

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES SERVICE

MANUSCRIPT REPORT NUMBER 9

YUKON TERRITORY: A COMMUNITY OF MEN

by

James Weppler

NATIONAL AND HISTORIC PARKS BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

A COMMUNITY OF MEN

Jim Wepler

June 25, 1969.

### A Community of Men

The Klondike gold rush has eclipsed the early history of the Yukon Territory. This proves twofold unfortunate: first, because the Klondike rush cannot be understood without the historical framework of the pre-1896 period; secondly, because the Klondike rush in its historical context can be considered a momentary aberration of Yukon history. The Yukon presents a case study of how to deal with an inaccessible territory and a harsh climate. The adventurers who dared the Yukon - fur traders and prospectors - formed an interdependent community. This society, based on the golden rule, gave the men the margin required for survival in the Yukon. The Klondike hordes temporarily destroyed the community of traders and prospectors, but a decade after the gold rush the spirit and practice of the Yukon pioneers partially reasserted itself. The immense wealth of the Klondike strike and the plethora of romantic, nostalgic writings on the 1897-98 rush have obscured the most successful response to the harsh environment of the Yukon. Contemporary companies, eager to mine Yukon resources at the urging of the Department of Northern Development, would do well to forget the El Dorado approach of the Klondike gold rush and, instead, to follow the example of the early traders and prospectors.

In the beginning was the Indian. Without the Indian the fur trader would not have ventured into the Yukon, and without the trading posts the miners could not have prospected. Very seldom, however did the White man recognize his debt to the Indian and regarded him at best as a child, at worst as a savage. Instead, the White man

used the Indian to provide furs and provisions for the trading posts. One of the most significant features of Yukon history in the 19th century was the generous assistance given the White man by the trusting Indian, thereby permitting the exploration of the country to proceed.

Argument on the question of who "discovered" the Yukon River is puerile, given that the Indian had been living and travelling along that river for several thousand years. As one friend of the Indian, Jim Lotz, put it, "Columbus may have 'discovered' America but the indigenous peoples..... were not aware that their land was lost." <sup>(1)</sup> Hence discussion of the exploration of the Yukon River is relative to the experience of the White man.

To the 19th century White man the northern frontier represented a lost territory where fur-trading dreams could still come true. The desire for peltry profits lured White men to the Yukon River in the 1830's; from the Bering Sea came the Russians and from the Mackenzie River the British. In 1830 the Russian-American Company commenced the eastern pincer movement, dispatching an armed brig to explore Norton Sound for trading possibilities. <sup>(2)</sup> A favourable report encouraged Baron Wrangell to direct Michael Tebenkof the following year to establish a trading post on St. Michael Island. This station, called Michaelouski Redoubt, began trade with the Indians in 1833. <sup>(3)</sup> Soon after its establishment the neighbouring Unaligmut Indians attacked the Michaelouski Redoubt, but its commander, Kurupanof, beat off the attack. The Russian technique of dealing with

the Indians must have suffered from serious flaws, for the history of their trading posts along the Yukon River was marked by such outbursts of violence.

Yet the exploration of the Yukon, called the Kivikhpak at this time, progressed under the Russian explorer-traders Glasunof and Malakof. The latter ascended the Yukon in native skin boats (bidarras) some 575 miles where he built the post of Nulato. <sup>(4)</sup> The station consisted of several small houses with no stockade, a lack which cost the Russians dearly at this and other posts. Scarcity of provisions and unfriendly natives persuaded Malakof and his fellow traders to leave Nulato and winter at Michaelouski Redoubt. <sup>(5)</sup> On their return in the spring the Russians found the buildings at Nulato completely destroyed by fire. The Indians, showing remarkable prescience, had decided that they did not want permanent white settlements near their villages. The Russians, demonstrating remarkable stupidity, rebuilt the post without a stockade. On their return from Michaelouski the following season the Russians were rewarded by the usual sight of burned-out buildings. This time the bidarshik or commander of the post, took the measure of placating the neighbouring chiefs with presents. This technique worked for some time until a visiting British naval officer, Lieutenant Barnard, inadvertently insulted an Indian chief. Lack of a stockade proved fatal this time as the Indians wiped out the entire settlement. <sup>(6)</sup> Dependent upon the Indians for fur, the Russian-American Company swallowed its pride and deaths, and re-opened the post, this time with a stockade.

The Russians did not extend their trading arm much beyond Nulato, although several exploratory thrusts were made. In June 1843 a Russian naval officer, Zagoskin, explored the Yukon above Nulato as far as the mouth of the Nowikakat, where hostile Indians forced him to turn back. (7) Thus at the time of the establishment of the first British trading post on the Yukon River in 1847, Russian penetration along the Yukon had reached only the Nowikakat. A meeting between the two expanding fur-trading powers never occurred, although some time after the establishment of Fort Yukon Russian traders made a final thrust into the interior reaching Nuklukayet, a few miles below the mouth of the Tanana. (8) The reason for "peaceful co-existence" was, according to A. H. Brooks of the United States Geological Survey, geographical rather than political,

The reason why the Russian traders never ascended the river above Nuklukayet is obvious - their clumsy boats would be unmanageable in the swift water which prevails through much of the Rampart region above. The same point seems to have been reached by the Hudson (sic) Bay traders, who descended the river from Fort Yukon for the purpose of barter with the natives. If any confirmatory evidence were needed that the Russians were familiar with the Yukon as far as the mouth of the Tanana, it would be found in the fact that the lower Tanana natives included a large number of Russian words in their vocabulary. As it is known that they did not descend the Yukon, they must have acquired these by contact with the Russian traders at the mouth of the Tanana. (9)

Rapids on the Yukon prevented the Russians from carrying their explorations above Nuklukayet and precluded a clash with the eastward expanding Hudson's Bay Company.

John Bell, a Chief trader in the Hudson's Bay Company, had explored Peel River in 1839 and established Fort MacPherson on the Peel

in 1840. Bell then crossed the mountains to the east where he  
discovered the Rat River, later renamed the Bell. (10) Two years  
later Bell returned to the Rat River and travelled down it until the  
junction with the Porcupine. He continued down the Porcupine for  
three days to the vicinity of the 141st meridian, the boundary agreed  
upon by Russian and England in 1825. Bell returned to his exploration  
of the Porcupine in 1844 and followed the river to its junction with  
the Yukon River, meaning "Great River" in the local Indian language. (11)  
Excited at the fur-trading potential of this untapped region along the  
Yukon, Bell decided to establish a post at the confluence of the Yukon  
and the Porcupine. For this task Bell tapped Alexander Hunter Murray,  
who hailed from Kilman, Argyllshire, Scotland. Murray had learned the  
fur-trade ropes in the employ of the American Fur Company, and later as  
a senior clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company for the Mackenzie River  
District. (12) Now he had the dubious honour of building the most  
isolated Hudson's Bay Company post in the West.

On June 18, 1847, Murray left Lapierre House on the Bell River  
and followed that river to the Porcupine. Seven days later Murray  
reached the Yukon. On the east bank of the Yukon about three miles  
above the mouth of the Porcupine, Murray built a post - Fort Yukon -  
where he wintered. (13)

Murray's trip to the site of Fort Yukon did not fulfill the  
image of a courageous White man venturing alone into the wilderness  
dependent on the childish whims of savages. Rather, the Indians with  
their assistance made Murray's trip possible. A group of Peel River  
Indians travelled with Murray in the capacity of guides and provisioners.

At various points along the route other Indian tribes appeared with gifts of fresh game. These latter Indians also noted the various hazards along the route and acted as guides for their particular region. Murray's guides even knew the possible site for Fort Yukon and provided succour to his drooping spirits at the first impressions of the Yukon River -

I (Murray) must say, as I sat smoking my pipe and my face besmeared with tobacco juice to keep at bay the mosquitoes still hovering in clouds around me, that my first impressions of the Youcon (Sic) were anything but favourable. As far as we had come (2½ miles) I never saw an uglier river, everywhere low banks, apparently lately overflowed, with lakes and swamps behind, the trees too small for building, the water abominably dirty and the current furious; but I was consoled with the hopes held by our Indian informant that a short distance further on was higher land.(14)

Hence it was with Indian guidance that Murray finally found a suitable site for Fort Yukon, "a ridge of dryland extending about 300 yards parallel with the river, and ninety yards in width."<sup>(15)</sup>

After Murray began constructing the buildings, the Indians performed the function of public relations men and informed their neighbouring brethren of the coming of the White man. Their mission proved successful and Murray soon found himself playing host to several bands of Indians. Murray showed understanding of the Indians' customs and also great patience of their lengthy "speechifying",

The principal chief, after being spoken to by several others walked to the front and made a speech, the longest I ever listened to, except, perhaps, a cameronian sermon, and some parts of (it) equally far from the text. The interpreter could not repeat one fourth of it. He began by telling us the bravery of his nation, the extent of their country, the quantity of furs they could bring, and the Moose and Rain deer they could kill, and after a super - extra allowance of boasting and self-praise arrived at what I wanted to hear.

He said the White Chief had spoken truth, they found now that they had been cheated by the other bands, and would thereafter bring their furs to us; they wished no more to see the 'twisted' (the Rat Indians under Grand Blanc) in their country, they had told them, what was not true, and they had given up hopes of seeing us, and some of them were just preparing to go and meet the other whites down the river, but they would not; that they had not so many furs at present, but would soon bring what they had; as they much wanted beads and guns. He and his followers were glad that we had come to their country and wished us to remain amongst them and they would strive to supply us with meat, and what other things we required.(16)

All the elements for a successful trading post existed: an area rich in furs, Indians willing to bring in the furs and supplies, and no apparent rivals in the vicinity. Only the latter point gave Murray some disquiet, because he knew that Fort Yukon rested on Russian territory.

By the Agreement of 1839 between the Russian-American Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, the latter had agreed, ".....not (to) trade with the Indians nor receive in trade or barter nor hunt any furs or peltries on any part of the Russian territory on the northwest coast....."<sup>(17)</sup>

Murray knew of the agreement and, courtesy of Sir John Franklin's observations for longitude on the Mackenzie River, Murray was able to roughly plot where the 141st meridian lay. On June 21, 1847, Murray wrote in his Journal, "We are now, according to my reckoning, across the Boundary Line, and I have been on the look out as we came along for a site whereon to build, should it so happen that we are compelled to retreat upon our own territory."<sup>(18)</sup> It would slightly dishearten Murray to know that he actually had some fifty miles further to traverse before reaching the boundary. In the long run he achieved that goal for Fort Yukon was well within Russian territory.

The illegality of Fort Yukon did not bother Murray, but he was concerned with the security of the post, "The bastions will be made as strong as possible, roomy and convenient. When all this is finished the Russians may advance when they d\_\_\_\_\_d please."<sup>(19)</sup>

Murray, having secured his defenses, then proceeded to compete with the Russians for the trade of the Indians by telling tall tales of how the Russians cheated them with inferior merchandise. Initially Murray succeeded in his designs but by the second year the competition with the Russians became serious. In 1848 Murray wrote his superior that,

In November I had no idea of being troubled with the Russians until the following summer, but here they were, wintering down on the same river, with plenty of goods and trading at prices far below our tariff, and endeavouring to set our own Indians against us. I have been accustomed to the strongest kind of opposition while in the south, and would like nothing better, as I love a row, than to have it again, but I should wish also to have the means of competing.(20)

Murray must have received adequate supplies, for Fort Yukon prospered despite Russian competition. The end of Fort Yukon came not as a result of financial losses but of imperialistic horse-trading. The United States purchased Alaska in 1867 from Russia and moved quickly to assert sovereignty over the entire territory. In 1869 the American Government, particularly sensitive toward British encroachments, unceremoniously ejected the Hudson's Bay Company from Fort Yukon. This ejection did not end the Company's presence in the Yukon, for another of its traders, cut from the same Scottish cloth as Murray, had already explored the headwaters of the Yukon River.

Unlike Murray in the north, Robert Campbell experienced

considerable hardship in establishing posts in the southern part of Yukon. Campbell did not have the benefit of a large party of Indians to travel with him and act as hunters and interpreters. Scarcity of game exacerbated his condition. Commissioned to establish a post at Dease Lake in contemporary northern British Columbia, Campbell completed a post in the winter of 1838-9. His description of that winter at Dease Lake gives some idea of the fortitude of the Hudson's Bay Company explorer-traders,

We passed a winter of constant danger from the savage Russian (Coast) Indians, and of much suffering from starvation. We were dependent for subsistence on what animals we could catch and, failing that, on 'tripe de roche'. We were at one time reduced to such dire straits that we were obliged to eat our parchment windows, and our last meal before abandoning Dease Lake, on 8th May, 1839, consisted of the lacing of our snow shoe. (21)

It turned out that Campbell's effort was in vain, for the Agreement of 1839 had given the Hudson's Bay Company the privilege of leasing a coastal strip of Russian America, eliminating the need for an inland post at Dease Lake. When Campbell left Dease Lake in the spring of 1839, the post was permanently abandoned.

Campbell's next commission came in the spring of 1840 -  
"To explore the north branch of the Liard to its source, and to cross the height-of-land in search of any river flowing to the westward, especially the head-waters of the Colville, "which had just been discovered by Messrs. Dease and Simpson. (22) Campbell's party of seven left Fort Halkett on the Liard in May, following that river until its junction with another stream running north. Campbell

continued up the latter stream until he came to a mountain lake which he named Frances in honour of Lady Simpson. Beyond the Lake Campbell and a few of his companions ascended a river valley and proceeded to its source, Finlayson's Lake. There Campbell struck across a divide to the Pelly named after the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company at that time. (23) After reaching the Pelly River Campbell rejoined the main body of his party at Finlayson's Lake. By this exploration Campbell had opened a route to the Yukon territory, for the Pelly flowed into the Yukon River. By 1840, then, routes into both the northern and southern Yukon had been established by Hudson's Bay traders John Bell and Robert Campbell.

After the delay of a year the Company decided to follow up the Yukon discoveries and ordered Campbell to build a post on the Pelly. This he carried out in 1842. A naturally adventurous and curious man, Campbell explored the Pelly to its junction with the Yukon. Campbell mistakenly named the confluence the Pelly, and the upper Yukon the Lewes. (24) Returning to the more sedentary life at Fort Pelly Banks, Campbell carried on a lucrative trade with the "Stick" Indians, so called because they came from the land of forest or "sticks." In 1847 the Company called for a new post at the confluence of the Pelly and Lewes Rivers. Faithful Robert carried out the order in 1848, first situating Fort Selkirk right at the confluence and later moving it to a site a short way below that point on the Lewes. (25) Campbell gave flooding as his reason for the move. This post enabled Campbell to deal more directly with the

Stick Indians who lived and hunted in the environs of Fort Selkirk.

As could be expected, Campbell's wanderlust soon had him on the move. In 1850 he experienced the urge to know whether his Pelly and Alexander Murray's Yukon were one and the same river. This he proved by arriving at Fort Yukon one mosquito morning. To return whence you came is, as any traveller of Highway 401 will agree, a bore, so Campbell felt a round trip would be more interesting. This accounted for his route home via the Porcupine and Mackenzie Rivers. (26) Needless to say, the traders at Fort Simpson were surprised when Campbell appeared from the wrong direction, for they had no idea that Fort Yukon could be reached from Fort Selkirk. Due to extremely dangerous travelling conditions on the Liard, supplies were henceforth sent to Fort Selkirk byway of Fort Yukon.

About this time the fur trade in the Southern Yukon experienced difficulties. The Hudson's Bay Company post on the Pacific coast proved cheaper to operate than the inland posts of Port Pelly Banks, Frances Lake or even Fort Selkirk. When Fort Pelly Banks burned in 1849 the Company abandoned it; Fort Frances was closed in (27) 1851. Another problem appeared as the coastal Indians, the Chilkoot or Chilkats, became angry at the interference by Fort Selkirk with their monopoly of Stick Indian trade. Previously the Sticks had traded with the Chilkats, who in turn traded with the Hudson's Bay Company at the coastal post. The Chilkats, in their role as exploiting middlemen, were disturbed when they found Fort Selkirk cutting off the supply of furs at its source. According to William Ogilvie the

Chilkat Indians operated on the simple but effective principle that,

The good old rule  
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,  
That they shall take who have the power  
And they shall keep who can. (28)

During the summer of 1852 rumors reached Fort Selkirk that the Chilkats planned to regain their monopoly by destroying the post. The local Stick Indians loyal to Campbell, remained close to the fort during the summer to deter a Chilkat attack. But the wily Chilkats took advantage of the one occasion the Sticks absented themselves from the vicinity and overwhelmed the occupants of the fort. Since the attack was based on the solid economic principle of profit motive, no blood was shed. Instead the Chilkats expelled Campbell from the fort and appropriated all the trading goods. (29) By the time Campbell returned with Stick Indians the Chilkats had departed, leaving the cupboard very bare. Unable to conduct trade without goods, Campbell had no choice but to leave and there began another epic journey.

Campbell first headed off one of his men, Stewart, who was returning from Fort Yukon, and ordered him to retrace his steps. Then, taking a canoe, Campbell headed up the Pelly alone, crossed the divide to Frances Lake and followed the Liard to Fort Simpson. But Campbell had to reach another Simpson, Sir George, in order to ask for permission to re-open Fort Selkirk. Having already covered some 1,700 miles from Fort Selkirk to Fort Simpson, Campbell set out on snowshoes for Crow Wing (now St. Paul), Minnesota, a distance of 2,500 miles. (30)

Campbell completed this amazing hike on March 13, (1853), and headed

immediately for London, arriving on April 18. <sup>(31)</sup> There he pleaded in vain his case for the re-establishment of Fort Selkirk. The directors of the Hudson's Bay Company felt that the inland posts were too costly to maintain, given that the Stick Indians would bring their furs to the coastal post. <sup>(32)</sup> Fort Selkirk went the way of Fort Pelly Banks and Fort Frances, and the buildings were left for the local Indians to demolish in search of nails. The history of Hudson's Bay trading posts in the Southern Yukon waxed and waned in a twelve-year period, and had disappeared permanently seventeen years before an American Army officer terminated the activity of Fort Yukon.

Thus ended the first saga of White man history of the Yukon. The Hudson's Bay Company, despite the awful difficulties posed by the great distances of the Yukon, had opened both the northern and the southern regions of the territory to the fur trade. Men of the fortitude of Alexander Murray and Robert Campbell understood the task of building and maintaining posts in this hitherto unexplored region. The success of the trading posts depended to a significant degree upon the Indians who welcomed the White man with good will, abundant furs, and fresh provisions. Only the Chilkats proved an exception to this rule and perhaps this can be explained by their over-exposure to the White man's business methods. After more than a decade of profitable trading the fact became obvious that costs could be cut by allowing the Stick Indians in the southern Yukon to carry their furs to the coastal posts. The iron law of profit and loss carried the day and as natural and unnatural misfortunes overtook the posts of the Yukon interior,

the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned them. The American ousting of Company traders at Fort Yukon in 1869 administered the coup de grace to the British presence in the Yukon. During the next quarter century the history of the Yukon looked west to American Alaska instead of east to Hudson's Bay Company posts. Needless to say, the Canadian presence had yet to make itself felt in the Yukon, for the Yukon Territory itself had to bring about Canadian recognition of its northern frontier through the culmination of a movement of traders and prospectors.

The movement received its major support from the fur trade but made a subtle accommodation with prospectors. American commercial interests filled the hiatus left by the Russians and the British. In 1868 Hutchinson, Kohl and Company of San Francisco bought out the Russian-Alaska Company. Under the name of the Alaska Commercial Company this firm established posts along the Yukon, usually on former sites. The formation of trade relations with the Indians proved more difficult than previously. The American traders did not share the patience of an Alexander Murray in dealing with the Indians, and their brisk, efficient manner conflicted with the "speechifying". Excellent businessmen, the Americans accommodated themselves to Indian manners enough to form a trading relationship. The line of trading posts stretching from St. Michael to Fort Yukon prospered.

Those trading posts made possible the development of an industry which later dominated Yukon history - mining. The initial step in mining, prospecting, could not be carried on without supply

bases nearby, especially in such a remote area as the Yukon. Yet the interests of fur traders and prospectors were traditionally inimical. Ideal conditions for trading demanded the fewer White men in contact with the Indians the better, and a gold strike would flood an area and destroy the fur trade. The Hudson's Bay Company had sat on the knowledge of gold in the Yukon for many years. As early as 1842 Robert Campbell had reported the presence of gold along the Pelly River.

Another employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, stationed at Fort Yukon, gave the attitude of traders to gold in a letter written to his parents in October 1864,

I had some thoughts of digging gold here, but am not sure about it. I do not think it is in paying quantities at the fort, but if I can only get time to make an expedition up the Yukon, I expect we should find it in abundance, but I am always on a voyage or busy at the fort during the summer, AND IN THE WINTER NOTHING CAN BE DONE IN THE WAY OF GOLD-HUNTING. I think that next fall, after arriving from the trip down the Yukon I shall be able to go up the river. There is a small river not far from here that the minister the Reverend McDonald, saw so much gold on it a year ago that he could have gathered it with a spoon. I have often wished to go, but can never find the time. Should I find gold in paying quantities, I may turn gold-digger, but this is merely a LAST RESORT WHEN I CAN DO NO BETTER.(34)

The clerk states several good reasons other than conflicting interests for the disinterest of traders in gold. For one, the work on the posts kept the fur traders so busy that they had no time for prospecting, even when they knew of a place where gold could be found "by the spoonful". Also, visions of great wealth did not haunt the traders, who preferred the security of yearly \$200 salary. Had the clerk taken up prospecting in 1864 the possibility exists that the strike of Birch Creek might

have occurred three decades earlier.

Missionaries, like the fur traders, had reason not to publicize the existence of gold in the Yukon. Concerned with the spiritual and physical well-being of their native charges, the missionaries did not want a horde of White men and their whiskey in the Yukon corrupting the newly-acquired Christian morals of the Indians. Hence the Reverend McDonald and other missionaries took common cause with the fur traders in not spreading the knowledge of gold deposits in the Yukon.

Rumors of bonanza did not lure the first prospector to the Yukon. After study of Arrowsmith's map of British North America, Arthur Harper of Antrim County, Ireland, concluded that the Yukon contained gold. <sup>(35)</sup> Harper reasoned that since the Liard, Peace and Yukon Rivers rose in the auriferous regions of British Columbia, they must be sources of gold. Harper chose to prospect the Yukon and spent the rest of his life trying to prove his theory.

A man of considerable persuasion, Harper convinced four other men, Frederick Hart - another Irishman, George Finch - a Canadian, Andrew Kansellar - a German, and Samuel Wilkinson - an Englishman, to accompany him to the Yukon. In September 1872, these men set out from the waters of the Upper Peace, crossed the Mountain Portage, and turned up Half-Way River. <sup>(36)</sup> From Half-Way Harper and company portaged in the winter across to the Sikhanni, surmising that this river joined the Liard. In the spring they descended the Sikhanni and came to the mouth

of the Nelson. There Harper was surprised to meet another company of men, led by Leroy Napoleon McQuesten, also looking for gold. In his Recollections McQuesten described the meeting,

In the spring after the river broke up, five men came down the Nelson River in a canoe - A. Harper, F. Hart, G. Finch and Gestler (sic). They had been working all winter sleighing down their goods from Peace River to the head of the Nelson River. They were prospecting like ourselves. They held a counsel and four of them concluded to go with us to the Yukon and one remained to prospect in that section.(37)

This passage indicates that McQuesten, not Harper, was the moving spirit behind the Yukon expedition, but William Ogilvie of the Geological Survey attempted to clear up the conflicting opinions by discussions with the two principals concerned, and he concluded that Harper was indeed the true leader.

This conclusion was in keeping with McQuesten's mode of life before and after 1871. McQuesten was a peripatetic fur trader, working for the Hudson's Bay Company initially and later on his own in northern British Columbia. Even in the Yukon McQuesten remained primarily a fur trader and made only occasional prospecting forays. Harper, on the other hand, lived for prospecting and proclaimed far and wide the mining potentialities of the Yukon. Harper turned to fur trading only to provide himself a grubstake and thereby enable him to carry on his first love - the search for gold. This circumstantial evidence, together with Ogilvie's firsthand assessment leads one to conclude that Harper, not McQuesten initiated the first prospecting expedition to the Yukon. Furthermore, Harper induced McQuesten to change his plans and

his large boat for Harper's dug-outs, although at the time McQuesten (38)  
did not inform Harper of his intention of following him to the Yukon.

After the meeting Harper carried out his original plan and made for Fort Yukon by the Mackenzie-Peel-Porcupine route. Harper's initial prospecting must have encouraged him as he reported that, "On the Peace everywhere colours were found more or less, on the Liard colours, on the Mackenzie nothing, on the Peel fair prospects, on the (39)  
Porcupine some colours, and on the Yukon prospects everywhere."

On July 15, 1873, Harper and company reached Fort Yukon, and much to (40)  
his surprise, along came Jack McQuesten several weeks later.

Following the same route taken by Harper, McQuesten had found his way to the Yukon.

The reunion of the two groups in the loneliness of the Yukon proved pleasant. Moses Mercier, the trader at Fort Yukon, played the munificent host according to McQuesten, "We were treated like kings ..... Some of us had not had such good living in ten years. It was there we (41)  
saw the first repeating rifle." The harsh environment forced men to work together and share generously. Mercier, although short of supplies, gave the prospectors flour and refused payment. A sense of community evolved among the early prospectors and the fur traders, together with a philosophy of life.

The reference to seeing a repeating rifle for the first time gives a clue to the character of the prospectors. Besides the lure of gold, the way of life of the frontier appealed to the Harpers and

McQuestens who felt free to live as they pleased, far from civilized restraints. They made up the breed of men often found on the frontiers - refugees from advancing civilization. One early prospector reflected this escapism when he bragged in 1880 of never having seen a railroad. In many respects these frontiersmen found the Yukon ideal. Gold provided them with a purpose in life. The harsh environment provided the challenge and encouraged the growth of a community based on the principle, "Do unto others as you would be done by," which was later adopted as the motto of the Yukon Order of Pioneers. It is interesting to note that a recent symposium of eminent philosophers, after a week-long discussion of world philosophies, concluded that the above principle was the most important for human life. The early prospectors arrived at the golden rule through experience in the Yukon, whereas the philosophers read their thousand books and had a symposium.

Basic philosophical truth and all, life in the Yukon was hard. The goldseekers had to alternate roles of prospector and trader, a process made possible by the benevolent presence of the Alaska Commercial Company. McQuesten and Harper both worked as traders for this company, the latter less consistently than the former. A pattern evolved for the prospectors as shown in the careers of these two men. They would trade during the spring and summer and then prospect during the fall. The limitation of prospecting to the short Yukon fall meant that only a small area could be covered each year. Nevertheless, Harper managed to cover many of the main goldfields in his explorations. On one of his prospecting forays in 1875 Harper, in charge of Fort Reliance

situated some six miles below present-day Dawson, descended the Yukon to Eagle, Alaska, and from there crossed to the north fork of the Fortymile River, and followed it down to the main river. (42) Upon traversing the divide between Fortymile and Sixtymile Rivers, Harper discovered such good prospects that he sent for a tank of quicksilver (43) used to separate gold from sand. Before the quicksilver arrived Harper was forced to leave the region because of a conflict with the Indians at Fort Reliance. (44) This untimely misfortune prevented Harper from determining the worth of the placer deposits on the Sixty-mile River. But Harper's share of unkind fate was not over. When, some time later, Harper found good prospects on the Fortymile, he could not take time off from trading to follow up his initial discoveries. These setbacks did not dampen Harper's public relations efforts on the behalf of the Yukon, and he continued to extol the potentialities of gold mining in that region. Harper lived for twenty-four years in the Yukon always hoping for the "big strike" to vindicate his faith.

Although the time Harper spent as a trader prevented his personal search for gold, it did enable other prospectors to carry on extensive prospecting with the supplies provided by the trading posts. The Alaska Commercial Company had its main supply base for the Yukon at St. Michael, hence the first prospectors, with the exception of the Harper and McQuesten expeditions, approached the Yukon territory from Alaska. The prospectors caught rides on the sternwheeler Yukon used by the Alaska Commercial Company to carry supplies to the various trading

posts. The Company had bought the Yukon in 1869 after it had transported Captain Raymond on his obstreperous mission of closing down Fort Yukon. (45)

McQuesten and Harper had travelled by the Yukon when they returned from St. Michael in 1873 to take up trading for the Alaska Commercial Company. McQuesten described that trip,

We had five boats in tow. We made three miles an hour up stream. When we would get out of wood we would tie up to some driftpile and pile up the boat with wood. She would take about four cords at a time; it took us about three to four hours to fill her up. That would last about ten hours. (46)

Although not the fastest boat imaginable, the Yukon by towing other boats and barges fulfilled its task of supplying the trading posts during the short summer season. When the demands for supplies increased other sternwheelers appeared. In 1871 a rival firm to the Alaska Commercial Company fielded the St. Michael, which made the run from St. Michael to Fort Yukon. (47) In 1883 Ed Schieffelin, already a millionaire from his silver mines in Tombstone Arizona, (48) <sup>sternwheeler</sup> built a small fittingly named the New Racket and ascended the Yukon to prospect. When he failed to find quartz gold, Schieffelin left the Yukon and sold the New Racket to the Alaska Commercial Company. For two decades those relatively small (49) sternwheelers - the Yukon, St. Michael and New Racket linked the isolated trading posts and provided supplies and transportation for prospectors.

While Harper and McQuesten were carrying on their trading and prospecting on the lower reaches of the Yukon River, another movement of men developed on the upper Yukon. For some time previous to the eighteen-seventies White men had known of a trail across the St. Elias

Mountains; but the Chilkats guarded the trail against the White-man's penetration. In 1878 George Holt somehow managed to slip past the Chilkat guards and crossed either the Chilcoot or White Pass. (50)

As he was accompanied by Indian guides, it seem likely that Holt persuaded several Chilkats to betray the tribal secret. The Indians guided Holt to the lower end of Lake Marsh, and then over a trail to Teslin River, before returning with him to the coast. Holt's crossing did not mean the end of the difficulty of gaining access to the passes.

That same year the Chilkats turned back a California prospector Edward Bean - and the Rath brothers of Victoria. (51) Bean returned in 1880

with a party of nineteen prospectors, but again the Chilkats opposed entry by White miners. The Chilkats reasoned that the opening up of the Yukon to mining would destroy their fur trade monopoly with the Stick Indians. This time, however, Bean enlisted the assistance of a Captain Beardslee of the United States navy who, according to

Pierre Berton, fired "a few blanks from a Gatling gun" for the enlightenment of the Chilkats. (52) Chief Hole-in-the-Face of the Chilkats

understandably relented and the party of prospectors, some twenty-five strong by this time, crossed the Chilcoot Pass to Lake Lindeman. There the party constructed boats and descended the headwaters of the Lewes or Yukon prospecting as they went. The prospectors followed the Yukon as far as the Teslin River and while not finding gold in paying quantities, one of the party - Steel by name - reported finding bars yielding \$2.50 a day on a small tributary of the Yukon. (53)

The Bean Company carried only enough provisions for the summer and returned to Sitka, Alaska in the fall.

Two other men - Johnny Mackenzie and Slim Jim - followed Bean's group over the Chilcoot and spent the summer prospecting the upper Yukon River. Despite the enormous distances separating the various prospecting groups in the Yukon, the knowledge of Mackenzie and Slim Jim's presence was known in the lower Yukon region. McQuesten wrote in his Recollections,

It was reported that fall (1880) that there were White men on the head waters of the Yukon and travelling about in boats. I supposed it was prospectors looking for gold and it proved to be the case as Densmore (sic) and Slim Jim were in about that time.(54)

An efficient network of oral transmission of knowledge was another means by which the prospectors overcame the vast distances and concomitant separation of the Yukon. The original prospectors in the Fort Yukon and Fort Reliance area soon learned of the coming of a second movement of prospectors across the Chilcoot Pass in 1880. The route across the Chilcoot Pass in the long run proved more significant for the history of prospecting in the Yukon than its northern counterpart, the St. Michael route, for it opened the Yukon at a time when miners from the Cassiar gold fields began looking for yellower pastures.

Messrs. Thibert and McCullough, of Cassiar fame, began their search for gold in the tradition of Harper and McQuesten. Travelling westward from the Mackenzie River in 1871, they combined hunting and prospecting until they arrived at the Stikine River by way of Dease Lake. There they found a small group of men placer mining and spent the winter of 1873-74 with these men. In the spring Thibert and McCullough headed back to Dease Lake where they discovered gold in

(55)  
paying quantities. Attracted by the strike, the miners from the  
Stikine joined Thibert and the names of gold - bearing creeks  
proliferated - Defot, McDame, Snow, Quartz, Rosella, Patterson, Sayyea,  
Black and Dease. (56)  
The discovery of gold in the Cassiar Mountains of  
northern British Columbia set a pattern which was to occur many times  
in the Yukon. Within six months of the strike by Thibert and McCullough  
the area around Dease Lake contained a population of 1,500, "exclusive  
of Indians." (57)  
The metropolis of Laketon sprang up at the mouth of  
Dease Creek and beef cattle were brought in from the upper Fraser River.  
Laketon depended upon one resource - gold - a situation not conducive  
to economic stability. The figure for the gold yield of the Cassiar  
(58)  
reflect the precariousness of the area's economic foundation,

Estimate value of gold produced by Cassiar District 1874-87

1873	not known
1874	1,000,000
1875	830,000
1876	556,474
1877	449,830
1878	519,720
1879	405,200
1880	297,850
1881	198,900
1882	182,000
1883	119,000
1884	101,600
1885	50,600
1886	63,610
1887	60,485

The decreasing figures for gold production spelled the end of Laketon  
and the Cassiar gold fields although the initial impetus of the rush  
delayed the denouement. Hence the population of Laketon peaked several  
years after the best year for gold production. By 1877 the gold rush  
ebbed and the stampedeers who could find neither gold nor employment in

the Cassiar region began prospecting elsewhere.

The Cassiar gold strike gave a good preview of what was to come in the Yukon. The discovery of gold occurred and prospectors in the vicinity descended upon the site, staking Thibert Creek and neighbouring creeks. The prospectors sent out news of the strike in a generally exaggerated form. Stampeders made their way to the Cassiar region and found work as labourers in the placer diggings. But more men arrived than the gold mining could use, and gradually the stampeders drifted away. Several years after the initial discovery gold production peaked and began to decline. An exodus of population ensued and after a decade Laketon stood empty for all but a few diehards who lived in the hopes of making another big strike in the Cassiar.

The Thibert Creek discovery also demonstrated problems which miners in the Yukon later had to solve. The problem of obtaining supplies faced the men of the Cassiar. For another, the prospectors found the ground frozen, even in summer. The Cassiar miners found that by burning off the trees and moss, and exposing the ground to the sun, the gravel became sufficiently thawed to work. In the Yukon the frozen ground proved more contentious, but the solution of the Cassiar miners provided an important clue to overcome the permafrost.

In 1880 the ex-Cassiar miners turned north in their quest for gold. Due to the efforts of Bean and Beardflee the southern route to the Yukon across the Chilcoot Pass lay open to them. The first recorded instance of Cassiar miners to take advantage of this route occurred in

1881. According to George Dawson two of this group - Lantry and (59)  
McClinchy - were the first men to find paying placers in the Yukon.

Each successive year saw more men entering the Yukon and proportionally increasing the area prospected and hence the possibilities of a major strike. For example, in 1882 a large party - Thomas Boswell, John Dougan, Robert Robertson, D. Bertrand, Frank Densmore, John Riley, P. Cloudman, Robert Fox, Thomas Curney, Joseph Ladue and William Moore - crossed the Chilcoot, followed the Yukon River to the Peel, and ascended the latter (60)

to Hoole Canyon. Ladue and Moore - destined to be colourful characters of the Dawson era - the following summer over Fortymile and Sixtymile Rivers and found nothing. Both these areas later hosted major gold rushes, an indication of the element of chance in the game of (61)  
prospecting.

In 1883 Richard Poplin, Charles McConkey, Benjamin Beach and C. Marks started the stone rolling which avalanched into a series of gold rushes. They followed the, by now, usual route from Dyea to the headwaters of the Yukon, but descended the Yukon much further than other parties. They prospected the Stewart River as far as the McQuesten (62)  
before their supplies ran out. Instead of returning to the coast they made for Fort Reliance and upon learning that the annual supply steamer had not arrived, the Poplin party continued on to Tanana, some distance below Fort Yukon. In the spring Jack McQuesten took them upstream by steamer on his supply run to Reliance. Poplin and company (63)  
returned to the Stewart and spent the summer prospecting on it.

There they met Thomas Boswell and Frazer who had been working the banks and bars of the upper Yukon. Poplin generously advised the two men to

(64)  
try the Stewart. As it was late in the season Boswell and Frazer headed for Reliance to winter but they took Poplin's advice to return in the spring. In April 1885 Boswell and his partner sleighed their provisions to the Stewart River and prospected their way up it, thawing gravel and testing samples. About ninety miles from the mouth of the Stewart they reached Chapman's Bar, which prospected so well that they spent the rest of the season working it. (65) Meanwhile Poplin, in company with Peter Wybourg, Francis Morphat and Jeremiah Bertrand, had also returned to the Stewart and commenced placer mining at Steamboat Bar, about seven miles above Chapman's Bar. The Poplin party managed to clean up some \$35,000 for the season, while Boswell and Frazer mined \$6,000 worth of gold. (66) This was the first substantial clean-up of gold in the Yukon.

Late that summer Boswell went down to Fort Reliance to buy provisions for the winter. Contrary to the understood code of proclaiming a strike, Boswell decided not to tell his fellow prospectors of the discovery on the Stewart. Boswell did not even break the news when McQuesten offered to transport him back to Stewart, along with H. Madison, T. Williams, J. Ladue, and Mike Hess. (67) Only after the rest of the prospectors had departed from the steamer for White River and Selkirk did Boswell inform McQuesten of the amount of the summer clean-up. McQuesten felt that "it was very wrong of his not telling the other boys," for there were so few of them in the area. (68) The process of undermining the principle of "doing unto others" began with the discovery of the first sizeable gold deposits in the Yukon.

Despite his dislike of Boswell's selfish attitude, McQuesten took him up the Stewart and about twelve miles from its mouth found six men working on a bar - F. Dinsmond, John Hughes, J. Powers, Steven Custer, (69) and the two Day brothers. When asked for information about the upper Stewart, Boswell again lied, stating that he had found nothing further up. McQuesten, however, lost no time in telling John Hughes of Boswell's strike. Hence the entire party insisted on accompanying Boswell back to his "nothing" diggings, much to the latter's displeasure. With these men in tow McQuesten continued another fifteen miles before low water forced him to beach the boat and to cache his trading goods. The party then hiked to Chapman's Bar, where they joined Boswell and Frazer in placer mining. McQuesten himself worked for five days and made \$250 before returning to his boat. (70) McQuesten reported that fifteen men remained on the Stewart that winter and every one of them "expected to strike it big." This hope for a major discovering nourished the prospectors until the Klondike fulfilled their expectations a decade later.

If dreams of fabulous riches provided spiritual nourishment, strikes of the Stewart River variety supplied material needs and enabled the search to continue. News of the discovery travelled fast. By the summer of 1886 about 100 men were working on the Stewart and they each made \$1,000 on the average. (71) Harper and McQuesten anticipated this influx by establishing a supply post at the mouth of the Stewart early that summer. They expected Stewart to be the focus of gold mining and prospecting for some time, but the prejudices of two prospectors spoiled the traders' hopes.

In 1886 Franklin and Madison had explored the Stewart and the McQuesten Rivers as far as their boats would go. In their bible it read that gold and leeks did not mix. Since the banks of the Stewart abounded with odoriferous leeks, Franklin and Madison diverted their searches to Fortymile River. Before laughing at the hypersensitivity of the olfactory organs of Franklin and Madison died out on the Stewart, the two men returned and according to the code of the country, proclaimed the discovery of coarse gold. <sup>(72)</sup> Franklin and Madison had discovered what prospectors had sought but never found in the Yukon - coarse gold. The prospectors stampeded to the Fortymile, leaving behind their fine-gold diggings on the Stewart. The stampede was not an entirely rational one, as many men abandoned good-paying claims. The few who stayed often did quite well. The Day brothers, for example, made over \$30 a day on the leeky banks of the Stewart. Meanwhile back at the trading post, Harper and McQuesten found themselves holding an empty bag and had no choice but to follow the stampeders.

In September 1887 William Ogilvie observed the commencement of their post at Fortymile. By that time \$200,000 had been taken out of the Fortymile diggings, according to Ogilvie's rough estimates. Gold production on the Fortymile River and surrounding creeks provided a relatively stable base for a town, which grew up around the trading post. This added a new dimension to the development of the Yukon, the first community to house, feed, clothe and entertain the miners. The latter industry found its gold mine in the miners. The Puritan ethic did not prevail in the Yukon and the men thought that gold should be

spent, preferably as soon as possible. This led to the institution of the "blow-out" in which a miner would spend all his gold in one grand orgy of drinking, gambling and wenching. The facilities for the "blow-out" existed. The saloons served watered whiskey at fifty cents a shot. (73) An "opera" house staffed by a troupe of San Francisco dance-hall girls catered to the erotic tastes of the miners. For more sublimated tastes a Shakespearean Club and play-read groups sufficed. The Yukon had its first taste of civilization.

The concentration of men in a town setting brought the problem of law and order. The miners extended the principle of the golden rule to law enforcement. A miners' meeting was convened whenever an individual claimed an injustice had been done. The miners had their own code of values which reflected the problems posed by the Yukon environment. The most serious crime, theft of supplies, commanded the penalty of death or banishment from the community. This form of ad hoc justice owed more to the American frontier experience than to British traditions. The British imposed colonial rule from above on frontier settlements; Americans allowed it to grow from the grass roots, and strongly resented external controls. Since a majority of the residents of Fortymile were Americans, they naturally applied frontier tenets common to their experience in the earlier stampedes of the Black Hills and California. American ties through supply lines running northwest to St. Michael and south to Dyea strengthened the influence of frontier ideas. At this point in its history the Yukon could be termed American Ideologically and economically.

American know-how and efficiency dealt with the problems posed by the Yukon distances. San Francisco, the home of the Alaska Commercial Company supplied the goods. Ocean freighters transported the supplies to St. Michael where steamers rendezvoused. Steamers like the Arctic, put into service in 1889, made regular runs between St. Michael and the trading posts. As more prospectors entered the Yukon, the trading posts made the smooth transition to centers for mining supplies a process aided by Harper and McQuesten. The supply system worked well and no prospector ever starved. The same system worked when mining towns appeared. For example, the Alaska Commercial Company added the steamer Arctic in response to the supply demands of Fortymile. The number of steamers and supply runs increased as the scent on the gold trail became stronger.

In 1893 two Indians, Syrosca and Pitka, discovered gold on Birch Creek, Alaska. McQuesten had grubstaked the duo and moved his merchandise downriver in the spring of 1894. Upon arrival at the point where Birch Creek flows nearest to the Yukon, McQuesten found seventy-<sup>(74)</sup> five miners already laying out a townsite. McQuesten built an imposing two-storey trading post in Circle City, as he named the new town, and set about living up to his given name - Leroy.

During the 1894 and 1895 mining seasons, nine paying creeks were discovered around Birch Creek and yielded \$400,00 in the latter<sup>(75)</sup> season. Naturally, the gold attracted those who "mined the miners," to use William R. Morrison's phrase. Soon Circle City boasted

an entertainment industry the equal of Fortymile and competed for the bodies of the miners. Events occurring in Fortymile at this time gave Circle City the edge in the realm of social freedom.

As a society increases in numbers and hence complexity, simple forms of law often prove inadequate. The miners' meeting in Fortymile had run into this problem. Initially this means of dispensing justice had worked to the satisfaction of the mining community. Later, however, the usual setting of the meeting - a saloon - influenced the juridicial proceedings and the caller of the meeting often found himself standing a round of drinks at the cost of \$20. Then too, as the mining community grew in size, factions developed and cases were decided on the basis of who belonged to which clique. Finally, the men were sometimes moved by their emotions at the meeting and Minerva the Objective got lost in the confusion. Such an abuse of justice, incurred at the expense of John Jerome Healy, served to bring the problem to a head.

Healy could not be termed a "career-man" in the contemporary sense of the word. By the time he reached Fortymile he had been a "hunter, trapper, soldier, prospector, whiskey-trader, editor, guide, Indian scout sheriff," and businessman. In the latter role Healy formed the North American Transportation and Trading Company, which floated its first sternwheeler, the Porteous B. Weare, in 1892. Healy had built a large warehouse at Fortymile in 1893 and prepared to duel commercially with the Alaska Commercial Company.

Healy's conflict with the miners' meeting came in 1893 over complaints against him by his hired girl. The girl's habit of remaining

out all night aroused Healy's displeasure, so he locked her out. A male Samaritan appeared to argue the girl's case before the miners' court. In the face of confused testimony the court emotionally decided in favour of the girl and ordered Healy to pay her a year's wages and her fare back home. (77) Outraged, Healy paid. Later, evidence came out that the good Samaritan was the girl's lover with whom she had spent the nights and who had also collected her year's wages. Vindicated, Healy wrote to his friend from Fort Whoop-up days, North West Mounted Police Superintendent Samuel B. Steele, and asked for protection. Healy's appeal coincided with another call for law enforcement by the Anglican bishop of Fortymile. Bishop Bompas decried the effect of alcohol on the Indians and of gambling on the Whitemen, citing a fatal altercation over a card game. Ottawa replied in the person of North West Mounted Police Inspector Charles Constantine, who arrived at Fortymile in 1894. In one of his first acts, Constantine reversed the decision of a miners' meeting and dismissed it permanently. Law and order of the colonial variety had come to the Yukon.

The coming of the Mounties officially ended the sourdough way of life. By 1895 the original community of prospectors, sharing beliefs, food, shelter, and gold discoveries, had disintegrated beneath the weight of sheer numbers of newcomers to the Yukon. Where it was impossible to know everyone personally, it became impossible to bring the opprobrium of the community against transgressors of tacitly understood laws. The moral code no longer held. Men could not leave their cabins unlocked or their provisions unguarded. The breed of prospector who entered the

Yukon after the Birch Creek discovery was interested solely in gold, and not in the way of life. As the pursuit of the "big strike" intensified after 1894 the newcomers saw other prospectors more as objects to be competed against, rather than as their fellow human beings, awash in the same pointless game.

If the miners' code of ethics broke down, the economic system did not. The Alaska Commercial Company and the North American Transportation and Trading Company made full steam ahead, literally and figuratively. To accommodate demand for supplies, the Alaska Commercial Company put two sternwheelers, the Alice and Bella, on the St. Michael to Fortymile run in 1895. Large sternwheelers for the Yukon at that time - 165 feet long with a beam of 32 feet - the Alice and Bella pushed barges, and came equipped with exceptionally powerful engines. (79) At the same time the North American Transportation and Trading Company added the John J. Healy to the lower Yukon run. This steady expansion of the sternwheeler fleets carefully maintained the balance between demand and supply of food and merchandise to the prospectors in the Yukon.

In light of the history preceding the discovery of gold in Bonanza Creek in 1896, the Klondike gold rush comes not as a surprise but as the culmination of twenty years of prospecting. Harper and McQuesten laid the groundwork with an expedient combination of fur trading and prospecting. Their supply posts enabled other men to prospect during the period 1880-85. The discovery of gold in paying

quantities on the Stewart on 1885 gave prospectors a new support. From that time they could pan enough gold to grubstake themselves at the Harper-McQuesten posts without having to return to St. Michael, Vancouver, or San Francisco. Further discoveries of paying placer gold at Fortymile and Birch Creek reinforced this process and the country supported more and more men. Proportionate to the increase in numbers of prospectors the chances of a major strike increased. The prospectors reasoned similarly and lived in expectation of the "big one".

Ironically, when the major strike did occur in 1896, chance ruled the discovery. Skookum Jim, Tagish Charley, and George Washington Carmack were returning from a prospecting trip on Gold Bottom Creek and took a short cut along Rabbit (Bonanza) Creek. There Skookum Jim happened to try his luck and she smiled with yellow teeth. Skookum Jim's discovery unleashed the Klondike gold rush which buried the early history of the Yukon in a torrent of bodies, gold, exploits, and words.

By the time of the Klondike gold rush the Yukon had lost her innocence. The Hudson's Bay Fur traders had it. So did the trader-prospectors of the Alaska Commercial Company. The prospectors of the eighties partook, but the Klondikers never understood. The innocence of the Yukon was a delicate creature which the early explorers, traders and prospectors developed to offset the harshness of the land. Spider-webs of communication evolved under the Harpers and McQuestens and overcame the problems of supplies and distance. The community of prospectors who came to the Yukon in the seventies and eighties returned to the centres of the webs - the posts - for supplies and friendship.

Food, the most vital commodity, was shared without cost. There were values above that of money.

Along with the supply system, there developed a code of ethics summed up by the golden rule - "Do unto others as you would be done by." From this principle emanated laws agreed upon by the prospecting community. Theft of food was punishable by death or exile. Cabins were always left open for other miners to come in, build a fire, eat the food and sleep. The only condition was that the store of firewood was replenished before leaving. All news and knowledge, including that of gold discoveries, was shared by all, on the assumption that there was enough for everyone. A common meeting of the miners decided all disputes and upheld the law.

With the Alaska Commercial Company posts to supply the economic base, and the miners' meeting the justice and the ethical code, the Yukon was explored by professional prospectors for twenty years. No one starved, and only one man froze to death, and that was due to a foolhardy attempt to bring news to Dyea of the Stewart River discovery. In short, the system evolved by the traders and prospectors of dealing with the formidable Yukon environment worked.

Tensions in the system did not appear until the early nineties. The major causes, as stated earlier, were numbers and gold fever. The strikes of Fortymile and Birch Creek had lured hundreds of new men into the Yukon and the secondary industries followed. Fortymile and Circle City became established towns, which, in Yukon jargon, meant

that they contained warehouse and whorehouses. The simple economic and moral system of the system of the trader-pro prospector community no longer held. The summoning of the North West Mounted Police in 1894 came as a response to a need for a more effect law-enforcement agency in the Yukon.

While mass of numbers influenced most decisively the social structure and beliefs of the Yukon society the type of man entering the territory in the mid-nineties also had an influence. The traders and early prospectors came for the mode of living on the last frontier, as well as for profit. In fact, in reading their diaries, one receives the impression that the life and comaraderie actually took precedence over the pursuit of gold. The same did not hold for those who came after 1895, especially during the gold rush. They wanted to strike it rich and viewed other prospectors as opponents to be beaten. The Darwinian struggle did not leave any room for, "Do unto others as you would be done by." Time spent helping a neighbour represented time lost in the race for the bonanza. The new yardstick for measuring social institutions and other men became their use in assisting one to that glorious goal of North American society - wealth.

Notes

1. Jim Lotz, The Invisible North, Northian, October 1968, Volume V, Number 4, page 9.
2. William Ogilvie, Early Days on the Yukon, (Ottawa, 1913) p. 20.
3. W. H. Dall, "The Narrative of W. H. Dall, Leader of the Expedition to Alaska in 1866-1868", The Yukon Territory, (London, 1898), p. 9.
4. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 20.
5. Dall, Yukon Territory, p. 48.
6. Ibid.
7. Alexander Hunter Murray, Journal of the Yukon 1847-48, (Ottawa, 1910), p. 7.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid, pp. 7-8.
10. Ibid, p. 1.
11. Ibid, p. 2.
12. Ibid, p. 1.
13. Ibid, p. 2.
14. Ibid, p. 43.
15. Ibid, p. 44.
16. Ibid, p. 48.
17. Ibid, p. 5.
18. Ibid, p. 35.
19. Ibid, p. 67.
20. Ibid, p. 70.
21. George M. Dawson, "The Narrative of an Exploration Made in 1887 in the Yukon District," The Yukon Territory, (London, 1898), p. 307.

22. Ibid, p. 346.
23. Ibid, pp. 346-7.
24. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 23.
25. Dawson, Yukon Territory, p. 347.
26. Ibid, p. 348.
27. Ibid, p. 349.
28. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 25.
29. Dawson, Yukon Territory, p. 349.
30. Ogilvie, Early Days, pp. 25-26.
31. Dawson, Yukon Territory, p. 350.
32. Ibid.
33. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 64.
34. Ibid, p. 86.
35. Ibid, p. 87.
36. Ibid, p. 88.
37. Leroy N. McQuesten, Recollections of Life in the Yukon 1871-1885,  
(Dawson, 1952), p. 2.
38. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 92.
39. Ibid, p. 94.
40. Ibid, p. 96.
41. McQuesten, Recollections, p. 3.
42. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 100.
43. McQuesten, Recollections, p. 6.
44. Ibid.
45. Dawson, Yukon Territory, pp. 350 - 1.
46. McQuesten, Recollections, p. 4.

47. Ibid, p. 8.
48. Pierre Berton, Klondike, The Life and Death of the Last Gold Rush, (Toronto, 1958), p. 10.
49. The Yukon, St. Michael and New Racket were about seventy to eighty feet long and fourteen to twenty feet wide, with a hull depth of three to four feet, necessary because of the shallow flats in the Yukon River. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 75.
50. Dawson, Yukon Territory, pp. 376-7. Ogilvie gives the date as 1875, but since Dawson discussed the expedition with its participants, I went with the father's date.
51. Ibid, p. 377.
52. Berton, Klondike, p. 9.
53. Dawson, Yukon Territory, p. 377.
54. McQuesten, Recollections, p. 9.
55. Dawson, Yukon Territory, p. 308.
56. Ibid, p. 301.
57. Ibid, p. 308.
58. Ibid, p. 300.
59. Ibid, p. 378.
60. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 110.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid, p. 107.
63. McQuesten, Recollections, p. 12.
64. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 108.
65. McQuesten, Recollections, p. 13.

66. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 108.
67. McQuesten, Recollections, p. 13.
68. Ibid, p. 14.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 109.
72. Ibid. p. 111.
73. Berton, Klondike, p. 22.
74. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 113.
75. Ibid.
76. Berton, Klondike, p. 25.
77. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 68.
78. Berton, Klondike, p. 26.
79. Ogilvie, Early Days, p. 80.

Bibliography

Alaska, Sundry Pamphlets

- Bancroft, H. H. History of Alaska, 1730 - 1885. San Francisco, 1886.
- Begg, A. "Early Exploration in North-West Canada". Scottish Geographical Magazine. July 1899 pp. 351-56.
- Berton, Pierre. Klondike, The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush. Toronto, 1958.
- Brown, John. "The Evolution of Law and Government in the Yukon Territory." University of Toronto Studies. Vol. II, pp. 197 - 212. 1902 - 107.
- Burpee, L. J. "Western Exploration 1763 - 1841." Canada and Its Provinces. A. Shortt and A. G. Doughty, eds. Vol. IV, 1914 - 17. pp. 293-313.
- Campbell, R. The Discovery and Exploration of the Youcon (Pelley) River. Winnipeg, 1885.
- Coolidge, L. A. Klondike and the Yukon Country. Philadelphia, 1897.
- Dall, W. H. "The Narrative of W. H. Dall, Leader of the Expedition to Alaska in 1866 - 1868." The Yukon Territory. London, 1898.
- Dawson, George M. "The Narrative of an Exploration in 1887 in the Yukon District." The Yukon Territory. London, 1898.
- Dease, P. W. and Simpson, T. "An Account of the recent Artic Discoveries by Messrs. Dease and T. Simpson." Royal Geographical Society Journal. 1838 pp. 213-25.
- Elliot, Henry W. A Report upon the Conditions of Affairs in the Territory of Alaska. Washington, 1875.
- Greever, William S. The Bonanza West. University of Oklahoma, 1963.
- Haldendy, Rev. A. The Anglican Church in the Yukon. Dawson, 1863.

- Hayes, C. W. "An Expedition through the Yukon district." National Geographic Magazine. May, 1892. pp. 117-62.
- Innis, H. A. The Fur Trade in Canada. Toronto, 1930.
- Innis, H. A. Settlement and the Mining Frontier. Toronto, 1936.
- James, James. The First Scientific Exploration of Russian America and the Purchase of Alaska. Northwestern University, 1942.
- Kirby, W. W. A Journey into the Youcon. Smithsonian Annual Report. 1864 pp. 416-20.
- Ladue, Joseph. Klondyke Facts. New York, 1897.
- Lotz, Jim. "The Invisible North." Northian Vol. V, Number 4. October, 1968. pp. 9-13.
- "Canadian North" The Atlantic. June, 1969.  
pp. 22-29.
- MacBride, W.D. "Robert Campbell Trail - Blazer of the Yukon." Alaska Sportsman. July and August, 1962. pp. 20-21, 42-45; pp. 12-13, 43-45.
- McQuesten, Leroy N. Recollections of Life in the Yukon 1871 - 1885. Dawson, 1952.
- Murray, Alexander H. Journal of the Yukon 1847 - 48. Ottawa, 1910.
- Ogilvie, William. Early Days on the Yukon. Ottawa, 1913.
- Information respecting the Yukon District. Ottawa, 1897.
- Parnell, C. "Campbell of the Yukon." Beaver. June, 1942, pp. 4-6. September, 1942, pp. 16-18, December 1942, pp. 23-27.
- Schwatka, F. "Exploration of the Yukon River in 1883." American Geographical Society Journal. 1884. pp. 345-82.

Turenne, Father E. A Century of History. Dawson, 1963.

Whyard, F. "The First Hundred Years." North. January - February, 1962.  
pp. 30-32.

