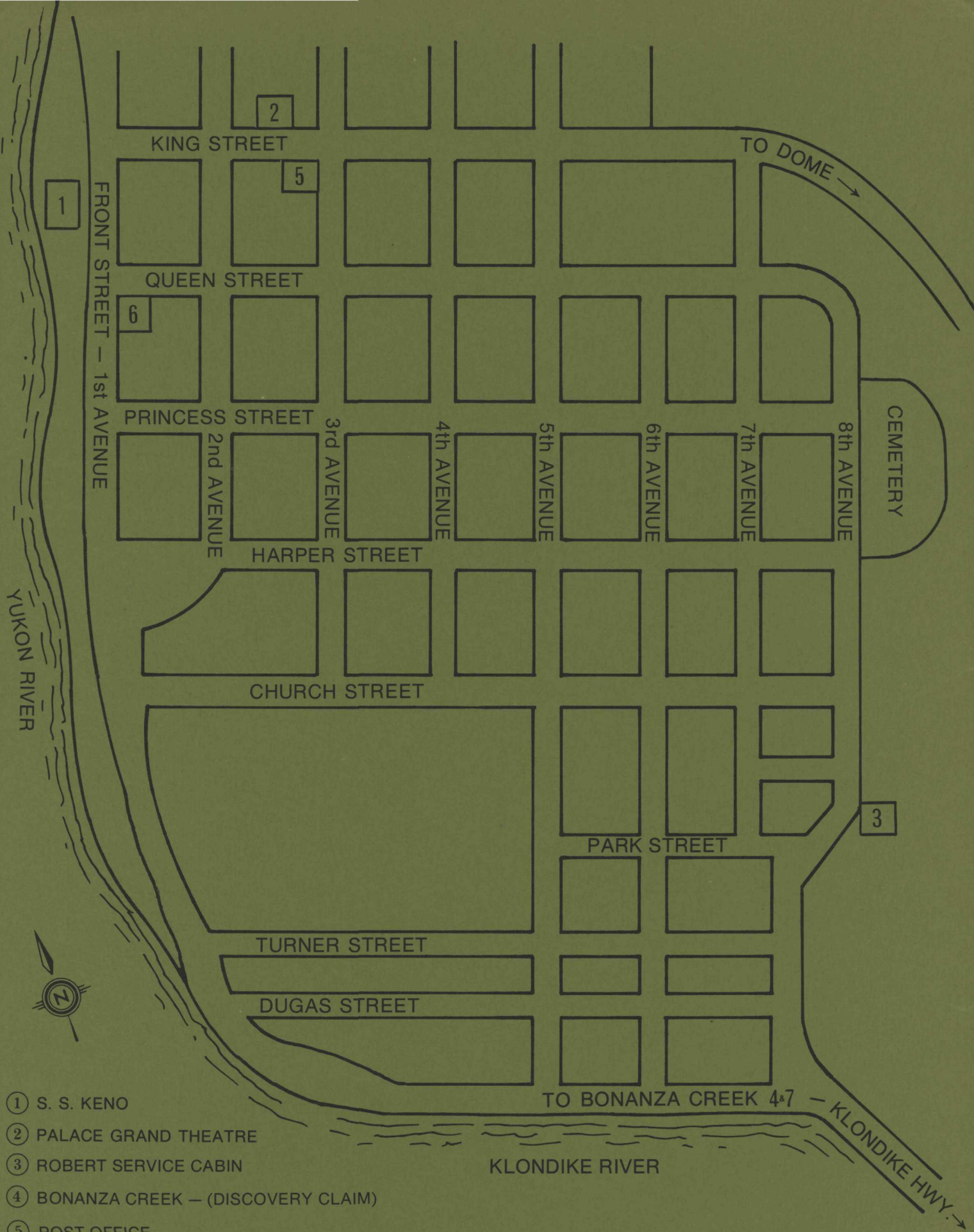


DAWSON CITY
HEART of the KLONDIKE



- ① S. S. KENO
- ② PALACE GRAND THEATRE
- ③ ROBERT SERVICE CABIN
- ④ BONANZA CREEK — (DISCOVERY CLAIM)
- ⑤ POST OFFICE
- ⑥ BONANZA B. MINING MUSEUM
- ⑦ GOLD DREDGE No. 4

DISCOVERY CLAIM

Bonanza Creek



It was at this point on Bonanza Creek, marked by a National Historic Sites cairn, that gold was found in 1896, and set off the Klondike Stampede of 1898.

The event captured the imagination of the western world. More than \$500 million dollars worth of gold was ultimately taken from the frozen ground.

Tipped off by veteran prospector Bob Henderson, George Carmack and his fishing partners, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, searched the creek gravels of this area. On August 17, 1896 they found gold and staked the first four claims. A few days later at Forty Mile, Carmack registered the Discovery Claim in his own name, and one each for Charlie and Jim. Skookum Jim was sent to guard the claims on what Carmack renamed Bonanza Creek. Within days Bonanza and Eldorado Creeks had been staked from end to end, and when the news reached the outside the Klondike Gold Rush was on.

Word reached the outside world in 1897 when the ships carrying the wealthy Klondikers docked at San Francisco and Seattle. May of 1898 saw 4,735 boats of one kind or another carrying 28,000 people past a North West Mounted Police check point at Tagish Post, heading for Dawson and the Klondike.

The valley became the scene of hundreds of excited men tearing up the creek beds. Each claim was 500 feet wide. Smoke filled the air as fires smoldered in the shafts to thaw frozen ground. Hand-turned windlasses creaked as the buckets of half frozen muck were dumped out on the tailing piles, ready to be sluiced.

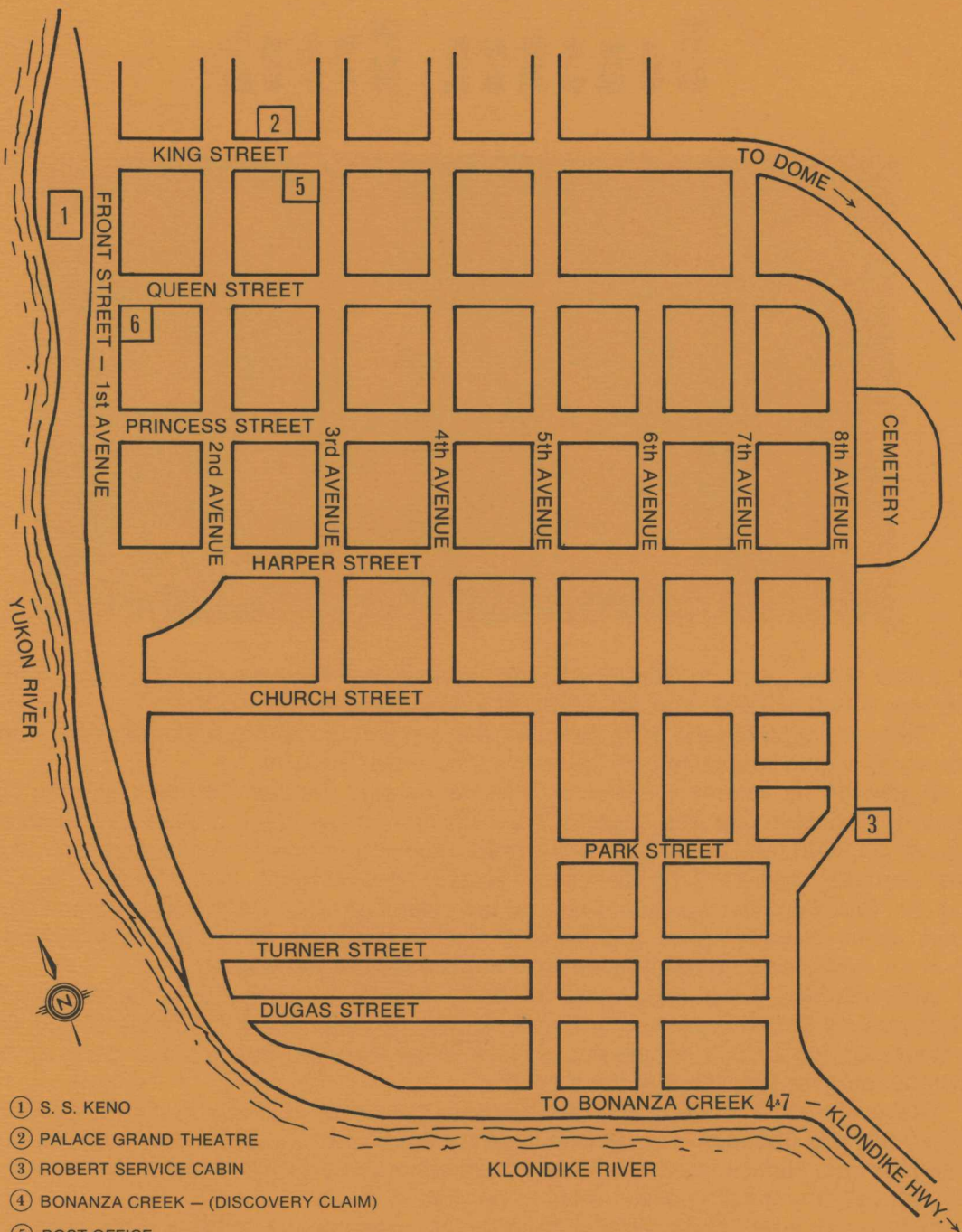
Soon every creek and hillside in the Klondike was being worked and the gold poured out in what appeared to be an endless stream.

The west coast cities, Victoria, Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco reaped the benefits of outfitting miners, and loading the northbound ships with every conceivable necessity and luxury.

One by one the individual miners sold out to large companies who installed dredges on the creeks. The conveyor buckets dug to bedrock and turned the valleys into mounds of gravel. Massive tailing piles are reminders of the dredging operations. Eventually the gold ran out — over \$500 million dollars' worth is a conservative estimate.

Once again the valleys are quiet and the trees and shrubs are covering scars. There are small mining operations scattered here and there, and some gold is still to be found. There is a dwindling number who believe that somewhere in these ridges or valleys a mother lode is waiting to be discovered.

Meanwhile the Eldorado and Bonanza quietly murmur their way to join the Klondike River, as serenely as they did that summer of 1896 and only the stone cairn is left to mark the site where the Klondike Stampede began.



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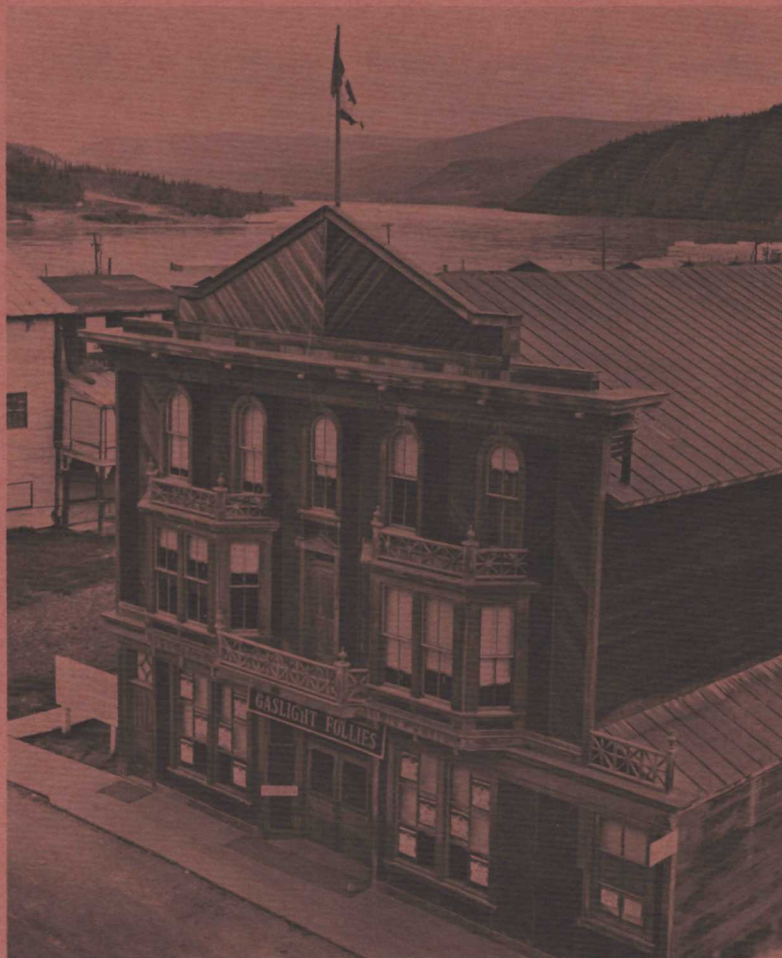


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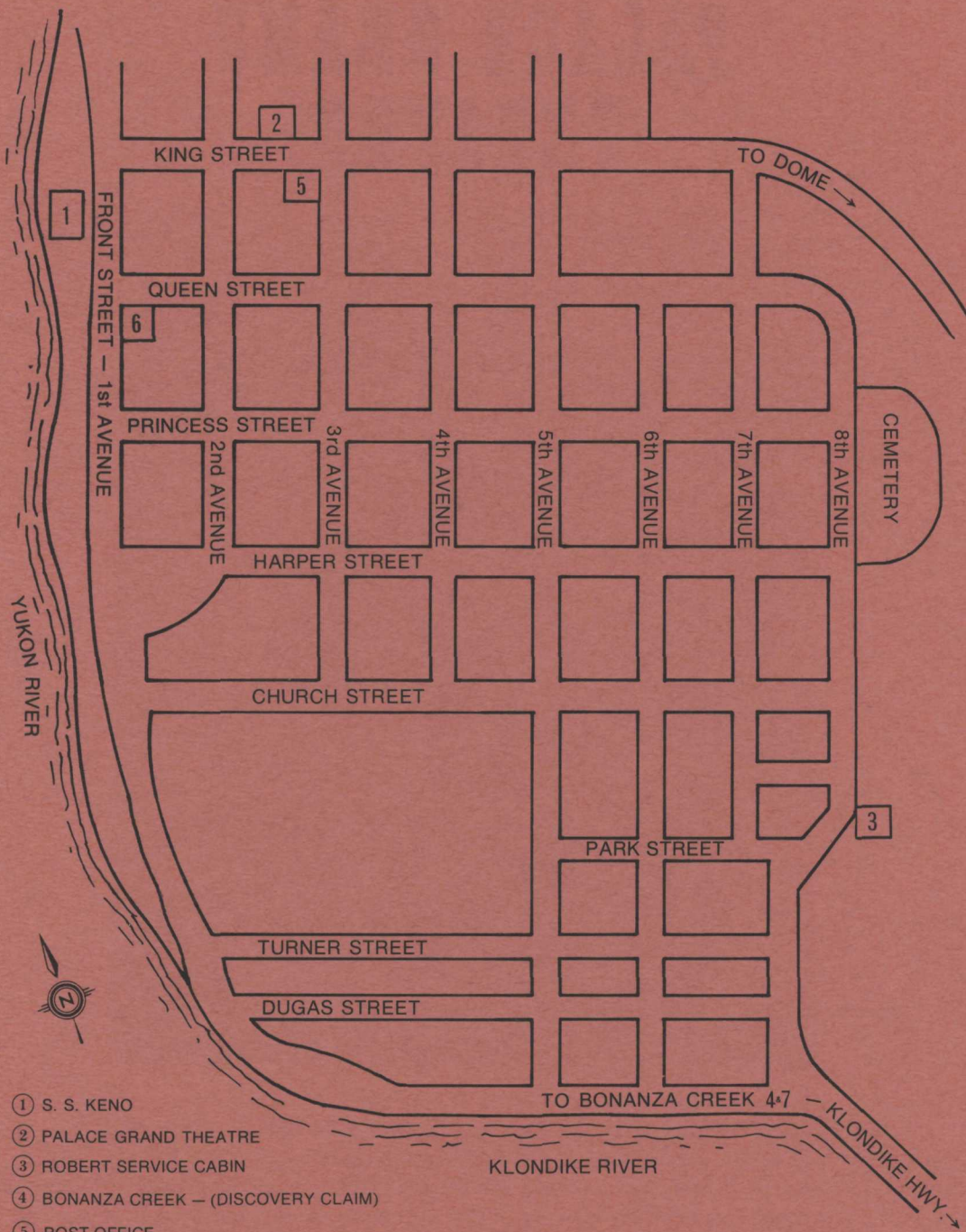
The PALACE GRAND THEATRE



A luxurious and flamboyant opera house, cum dance hall, the Palace Grand opened in gala style July 1899. It was built at the height of the gold rush by 'Arizona Charlie' Meadows, a colourful character who utilized the remnants of a couple of beached sternwheelers for the purpose. During the hey-day of the sprawling and roisterous mining camp, the Palace Grand played host to a variety of entertainment, from wild west shows to opera. It was known as the roomiest and best appointed opera house in the north. The Palace Grand, whose false front is reminiscent of a Hollywood movie set, changed hands a number of times from 1899 to 1902.

With the turn of the century the excitement of the gold rush died as quickly as it had arisen. Dawson took on the aspects of a settled residential community. Mining continued as the town's principal industry for many years, and indeed gold production continued into the early years of the twentieth century. In its staid middle age, the Palace Grand was used for community functions and visiting theatre troupes.

Saved from destruction by the Klondike Visitors Association and donated to the Canadian government, the National Historic Parks Branch undertook the re-construction of the Palace Grand Theatre in the 1960's. The old opera house is restored to its 1899 splendour. It is well patronized during the tourist season, when entertainment reminiscent of that charismatic era of three-quarters of a century ago echoes to the raftered roof.



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S.S. KENO



So quickly did word of the wealth of the Klondike affect the outside world that 57 registered steamboats, carrying more than 12,000 tons of supplies, docked at Dawson City between June and September 1898. A year later, 60 steamboats, 8 tugs and 20 barges were in service on the river.

The stern-wheeler with wood-fired boilers, resulted in an important new industry along the river, and wood camps were established along the waterway. A steamer, depending upon its size, consumed approximately 120 cords of 4 foot wood every trip. The wood contracts ran into thousands of dollars annually, and employed large numbers of men.

To handle the tonnage, barges were pushed ahead of the steamer. Freight was as varied as only a gold rich country could demand. Mining equipment, horse and dog feed was packed beside cut crystal, fine linens and first editions. Bacon, beans, flour, and dynamite shared cargo space with vintage wines, canned oysters, and evening gowns.

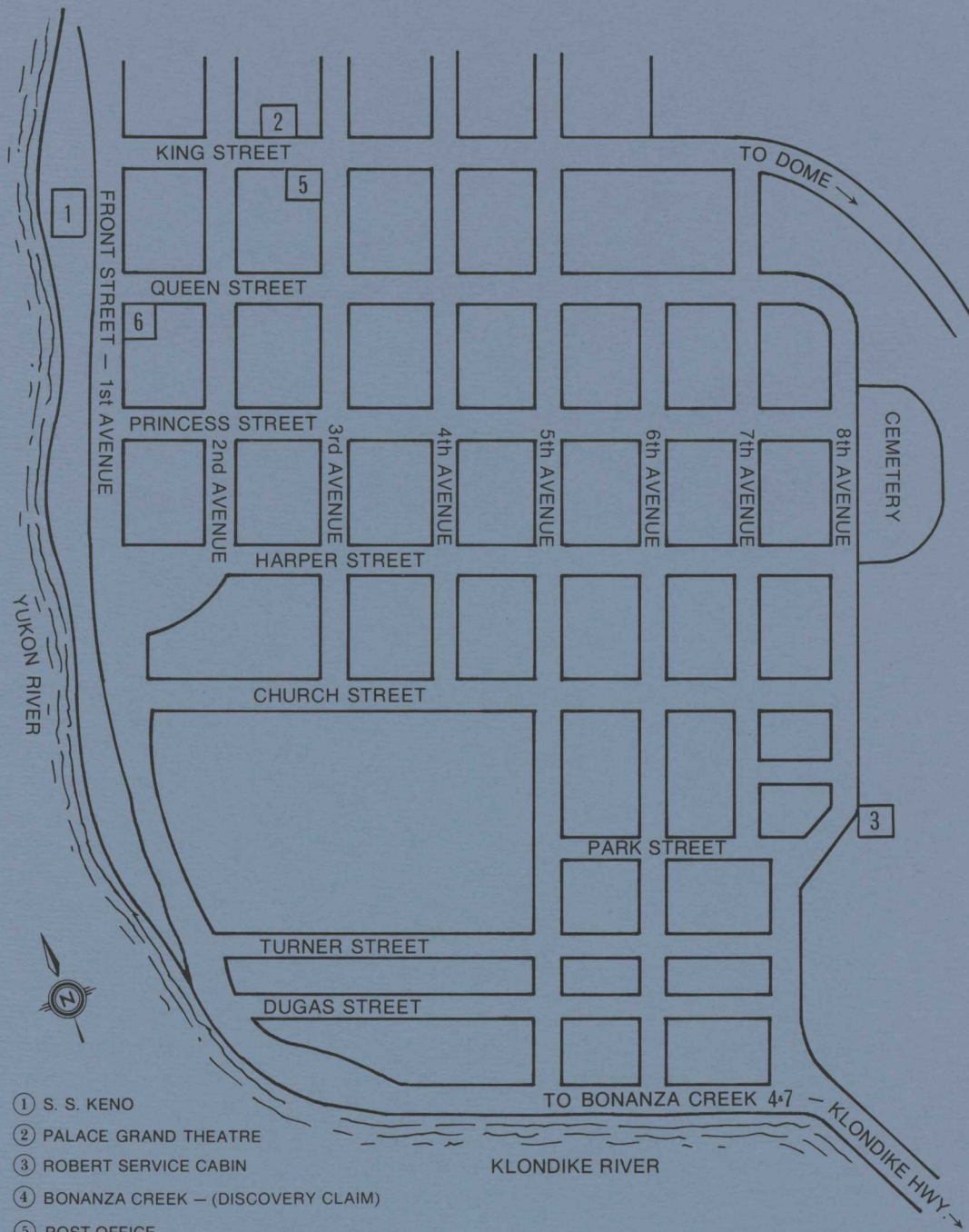
The officers who commanded these ships were a special breed. Resourceful, self-reliant, in constant combat with a river which could hide snags, rocks, sandbars, rapids or could suddenly fill with ice floes to crush the light wooden hulls. The captains had to know their river. Many had been Mississippi River men, others were deep-sea captains.

Unfortunately none of the steamers in service at the time of the gold rush have survived. The National and Historic Sites Branch has preserved a typical vessel dating from 1922, the *S.S. Keno*, built in Whitehorse. The *Keno* was in good condition, necessitating little restoration work. Built for the 180 mile Stewart City-Mayo Landing run to transport silver, lead, zinc ore from the mines in the Mayo district, the *Keno* is 130 feet long, 29.2 foot beam. The wood-burning boiler supplied steam to 2 1-cylinder engines. The ore was stock-piled on the bank of the river at Mayo Landing all winter, awaiting the arrival of the *Keno* in mid-May. In 1938 over 9,000 tons of ore were carried by the *Keno*, every sack of it man-handled.

With the construction of the White Pass Railway in 1900, the hazardous navigation from Lake Bennett to Whitehorse was eliminated. For half-a-century the steamboats plied between Whitehorse and Dawson City, and between St. Michael, Alaska and Dawson, 1,700 miles of waterway.

The *S.S. Keno* was part of the fleet which played a major part in the history of the Yukon Territory. Without the riverboats, the gold of the Klondike and the silver, lead and zinc of the Mayo district would have remained in the hills for at least another half century, and the development of the Canadian West and North would have suffered in consequence.

In 1960 the *Keno* was moved to her present berth, on Dawson's waterfront, beside the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Her shallow draught and low superstructure made transfer the easier. On her last trip to Dawson, she carried 21 passengers, mostly newspaper correspondents and camera men. The old river steamer has been preserved to commemorate an era now passed forever. Eventually she will be made into a museum.



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S.S. KLONDIKE



For almost four generations the sternwheeler was the mainstay of the Yukon transportation system. From the late 1860's to the mid 1950's, some 250 sternwheelers plied the Yukon River during the open season of navigation.

The S.S. Klondike No. 1, the forerunner of the vessel which is currently being restored by Parks Canada, was launched in 1929 by the British Yukon Navigation Company. She represented a major breakthrough in sternwheeler design, in that her cargo capacity was increased 50% more over other boats on the river without sacrificing shallow draft. The Klondike was the first boat built large enough to handle the cargo tonnage without having to push a barge.

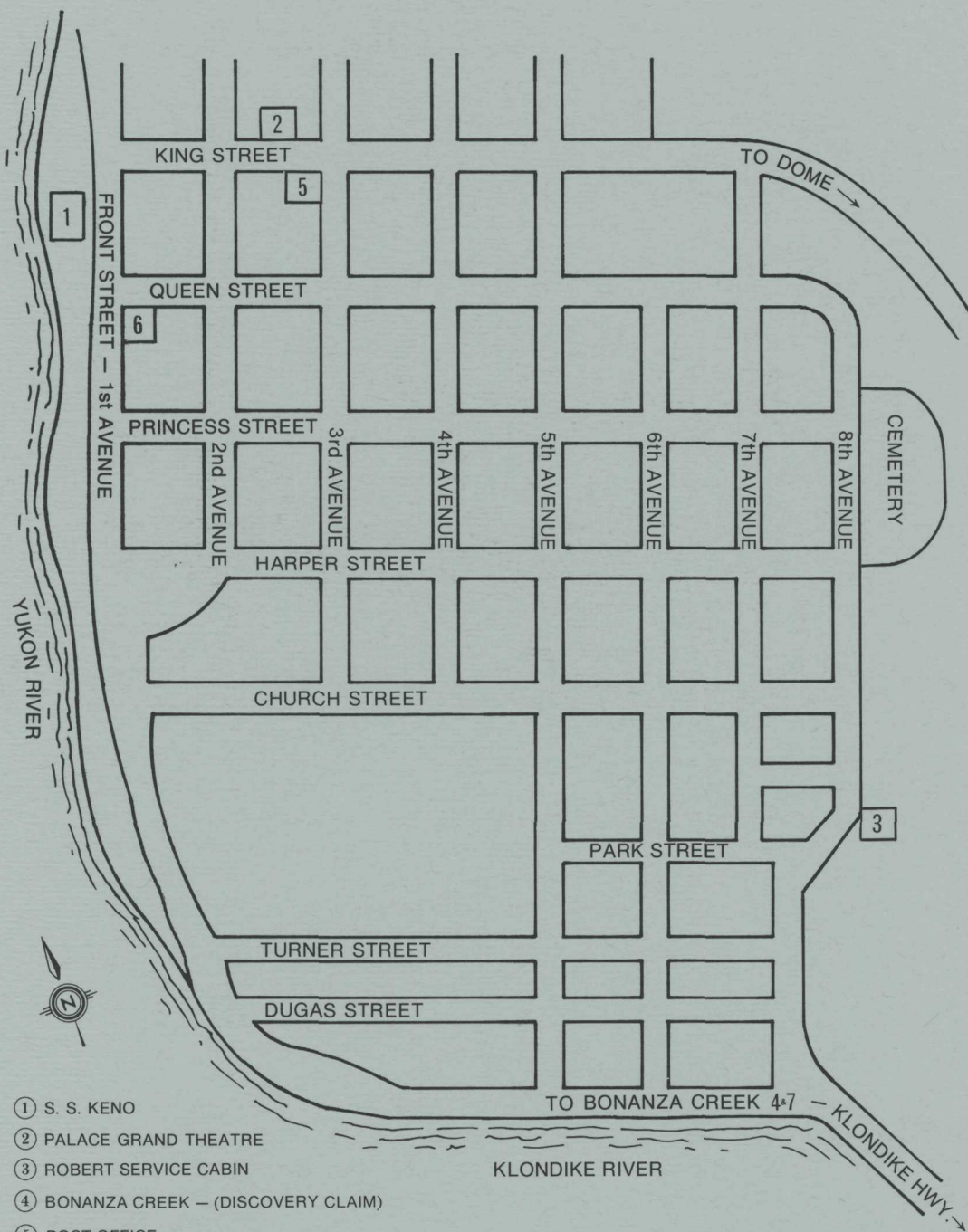
The career of the S. S. Klondike No. 1 came to an abrupt end in 1936, when the vessel struck a reef and broke its back. The company immediately had the S. S. Klondike No. 2 built . . . a virtual carbon copy of her predecessor.

For five years, the Klondike laboured as a cargo vessel, carrying merchandise, supplies and a few passengers from Whitehorse to Dawson. She made the run downstream in 36 hours with one or two stops to take on wood. After clearing Dawson, she would proceed to Stewart Landing where she loaded with silver-lead ore to be transported up river to Whitehorse. The return run against the current was much tougher and required four or five days.

This first chapter in the career of the Klondike No. 2 ended in 1941, when the territory's largest producer of silver-lead ore suspended operation. Fortunately, the termination of ore shipments was partially offset by the massive demand for transportation created by the construction of the Alaska Highway.

The end of the Klondike's career came as a result of the seasonal aspect of river transport . . . and progress. Although silver-lead production did resume in 1946, it did nothing to forestall the inevitable. When all-weather roads were constructed in the early 50's, it signified the passing of sternwheelers as freight carriers on the Yukon River.

In a last ditch attempt to save her career, the S. S. Klondike was extensively refurbished as a cruise ship, but the plan was ten years too early to capitalize on the territory's now burgeoning tourist trade. In August, 1955, the S. S. Klondike No. 2 steamed into Whitehorse, to end her last run up river. She now draws many tourists to the bank of the Yukon River in Whiskey Flats, where she sits in permanent retirement.



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The ROBERT SERVICE CABIN

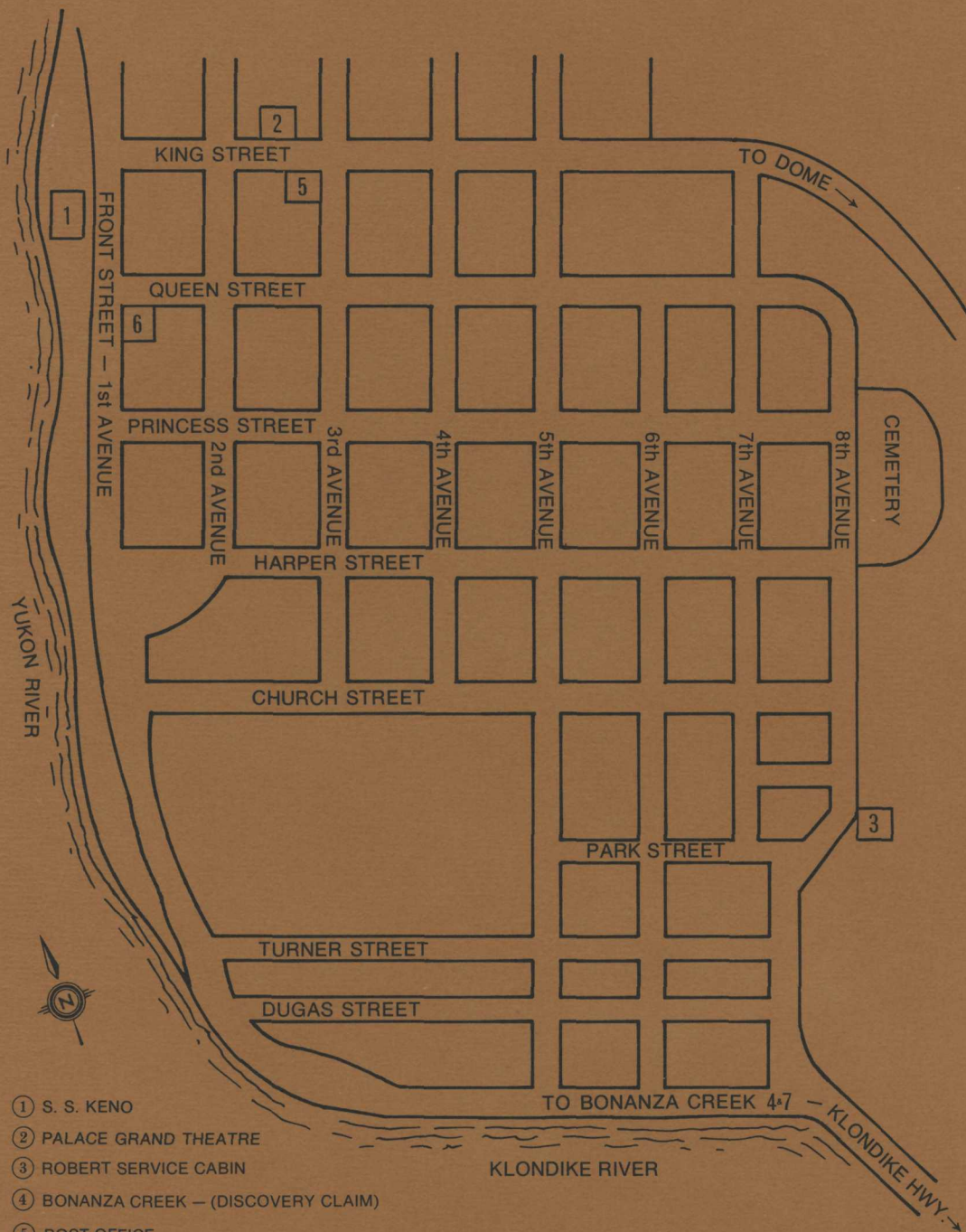


This two-room log cabin, set amidst the willows and the alders on the lower slopes at the eastern end of the town, has long been a tourist attraction. There, Robert W. Service, bard of the Klondike, lived from November 1909 to June 1912. During this time he wrote his melodramatic novel, *The Trail of Ninety-Eight*, and composed his third and final volume of Yukon verse, *Songs of a Rolling Stone*.

Service lived a spartan life. A remote figure, he was a good listener, absorbing, in his own words, "Yukon lore by every pore."

The cabin, which may have been built as early as 1897 or 1898, is typical of the time — logs well chinked with moss to keep out the sub-arctic cold, a double door, with front porch. It was heated by a wood stove, and probably illuminated by coal-oil lamps in Service's time, although downtown Dawson had had electricity since 1899–1900. A Mrs. Matilda Day held the original title to the property, dating from May, 1900, but it was later acquired by Mrs. Edna B. Clarke, from whom Service rented it during his later sojourn in Dawson.

The poet left Dawson for the last time on 29 June 1912, ostensibly on one of his periodic trips "outside" to consult with his publishers in Toronto and New York. *The Dawson Daily News* reported his departure in a few lines, without comment. By 1917 the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, with the owner's rather reluctant permission, were promoting the little cabin as a tourist attraction to raise money for soldiers' comforts overseas. After the war, the I.O.D.E. furnished the cabin in typical miner's style of the gold-rush period. Donated to the National Historic Sites Branch of Parks Canada by the City of Dawson, it has been restored to the period when Service lived in it.



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DAWSON CITY

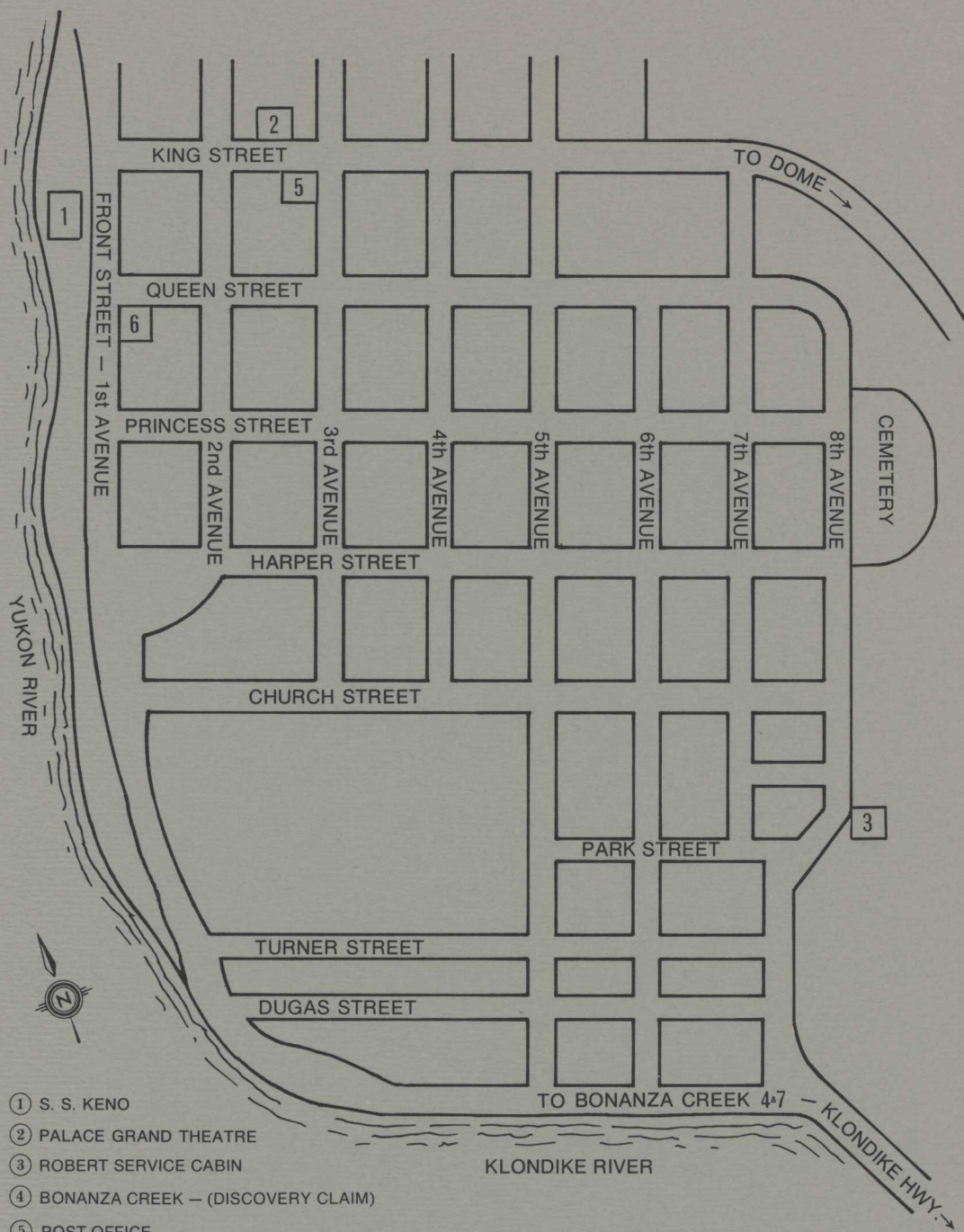


HEART of the KLONDIKE

Few episodes in Canadian history have so captured imaginations as the fabulous Klondike Gold Rush, 1897–8. Thousands of adventurers and fortune seekers faced the rigours of the trail to dig for gold along creeks feeding the Klondike River. Dawson, a trading post on a mud flat at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon Rivers, mushroomed in a single season to a sprawling boom town, made up of log and frame buildings, and tents. Some 5,000 people from the four corners of the earth arrived at Dawson. At the height of the gold rush, 1898–9, the itinerant population of Dawson was estimated between 20,000 and 30,000, making it the largest Canadian community west of Winnipeg. The excitement quickly petered out after the turn of the century, with the formation of large corporations which bought up individual claims. The Klondike continued to produce gold in abundance for a number of years.

In a sense, the Dawson of the frantic two seasons just before the turn of the century, was Canada's last frontier. By the 1940's Dawson was a village with a permanent population of under 1,000. In 1953 the territorial capital was transferred to Whitehorse. But the picturesque ghost-town beneath the scarred and rounded hill known as the Dome, less than 200 miles below the Arctic Circle, is still very much a part of our historical heritage.

The gold rush provided a significant and colourful chapter in a Canadian history which some thought dull. Dawson City, the heart of the Klondike, was named for Dr. George Mercer Dawson, a Canadian government geologist. Parks Canada has been active in the restoration and preservation of what remains of the once lusty mining camp. Its development will continue over the next several years.



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GOLD DREDGES



The first experiment with placer mining bucket elevator dredges was made in 1867 at Otago, New Zealand. This dredge was powered by current wheels. The first steam driven dredge for mining was constructed to operate on the Molyneux river, New Zealand in 1881.

Not long after gold was discovered in large quantities in the Klondike, the first dredge was brought into the Yukon. The first one built in the Yukon was at Cassiar Bar on the Yukon River, near the mouth of the Big Salmon River, in the fall of 1899. From this location it was moved to Bonanza Creek, working in the rich creek bed for several years.

Thirty-five dredges were subsequently built in the Yukon. The last dredge was brought into the area in the 1950's. Dredge size is measured by the cubic foot capacity of each bucket. Those built on the Klondike range in size from 2½ to 16 cubic feet.

No. 4 dredge with a 16 cubic foot capacity now rests on Claim No. 17, below Discovery on Bonanza and is the biggest wooden hull, bucket-line dredge in North America. Designed by the Marion Steam Shovel Company, it was built for the Canadian Klondike Mining Company on Claim 112 Below Discovery on Bonanza Creek.

Constructed during the summer and winter of 1912, it commenced operations in May of 1913, and dug its way upstream in the Klondike Valley into what was known as the "Boyle Concession", and sank there in 1924. In 1927, it was refloated and continued to operate from the Klondike Valley to Hunker Creek. The ground at the mouth of Hunker Creek was rich and the dredge produced as much as 800 ounces of gold in a single day. It was operated there until 1940. The dredge was rebuilt on Bonanza Creek by the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation and from 1941 to 1959 worked the Bonanza Creek valley to where it now rests on Claim No. 17 Below Discovery. The dredge is sitting in a man-made pond that over the years has become silted-in to a depth of about 16-18 feet.

It was electrically powered from the Company's hydro plant on the Klondike River about 30 miles away.

Power required during the digging operation was 920 continuous horsepower. Extra horsepower was needed occasionally for such things as hoisting the "spud", gangplank, etc.

The hull is 140 feet long, 65 feet 8 inches wide, and 12 feet 2 inches to 14 feet 6 inches deep. The total height of the dredge from the bottom of the hull to the top of the highest

roof is 76 feet. Displacement weight of the dredge is over 3,000 tons.

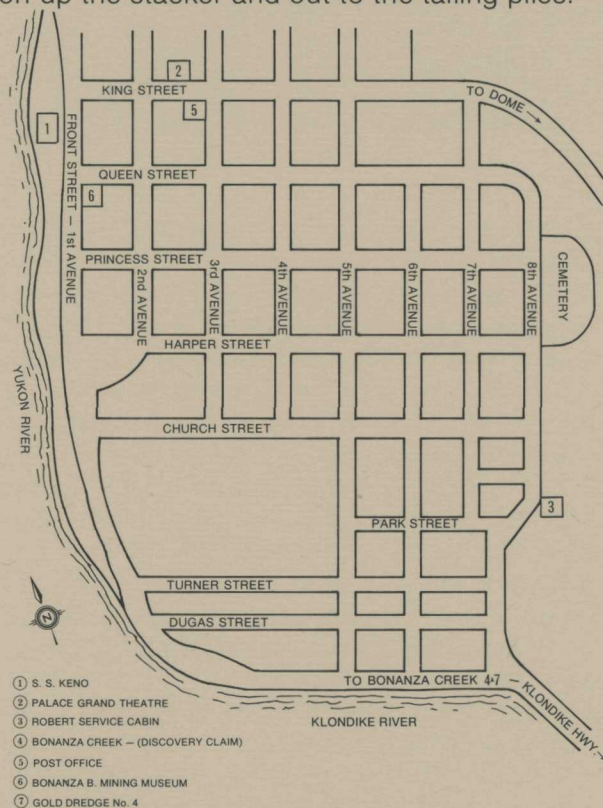
The dredge was able to dig 57 feet below water level and by using hydraulic monitors and washing the gravel banks down, more than 17 feet above water level.

The dredge moved along on a pond of its own making, digging gold bearing gravel from in front, recovering the gold through the revolving screen washing plant, then depositing the gravel out the stacker at the rear. A dredge pond could be 300 feet by as much as 500 feet wide, depending on the width of the valley, in which the dredge was working.

There were seventy-five 16-cubic-foot capacity buckets on an endless chain on No. 4 dredge, with a dumping capacity of 22 buckets per minute; theoretically, under ideal conditions, the dredge could dig and process 18,000 cubic yards in 24 hours. The average was actually between 8,000 and 10,000 cubic yards. Each bucket and pin weighed 4,600 pounds, the whole bucket line weighing 172 tons. The electric motor to drive the bucket line was 300 h.p.

The operating season was an average of about 200 days, starting in late April or early May and operating 24 hours a day until late November. In 1939, operating for 262 days on Hunker Creek, the dredge processed 2,000,000 cubic yards of gravel, recovering 35,000 ounces of gold valued at \$1,000,000 then. At the price of gold in July 1973, this would have been worth \$5,000,000.

The dredges were a very efficient means of mining for gold, recovering at least 90%. The very fine flour gold however was very hard to save; as were the nuggets too large to go through the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch holes in the revolving screen or be caught in the nugget catcher; and these also went on up the stacker and out to the tailing piles.



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