklin, 13 July 1898; also file 3046, Pereira to Layfield, 06 July 1898. The above letters of appointment show that Conklin and Layfield were appointed at \$900 and \$1200 per annum respectively. Their files show that both of these clerks were investigated for mishandling government funds.

<sup>175</sup>NA, RG85 Vol.656, file 3032, Sifton to Governor General, 18 September 1899. See also Smart to Bell, 29 November 1899. Bell was removed after an investigation in to his handling information and sale of mining claims, see Sifton to Governor General, 04 November 1901.

salary of \$6000.<sup>176</sup>

Still, low salaries and high costs of living tempted a number of civil servants to take advantage of their positions, much to Laurier's embarrassment. Taking in huge amounts of gold dust and currency every day, several young clerks gave in and helped themselves to a "golden opportunity." One such man was Thomas Middleton, who had been appointed to the Gold Office in 1898. This young English-born clerk later misappropriated nearly six-thousand dollars in mining claim fees.<sup>177</sup>

Still others found themselves accused, not of misappropriation, but of a conflict of interests. In 1899, F.C. Wade was Crown Prosecutor but was charged with acting in conflict of interest because he also privately represented several mining firms -- sometimes acting as counsel for the prosecution and defence on the same case. Reports that Wade had grown rich on mining revenue led the Laurier cabinet to pass an order restricting all officials from staking, purchasing, or sharing profits

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<sup>176</sup>NA, RG85 Vol.657, file 3232, Sifton to Governor General, 09 March 1901, re. Appointment of James Hamilton Ross as Commissioner of Yukon.

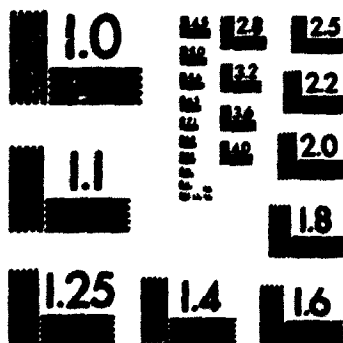
<sup>177</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 659, file 3568, Newlands to T.G. Rothwell, 05 February, 1902. Details of the fraud are laid out in Lithgow to Smart, 28 May 1902. Upon being discovered, Middleton committed suicide by slitting his throat.

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from mining claims.<sup>178</sup> J.E. Girouard and W.H.P. Clement both also conducted private legal practices outside of their civil service positions. As well, Girouard and another French Canadian, Judge Dugas were both chastised by the Commissioner for devoting "too much time to the acquirement of claims."<sup>179</sup>

For many young Liberals, appointment in the service of the government was an opportunity for an expense-paid adventure to the Klondike. Caught up in the spirit of the Rush, these men were not exempt from the temptations of the frontier. William Beattie was a young clerk who arrived once too often at the Gold Office in a "state of Intoxication" and acting "in a profane and riotous manner." Claiming connections in Ottawa, Beattie refused to be reprimanded by his supervisor. Commissioner Ogilvie handled the matter by suspending and fining Beattie before transferring him out of Dawson to the mining office at Hunker Creek.<sup>180</sup> Even the estimable Dufferin Pattullo, clerk in the Gold Office and later Premier of British Columbia, also had a penchant for drink such that Sifton reprimanded him for it when he

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<sup>178</sup>Privy Council Orders, March 1899, cited in D. Morrison, Politics of the Yukon Territory, p. 23.

<sup>179</sup>D. Morrison, Politics of the Yukon Territory, p. 23.

<sup>180</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 656, file 3063, Bell to Ogilvie, 19 March 1900. See also Ogilvie to Smart, 21 March 1900 and 31 March 1900.

visited Ottawa.<sup>181</sup> Still others, notably Philip Holliday, supplemented their incomes by selling whisky to Indians.<sup>182</sup>

Chapter IV identified informal networks based on place of origin which operated within the ranks of the miners and labourers. This was also true of the white collar crowd. George Nash was a young clerk, for example, who wrote home to give news about the rest of the "Ottawa crowd," which included Norman Watt and "Kid" Morrison. His father, Patrick Nash, had returned to Ottawa seeking a government appointment which he later received.<sup>183</sup> Such networks provided, in a place filled with newcomers, a system of connection which could link individuals together for social or employment opportunities.

To those outside the civil service, especially those looking for work, even a clerk's salary of sixty dollars per month seemed a princely sum when combined with the quarters furnished by the government. Beginning in 1899, the government provided housing to its employees rather than issuing living allowances. They first received room

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<sup>181</sup>NA, RG85 Vol.656, file 3032, Pattullo to Sifton, 15 March 1899.

<sup>182</sup>NA, RG85 Fol. 655, file 3005, Smart to Corey, 08 October 1907, re. the firing the Philip Holliday.

<sup>183</sup>NA, MG30 C6, "George Nash Papers," Nash to "Uncle," 20 July 1900.

and board there, but after October 1899 they received lodging and \$75 living allowance.

In 1900 the policy was made to pay officials one hundred dollars per month in lieu of board. Subsequently this sum was raised to one-hundred and fifty dollars, exclusive of lodgings.<sup>184</sup> In 1904 the grumbling over the living allowances of civil servants erupted into a formal petition for increases. Submissions were made to the Department of the Interior from the lowest clerk to the Gold Commissioner and supported by the Bank of British North America and other businesses. In a community where dentists charged "five to six times" the rate outside and where drugs cost four or five times more and baths average one dollar per visit, living allowances could hardly keep up.

Then-Commissioner Congdon supported the claims of his staff, stating that the living allowances were "ridiculously small" given the cost of living in Dawson.<sup>185</sup> The statements of monthly expenses Congdon sent to the Minister of the Interior ranged from \$170 for a clerk supporting his wife and child to \$456 for the Territorial Registrar to support his wife, five children and a servant. Wrote F.A.H. Fysh:

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<sup>184</sup>NA, RG85 Vol. 655, file 3005, internal memo to Rowatt, 23 January 1917.

<sup>185</sup>NA, RG85 Vol.655, file 3005, Congdon to Rowat, April 1904.

My wife does her own house work and is very economical and only by living this way are we [the couple and their three children] able to live within the salary and living allowance on what I receive.<sup>186</sup>

Many men did not bring their families in, arranging instead to have the Department of Interior pay a portion of their salaries to their wives at home.

The merchants of Dawson supported submissions of the government employees with a petition of their own. Always a strong lobby, the merchants' petition submitted that "the salaries, reduced as intended, will not permit any of those officials and employees who are married and have to sustain their families, to meet their current expenses..." Signed by approximately forty merchants and businessmen, the petition also contended that maintaining adequate salaries would ensure that officials would not be tempted to speculate in other affairs.<sup>187</sup>

William Cautley, one of the Department of Interior's Dominion Land Surveyors, left a memoir that reveals much about the life of single male civil servants in Dawson at the turn of the century. He remembered, for example, that the social life of Dawson offered rather less than

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<sup>186</sup>*ibid.*, "Estimate of F.A. H. Fysh, Living Expenses for one month, married man with family of three small children," March 1904. Married men received living allowances that were slightly higher (three-hundred dollars more per annum) than single men.

<sup>187</sup>*ibid.*, Merchants of Dawson to Governor General of Canada, 02 July 1904.

that to which they were accustomed in the more southerly cities of the Dominion:

In those days there were no clubs, no private houses to which one might be invited, no place to which one could invite one's friends. My own quarters ... consisted of a small roughly-boarded room in the Gold Commissioner's staff house.<sup>188</sup>

Instead, even the most respectable single men "hung out" at the M&M, the North Star, the Aurora, the Monte Carlo and the Alhambra saloons. Each of these establishments had the attraction of some combination of bar, gambling room, dance hall, or vaudeville theatre.<sup>189</sup> On the creeks social life was even more restricted and another surveyor remembered a long stint on Hunker Creek, when "the evenings were long and dreary" and there was "nothing to read except a Bible."<sup>190</sup>

#### **The Personal and the Political: Government and Politics of the Territory**

Yukon was officially made a Territory by Parliament in 1898, complete with executive, legislative and judicial bodies.<sup>191</sup> A Commissioner and six appointees

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<sup>188</sup>YTA, MS 82/97, "R.W. Cautley Papers," memoir, p. 54.

<sup>189</sup>ibid., p. 54.

<sup>190</sup>PABC, AddMss 1158, "Ronald Weir Papers," memoir of John McGregor, p. 7.

<sup>191</sup>Canada, An Act to Provide for the Government of the Yukon Territory, 1898.



became the Yukon Council. The Council consisted of the Crown Prosecutor, the Gold Commissioner, the Mining Inspector and some minor officials. When William Ogilvie replaced Walsh in the late summer of 1898, he selected for his council F.C. Wade (Legal Adviser), J.E. Girouard (Registrar of Lands), T.H. McGuire (Judge), and Sam Steele, commander of the NWMP. After the scandals of the summer of 1898, Wade and McGuire were replaced both on Council and in office by W.H.P. Clement and C.A. Dugas respectively.<sup>192</sup>

There was, just as there was in the south, always some French-English tension among the mandarins and the French Canadians appointed by Laurier could not always get along with the English appointees of Sifton. Dugas and Girouard, for example, were the lowest paid members of the Council and urged Laurier to raise their pay and appoint more French Canadian civil servants. One scholar has also noted that at times this "race and religion" issue spread to the society at large. This can be seen in the split over the hospital and schools, where there were often allegations of favouritism.<sup>193</sup>

Ethnicity was an important component of Yukon local politics throughout the period. Max Landreville and E.J.

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<sup>192</sup>D. Morrison, Politics of the Yukon Territory, p. 21.

<sup>193</sup>ibid., p. 24.

Livernash, for example, represented French Canadian and American miners respectively in the lobby to have the mining laws changed in 1898. George Armstrong and Colonel Donald McGregor, two Scots-Canadians, led the movement of the "Citizens' Committee" in the summer of 1898 to get representation in Ottawa in September 1898. In March 1900, the exclusively anglophone membership<sup>194</sup> of this committee was augmented by the addition of lawyer Auguste Noel and Alex Prudhomme.

The French-English fact became a permanent part of Yukon politics when Prudhomme and Arthur Wilson were elected as the Yukon's first councillors in 1901. Wilson was a Liberal who joined the rush in 1897 from Nanaimo where he was a coal miner and municipal councillor. Prudhomme was a Conservative from Quebec who arrived in 1897 and had been a miner before establishing himself as a contractor and builder. Thomas O'Brien, one of the wealthiest hotel and saloon owners in Dawson,<sup>195</sup> ran against barrister August Noel. Each ticket then, had one English-speaking and one French-speaking candidate.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup>Among these were the miners A.D. Williams and James Sturgeon, Lawyer C.M. Woodward, banker T. McMullen, stenographer Joseph Clarke, and mine owner Big Alex McDonald.

<sup>195</sup>The 1901 Manuscript Census reports O'Brien's asset to include \$7200 in real estate, \$15,000 in mining claims, and private property in excess of \$142,000.

<sup>196</sup>D. Morrison, Politics of the Yukon Territory, p. 35.

The same system was operating two years later when five men were chosen for a two-year term on the Yukon Council. In Dawson Dr. Alfred Thompson and Joseph Clarke defeated Alex Prudhomme. The men who successfully contested these positions were largely from the professional and commercial sector, calculated by David Morrison at over eighty percent for the period 1901-1908.<sup>197</sup>

One of the local elite was the top ranking American official, the United States Consul to Dawson. Like most of the higher circle he moved in, this official was British-born. Colonel James McCook was an Irish-born entrepreneur with close ties to President McKinley who appointed him to the post in 1898.<sup>198</sup> The American Consul gained automatic entrance to the inner sanctum of Dawson. McCook and his successors were on the invitation lists to all the major social functions, including the fancy "Bal Poudre" held in the winter of 1904.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup>D. Morrison, Politics of the Yukon Territory, Appendices "C" and "D".

<sup>198</sup>NL, G36, Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson," McCook to Hill, 26 April 1899: "C.C. Harrison president of the University of Pennsylvania, a personal friend of the President has known me for over 20 years and member of the Manufacturers Club of Philadelphia to which I belonged almost since its organization and some of its members called on the President with me."

<sup>199</sup>M. Black, My Ninety Years, p.75. Mrs. Bergholz, wife of the US Consul was seated next to Mrs. Wood, wife of the Commanding Officer of the NWMP.

McCook soon found it necessary to appoint a Vice Consul -- someone better acquainted with mining matters. He found this in Ronald Morrison, a well-connected man of the inner circle. Morrison was a naturalized American of Canadian birth and a veteran of the Colorado mining camps. He was also a partner of Big Alex McDonald and a board member of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>200</sup> Here then was another link between the government and professional sector and the "downtown crowd." For, as noted above, a large proportion of the merchants of Dawson were American, while the majority of the civil service and professional sector were Canadian and British. McCook at first was well integrated in the social and political world of Dawson society, presiding himself over the farewell banquet of Thomas Fawcett, the Gold Commissioner who left under a cloud of accusations.<sup>201</sup>

Similarly, "Klondike Joe" Boyle moved at every social level, despite a questionable background. While this American native had been both a sailor and a prize-fight promoter, he also made a great deal of money in his

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<sup>200</sup>NL, G36 Reel #1, "United States Consul Records, Dawson," McCook to Moore, 03 September 1898. Morrison was born in Nova Scotia, and had moved to Colorado where he was naturalized a number of years earlier. See White and McCaul to McCook, 01 August 1899.

<sup>201</sup>*ibid.*, McCook to Moore, 30 March 1899. This participation led McCook to come under great fire by the pro-American newspapers in Dawson who attacked him for supporting what they called a corrupt and anti-democratic Yukon bureaucracy.

mining ventures, bringing in the largest of the Yukon dredges and later raising money for a Yukon battalion for World War One. Klondike Joe was also something of a celebrity in Yukon, and he was active in promoting Dawson "outside" as a place to live and to do business.<sup>202</sup> Thus, like Big Alex McDonald, Joe was received from Lousetown to Government House.

#### Conclusions:

By 1901 then, Dawson City boasted the institutions and services expected in like-sized southern cities. It had two large hospitals and schools as well as several private operations of each. It had two libraries, four new church buildings (each with a substantial congregation) and a new system of drainage, sidewalks, and public health. It also had a well-developed social set, drawn from the official, professional and commercial sectors, which was responsible for seeing that such institutions and services were provided and maintained. These three sub-groups each played a part in the institutional and social development of the community. The clergy and the professionals together established and

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<sup>202</sup>See L. Taylor, The Sourdough and the Queen: The Many Lives of Klondike Joe Boyle (Toronto: Methuen, 1983).

maintained the community's hospitals, schools, and poor relief. The officials and civil servants coordinated the legal and bureaucratic development, while the mercantile sector was involved in all of the above as well as in promoting the city to others.

These three groups formed the basis of what might be loosely termed the upper and middle classes of Dawson, beginning with the Commissioner and his inner circle and ending down to the small entrepreneurs and teachers and nurses. Within this social scale, there was some fluidity as people moved from professions to labour (doctors who became miners, for example) and from labour to vast wealth (miners who became wealthy entrepreneurs like Alex McDonald). Still, in general, the community determined its members' social standing by ethnicity (the majority were Canadian or British-born, Anglo-Saxons and Protestant) and occupation. From this formula was established what a local physician referred to as the "Nucleus of Four-Hundred," a group of couples and families of similar backgrounds who entertained and socialized together.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>203</sup>YTA, CR81/45, pt.1 file 3, "Sisters of Ste. Anne papers," W.T. Barrett, reminiscences, p. 9.

**Chapter VII**  
**Conclusions:**  
**Culture, Class and Community in Dawson City**

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In many ways Dawson City was an "instant" city. On the site of a Han fish camp, a town of thirty-thousand souls sprang up in the space of little more than a year. Almost all of these people were newcomers, not just to Dawson, but to the Klondike region as well. They came to Dawson from the four corners of the world, the majority of them from outside Canada's borders. Together they built a city in the wilderness, a lasting community in which many of them permanently settled. By 1901 this community was relatively stable, boasting a full-time population of about ten-thousand people.

In this study I set out to identify the average Klondikers and to learn something about what it meant to them to have been part of the Great Klondike Gold Rush. For it seems clear by the hundreds of memoirs and diaries written in the period that Klondikers were well aware that they were participants in an historic event. I also looked beneath the surface of the community by asking questions about where these people came from and what role they played in establishing a community in the far northern wilderness. To do this, I examined four

components of the new community: Native people, miners and other labourers, prostitutes and other professionals of the demi-monde, as well as the professional and business sectors. The results of this investigation showed that many previous assumptions about the Klondike were incorrect.

Klondike society was cosmopolitan. While several authorities on the Yukon have assumed that the vast majority of Klondikers were Americans, this is not the case. And while Canadian- and American-born residents together made up about two-thirds of the population, fully one-third reported being foreign-born.<sup>1</sup> By comparing several sets of data, it is clear that this figure remained constant throughout the period under study. As well, many of these ethnic groups demonstrate a high degree of occupational clustering. Assumptions about the male-dominated frontier held true, although this was definitely not what James Weppler has called a "community of men."<sup>2</sup> While the majority of the members of this community were men, a fact that did not change significantly in the period under study, the potential effects of such a preponderance of males was mitigated by

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<sup>1</sup>This compares with an eighty-percen' native-American population in Cripple Creek, Colorado.

<sup>2</sup>James Weppler, Yukon Territory: A Community of Men, National History Sites Manuscript Report No.9. (Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1969).



a surprisingly large number of families.

Unlike Ralph Mann and Leanne Sander, I found no correlation between marital status and persistence in this mining community.<sup>3</sup> The proportion of married people, in fact, was found to be identical among the "persistent" and the population as a whole: thirty-two percent. In Dawson, while women tended to be among the newer residents, they nevertheless represented a full twelve percent of the persistent population.<sup>4</sup> This study also found that there were more families present in the Klondike than has been previously recognized and that these families tended to migrate as a unit, contrary to assumptions about primarily male migration. It was through the combined efforts of the men, women and families of all ethnicities that a well-ordered, cohesive community emerged by the turn of the century.

For many men and women, the journey to Yukon constituted their first contact with Native people, and they recorded their impressions at length. From these records, it is clear that racism was a mainstay of Yukon life, an attitude that was not shaken off in the Klondike experience. The Native community was disrupted by the

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<sup>3</sup>R. Mann, After the Gold Rush, pp. 210-12; L. Sander, "All the Men Died of Miners' Disease," p. 265.

<sup>4</sup>It is worth noting that this figure is consistent with the NWMP Census taken in 1898, which also indicated that twelve percent of the population was female.

Gold Rush and its development proceeded entirely separately from Dawson's. The Han especially, attempted minimize their interaction with the newcomers and throughout the period, they remained separate from the non-Native community; indeed, they were unwelcome in that community.

Miners and other labouring people constitute the majority of Dawsonites in the period under study. This group performed most of the work in the mines and provided the necessary labour for the services sector. As a group, Dawson's miners looked very much like the rest of the population, although they tended to be even more overwhelmingly male and unmarried than other occupational groups.

In an established community, business and social networks are most often established through long-standing familial and occupational connections. In Dawson, where nearly everyone was a newcomer, familial networks existed but were largely limited to one or two individuals -- a brother, a father, a sister or a spouse. That is, although long-standing extended family links did not exist, familial chain migration did take place, creating small familial networks. In addition to these, new networks were created based on culture, class and place of origin.

As well, a significant proportion of Dawson's

population was made up of people who had participated in other gold rushes. This group included miners, prostitutes, merchants and saloon owners. This shared background assisted in community development by providing another basis on which social and business networks could be forged.

Indeed, many Klondike stampeders remarked that it was "a very small world," when they reached Dawson City, for they were constantly bumping into friends and acquaintances from "back home." Phrases like "who do you think I met the other day?"<sup>5</sup> are liberally sprinkled throughout the letters and diaries of Klondikers. This re-uniting phenomenon often proved helpful when an individual was looking for lodging or employment, or when they were learning (as in the case of a number of French Canadians) a new language.<sup>6</sup> Small sub-communities chose to meet daily in a favourite watering hole or lived in the same boarding house or hotel, offering each other financial and moral support. The meeting place for many

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<sup>5</sup>PABC, AddMss 698 Vol. VI file 4, "J.B. Clearihue Papers," Clearihue to Annie, 18 September 1901. Similar references are made by other Klondikers in their letters home, see YTA, MS 81/37, "Alexander Godfrey Papers," Godfrey to Hat, 27 November 1900.

<sup>6</sup>YTA, MS82/327 F-59 pt. 2, "Blanche Pépin Lambert Papers," memoir. NA, MG29 C91, W.C.E. Stewart Papers, John McDougal to Stewart, 10 September 1899: "There are a number [of others] from Ottawa here but not many seem to be doing very well. I have been able to give jobs as miners to a few of them so as to help them out"

from Ottawa and Montreal, for example, was the Ottawa Hotel owned by Joseph Cadieux.

Dawson City and its surrounds was home in this period to a significant number of French Canadians. Like other ethnic groups, Francophones showed a strong tendency to cluster both in occupation and in choice of living space. The French Canadian presence, from the earliest period, helped shaped the cultural, religious, and political structure of Yukon.

Dawsonites then, often established new networks based on family, culture, and place of origin. In a society where mail was slow or non-existent, people depended on newcomers to bring information from the outside. Thus, news brought to an individual from his or her home-town or village was often the starting point for a friendship or business partnership. In this way, place of origin (even when the individuals had not been acquainted "back home") replaced kin as a kind of mitigating factor. As well, chain migration, either forced (as in the case of indentured prostitutes) or voluntary (as in the case of family members sending for one another) was common and these links helped establish social networks. Sub-communities, like the one that developed within the red light district and among the French Canadian labourers, were equally important to their constituents.

I have argued that the people of Dawson City were both aware of and valued a sense of community. This can be shown, in part, by a surprising rate of persistence within the community. Fully sixty-five percent of Dawson's population remained there for a minimum of three years. Their commitment to and involvement in the establishment of services, businesses and government institutions demonstrates that these people were not just "passing through." This persistence (shown in Appendix XIII) challenges previous assumptions about transience in mining communities.<sup>7</sup>

Persistence, in fact, contributed to the emergence of a highly stratified community in Dawson. A local physician noted this phenomenon as early as 1898 when local residents established the "Nucleus of 400," a social group among whom "hospitality and good fellowship flourished to a degree unthought of in older Canadian communities."<sup>8</sup> Membership was limited by class and duration of time spent in the Klondike. Dawson residents, newly arrived and feeling displaced, moved very quickly to establish a social world within which members could feel a sense of community, as the above

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<sup>7</sup>T. Stone, Miners' Justice, pp. 32-42. Stone's entire discussion of community structure and the advent of "justice" rests on an assumption of transience.

<sup>8</sup>YTA. CR81/45 pt. 1 file 3, "Sisters of Ste. Anne Papers," W.T. Barrett, memoir, p. 9. Emphasis added.

statement makes clear. Similarly, the Yukon Order of Pioneers, the earliest fraternal association in Yukon, based its prestigious membership solely on length of residence in the territory.

In Dawson, an elaborate social life was maintained and class lines (particularly at the upper levels) were drawn early. Indeed, contrary to ideas about egalitarianism on the mining frontier, members of the upper class "were determined to keep up appearances."<sup>9</sup> The Commissioner of Yukon was a leader within this circle and he maintained a staff of servants which include "an immaculate Japanese servant in white"<sup>10</sup> and a gardener (a rare commodity and a difficult job with such a short growing season). Martha Black for example, remembered that until her husband became Yukon Commissioner in 1910, Government House had never received miners and labourers. The Commissioner and others moved in an entirely different circle. Even within the demi-monde, a clear social stratification developed.

The "nucleus" of this circle, diminished in number but equally strong in influence was also encountered by Laura Berton when she arrived in Dawson nearly ten years after Dr. Barrett remembered it being established. Berton described the social network as not only congenial

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<sup>9</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup>ibid., p. 42.

but highly stratified as well, beginning with the commissioner and moving down incrementally through the ranks of the professional and mercantile sectors, to the miners and labourers on which they all depended. The lowest rungs of this ladder were reserved for prostitutes, Métis and Native people. According to this commentator, in fact, every individual's status could be computed "mathematically."

Patterns of social distinction established early in the formation of the community then, became only more entrenched as the community itself stabilized.<sup>11</sup>

The upper crust also eliminated potential members on the basis of ethnicity. Like other Victorian cities of the era, Dawson made social distinctions based on race and culture. Jews, Catholics, French-Canadians (with a few notable exceptions), Native people, Japanese and African Americans, for example, were all excluded from the inner circles of Dawson life, leaving a "white," Anglo-Protestant core. It became fashionable for wealthier Dawsonites to employ Japanese cooks and/or black housekeepers. That ethnicity was reason enough to exclude individuals, is exemplified in the case of Mrs. Robert McDonald. For while this Mrs. McDonald was the wife (and later widow) of one of Yukon's oldest and most respected missionaries, she was Native and for this

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<sup>11</sup>ibid., p. 46.

reason carefully excluded from most social functions.<sup>12</sup>

Members of the "nucleus," of course, could also be expelled for breaking the rules. Jimmy Turner, a prominent local assayer discovered himself no longer welcome in many Dawson parlours after marrying Dolly Orchard, a former dance hall girl. As one socialite editorialized, while many dance hall women probably made good housewives, "very few invaded the sacred precincts of Dawson society."<sup>13</sup>

Like most cliques, however, there were fringe dwellers who were not really accepted as members but were too important to be excluded for a variety of reasons. Admission of some of these people provides insight into the importance of "community" to Dawson residents. One of the fringe dwellers, for example, was "Big Alex" McDonald. McDonald gained entrance to the club, less because of his wealth (many miners who gained great wealth were never admitted, witness George Carmack and the Tagish men Jim and Charley, among many others), but for his active community involvement with the churches and hospitals in Dawson. Like Robert Service and Klondike Joe Boyle, Big Alex became a famous Klondike

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<sup>12</sup>ibid., p. 47. Laura Berton remembered another occasion where Mrs. Stringer, the Bishop's wife, had upset the ladies of the Women's Auxiliary into a flurry because she "sat Mrs. Julius Kendi, an Indian woman from Mayo" at her side (the place of honour).

<sup>13</sup>ibid., p. 48.



symbol, and all three men retained membership as fringe members of the set.<sup>14</sup>

A number of other social patterns also persisted in the North, albeit sometimes in a strange form. The existence of the Methodist Ladies' Aid Society heavily male in composition, for example, indicates a stubborn inclination to replicate southern structures and institutions regardless of local conditions. That individuals set out to create a familiar world in a harsh and remote wilderness, is perhaps not at all surprising.

Just like more southern cities at the end of the nineteenth century, poverty was widespread in Dawson. In mining communities where fortunes could be made overnight, it must be remembered that these individuals were the exception. Most Klondikers left home with little or no money (and many with large debts) and returned with even less. Costs of living were high, and while wages were also high, it was a difficult place in which to save money. This was not a community of wealthy high-rollers as the popular historians would have us believe. Indeed, one very reasonable explanation for the persistence of many Dawson residents is that they simply could not afford to relocate themselves.

In the Free Women of Petersburg, Suzanne Lebsock answered her own question of "Why study a place like

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<sup>14</sup>ibid., p. 46.

Petersburg?" with "Why not?" Ignoring critics who deplore the growing number of "micro-histories" Lebsack set out to explore the historical community that interested her. I have done the same with Dawson City. In the course of this exploration, I found Dawson less "typical" of mining communities than it at first appeared. Like Leanne Sander, I found a surprising rate of persistence, and a commitment among residents to the community in which they had chosen to make their home. When external and distant governments attempted to impose controls from afar, the residents resisted "in the community's interests" and they worked hard to establish the institutions they required for the health and education of their families. Besides, Dawson is interesting, colourful and full of adventure. Indeed, why not?

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NAUSA	- National Archives of the United States, Washington, D.C.
NL	- National Library of Canada, Ottawa
PAA	- Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton
PABC	- Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria
UASC	- University of Alberta Special Collections
YTA	- Yukon Territorial Archives, Whitehorse

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**APPENDICES**

APPENDIX I  
SAMPLE ENTRY FOR ELECTRONIC DATABASE

SURNAME _____	ALIAS _____	FIRSTNAME _____
DATE _____	ETHNICITY _____	
RELIGION _____		
OCCUP.1 (In Yukon) _____	OCCUP.2 (Before Yukon) _____	
AGE _____	ORIGIN _____	SEX _____ CIVIL STATUS _____
YUKON RES. _____	SOURCE _____	

APPENDIX II  
BIRTHPLACES REPORTED BY DAWSON RESIDENTS<sup>1</sup>

Australia	Ireland
Austria	Israel
Baltics	Italy
Belgium	Japan
Brazil/Peru	Lapland
Canada	Mexico
Chile	New Zealand
China	Norway
Costa Rica	Poland
Cuba/Bermuda	Portugal
Denmark	Romania
Egypt	Russia
England	S.Africa
Finland	Scotland
France	Spain
Germany	Sweden
Greece	Switzerland
Holland	Turkey
Hungary	United States
Iceland	Wales
India	West Indies

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<sup>1</sup>Source: 1901 Manuscript Census and Master Database.



**APPENDIX III**  
**CITIZENSHIP OF DAWSON RESIDENTS**

CITIZENSHIP/ ORIGIN <sup>2</sup>	NWMP CENSUS 1898	MASTER DATABASE 1885-1914
UNITED STATES	9 534 (63%)	2 260 (68%)
BRITAIN (BRITISH SUBJECTS)	4 911 (32%)	988 (30%)
CONTINENTAL EUROPE	360 (2%)	26 (1%)
OTHER / UNKNOWN	398 (3%)	25 (1%)
TOTAL	15 203 (100%)	3 299 (100%)

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<sup>2</sup>Origin is defined here as an individual's last stated place of residence before Yukon and taken as a rough equivalent to citizenship. Citizenship is asked in the NWMP census and origin is asked in the Master Database.

**APPENDIX IV**  
**NATIVITY OF YUKONERS**

PLACE OF BIRTH	1901 MSS CENSUS (DAWSON)	1901 AGG CENSUS (YUKON)	MASTER DATABASE
UNITED STATES <sup>3</sup>	3 022 (40%)	6 707 (25%)	304 (4.3%)
CANADA <sup>4</sup>	2 025 (27%)	8 163 (30%)	646 (36%)
BRITISH ISLES	1 030 (13%)	2 416 (9%)	146 (8%)
CONT. EUROPE	587 (8%)	1 395 (5%)	101 (6%)
SCANDINAVIA	509 (7%)	1 442 (5%)	76 (4%)
AUSTRALIA & OTHER BRITISH POSSESSIONS	62 (1%)	253 (1%)	19 (1%)
RUSSIA & EAST EUROPE	76 (1%)	296 (1%)	17 (1%)
ASIA	66 (1%)	97 (0.5%)	6 (0.5%)
OTHER / UNKNOWN	125 (2%)	6 450 (23.5%)	7 (0.5%)
TOTAL	7 503 (100%)	27 219 (100%)	1 824 (100%)

<sup>3</sup>American figures include African-Americans.

<sup>4</sup>Canadian figures include Native people.

**APPENDIX V**  
**OCCUPATIONAL GROUPINGS**  
**1901 DAWSON CITY AND MOOSEHIDE CENSUS<sup>5</sup>**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>CENSUS</b>	<b>MASTER</b>
<b><u>1) PROFESSIONAL / WHITE COLLAR</u></b>		
ARCHITECT	4	0
ACCOUNTANT/CLERK	380	71
BANKER	7	30
CIVIL SERVANT	35	478
DENTIST	9	30
DOCTOR	14	84
DRUGGIST	8	14
JOURNALIST	17	13
LAWYER	37	128
NEWSPAPER EDITOR	3	14
NUN/FEMALE CLERGY	9	29
NURSE	28	15
OPTICIAN	1	0
PHOTOGRAPHER/ARTIST	13	18
GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL	15	81
PRIEST/MALE CLERGY	10	24
SALVATION ARMY	4	7
SCHOOL TEACHER	8	26
SHERIFF	0	1
TELEGRAPH OPERATOR	8	2
UNDERTAKER	2	7
VETERINARIAN	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>1074</b>
<b><u>2) COMMERCIAL</u></b>		
BATH HOUSE PROP./MGR	1	8
BICYCLE DEALER	0	1
BROKER (CUSTOMS/INSURANCE)	38	80
CONTRACTOR/BUILDER	20	23
DANCE HALL OR SALOON PROP	18	97
ENTREPRENEUR/REAL ESTATE	10	17
HOTEL/RESTAURANT KEEPER	162	399
LIVERY STABLE/WAGON SHOP	13	5
MANUFACTURER	1	11
MERCHANT	268	636
MILLER	1	0
MINING CO. OWNER/MGR	4	8
OWNER, STEAMSHIP	4	2

<sup>5</sup>Source: 1901 Manuscript Census and the Master Database compiled by author.

SAWMILL OWNER/MGR	6	18
TRADER	13	9
UTILITIES CO. MGR	4	12
WOOD/LUMBER MERCHANT	19	42
Total	582	1368

### **3) SKILLED TRADES**

BAKER	51	122
BLACKSMITH	48	49
BUTCHER	56	11
CARPENTER	246	39
ELECTRICIAN	17	6
ENGINEER/SURVEYOR	144	88
FIREMAN/FIRE CHIEF	30	3
FLORIST	4	0
FURRIER	7	2
GUNSMITH	0	3
JEWELLER/GOLDSMITH	36	53
MECHANIC/MACHINIST, METAL WORKS/TINSMITH/	83	36
PAINTER	58	34
PLUMBER	3	2
POLICE OFFICER	75	198
PRINTER	23	14
SHIP MASTER/CAPTAIN	31	6
STONEMASON/BRICKLAYER	15	3
TAILOR/SHOEMAKER/MILLINER	104	53
Total	1031	722

### **4) SEMI-SKILLED TRADES**

ARMY/YUKON FIELD FORCE	1	38
BARBER/HAIRDRESSER	56	38
FARMER	29	30
MAIL CARRIER	8	4
MINER	2414	3292
RAILWAY WORKER (CHAINMAN, SWITCHMAN, TELEGRAPH LINEMAN)	4	31
SEAMAN/SAILOR	68	365
TRANSPORT/STORAGE	233	227
TRAPPER/HUNTER/LOGGER	83	22
WOOD CHOPPER/SAWMILL WORKER	90	46
Total	2986	4093

### **5) UNSKILLED LABOUR AND SERVICE SECTOR**

COOK/WAITRESS/BARTENDER	377	49
CRIMINAL	32	43
DANCER/ACTOR/ENTERTAINER	84	59
DOG CATCHER/POUND KEEPER	0	1
DOMESTIC SERVICE	108	12
FISHERMAN	2	1
GAMBLER	10	25

LAUNDRESS/LAUNDRY	88	21
MUSICIAN	26	10
MANUAL LABOURER	247	23
PEDDLAR/VAGRANT	6	3
PIMP/PROCURER	0	4
PROSTITUTE	0	15
SALESMAN	71	5
SCAVENGER	2	5
THEATRICAL AGENT	1	1
WIFE	564	169
<u>Total</u>	<u>1618</u>	<u>446</u>
<b>TOTAL WORKFORCE</b>	<b><u>6832</u></b>	<b><u>7703</u></b>
CHILD	462	467
OCCUPATION NOT GIVEN	209	7185
<u>TOTAL POPULATION</u>	<u>7503</u>	<u>15355</u>

**APPENDIX VI**  
**OCCUPATIONS OF KLONDIKERS, 1885-1914<sup>6</sup>**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	MASTER DATABASE	MASTER DATABASE	1901 MSS CENSUS	1901 MSS CENSUS
MANUAL LABOUR & SERVICE SECTOR	446	6%	1 618	24%
SEMI-SKILLED	4 093	53%	2 986	44%
SKILLED TRADES	722	9%	1 031	14%
COMMERCIAL & MERCANTILE	1 368	18%	582	9%
PROFESSIONAL	1 074	14%	615	9%
TOTAL	7 703	100%	6 832	100%

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<sup>6</sup>These figures exclude children and those for whom there was no information about occupation or employment.

**APPENDIX VII**  
**CROSS-TABULATION OF OCCUPATION AND ETHNICITY**  
**OF DAWSON RESIDENTS**

ETHNICITY	UN- SKILLED	SEMI- SKILLED	SKILLED TRADES	COMMER- CIAL	PROFESS- IONAL
CANADIAN	281	891	290	141	245
AMERICAN	794	1 004	385	252	257
BRITISH	192	429	154	52	72
CONT. EUROPEAN	153	226	114	65	21
NATIVE	2	31	0	0	1
SCANDIN- AVIAN	104	304	64	26	5
OTHER BRITISH SUBJECTS	7	42	9	6	3
RUSSIAN/ E. EUROPEAN	17	21	6	27	3
JAPANESE/ CHINESE	50	3	2	10	1
OTHER	18	35	5	3	7
TOTAL	1 618	2 986	1 031	582	615

Source: 1901 Manuscript Census

**APPENDIX VIII**  
**WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION BY MEN AND WOMEN OF DAWSON\***

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	MEN	WOMEN	TOTALS
SERVICE SECTOR/ UNSKILLED <sup>9</sup>	507	811 (564)	1 318
SEMI-SKILLED	2 963	23	2 986
SKILLED	938	93	1 031
COMMERCIAL	514	68	582
WHITE COLLAR	531	84	615
TOTAL	5 753	1 079	6 832 <sup>10</sup>

\*Source: 1901 Manuscript Census

<sup>9</sup>These figures include women's unpaid labour. Bracketed figure represents women who reported their occupation as "wife."

<sup>10</sup>The total adult workforce excludes children under fourteen years of age and those for whom there was no information.



**APPENDIX IX**  
**SEX OF YUKONERS, 1901-1921**

SEX	NWME Census Yukon <sup>11</sup>	NWMP Census Dawson	1901 Census Yukon	1901 Census Dawson	1911 Census Yukon	1921 Census Yukon.
MEN	13 147 92%	4 516 88%	23 084 85%	6 098 81%	6 508 77%	2 819 68%
WOMEN	1 195 8%	646 12%	4 135 15%	1 405 19%	2 004 23%	1 338 32%
TOTAL	14 342	5 162	27 219	7 503	8 512	4 157

<sup>11</sup>These figures do not include Native people, who, along with children were not broken down by sex in the sources.

**APPENDIX X**  
**MARITAL STATUS OF YUKONERS, 1901-1921**

MARITAL STATUS	MSS CENSUS 1901 <sup>12</sup>	AGG 1901	AGG 1911	AGG 1921
SINGLE	4 215 (57%)	20 011 (74%)	5 506 (65%)	2 390 (57%)
MARRIED	2 432 (32%)	6 591 (24%)	2 635 (31%)	1 311 (32%)
WIDOWED	206 (2.5%)	482 (1.8%)	304 (3%)	230 (5%)
DIVORCED	23 (0.5%)	36 (0.2%)	60 (0.7%)	20 (0.5%)
NOT STATED	627 (8%)	--	7 (0.3%)	200 (4.5%)
TOTAL	7 503	27 220	8 512	4 157

<sup>12</sup>Figures from the 1901 Manuscript Census are for Dawson City only, while the aggregate census figures represent the entire Yukon.

**APPENDIX XI (A)**  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF DAWSON & MOOSEHIDE RESIDENTS<sup>13</sup>**

RELIGION	NUMBER	PERCENT
PROTESTANT	4 541	63%
CATHOLIC	1 683	23%
NON-BELIEVERS	552	7%
NO INFORMATION	445	6%
OTHER	136	2%
JEWISH	95	1%
ORTHODOX	51	1%
TOTAL	7 503	100%

**APPENDIX XI (B)**  
**RELIGIOUS GROUPS REPRESENTED IN DAWSON, 1901**

Baptist	Mormon
Buddhist	Native Religion/Pagan
Church of England	Non-Denom. Protestant
Confucious	Presbyterian
Congregationalist	Quaker
Episcopalian	Roman Catholic
Free Thinker	Russian or Greek Orthodox
Jewish	Salvationist
Lutheran	Seventh Day Adventist
Methodist	

<sup>13</sup>Source: 1901 Manuscript Census

APPENDIX XII  
MIGRATION PATTERNS OF DAWSON FAMILIES, 1896-1901<sup>14</sup>

ARRIVING YUKON	NUMBER	PERCENT
WHOLE FAMILY TOGETHER	222	42%
WIFE AND CHILDREN JOINED HUSBAND ONE YEAR AFTER HIS ARRIVAL	125	23%
WIFE AND CHILDREN JOINED HUSBAND TWO YEARS AFTER	94	18%
WIFE AND CHILDREN JOINED HUSBAND THREE YEARS OR MORE	81	15%
WIFE ARRIVED BEFORE HUSBAND	6	1%
TOTAL	526	100%

<sup>14</sup>Source: 1901 Manuscript Census.

APPENDIX XIII  
PERSISTENCE OF DAWSON RESIDENTS, 1885-1901<sup>15</sup>

LENGTH OF YUKON RESIDENCE	NUMBER	PERCENT
FIVE YEARS OR LONGER (ARRIVED 1896 OR EARLIER)	419	5%
FOUR OR FIVE YEARS (ARRIVED 1897-1898)	3 314	44%
THREE YEARS (ARRIVED 1899)	1 142	15%
TWO YEARS (ARRIVED 1900)	1 522	20%
ONE YEAR OR LESS (ARRIVED 1901)	1 202	16%
TOTAL	7 599	100%

<sup>15</sup>Source: 1901 Manuscript Census.

**END**

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**FIN**