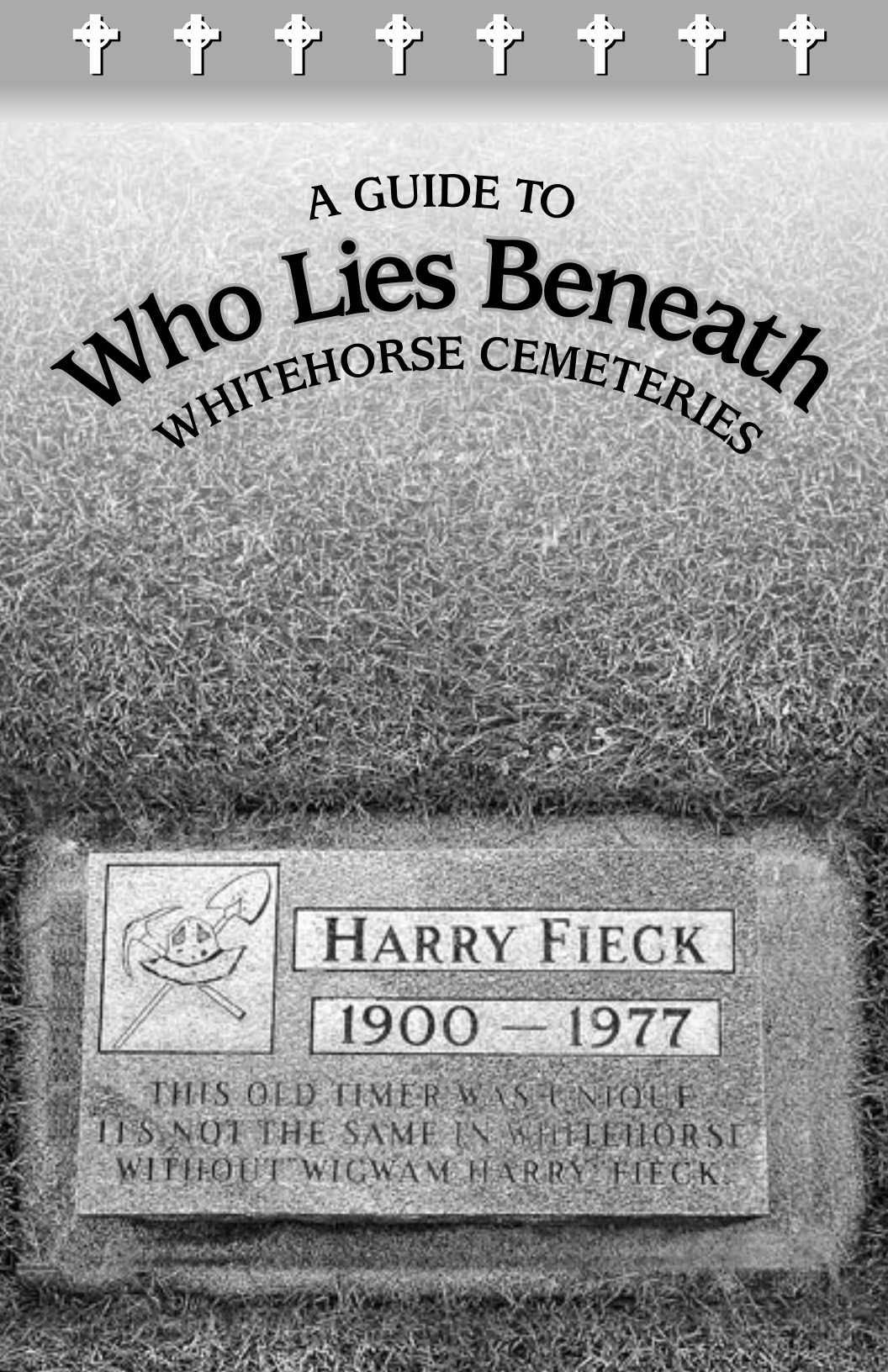
A GUIDE TO Who Lies Beneath WHITEHORSE CEMETERIES



"Wigwam Harry" Fieck. Yukon Archives, Whitehorse Star collection 82/527 CS #698 w55

Prepared for the Old Log Church Museum
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Cover Photo: "Wigwam Harry" Fieck's gravestone OLD LOG CHURCH MUSEUM PHOTO

Introduction

Stroll through a cemetery and one cannot help but wonder about the people at rest beneath the soil. The names chiseled on the grave markers conjure images and questions about the lives of those who came before us. Where did they come from? What did they do? What mark did they leave in their community?

The Guidebook to Whitehorse Cemeteries introduces you to just a few of the ordinary and extraordinary people interred in Pioneer and Grey Mountain cemeteries. Some were politicians, entrepreneurs, religious leaders, eccentrics, and individuals who quietly passed on or were victims of a disaster or a murder. Each person has a unique story waiting to be told which contributed to the city's history.

First Nation Burial Grounds

Archaeological evidence indicates that the Southern Tutchone, Tagish, and Tlingit people have inhabited the Whitehorse area for thousands of years. This land was their traditional territory for hunting, fishing, trapping, and trading.

Several First Nation burial grounds are located within the city boundaries.They are not included in *The Guidebook to Whitehorse Cemeteries* as they are sacred to the First Nation people and are not open to public visitation. Please respect First Nation peoples' privacy and do not enter their burial grounds. For more information about these cemeteries, please contact the appropriate First Nation.

Acknowledgements

This booklet is dedicated to Margaret (Peg) Crook and Helen Horback who researched the burials at Pioneer Cemetery and to Norma Felker who compiled the material. Their work is documented in the City of Whitehorse publication *Lost Graves*, published in 1989 and is the basis for much of this booklet along with information files from the *Whitehorse Star*, *Yukon News*, and *Yukoner Magazine* held at the Yukon Archives.

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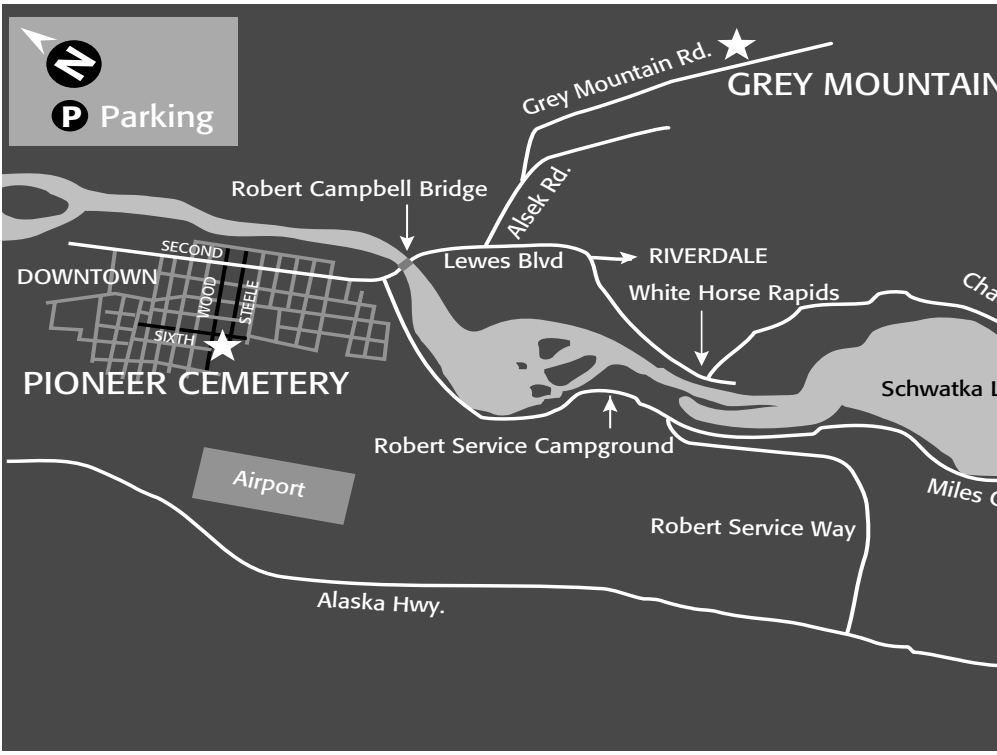
The Lost Cemetery

MILES CANYON & WHITE HORSE RAPIDS

For the stampeders heading downstream to the Klondike Gold Fields, Miles Canyon and the White Horse Rapids were formidable obstacles. The exact number of those who lost their lives in the swift rapids and canyon is unknown. Some sources record as few as five people while others estimate the number as high as two hundred. It is said the dead were buried along the banks of the river.

A story in the Whitehorse Star makes reference to these burials….

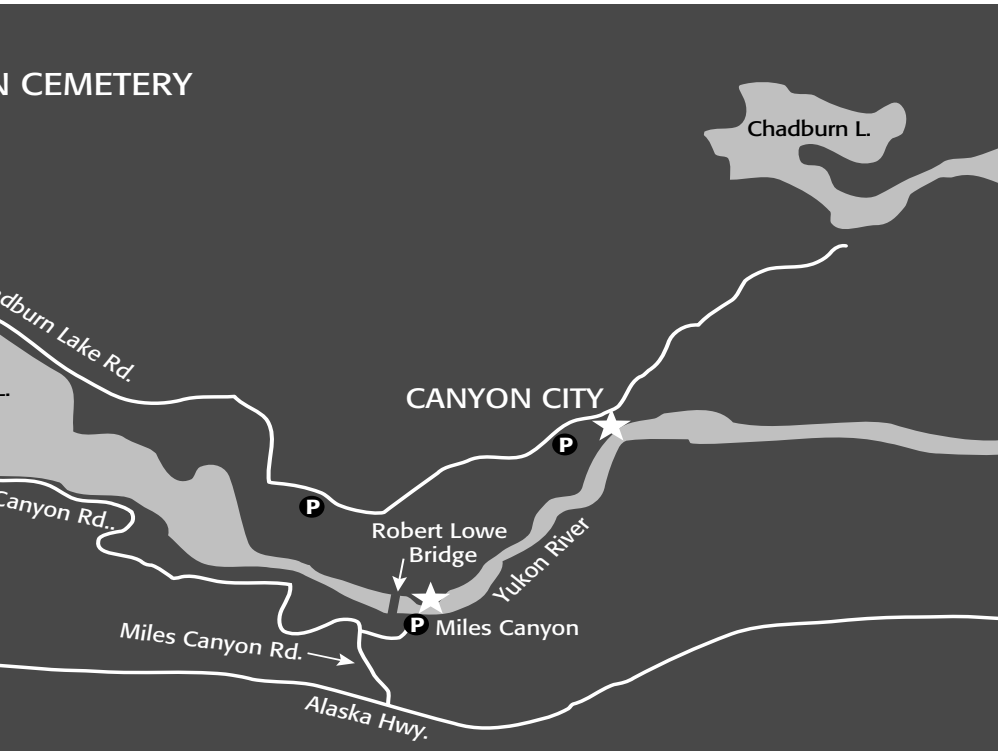
Picnickers found a coffin, which held the body of an unknown young man, projecting from the cut bank on the east shore of the river at the Big Bend, a few miles below Whitehorse. Tom Dixon shed some light on the mystery. Death occurred during the summer of 1897, the dead man was a Norwegian who went to his death in the wreck of a scow which he with others, were attempting to run Miles Canyon and the [White Horse] Rapids. His body



was found at the Big Bend and E. A. Dixon, then a member of the [NWMP], and another policeman buried the body at the place some distance back from the bank of the river. Tom was present at the time, rowing the two officers to the scene of the accident and helping with the interment. (WHITEHORSE STAR, OCTOBER 1920)

In June 1898, to prevent the further loss of lives, North-West Mounted Police Inspector Sam Steele invoked an order that required stampeders to hire skilled pilots to navigate their boats through this treacherous stretch of water.

While these burials at Miles Canyon and White Horse Rapids are essentially lost, it is worth the trip to this scenic area for a sense of the gold rush history at the abandoned historic settlement of Canyon City.



PIONEER CEMETERY

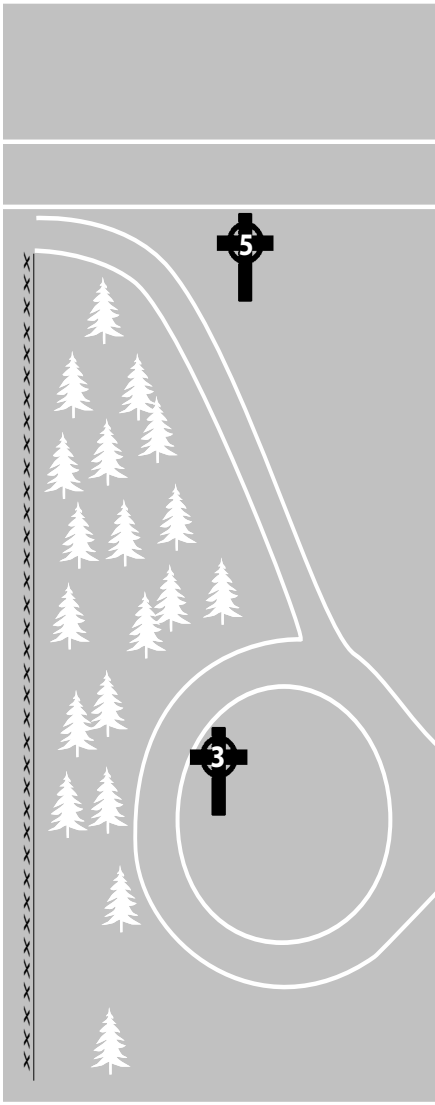
Established in 1900, this quaint cemetery located in the city's downtown core was originally known as the 6th Avenue Cemetery. While the cemetery's tranquil setting nestled under the escarpment in a grove of trees seemed an ideal resting place for the dearly departed, it sparked controversy.

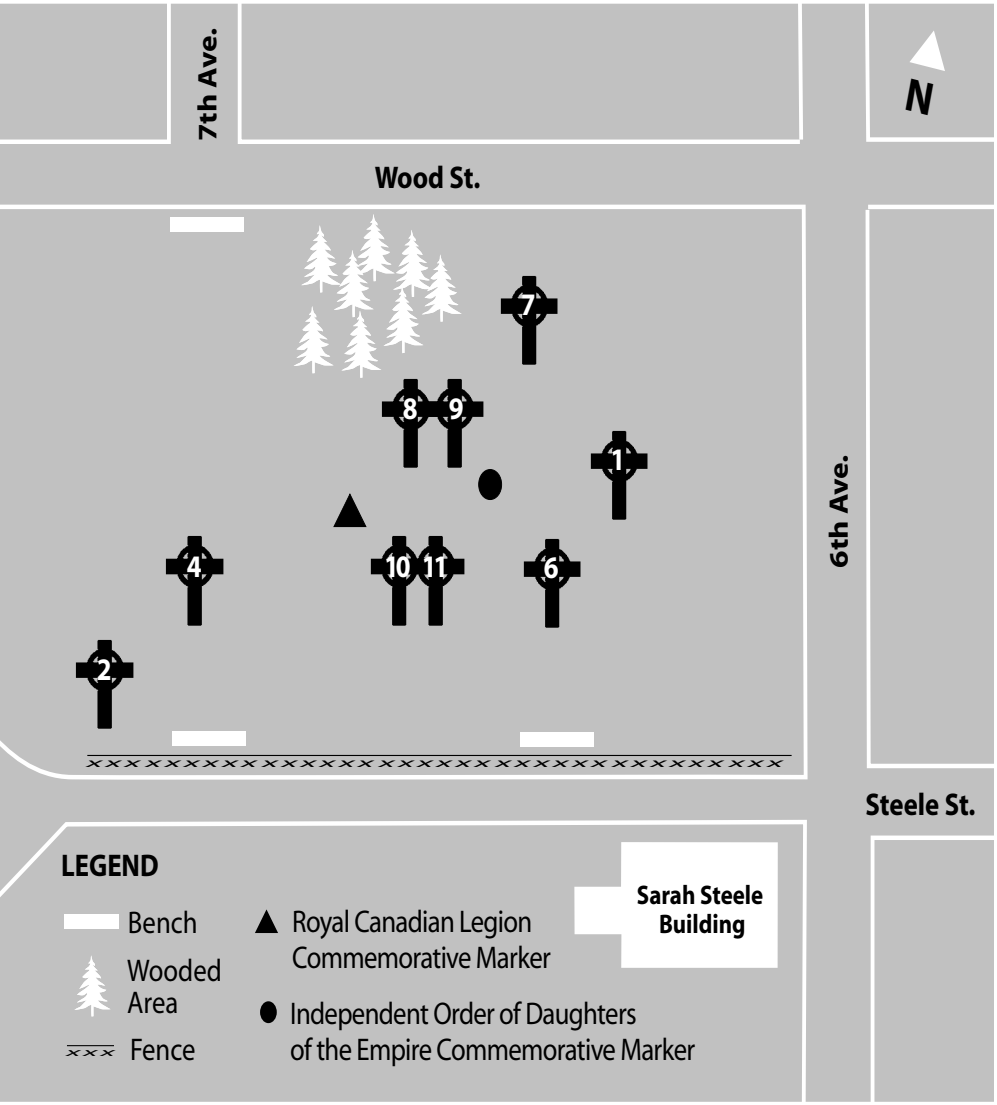
A letter from H.M. Martin, Crown Timber and Land Agent to the Territorial Commissioner Fred T. Congdon raised concern that the cemetery posed a potential health risk. He feared the decomposing bodies would seep through the soil into the water table and contaminate the well water. On January 6, 1908 a petition signed by 100 townspeople requested that the cemetery be moved to the outskirts of town near where the airport is now located. The petition was unsuccessful.

During the 1960s, the cemetery suffered from neglect as the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon Government argued as to which political body was responsible for its upkeep. Eventually the issue was resolved and the city took responsibility only after the cemetery had fallen into serious disrepair. In the 1970s, a well meaning but misguided attempt to clean up the cemetery resulted in a number of worn grave markers being discarded. As a result the identities of many of the bodies interred here have been lost forever.

The cemetery closed in 1965. It is estimated that 800 people are buried here.

In 1975, the cemetery was renamed the Pioneer Cemetery in honour of the citizens who contributed to the development of Whitehorse and the Yukon Territory.





Located in downtown Whitehorse at 6th Avenue between Wood and Steele Streets.

James Brown (no marker)

BORN: 1848, DIED: OCTOBER 11, 1900

The first interment in Pioneer Cemetery is said to be James Brown. He was a member of the firm Sinclair & Brown located in Atlin, British Columbia. James died of pneumonia at the Windsor Hotel. He was 52 years of age.

Blanche Beauchamp (no marker)

BORN: 1873, DIED: FEBRUARY 28, 1913

This is perhaps the most heart wrenching of all the interments at Pioneer Cemetery. What should have been a joyous occasion turned very tragic.

Joseph and Blanche Beauchamp lived at Bear Creek, 110 miles outside of Whitehorse on the Kluane Road. On February 8, 1913, Blanche gave birth to a male child. The baby was premature and lived for only a few hours. Joseph planned to bring Blanche into Whitehorse for their son's funeral as soon as she was well enough to travel. However, complications set in and Blanche's health deteriorated. With the nearest neighbour 20 miles away, Joseph felt he could not leave his wife to seek help. Blanche died a few days later of blood poisoning.

Joseph stoically prepared her body for burial, built a coffin, and made the long journey into town alone with the bodies of his wife and son as his only companions. Father Turnell of Skagway, Alaska conducted the funeral as the Whitehorse priest was not available. Mother and son were buried together, the baby placed in her arms. Blanche Beauchamp died at 40 years of age.

Timotheus Leonard (no marker)

BORN: UNKNOWN, DIED: AUGUST 16, 1901

Timotheus Leonard was employed as a waiter on the steamer *Wilbur Crimmins*. On the night of August 16th, 1901 he mysteriously disappeared from the boat while it was docked at Whitehorse. A few days later his body was found a few miles away at the south end of Lake Laberge. He was known to be a somnambulist, or sleep walker, and was believed to have walked overboard and drowned.

1. Jean Marie Beaulieu

BORN: 1922, DIED: MAY 29, 1953

If his death is any indication, Jean Marie Beaulieu probably lived life to the extreme. A private in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corp, Jean bet a friend that he could down two double over-proof rum drinks. He won the bet but collapsed and died a short time later. He was 31 years of age.

2. Martin Berrigan

BORN: ONTARIO, 1871, DIED: FEBRUARY 27, 1950

Log Skyscrapers built by Martin Berrigan. Yukon Archives, Richard Harrington fonds 79/27 #506

Martin Berrigan arrived in the Yukon during the height of the Klondike Gold Rush. He worked the big gold dredges, a job which demanded a great deal of physical strength and stamina. After a number of years of mining, Martin began to feel run down and is reported to have said, *"I just thought life was too short to allow for getting sick"*, so in 1939 he moved to Whitehorse to slow down and find another way to make a living.

Martin's timing could not have been better. Construction was to begin on the Alaska Highway and Whitehorse was swarming with American army personnel and civilians with nowhere to live. Anyone who could build a cabin could make a lot of cash and Martin set about to do just that, but his cabins were like no other. To maximize space and accommodate more people, he built two and three storey structures known locally as the "log skyscrapers".

Working on his own, Martin was well into his 70s when he built these architectural wonders. He cut the logs about three miles from town and drove them by horse team to the construction site. He devised an innovative pulley system to help him lift the logs in place; each log estimated to weigh 300 lbs. He then notched the logs and fitted them into position, pounding one foot spikes through to strengthen them.

Martin did not live long enough to reap much of the benefits of his labour. He died shortly after finishing the last skyscraper. He was 78 years of age.

In 2000, the log skyscrapers were officially declared a municipal historic site. They can be viewed on Lambert Street between Second and Third Avenues.

3. Kathleen (Martin) Cowaret

BORN: MANITOBA, 1887, DIED: OCTOBER 26, 1958

Kathleen Cowaret with her Sunday School class, Fort Selkirk, ca. 1925. Yukon Archives, Van Bibber fonds 87/80 #77

Kathleen Martin is fondly remembered as a dedicated teacher and friend to the First Nation community of Fort Selkirk.

Trained as a teacher in her home province of Manitoba, Kathleen applied to Bishop I.O. Stringer in 1916 for a teaching position in the Yukon Anglican Diocese. Despite the need for teachers and lay readers, Bishop Stringer did not encourage Kathleen. In his reply to her inquiry, he suggested the north was no place for a single woman as the isolation and living conditions would be hard to endure. However, Kathleen persisted and was given charge of the Fort Selkirk day school where she served as teacher, spiritual leader, and medical officer.

In 1929, Kathleen married Alexander Coward, a solitary man who was often away tending his trap lines and running trading posts. Kathleen disliked her husband's name and perhaps afraid of the implications such a name might draw she insisted that the couple change their name to Cowaret. So they became known as "Mrs. Cowaret and Mr. Coward".

The construction of the Klondike Highway in 1953 forced the Fort Selkirk residents to move to Minto and Pelly Crossing. Kathleen and Alex moved with them and settled in Minto.

Active in church work for over 50 years, Kathleen was elected in 1955 as the Yukon Diocese's representative to the Anglican General Synod.

In 1958, a frail Kathleen was honoured with a Dominion life membership in the Anglican Church Women's Auxiliary. That same year she also accompanied Diocese of Yukon Bishop Tom Greenwood and his wife Isabel to England on church business. Upon her return to Canada, Kathleen was admitted to hospital in Whitehorse and died at home in Minto on October 26th after a long illness. Kathleen was 71 years of age.

Despite Kathleen's contempt for her husband's name, "Coward" appears on her gravestone. Perhaps it was never legally changed.

4. Carl Christianson (alias John Smith), L.C. Cowper, Edward Morgan, Phil Murray, Joe Welsh, John Woods

BORN: UNKNOWN, DIED: SEPTEMBER 25, 1906

The *SS Columbian* wreck at Eagle Rock, September 25, 1906. Yukon Archives, Scharschmidt collection 82/304 #5644. **(Inset. A view of the *SS Columbian* on her last voyage up the Yukon River, September 1906.** Yukon Archives, Scharschmidt collection #5643

A commemorative monument stands in Pioneer Cemetery as a tribute to the six men who lost their lives in the worst sternwheeler disaster in Yukon history.

The *Columbian*, a member of the British Yukon Navigation Company fleet, plied the water of the upper Yukon River. The sternwheeler served as both a cargo and a passenger boat and had eight years of service prior to the accident.

On September 25, 1906, during her last trip of the season, the *Columbian* was proceeding to Dawson City. She carried a full load of cargo which included 3 tons of blasting powder. Fortunately no passengers were aboard the ship.

During the trip down river, the deck boy Phil Murray and another man bided their time shooting at ducks from the ship's deck. As the *Columbian* neared Eagle Rock, a stray bullet struck the blasting powder stowed on the forward deck, causing an explosion.

The ship's casualities included Mate Joe Welsh and Fireman Edward Morgan who were thrown into the river and drowned. Three deckhands, John Woods, Phil Murray, and Carl Christianson (who had shipped aboard under the name John Smith) died on board the ship before help could reach them, and Purser L.C. Cowper died later in hospital in Whitehorse.

Shortly after the *Columbian* disaster, the British Yukon Navigation Company changed their regulations and did not permit crew or passengers to use firearms aboard their ships.

5. Anna Katrina (Lauridsen) Viaux

BORN: HOMER, DENMARK, FEBRUARY 28, 1867, DIED: 1957

Anna Viaux came to North America from Denmark at the age of 16 and arrived in Whitehorse during World War II. For several years she lived with the owner of the White Pass Hotel and worked hard to make the hotel a success. However, when the owner met and married another woman, Anna retaliated and sued him for 3 years in back wages. She won her case and acquired the hotel as the owner could not pay her the wages she was owed. Anna died in 1957.

6. Martha (Munger) Black

BORN: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, FEBRUARY 24, 1866, DIED: NOVEMBER 1, 1957

Martha Black was a legendary figure in the north and a woman well ahead of her time. Born in Chicago, Illinois into wealth and privilege, she and her family lived through the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Survival of this tragic event may have molded the traits of fierce independence, resolve, and a spirit of adventure for which she was known.

In 1887, Martha married the wealthy Will Purdy and within a few years of marriage the couple had two children. When news of the great Klondike Gold Rush reached the outside world, Martha was eager to partake. She left her children with her parents and set out with Will and her brother George for Dawson City.

Martha went on ahead of Will and had reached Seattle when a cable arrived from San Francisco. Will had changed his mind and was going to Hawaii instead of the Yukon. Martha never saw him again. Around the same time her husband deserted her, Martha learned she was pregnant. Many women in her position would have abandoned their mission, but Martha was determined to reach the Yukon and persevered over the treacherous Chilkoot Pass and went on to Dawson City by boat.

In the Klondike during an age when men generally ran the show, Martha competed with the best of them. She proved to have a keen sense of business acumen and formed partnerships in gold claims. She also established a sawmill operation in partnersip with her father.

In January of 1899, alone in her rustic cabin without medical assistance, Martha gave birth to her third baby. Her father arrived in Dawson City the following spring to take her and the baby back to Chicago and civilization. Reluctantly Martha went, but she soon returned to Dawson City to oversee her gold claims and the sawmill operation.

In Dawson City Martha met George Black, a successful young lawyer. She married him on August 1, 1904 after the divorce from her first husband was finalized.

George Black was appointed Commissioner of the Yukon in 1912 and Martha was

Martha Black Old Log Church Museum, 1984.416

the perfect hostess. She welcomed everyone to their beautiful home for teas, dances, and dinner parties. When the First World War broke out, George resigned his position, enlisted in the army and sailed for England accompanied by Martha, the only woman among two thousand men on the ship. Once in England, she did volunteer work in the hospitals and hostels. She also travelled across the country lecturing on Yukon wildflowers and was awarded a Fellowship in the Royal Geographical Society for her research on Yukon flora.

Upon their return to Canada, Martha accompanied her husband to Ottawa when he was elected as a federal Member of Parliament representing the Yukon Territory in 1921. George never lost an election. However, in 1935 ill health forced him to retire from politics. Martha ran in his place, won the election, and became the second woman in Canadian history to be elected as a Member of Parliament. She took her seat in Parliament on her 70th birthday and pursued issues on public health, pensions for the blind, and nature conservation.

In 1946, Martha was awarded the Order of the British Empire.

With a life full of accomplishments and accolades, Martha died at 91 years of age.

7. Ralph Caruso

BORN: 1925, DIED: AUGUST 11, 1952

This is a sad story of a senseless act of violence which left one man dead.

Ralph Caruso worked for the White Pass & Yukon Route railway. To help make ends meet, he took a second job as a part time driver for Inn Cabs. On the evening of August 11th Ralph was dispatched to pick up a fare on 4th Avenue. Joseph Mahnsten (alias Joe Brent and Joe Armstrong) and Glenn Smith (alias Lloyd Oslen) got into Ralph's cab. Glenn told Ralph to drive them to Prince George, British Columbia, several hundred miles south of Whitehorse. When Ralph refused, a quarrel ensued and according to the testimony given at the trial by Joseph, Glenn shot and killed Ralph.

According to Joseph, Glenn was very drunk and earlier that evening had caused trouble in the Regina Hotel cocktail lounge and had also shot off his gun in the Whitehorse Inn.

Glenn was convicted of Ralph's murder and was sentenced to hang on July 10. Joseph received three months for accessory to the crime. Both men were army deserters.

Milos Tadich (no marker)

BORN: MONTENEGRO, 1887 DIED: JUNE 17, 1960

Milos Tadich, or "Big Mike" as he was affectionately known, came to the Yukon in 1910. A quiet man, Mike was always seen around town in the company of his three dogs.

John Hendrik, a neighbour, began to worry about Mike as he had not been out in several days. He went to his home and found Mike sick in bed with one of his dogs lying across his chest. In need of medical attention, Mike refused to go to hospital as he worried his three dogs Burn, Skipper, and Fox would not be looked after while he was hospitalized. Upon assurances by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that they would care for his animals, he consented.

Sadly, Mike never left the hospital nor did he have a chance to say goodbye to his beloved dogs. As stipulated in his will, two of the dogs were destroyed as Mike feared they would be maltreated under a new master and no one would shower them with liver, beef steak, and veal cutlets as he had. The dogcatcher D.A. Brown kept Burn, Mike's favourite dog, as his personal pet.

Mike died at the age of 73 of a heart condition.

8. Leslie Cook born: 1908, died: December 4, 1942
9. Donald Dickson born: 1914, died: December 4, 1942

Les Cook's famed Norseman plane taking off from Whitehorse Airport shortly before Cook's fatal flight. Whitehorse, YT, Alaska Highway Project, December 1942. Yukon Archives, National Archives of Canada collection 88/138 #58

The lives of Leslie Cook, Donald Dickson, and Ken McLean ended tragically in a plane crash in downtown Whitehorse.

A skilled pilot and popular man in aviation circles in the north, Les piloted his Norseman aircraft on a short spin above Whitehorse with mechanics Donald and Ken after they had completed some routine engine work. A short distance from the airport something went terribly wrong. Les attempted an emergency landing, but hit several trees and telephone poles as the plane descended. Shortly after four o'clock the plane is reported to have hit the ground and burst into flames upon impact near the home of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Taylor on Main Street. Les, Donald and Ken were killed instantly.

In the coverage of the tragedy the local newspaper reported … *"the skill and ingenuity Les had displayed in his many mercy flights for the benefit of others he was unable to apply to save his own life and those of his companions who died with him."*

Les Cook was 34 years of age and Donald Dickson was 28 years of age. Ken McLean is buried in Edmonton, Alberta.

10. Isaac Taylor

BORN: YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND, 1864, DIED: JUNE 12, 1959

Left to right standing: Mr. Drury, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Black receiving their 50 year Masonic pins at a banquet in Whitehorse ca. 1950. Yukon Archives, MacBride Museum collection vol. 2 #5660

11. William Stephenson Drury

BORN: LINCOLNSHIRE, ENGLAND, 1870, DIED: SEPTEMBER 21, 1953

William Drury and family on the deck of the *Thistle*. Left to right: Lucy, William L., William S., Mary Alice, and Thomas E. July 1927 Yukon Archives, Claude Tidd fonds #8408

A chance meeting between two entrepreneurs on the Gold Rush Trail led to a very successful Yukon mercantile business and a lifelong friendship.

Isaac Taylor and William Drury had much in common when they first met in the fall of 1898 on the Ashcroft Trail in British Columbia, the poor man's route to the Klondike. Both were from England, both were headed to the gold fields, and both had worked at one time or another in the clothing trade. However, they parted company and each took a different route to Dawson City. Isaac went on to Skagway, Alaska and William headed to Atlin, British Columbia.

The following spring, news of a gold strike in Atlin started a new stampede and the paths of Isaac and William crossed once again at Discovery, a gold town near Atlin. Here both men saw a gold strike of another kind.

With Isaac's $200.00 and William's 12 foot by 14 foot tent, the men turned a profit buying outfits at $5.00 from disillusioned gold seekers leaving the north and selling the same outfits for $25.00 to new hopefuls on their way to the gold fields. This profitable business was the start of a partnership and the formation of Taylor and Drury Ltd.

With the White Pass & Yukon Route railway completed to Bennett Lake, Isaac and William moved their business to this location. Here they sold sails for boats and scows travelling to Dawson City. When the railway reached Whitehorse in 1900, Isaac and William moved once again and set up their tent on the riverbank. With Whitehorse fast becoming a rail and river transport centre, Taylor and Drury Ltd. headquartered here and quickly expanded their business. Thirteen trading posts were established at the various First Nation settlements scattered throughout the Yukon, the farthest at Pelly Banks, six hundred miles from Whitehorse.

In order to service these posts, Taylor and Drury Ltd. acquired a small fleet of river boats to deliver merchandise and pick up furs for the outside market and for a number of years the *Kluane, Thistle*, and *Yukon Rose* were common sights on Yukon waters.

Partners, friends, and brothers-in-law for over fifty years, Isaac and William remained active in business until their deaths. Isaac died at 95 years of age and William died at 82 years of age.

Taylor and Drury Ltd. was the Yukon's oldest merchandising firm and ceased operation in 1974. At its peak, Taylor and Drury Ltd. annual gross sales topped $3 million and the firm employed eighty-five people.

A. Berker born: 1891, Robert Collins born: 1885, Mike Knazowich born: 1879, V. Levich born: 1869, Thomas McFadden born: 1884, Tom Zukoff born: 1895

DIED: MARCH 21, 1917

Mine Manager's House at Pueblo Copper Mine. Yukon Archives, MacBride Museum collection vol. 2 #5661

The Whitehorse Copper Belt extends approximately 30 km along the hills just west of the city. Copper was discovered here in 1897 by prospectors on their way to Dawson City to join the Klondike Gold Rush. Jack McIntyre staked the first claim on July 6, 1898 and called it Copper King. The following year there was a great deal of activity in the area and numerous claims were staked such as War Eagle, Excelsior, Hoodoo, Crooked Doctor, and Pueblo to name just a few.

The Pueblo Mine was the most productive of all the claims and it also proved to be the deadliest. Six lives were taken as a result of a cave-in that took place here on March 21, 1917. The investigation into the tragedy stated the cave-in was an accident believed to have been caused by the numerous water courses under the mine which washed away the sand and silt, weakening a chamber to the point where it collapsed.

Every possible effort was made to save the six men trapped inside the mine and rescue work was stopped only when the shaft was declared unsafe. Following the accident, the Pueblo Mine was closed. The deadly chamber was never disturbed and the bodies of the 6 men were never recovered. A. Berker was 26 years of age, Robert Collins was 32 years of age, Mike Knazowich was 38 years of age, V. Levich was 48 years of age, Thomas McFadden was 33 years of age, Tom Zukoff was 22 years of age.

A plaque commemorating this tragic event stands at Fish Lake Road in the Whitehorse Copper Belt.

Ephrim J. Hamacher (no marker)

BORN: KITCHENER, ONTARIO, JUNE 10, 1857, DIED: OCTOBER 29, 1935

Nineteen members of the local Whitehorse band with their instruments. Hamacher third from the left in front row (straw hat and flute). Yukon Archives, MacBride Museum collection vol. 2 #4080

Ephrim Hamacher is celebrated for his work as a professional photographer.

As a young man Ephrim left Ontario and travelled extensively throughout the west. He worked in Oregon and Washington states honing his photography skills. In 1883, he settled for a short time in Yakima, Washington. With news of the discovery of gold in the Klondike, Ephrim seized the opportunity to head north to document this world event.

He followed the wave of stampeders to Bennett Lake and operated a studio there on behalf of renowned gold rush photographer Eric Hegg who was already in the Klondike.

In April 1900, as the population of Bennett Lake dwindled, Ephrim moved to Whitehorse. He intended to continue on to Dawson City, however, his photographic supplies failed to arrive in time for shipment down river. So as fate would have it, he settled in Whitehorse and operated a general merchandise and photography store.

Much of what is known about the development of Whitehorse and its social history from 1900 to 1935 is due to Ephrim's keen eye. Fifteen hundred of his photographs have survived and capture Whitehorse in its heyday as a bustling railway and steamboat terminus. The collection also consists of studio portraits of people from various walks of life. Ephrim's sense of humour is apparent in some of these portraits. He charged people half price if they sat for him in costume. Many obliged and his portraits show serious looking Victorian men in cannibal, nun, and highland dance regalia.

Ephrim left the Yukon twice: once in 1907 to visit family and again in 1930 to visit Arizona for health reasons. He died at 79 years of age.

Domenico Melis (no marker)

BORN: ITALY, DIED: FEBRUARY 4, 1914

This gruesome murder reads like a good detective novel.

Employed at the Pueblo Mine, Domenico Melis was said to be a hard working and honest man. He lost his life at the hands of his roommate and fellow mine worker Romilio Caesari, who beat Domenico to death in the course of a drunken quarrel and placed his body under the ice in the Yukon River. The bizarre motive for the crime was the rights to the invention of a perpetual motion machine the two had been working on together.

Romilio was a heavy drinker and often went on benders with his friend George Ganley. The relationship between Domenico and Romilio had deteriorated as they argued incessantly over the rights to the machine. In early February, Domenico dropped out of sight and Romilio told a number of people that Domenico had gone away. No one questioned him until Domenico's bloated body was found in the Yukon River the following June.

Royal Northwest Mounted Police (RNMP) Sergeant McLaughlin examined the rooms rented by Domenico and Romilio and was shocked at the amount of blood covering the walls and floors. Romilio explained the blood had come from small game he and Domenico had hung from the walls in order to let the meat season. Sergeant McLaughlin did not buy the explanation and noticed places where an effort to mop up blood stains off the floor and door was ineffective. Why wipe up two spots in a room already awash in gore? The Sergeant took some samples which when analysed, proved to be human.

More evidence was found in a sack Romilio had left at Martin's store. It contained an axe head, a raincoat, and a pair of rubber boots. One boot had a suspicious dark stain on the inside.

Other incriminating evidence surfaced with the body. The RNMP assumed Domenico was killed at his residence and the body had been trussed in a basket-like structure to make it easier to move. The sticks from the truss matched those that grew along the Yukon River bank as well the nicks in Romilio's axe head matched the cuts in the sticks. Furthermore, the clay found in a head wound on Domenico's body matched the clay sample taken from the riverbank.

A few weeks later, the RNMP tracked down Romilio and George Ganley in Dawson City. Romilio was in possession of a number of Domenico's belongings. The RNMP also recovered Domenico's prized shotgun that Romilio had sold in Dawson City. The gun, which they believed to be the murder weapon, was missing a portion of its barrel and Romilio claimed it cracked and broke after being placed in the snow while hot.

Romilio was arrested and brought back to Whitehorse for trial. He was found guilty and sentenced to hang. The verdict was later changed to life imprisonment as the court ruled Romilio was insane. He managed to escape custody, but was shot and killed by the authorities.

Tom Bokovich, Henry Cook, Patrick Kinslow, George Lane (no markers)

BORN: UNKNOWN, DIED: SEPTEMBER 15, 1915

Here is a sad case whereby a language barrier cost four men their lives.

Tom Bokovich, Henry Cook, Patrick Kinslow, and George Lane were section hands with the White Pass & Yukon Route railway. While working on the rail bed three miles outside of Whitehorse, they were enjoying a lunch break when Alex Gagoff approached and shot them dead. Gagoff, a Russian Cossack with limited understanding of the English language, believed the men were making fun of him.

With the deed done, Gagoff drove the dead men's handcar into town, calmly confessing to anyone he met that he had killed the section crew. He then proceeded to put his affairs in order, stopping at the White Pass Hotel and the drugstore to pay his bills before being taken into custody.

After a short trial, Alex Gagoff was found guilty of the murders on October 29th. There was some deliberation as to whether he was mentally unstable at the time he committed the murders, but the court ruled Gagoff sane and sentenced him to death on March 10, 1916.

During the trial, Alex's cousin Tom Gagoff appeared at the jail armed with a gun. He was determined to shoot Alex as he stated a *"Cossack does not die by hanging."* After two unsuccessful tries to kill Alex, Tom Gagoff was deported to Russia.

An interesting side note to this story is a member of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police was found guilty of theft. One of the murdered men had several hundred dollars sewn inside his undershirt which an unidentified Mountie discovered and appropriated. The crime was discovered and the Mountie was sentenced to three years in the New Westminister, British Columbia Penitentiary.

Kate "Fanny" (Pridham) Partridge

BORN: BRISTOL, ENGLAND, 1854, DIED: JANUARY 10, 1931

Otto Partridge (no markers)

BORN: ISLE OF MAN, 1857, DIED: JUNE 28, 1930

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Partridge standing by their famous flower gardens at Ben-My-Chree. Yukon Archives, MacBride Museum collection vol. 1 #3565

The Partridges are remembered for Ben-My-Chree, a northern Shangri-La and one of the first tourist destinations in the Yukon region.

Otto Partridge emigrated from England to San Francisco. In 1897, he heard the stories of men walking off ships in San Francisco with suitcases full of gold from the Yukon gold fields. He had boat building skills that would be valuable in the north so at age 42 he set off for Skagway, Alaska.

Otto crossed the Chilkoot Pass and travelled to Bennett, British Columbia. Bennett was the start of the lake and river system that led to Dawson City. Here he worked as general manager for the Bennett Lake and Klondike Navigation Company.

With the extension of the White Pass & Yukon Route railway (WP&YR) to Whitehorse in 1900, Otto moved to Milhaven Bay on Bennett Lake near Carcross where he set up a sawmill and supplied railroad ties to the WP&YR. His wife Kate joined him here. They lived on a houseboat and Kate spent her time cultivating flower and vegetable gardens

which flourished in the intense northern sunlight.

Otto's sawmill closed shortly after the end of the gold rush and he turned his interest to mining. In 1911, he started a mining operation in partnership with Stanley McLellan and Lugwig Swanson. He called the mine Ben-My-Chree. The name in Manx spoken on the Isle of Man, translates to "girl of my heart", and was a tribute to Kate. The small mine employed up to sixty men, but was short-lived as an avalanche roared down the mountain burying the mine and tragically killing Stanley McLellan and his wife.

After the accident, the Partridges stopped mining and built a homestead, also named Ben-My-Chree, in the spectacular wilderness valley just 106 km south of the Yukon border. In the rich glacial silt they cultivated two acres of formal flower gardens in this most unlikely setting. Forty varieties of flowers flourished here and grew to amazing heights. The delphiniums were ten feet high, the pansies and poppies were five inches in diameter.

In 1912, sternwheelers began stopping at Ben-My-Chree to bring mail and supplies and to stock up on fresh vegetables from the Partridge's garden.

In 1916, Otto entered into an agreement with the British Yukon Navigation Company to bring tourists down the lake from Carcross to visit the gardens. Word quickly spread and soon steamers carried 9,000 passengers annually to Ben-My-Chree.

The scenery at Ben-My-Chree entranced visitors. The combination of towering snowcapped mountains, the rushing glacial river, the long white sandy delta, the turquoise lake, and the incredible gardens were breathtaking.

A houseboy received visitors at the dock while Kate, dressed in long formal wear, welcomed visitors at the garden gate and Otto conducted tours of the gardens. In the drawing room, Kate entertained with organ music and Otto, a gifted storyteller, captivated his audiences with stories from the gold rush days.

During the 1920s Ben-My-Chree was considered a key place to visit among the social elite of that time period. Many wealthy people including the Prince of Wales, President Roosevelt, Lord and Lady Byng, and numerous silent picture movie stars made the long trip.

Otto died at age 73 years and Kate a few months later at the age of 77 years.

Ginger

BORN: UNKNOWN, DIED: 1965

In 1965, the year Pioneer Cemetery closed, an unconventional and highly controversial burial took place.

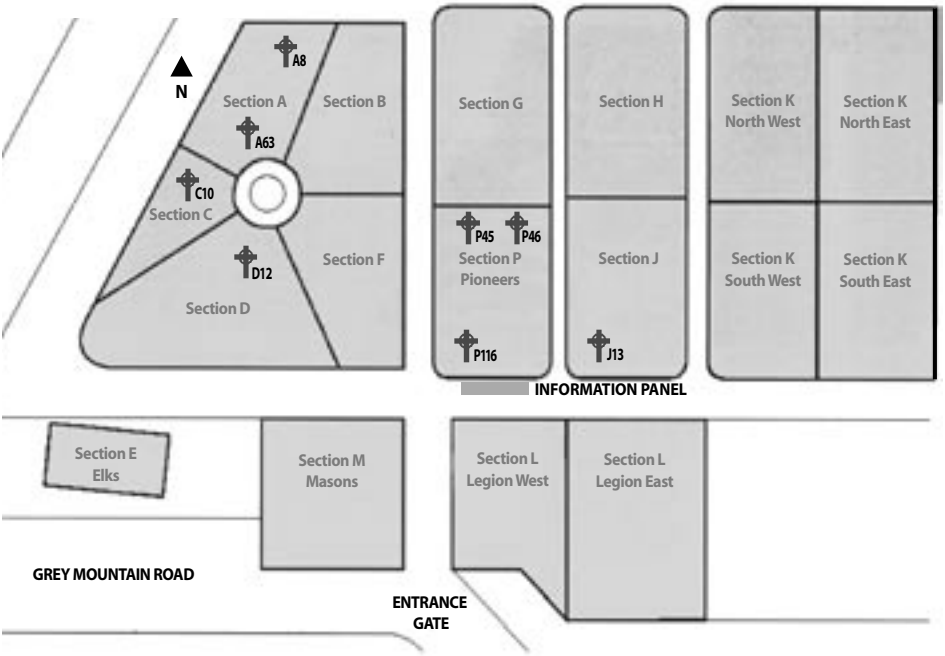
Perhaps in an attempt to draw attention to the deplorable condition of Pioneer Cemetery, local funeral director G.Wallden interred his beloved dog Ginger on the grounds and erected an elaborate headstone engraved with the words *"She brought sunshine to our home."*

The burial shocked a number of residents who were appalled at what they called a desecration of hallowed ground. Was Mr. Wallden trying to make a point? The Pioneer Cemetery had been neglected for many years and the City Council refused to accept responsibility as it believed the cemetery was located on territorial land and therefore the responsibility fell to the Yukon Government. Council had chosen a new cemetery at Grey Mountain and was directing its money and time into overseeing and regulating this site.

A few days later, Ginger was disinterred and removed from the cemetery to a more appropriate location.

GREY MOUNTAIN CEMETERY

In 1965, Whitehorse City Council opened Grey Mountain Cemetery amid the stewardship controversy surrounding Pioneer Cemetery and to resolve the need for more suitable land for burials. This picturesque cemetery located at the foot of Grey Mountain is still in use today.



To get to Grey Mountain Cemetery, cross the Robert Campbell Bridge to Riverdale along Lewes Boulevard. Turn left on to Alsek Road, and left on to Grey Mountain Road. Continue up Grey Mountain Road for 1 km. (See map page 2-3).

A8. Lucille Hunter

BORN: 1879, DIED: JUNE 10, 1972

This is an interesting story of a woman who lived life on her own terms.

Lucille was born in Michigan. At 16 years of age she married Charles Hunter and the couple headed north in the fall of 1897 to join the Klondike Gold Rush. They chose to follow the lesser known Stikine Trail into the Yukon. Arriving at Teslin, Lucille was heavy with child and gave birth to a daughter whom she named for that small community. The Hunters spent the winter in nearby Atlin, British Columbia and continued on to Dawson City in the spring of 1898.

Lucille and Charles arrived in the Klondike and staked three claims at Bonanza Creek. Lucille worked the creek beds alongside her husband in the hunt for the elusive gold while rearing their daughter Teslin in less than ideal conditions.

A few years later, Charles expanded the family's mining interests in the Mayo area and was often there working his silver claims.

On June 2, 1939 Charles died unexpectedly at age 65 leaving Lucille alone with her grandson, Buster, to carry on mining. (Sometime prior to Charles' death, Teslin died leaving a child for her parents to raise.) Lucille did not drive so every year she would walk the 140 miles from Dawson City to Mayo and back to do representation work on her claims in order to maintain legal ownership.

In 1942, with the Alaska Highway under construction, Lucille and Buster moved to Whitehorse. To earn a living, Lucille set up a laundry business on Wood Street. She did the washing while her grandson made the deliveries around town. Some say she picked this business because it allowed her to do something she loved, ironing.

A few years later Lucille moved to a house on 8th Avenue near Steele Street where she lived on her own even though her eyesight had failed. She enjoyed entertaining guests and keeping up to date on world and local affairs via the radio.

Lucille still owned claims on Bonanza Creek, but there was some question of the ownership lapsing as the claims had not been worked for a number of years. Commissioner F. H. Collins paid Lucille a visit and attempted to broach the subject of the delinquent claims several times. Each time, Lucille graciously changed the subject and engaged the Commissioner in polite discourse on current topics of interest. Finally he admitted defeat and took his departure.

Lucille's small home overflowed with stacks of newspapers, magazines, and bundles of other flammable stuff parked dangerously close to her wood stove and friends worried about the danger of fire. Living alone she guarded her safety and always locked her door and reinforced it with a knife stuck through the latch. One fateful night the house

Lucille Hunter at her home in Whitehorse, 1960. Yukon Archives, Richard Harrington fonds 79/27 #277

did catch fire and the firemen had a hard time breaking through the security locks to rescue Lucille whose clothes were ablaze by the time they got to her. Lucille was taken to Mary House, the Catholic church shelter. She objected strenuously to being undressed, bathed, and put into clean nightclothes and a real bed with clean sheets.

Lucille spent some time in the hospital to recover from minor burns and later moved to a small basement apartment in a house off 4th Avenue and Black Street. There she continued to receive guests and listened to her radio until her death at the age of 93 years.

A63. "Tagish" Anne Graham

BORN: HODGEVILLE, SASKATCHEWAN DECEMBER 10, 1914

DIED: SEPTEMBER 16, 1976

Tagish Anne and her husband Don, 1972. Yukon Archives, Richard Harrington fonds 79/27 #381

Anne Graham was born in a small prairie community to Polish and Ukrainian parents. The family moved to Estevan, Saskatchewan where Anne was schooled and worked for a period of time. Later she moved to Winnipeg. In 1936, she met her husband Don Graham and the two were married in November of that year in Crosby, North Dakota.

In time, the Grahams were lured to the Yukon and purchased property at Tagish Lake. The location was ideal for Anne who loved to fish. She was often seen fishing from the Tagish Bridge and earned the nickname "Tagish Anne" given to her by a First Nation game guide.

Anne was known for her baking skills and in 1966 she opened "Tagish Anne's Coffee Bar" which she ran single-handedly and produced 200 loaves of bread, 145 pies, assorted sausage rolls, cinnamon buns, and butter tarts each week - all made without the modern convenience of electricity, but on two propane stoves. If this did not keep her busy enough, every couple of weeks for a change of pace, Anne would make the long drive to Whitehorse to deliver her goods to customers, stores, and the nearby mines.

Her bakery was at its busiest on the weekends as folks from Whitehorse made the 140 mile round trip to Tagish for Anne's fruit pies, bread, and fresh coffee.

The love and respect Anne cultivated during her life was demonstrated following her death. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, always recipients of her help and hospitality, served as pallbearers at her funeral. Several American tourists who missed her during their seasonal travels to the Yukon donated funds to purchase a headstone for her grave.

C10. "Wigwam Harry" Harry Fieck

BORN: STRATFORD, ONTARIO 1900 DIED: 1977

"Wigwam Harry" Fieck. Yukon Archives, Whitehorse Star collection 82/527 CS #698 w55

"THIS OLDTIMER WAS UNIQUE." No better words could have been selected for Harry Fieck's gravestone as this local legend danced to the beat of his own drum.

Harry came to the Yukon in 1941 and worked on the construction of the Alaska Highway. He was known as the best heavy machine operator in the North and often the only guy with guts enough to drive the machinery through the soggy muskeg to clear the route for the highway. He could also dig a basement with a hand shovel and punch in more post holes faster than anyone.

With these skills there was no shortage of work for Harry, but what really earned him his reputation was the host of stories that evolved due to his independent nature.

Harry was hired to dig a basement for a house in downtown Whitehorse. He was offered sixty dollars plus a bottle of his favourite beverage. He completed the job by hand in a remarkable time of four hours and then went to the owner's house for payment. The man was out at the time so his wife handled the transaction. She surveyed the job and was satisfied. However, she felt that sixty dollars was a bit steep for four hours work and offered Harry forty dollars and no bottle which she felt was inappropriate.

Harry did not argue, but went away and spent the rest of the afternoon filling in

the basement with dirt, scrap metal, a bed spring, and any other bits of junk he could find. The woman's attempts to stop him were fruitless and by the time her husband returned home the refilling was complete. The husband was reportedly angry with his wife for changing the deal stating, *"When Harry agrees to do a job for you, just pay him - don't argue."* It cost one hundred dollars to clean out the basement and it was not done by Harry.

On another occasion, White Pass & Yukon Route contracted Harry to dig post holes for a fence. The supervisor had surveyed the site and marked where he wanted the holes dug. Harry went about the job and had it finished in a flash. He then proceeded to the White Pass office for payment.

The girl handling the payment told him he would receive a cheque in the mail for his work. Harry insisted on cash. The pay clerk was firm so Harry went back to the job site and dropped boulders down the holes and tamped earth over them.

Harry distrusted banks with his cash. He had his own "bank", the banks of the Yukon River. He once stashed two hundred dollars in an old stump along the river near his home. The land around him was being cleared and Harry woke one morning to the sound of an earth mover shoving brush and his stump bank into a pile ready for burning.

Harry went wild, leaped on the machine, and grabbed the ignition keys. The clearing job was held up for two hours while Harry and the operator searched through the brush for his two hundred dollars. The money was never found.

Harry earned his nickname, "Wigwam Harry", as at one time he lived under a tarp structure wrapped around a telephone pole in a wigwam fashion. Later, he moved from his wigwam to a more upscale home made from piano crates.

Among Yukon characters, Harry was certainly unique. He died at 77 years of age.

D12. Bishop Thomas Lobsinger

BORN: NOVEMBER 17, 1927, DIED: APRIL 15, 2000

Bishop Ferris and Bishop Lobsinger in front of the Diocesan aircraft C-GBEJ at the Whitehorse Airport ca. 1980.

Yukon Archives, Anglican Church Diocese of Yukon fonds 94/78 #280

Tom Lobsinger was born in Ayton, Ontario. He attended St. Michael's College in Toronto and the Oblate Novitiate in Arnprior, Ontario. In 1954, he was ordained as a member of the Oblate of Mary Immaculate.

Tom's first parish was in Kyuquot, a small fishing village on Vancouver Island. The majority of his career as a priest was spent in British Columbia working on First Nation reserves. To better serve his parishioners, Tom obtained his pilot's licence so that he could visit his missions in the remote regions of the province.

Prior to becoming Bishop, Tom was head of the Oblate Order in British Columbia. One of the most difficult issues he dealt with during his term was a scandal involving twelve native men who as youths had suffered sexual abuse at an Oblate residential school in northern British Columbia. Tom agreed that the Catholic Church should compensate abuse victims and he also issued an apology to the First Nation people on behalf of his church.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II ordained Tom as the fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Whitehorse. The Diocese includes the geographical boundaries of Yukon Territory and stretches south to include Fort Nelson, British Columbia.

A kindhearted man, Tom enjoyed two passions: his love of pastoral work and his love of flying. On April 15, 2000, sadly and ironically these passions ended his life. Tom and Brother Hoby Spruyt died when Tom's Cessna plane crashed on Fox Lake, eighty miles north of Whitehorse. The two men were on their way to Dawson City to take the mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church in the absence of the parish priest Tim Coonen who was away on business.

Tom was 72 years of age.

J13. Alan Innes-Taylor

BORN: BIRKHAMSTEAD, ENGLAND, FEBRUARY 12, 1900, DIED: JANUARY 14, 1983

Alan Innes-Taylor 1972 at the Whitehorse waterfront 1972. Yukon Archives, Richard Harrington fonds 79/27 #388

Alan Innes-Taylor had a very diverse and accomplished career. He is best remembered as a respected scholar and expert in Arctic survival.

Alan was a young boy when his family emigrated from England to the United States in 1906. A few years later, the Innes-Taylor family picked up again and moved to Ontario. Here Alan trained and served as a pilot with the Royal Flying Corps during World War I.

Following the war, Alan had numerous careers in various locations around the world.

In 1919, he arrived in the Yukon. Two years later, he joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and stayed with the Force for five years.

From 1926-1928 Alan worked as a purser on the sternwheeler *Whitehorse* which travelled between Whitehorse and Dawson City. During those years he logged an incredible 25,760 miles aboard the ship.

In 1929, he took employment with the Treadwell Yukon Mining Company at Keno and left that position to organize the Yukon Airways and Exploration Company.

The following year, in what was to become a turning point in Alan's career, he travelled to New Zealand to participate in Admiral Byrd's 1930 and 1933 Antarctic

expeditions. The first trip he served as the dog driver and observer on the *SS Kosmos* whaling ship in the Ross Sea. The second expedition he returned as Chief of Field Operations, a two year stint. In a short time his experience and expertise in Arctic survival were sought after.

In 1936-37, Alan lectured in Canada and the United States on Antarctica. During World War II, he worked for the United States War Shipping Administration and under a special Act of Congress, was commissioned Captain in the United States Army Air Corps stationed in Greenland. Here he taught Arctic survival courses at the air force schools and commanded the United States Air Force. When his military service ended, he spent the next two years building Beaver Ranch in the Forest Reserve of Jasper National Park for conservation purposes and in 1948-49 was Project Engineer for the joint Canada –United States Weather Station on Esachsen Island, Northwest Territories.

From 1950 to 1953, Alan was recalled to the United States Army as a Lieutenant Colonel and commanded the Military Air Transport Command Survival School at McCall, Idaho and other schools throughout the United States. During the next two years he worked in research and as a consultant to the United States Army in Alaska.

He also trained international commercial airline flight crews such as Air France and the Dutch KLM in Arctic survival and from 1957-1964 Alan acted as Arctic Operations Consultant for several other international airlines.

Alan also made a significant contribution to recording the Yukon's history. Prior to retirement, he worked for the territorial government describing and cataloguing government documents and was instrumental in establishing the Yukon Archives. The summers of 1964 and 1965 he worked for the federal government's National Historic Sites Board photographing and cataloguing the Hudson's Bay Company posts in the territory. He also made a series of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio programmes called *"The Rivers of the Yukon"*, describing his journeys by river to these outposts.

A modest yet much decorated man, few people knew about Alan's accomplishments: his two Congressional Medals for his work on the Byrd expedition to Antarctica, his Carnegie life saving medal, or his international reputation in geographical societies. He lived modestly in Dawson City and it was not until he was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada in 1977 and awarded the Queen's Anniversary Medal in 1978 that his accomplishments were celebrated more openly. Alan died in 1983, just a month shy of his 83rd birthday.

P45. Martha (Ballentine) Cameron born: 1904, died: may 1990
P46. Gordon Cameron born: january 22, 1900, died: april 29, 1996

Martha and Gordon Cameron are remembered fondly by the people of Fort Selkirk.

Martha was the second of five children born to Klondikers David and Elizabeth Ballentine. She spent her early years in Dawson City. By 1925, she had met her future husband and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officer, Gordon I. Cameron. The couple married in 1928 and Gordon resigned from the Force. At that time officers were forbidden to marry.

The Camerons left the north and dabbled in various endeavours including homesteading in the Peace River country in northern Alberta. However, the depression years of the 1930s held little promise and Martha and Gordon returned to the Yukon. Their homecoming coincided with the RCMP presence being re-established at Fort Selkirk and changes in regulations which allowed officers to marry. Gordon resumed his career with the Force and the Camerons moved to Fort Selkirk in 1935.

The one-man detachment was staffed by Gordon. The RCMP rented a cabin and this building housed the police office and living quarters for the Cameron family. For 14 years Gordon was the sole federal government representative in Fort Selkirk.

A career with the RCMP in a northern outpost was far more than policing. As well as carrying out law enforcement duties, Gordon regulated the game laws, met all incoming planes and sternwheelers, distributed medicines, helped dig graves for burials, delivered the mail, and generally helped out where needed in the community.

Gordon was often away on patrol. He travelled by boat in the summer and dog team in the winter. He patrolled up and down the Yukon River in the vicinity of Fort Selkirk as well as up the Pelly and South MacMillan rivers. During his absences, Martha was in charge of the detachment and fulfilled Gordon's duties. In addition, she also held the contract to cut firewood for the detachment and maintained the airfield for the White Pass Airways. She was often seen driving a two ton cat and roller up and down the airstrip.

Martha was a community-minded person, alert to the needs of others around her. She took it upon herself to read out, over the two-way radio, the Dawson City news in order that lonesome trappers could keep abreast of the latest happenings.

In 1933, Martha gave birth to a daughter, Ione*.

Gordon was also an avid photographer and recorded in photos and movie film the vanishing era of the sternwheeler and the small river community. His documentation has been invaluable as a historical record for the restoration of Fort Selkirk.

G.I. Cameron in RCMP uniform, Martha Cameron and Ione Cameron, 1939. Robert C. W. Ward, photographer. Yukon Archives, Robert Ward fonds #8808

With the construction of the Klondike Highway pending, the small settlement of Fort Selkirk would soon be abandoned so the Camerons moved to Whitehorse in 1949. Martha hosted many Selkirk friends and relatives who came to town.

Martha died at the age of 86 years and Gordon died at 96 years of age.

**Ione served as Mayor of Whitehorse, Commissioner of the Yukon Territory, and Senator for the Yukon in the Canadian Parliament.*

P116. Robert Porsild

BORN: COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, DECEMBER 28, 1898, DIED: DECEMBER 30, 1977

Alfred Porsild

BORN: COPENHAGEN, DEMARK, JANUARY 17, 1901, DIED: NOVEMBER 1977

The Porsild brothers are remembered for their work in reindeer husbandry, a scheme by the Canadian government to introduce reindeer into the Mackenzie Delta region.

Robert and Alfred were born in Copenhagen, Denmark, sons of scientist Dr. Morten Porsild, Director of the Biological Institute of Greenland. The institute trained young scientists in northern research.

The brothers studied botany and biology at the University of Copenhagen.

In 1925, Robert and Alfred were offered a contract with the Canadian government to explore the Mackenzie Delta region to determine its suitability as a reindeer grazing ground. The government had hatched a plan to relocate a herd of 3,442 reindeer from Nome, Alaska to Aklavik, Northwest Territories in an attempt to provide relief for the starving Inuvialuit population of that region.

In preparation for the job, the brothers spent the summer in Alaska studying reindeer husbandry and the Inuit language. The following two years were spent mapping the route and sampling vegetation. They travelled some 1,500 miles by dog team from Nome to Point Barrow in Alaska to Herschel Island, Yukon and on to Aklavik. The following year they concentrated on collecting botanical specimens and circumnavigated Great Bear Lake by boat and on foot. In 1928, Robert and Alfred arrived in Ottawa with an astounding 16,000 botanical specimens, many of them new to botanists.

Under the direction of Andrew Bahr, a Laplander, the reindeer relocation project was underway. Alfred recruited additional Laplanders to move the herd and instruct the Canadian native people in the care of the reindeer. The brothers also prepared for the herd's arrival by building huge corrals and housing for the herdsmen.

On March 6, 1935, a herd of 2,370 reindeer were delivered to the Mackenzie Delta region. The project, estimated to take only twenty-three months, took over six years to complete. In 1933, Robert left the Reindeer Project while Alfred stayed on until 1936 when he was appointed Acting Chief Botantist at the National Museum in Ottawa. He then became Chief Botanist of the National Herbarium, a position he held until his retirement in 1967.

Robert married his Danish fiancé Elly in 1930 at Aklavik. They returned to the Yukon in 1933 and he worked at a number of different jobs from gold mining to trapping to boat building. In the spring of 1949, the Porsilds opened their own lodge at Johnson's Crossing, extending hospitality to all travellers. In 1965, the couple retired and moved

Robert Porsild, Whitehorse, 1969. Yukon Archives, Richard Harrington fonds 79/27 #353

to Whitehorse.

Robert and Elly continued to indulge in their passion for botany and were contracted by the National Museum of Canada from 1966 to 1968 to collect, catalogue, and preserve wild flowers in the central Yukon. They collected four hundred and sixty four species, some extremely rare, and found the Yukon to be home to twelve kinds of orchids. They also found fifty plant species previously not known to exist in Yukon.

Robert was nominated as a member of the Order of Canada. He also served as first President of the Golden Age Society in Whitehorse and was a founding member of the Trinity Lutheran Church.

The Porsild brothers died within six weeks of one another. Robert was 79 years of age and Alfred was 76 years of age.

James "Buzz Saw Jimmy" Richards

BORN: SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, 1873

DIED: VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA AUGUST 21, 1967

"Buzz Saw Jimmy" Richards in an early automobile. Yukon Archives, Dick Ashton fonds 87/68 #4

Jimmy Richards was a local legend. Known for his mechanical wizardry, he earned his nickname "Buzz Saw Jimmy" for an efficient yet dangerous contraption he built that could cut cord wood at a phenomenal speed. Jimmy's physical appearance was testament to the machine's power: hundreds of stitches on his body, one lost finger, and a leg lost not once, but twice.

While Jimmy Richards is not buried in Whitehorse, his story is worth telling as he epitomizes the Yukon spirit of grit and determination; never give up even when the odds are against you.

In 1898, Jimmy left his home in Saint John and headed for the Klondike Gold Fields. The journey was prone to accidents and it is a wonder he arrived at all. His train derailed on the prairies near Rat Portage, killing two of his fellow passengers. The replacement train almost derailed outside of Canmore, Alberta when the car he was riding in left the tracks. After reaching the Pacific coast, Jimmy worked for his passage on a steamer headed for the Alaskan coast. During the voyage, the Pacific Ocean grew choppy and the steamer was damaged. Repairs were made and the trip to St. Michael, Alaska near the mouth of the Yukon River, was completed. Jimmy then boarded the sternwheeler *James Domville* which was headed up the Yukon River to Dawson City. Here he found all the gold bearing claims taken so he got back on the *James Domville* and worked his passage to Whitehorse. Captain Ferris offered Jimmy five dollars a cord on top of his usual wages to chop wood for the ship's boilers.

The following spring, the *James Domville* was wrecked in the Thirty Mile River and Jimmy found himself out of work. Thus he began a career of doing odd jobs. He prospected, worked on boilers and machinery, ran messages, and anything else to make a few dollars.

After a few years of working up and down the Yukon River as a jack of all trades, Jimmy settled in Whitehorse and built his famous mobile woodcutting machine. He salvaged parts from an old tractor and a Model T Ford which he fused together with bits of iron, pulleys, and

circular saw blades. He was the envy of other woodcutters as his machine could cut eight to ten cords of wood an hour when the next best machine could manage only three.

Jimmy and his machine had plenty of work. The Whitehorse Inn hired him to cut its wood because he was so fast and other people hired him just to see the contraption at work. When Jimmy drove his woodcutter from one wood pile to the next, many a tourist would snap his photograph for a souvenir of their visit.

The injuries Jimmy suffered while operating his woodcutting machine would be too much for most men. In 1911, he almost lost his right arm while adjusting the mechanical workings. A few years later when he was getting ready to go home for the night he fell from the seat and caught his right leg in the gears. The leg had to be amputated between his thigh and knee. Jimmy was fitted with a wooden leg and in a short time was back at work.

The next accident took place on December 12, 1919. Jimmy crawled under the woodcutter to fix a problem and had not bothered to turn off the machine. Shifting his body weight under the spinning blade, Jimmy cut his upper right leg through the muscle to the bone. Four months later, he lost his balance stepping on a log and fell back onto the blade cutting a huge gash across his back which required hundreds of stitches.

A few years later, and for a second time, Jimmy fell from his seat atop the woodcutter, this time he cutting his right leg completely off. He is said to have picked up his leg and shook it in a mocking gesture at the machine for it was his wooden artificial leg the machine had devoured not his good left leg.

Jimmy is also credited with saving Whitehorse from burning down. On May 20, 1921, the Whitehorse Hotel (now called the Edgewater) caught fire. People remembered the last fire in 1905 that destroyed the downtown core and they could see this fire had the potential for a repeat performance. The only chance to save the town was to put as much water on the fire as quickly as possible.

Jimmy was attending the regular gossip session at the Yukon Electric power house. Despite being there among engineers who worked with boilers every day, it was Jimmy who took over and saved the town. He used a washtub and began pouring coal oil in the fire engine boiler. This action kept the pumps powered and allowed the firemen to keep four hoses on all sides of the burning structure.

In the 1950s, Jimmy retired from the woodcutting business and his machine was carted away to the dump. Jimmy left Whitehorse in January of 1963. He died at 94 years of age at the Grandview Nursing Home in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Jimmy is presumed to be buried in Vancouver, perhaps his choice far away from his woodcutting machine.

DAWSON CITY CEMETERIES GUIDEBOOK

We hope you have enjoyed meeting a few Whitehorse residents who have passed on. For interesting encounters with the deceased sons and daughters of Dawson City and area, please pick up a copy of the *A Walking Tour of Dawson City Cemeteries* available at the Dawson City Museum and Archives. The following is a sampling of the interesting characters you will meet.

SOLOMON ALBERT BORN: 1860, DIED: SEPTEMBER 18, 1943

Solomon Albert sitting in the doorway of his cabin, ca. 1920. Yukon Archives, Clayton Betts collection #9412

This story illustrates how a little ingenuity and know-how can overcome any problem.

Solomon Albert, a friendly French Canadian trapper and prospector, lived in a small cabin four hundred miles from Dawson City at the headwaters of the White River in the St. Elias Mountains.

While prospecting for copper with two companions early one spring, Solomon was breaking trail and had the misfortune to fall into an overflow from the river. The weather turned bitterly cold that day and before the men could find a suitable place to camp, Solomon's feet and legs had begun to freeze. It was too far a distance to return to Solomon's cabin so his partners headed to Dawson City pulling Solomon on their sled.

Travel was slow and difficult and provisions were running low. The men were forced to leave Solomon in hope of finding some help somewhere along the trail. After four days they encountered a Royal Northwest Mounted Police (RNWMP) team on patrol. The patrol reached Solomon three days later and found him out of provisions and on the point of taking his own life. Four days later the patrol arrived with him at St. Mary's Hospital in Dawson City, but it was too late. Solomon' s feet were badly frost-bitten and the only recourse was amputation just below his ankles.

Solomon recovered quickly but required special shoes which were made for him in Dawson City. However, in roaming around the hills during the summer it did not take long before the shoes were worn and as fall approached Solomon was barely able to repair or use them at all. But like most mountain men, Solomon was used to inventiveness as part of survival and soon he was struck by an idea of how to replace the prosthetics.

Bear meat and grease were an essential part of a Yukon winter diet so when he shot a bear that fall he skinned off the hind feet and sewed them to his mukluks, creating sturdy and satisfactory footwear. With the bear feet he could balance and get around and was often seen shuffling about Dawson City, bear claws scraping against the boardwalk. His new shoes earned him the nickname "Bear Man".

One anecdote about Solomon and his famous shoes was told by some hunters

from the Alaska side of the St. Elias Mountain range. While hunting later that fall when the ground was covered with snow, they ran across some bear tracks and one chap is said to have remarked, *"Here's a darn bear walking on his hind legs, let's bring our rifles tomorrow morning and put him out of business, he's too damn smart."* Next day, they followed the tracks for twenty miles which ended at Solomon's cabin door. Needless to say, the men were surprised to encounter Solomon and his bear feet.

Solomon is buried at the Old Catholic Cemetery in Dawson City.

Carl Hafstad born: Norway, 1860, died: June 25, 1915

Carl Hafstad is known for a most unusual funeral which he planned for himself.

Carl learned carpentry and joinery skills in his native Norway. In the spring of 1889 he settled in Seattle, Washington where he worked his trade. In 1897, like so many others, Carl caught gold fever and left for Dyea, Alaska to join the stampede to the Klondike Gold Fields. He made a substantial living working a number of claims on his own and in partnership with others. Later on when mining began to wane, Carl and his wife Flora operated the Gay Gulch Hotel.

Carl had always admired the view from Haystack Mountain which was located near his Quartz Creek claim. He expressed the desire to be buried on the mountain's summit and left instructions in his will to that end, including money for beer for his pallbearers and mourners.

His burial was quite remarkable considering the lengths his friends took to carry out his wishes. A simple service was held in a roadhouse at the base of Haystack Mountain. Wagon teams were driven up the mountainside as far as they could go then twenty-three men were needed to carry the coffin and crates of beer a distance of twelve miles to the summit. Once there, they needed to blast a grave out of the rock to accommodate the coffin.

By late evening Carl was laid to rest in his favourite place. Carl died at 55 years of age.

Jan Welzl born: Czechoslovakia, 1868, died: 1948

Jan Welzl's story is the strangest and most eccentric of all.

A native of Czechoslovakia, Jan lived in Dawson City and was known by the locals as "John Inventor". He never tried to find his riches in the gold fields, but preferred to mine wealth from his intellect and thought of himself as an inventor and literary genius.

On the invention side, Jan attempted to manufacture a perpetual motion machine. This contraption was constructed from an assortment of pipe fittings, axles, counterweights, and the occasional beer bottle and tin thrown in for good measure. The machine proved useless and only served to cause him harm as it blocked access to his stove and thus prevented him from cooking meals.

His next venture embroiled him in a literary controversy. In 1932, the publication *Thirty Years in the Golden North*, appeared in English print. It sold more than 150,000 copies after being selected by the prestigious Book of the Month Club. Readers delighted in Jan's rollicking descriptions of his adventures in what he referred to as Siberia. However, some challenged it as more fantasy than fact such as Arctic Explorer Viljalmur Stefansson who believed the book was no more than a parody on exploration literature and was probably written by Czech satirist Karel Capek. If not a parody then a complete fabrication for no one ever lived in the New Siberian Islands, the remote archipelago that Jan claimed had been his Arctic home and which he populated with numerous "polar settlers" and Eskimo inhabitants.

The book provided facts and timely advice to those wishing to join Jan in the north. He wrote that the Arctic mailmen typically attached twenty-four sledges together and harnessed three hundred fifty dogs to these sledges with the lead dog half a mile ahead of its three hundred forty-nine companions. His Eskimos were said to worship twenty-five foot tall monkey idols and engage in boxing matches in their kayaks.

His time tested remedy for a toothache was to get scurvy because with scurvy your gums will become so spongy that the offending tooth will simply fall out.

From his base in Dawson City, which he called the New Siberian Islands, Jan wrote of journeying to San Francisco, Nome, and the Mackenzie River Delta with such casualness he could be sauntering down the street to the local convenience store.

In truth, Jan Welzl did not write *Thirty Years in the Golden North* he dictated it. In the 1920s he returned to his homeland and began giving lectures on his travels. On and on he would ramble spinning his outlandish yet fascinating tales. Lecturing did not prove to be very lucrative so he started sending articles to newspapers. A pair of enterprising journalists Bedrich Golombek and Edvard Valenta decided that Jan, a terrible writer, had a book in him as long as he did not write it himself. So Jan talked and the journalists took notes. He sometimes asked for rum to help his memory and the journalists would oblige him as his stories got better when fuelled by the drink. And so *Thirty Years in the Golden North* was born.

Jan relinquished the rights to the book for two thousand crowns (slightly less than $100). Karel Capek used his influence to get the book published in the United States where it was endorsed by the Book of the Month Club and sales took off.

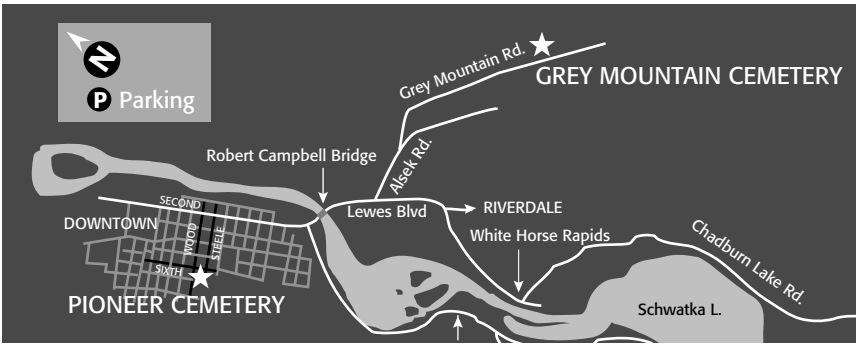
Jan is buried in the Dawson City Hillside Cemetery. He died at the age of 80 years.

A note about names changes for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police:

The Force was founded in 1873 and originally named the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP). In June 1904, the prefix "Royal" was added, changing the name to the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (RNWMP). In 1920, the Force was given the name the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for which it is known today.

The Yukon Genealogy Pan for Gold database was developed in response to the many enquires received by the Dawson City Museum & Historical Society about ancestors who lived in Dawson City during and after the Klondike Gold Rush. The records most commonly used for Gold Rush family history research were digitized for a searchable Gold Rush Genealogy Research Database. The database was assembled with financial assistance from the Yukon/Canada Economic Development Agreement for Tourism. This database now resides in the Yukon Archives Yukon Genealogy web site www.yukongenealogy.com, funded by the Stay Another Day Program.

We would like to hear from you if you have information or comments regarding the information presented in this guide. Please contact the Old Log Church Museum at 668-2555.



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