

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH – 151st Edition – March 12, 2006

Created by Sherron Jones sherronjones@shaw.ca

To use an e-mail address from the MocTel, replace the * with @.



View of Snow Sculptures from Pearson Building

Photo courtesy Doug Bell dougbell@ykn.net (In Whitehorse)

THE BAYMAN

By Gus Barrett sourdoughs2@shaw.ca (In Qualicum)

He grew up beside the ocean,
Spent his childhood on the beach,
He has learned his trade from elders in his clan.
He's been fishing since his early teens
Now he's about to teach
His grandson how to be a fisherman.

He has always been a slogger,
His hands are gnarled by toil,
His days are long with little time for rest.
He couldn't be a logger.
Or a tiller of the soil,
But put him in a boat and he's the best.

He dresses in his oilskins,
Not for him, the life romantic
He would stifle in a pinstripe suit and tie.
With his oars set in the tholepins
He will brave the wild Atlantic
But put him in an office and he'd die.

On Sunday at the altar
He's at peace before his God,
His boat is on the collar in the bay.
His cellar's full of vegetables,
His store is full of cod
He's dependant on no other for his pay.

Cod fishing is his birthright,
He was born unto the sea,
He's a bayman, as his father was before.
May he always have the foresight
To ensure that there will be,
Conservation of the stock for evermore.

© 2004 Gus Barrett



Moge and lake trout

Photo courtesy Moge Mogenson elgolfo*shaw.ca (In Cranbrook)

Here is a good-sized Lake Trout taken from the big arm across Kluane Lake. I caught it on a large Red Devil spoon in early July; another good spoon for these is the Five of Diamonds. This fellow weighed in at 25 lbs. These are not uncommon in this lake although they are not easily caught; this guy was full of other fish, one inside the other, all eaten head first. I caught this one in the early 80's. - Moge

REPLY RE TRUCKERS IN YUKON

A couple of names for you Nick Barnett drove the fuel truck for White Pass delivering gas for us at Pine Valley for years and years. Also a fellow named Ozzie drove the White Pass freight truck that came up the highway twice a week with all the food, mail, and any supplies we ordered. I believe the freight truck came on Tuesday's and Friday's, and the gas truck when enough orders were in to fill it. The mail route was later given to a fellow by the name of Fred Cook and he would come up in a smaller truck, and the freight truck only came once a week then. Hope this helps out some.

Moge Mogenson elgolfo@shaw.ca (In Cranbrook)

(Does Ozzie Stevens ring a bell with any one. – Bill Jones)

Yes you can tell Bill he nailed it, that was Ozzie's last name I'm sure. He was our mail man for years, and living on the highway of course freight day was a big day; you got goodies of one kind or another, so the day was always planned around the freight truck. You couldn't really leave home or anything until the truck arrived.

Take care till next time Moge

In Dawson for Yukon Dog Musers event Dawson City March, 2005.

We did stay in the Lipstick Room at Bombay Peggy's. We did 14 SHOWS in 4 days...Loved every minute of it. - Gillian



Gillian & Edward's room was at Bombay Peggy's in Dawson City.



The Lipstick Room becomes a Dressing Room/Bedroom



Costumes for 14 shows in 4 days.



Edward needs a place to relax.

Photos courtesy Gillian Campbell gillianklondikekate*shaw.ca (In Burnaby)

HENRY BREADEN

Thanks for the update on Henry, Sherron. I can imagine how Alice's e-mail box is being loaded up these days, so I'm sending sincere best wishes and good "vibes" to Henry through you.

Henry, you are an inspiration and treasured friend to all of us, and we know what a strong and determined fighter you are. Enjoy your "time-off" from the computer, and we'll be waiting with anticipation for the day you return with renewed energy!

Love, Joyce and Fred
Joyce Yardley joyceyardley@dataspan.ca (In Nanaimo)
www.dataspan.ca

YUKON ARCHIVES WANTS YOUR LIFE STORY AND YUKON HISTORY

Thanks for the help on the trucking - your note aimed me in a direction I'd forgotten.

I now have another request. Boy things come in bunches sometimes eh?

Okay this one is for the Archives. I'm a member of an Archives committee called FOYAS - Friends of the Yukon Archives. Our purpose is to help promote the archives, to encourage Yukoners to use and especially to encourage donations so their story will be there for their family, friends, and others who want to tell our story.

I have a letter and a pdf of our latest brochure I'd like to send for inclusion in MocTel if you will. As you know MocTel is being saved by the Yukon Archives, (a fine compliment in itself to what you have done and are doing). So some of Yukoners stories are getting there through your fine work. Stories and photos which might have disappeared had it not been for your foresight. Despite that more and more stories and materials are being lost all too often I think because many people say our life story isn't interesting. I think you've already proven that with MocTel, but I guess we have to keep saying it.

Anyway that's my last soap box presentation for awhile - I think.

Will edit some of my snow carving pics tomorrow - if I don't go and get some more tomorrow. Last year they melted but this year colder temperatures are in our favour.

Take care,
Doug Bell dougbell@yknet.ca (In Whitehorse)

How to Become a Friend

Donations and Bequests – You can help build the Yukon's documentary heritage for the benefit of future generations by donating your Yukon or Northern photos, movies, letters, diaries, club or society papers, business records, books, maps, sound recordings and newspapers.

Financial Contributions to our trust fund will help to develop displays, school programs and other projects at the Archives.

Memberships – Your membership will support archival programs and projects.

We value our Friends

Benefits of being a FOYAS member:

- invitations to special events
- an annual newsletter describing recent acquisitions and archival projects
- voting privileges at the FOYAS AGM
- the knowledge that you are actively helping to preserve Yukon's heritage

Some recent FOYAS projects:

- Housen Heritage Gallery, Arts Underground
- Alaska Highway virtual exhibit
- Genealogy workshops
- Community film shows
- Archives Adviser Program

Membership Application

Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms Other

Name: Surname First name

Address

City Prov./Terr./State

Country Postal Code

telephone

email

Individual \$10 Family \$25

New Membership Renewal

Send cheques or money orders to:
Friends of the Yukon Archives Society
Box 31089
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5P7

or drop off at Yukon Archives

To learn more about Yukon Archives contact:
Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6
tel. 867-667-5321
email: yukonarchives@gov.yk.ca
website: www.yukonarchives.ca

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Celebrating Archival Gold

F.O.Y.A.S.
FRIENDS OF THE YUKON ARCHIVES SOCIETY

The Yukon Archives – located in Whitehorse, Yukon – is a modern state-of-the-art preservation and research facility. It is supported by the Yukon Government to acquire, preserve and make available the archival heritage of the Yukon. Every year thousands of school children, family researchers, miners, former residents and researchers from every walk of life make use of the Archives collections to touch their past and pursue their passions.

Yukon Archives is our treasure chest, overflowing with fascinating stories about our history. Yukoners and visitors from all over the world visit the archives. Here they can learn about First Nations culture, the northern environment, family history, mining history, the Klondike gold rush, the White Pass and Yukon Railway and the Alaska Highway – to name just a few of the many topics that can be researched here. As well, Yukon Archives reaches out to share its historical wealth through travelling displays and film shows, and online resources including exhibits, finding aids, and digitized images.

Friends of the Yukon Archives Society (FOYAS) is a registered non-profit society. Since 1997, we have worked with the Yukon Archives to acquire and preserve the Yukon's documentary heritage. We are committed to assisting and advising the Archives in its important goal of preserving our past by:

- supporting and promoting Archives programs and activities
- receiving and administering gifts, endowments and bequests
- helping to make Archives records more accessible



WHITEHORSE S.T. photo taken at midnight.

Yukon Archives, Steve Gulligan fonds, 85/27, #24

This early view of Whitehorse is just one archival treasure. We encourage you to share and safeguard your family stories by donating your photos, writings, business records, publications and other memorabilia to Yukon Archives. Tell your story to future generations.

CHILDREN IN SAM MCGEE CABIN PHOTO IDENTIFIED

To Sherron Jones and Les McLaughlin -

I was surprised to see a picture of childhood friends and I in front of Sam McGee's cabin. Where ever did you find the photo? I believe it was published in the old Star Weekly, but I am not sure.

For your edification the people in the picture, going from left to right are:

Phyllis Brown, her sister Bonnie Brown, a forgotten little girl, my little sister Barbara (Close) Thorp and myself, Roberta (Close) Johansen.

I would like to get in touch with Phyllis, if anyone knows how to contact her. As an aside, I am going over to Barbara (Taylor's) Conway's house for a party tonight.....great to still be friends with some one who shares the same experiences of growing up in the Yukon. What a wonderful childhood we had!

Regards,

Roberta (Close) Johansen robertaj@bcgroup.net (In Prince George)

Hi Roberta

What a wonderful bit of information for you to come up with. The joys of the Moccasin Telegraph. So nice of you to share that information with the group.

I have cc'd Les McLaughlin.

Will place your message in the next edition.

Many thanks for sharing it.

Tell Barb that I just heard from Jim Thoresen (her cousins' husband) in Red Deer and it is -21 with the snow crunching like cornflakes under foot.

Also that we had coffee with Fred and Barb Aylwin just before we left to come south.

Fred Aylwin and Barb Conway are quite good friends from their growing up days in Mayo.

Thanks again.

Sherron

Ain't it amazin' grace. I don't know where I got that photo nor did I know who was in it. Wonder if Roberta Close ever talked to the old fellow who used to sit in front of the cabin. Then again, maybe he only sat there once. I certainly remember Roberta when we were in grade school. Maybe she has some memories of the Lambert Street School in the days that we went there.

Mine are pretty flimsy. I think we only went there til grade four and then moved into the old Dowell barracks before the new elementary high school was opened in 1952.

I knew Fred Aylwin's dad well. He was always there for us when we played hockey - first in the hanger on the airbase and then in the new (now gone) arena downtown. Mr. Aylwin was one of those quiet citizen's who we could count on to keep the town's tiny, but active sports leagues operating.

Les McLaughlin leslorn*rogers.com (In Ottawa)

BILL REID

**Bill passed away at 7:45 a.m. on Saturday, February 18th, 2006.
(APRIL 17, 1930 - FEBRUARY 18, 2006)**

**A CELEBRATION OF BILL'S LIFE
will be held at Mt. McIntyre Recreation Centre
March 26, 2006 from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M.**

William (Bill) David Reid passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by his family, after a lengthy, courageous battle with cancer on February 18th, 2006.

Born in Wallace, Nova Scotia, he settled in Whitehorse, Yukon in 1951. Bill and Rusty were married in The Old Log Church November 21, 1951.

He will be greatly missed by his wife, Rusty, his children, Shelley Biden (Mike) of Penticton, BC, and David Reid (Nora) of Delta, BC, grandchildren Dan LeClerc (Calgary, AB) Darryn Leclerc (Jacquelin) (Grande Prairie, AB) and Greatgrandson, Chandler LeClerc (Calgary, AB)

"He is not gone, he is everywhere"



Bill Reid

My daughter Shelley and my Dave came to Whitehorse and stayed with me during Bill's last days. They were such a comfort and help to both Bill and I during that time. It helped put Bill's mind at ease knowing they were with me.

They will take turns coming to visit me often. I look forward to visiting both of them and sharing their adventures. I have many other close relatives that I will be spending time with.

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This is Sunday, at 3:00 pm [March 6, 2006]. I am presently at my son, David REID'S house here in the Delta area.

Dave's two sons, Cameron & Glen (my grandsons) are coming over this afternoon to have a visit with me before I head home.

Dave will travel with me and we will leaving here at 6:30 pm to head for the airport. We will be travelling via Air Canada to go back to Whitehorse and will arrive there about 11:00 p.m. tonight.

He will stay with me for a few days to get me settled, and then I am looking forward to some quiet time in order to get my life organized into my new routines.

My Bill's request to me was, that I carry on playing music, do my hobbies, such as photography & editing the old home movies onto DVDs. He wants me to enjoy life to the fullest for the time I have left, until the time when I join him.

I will find comfort in the memories that I will always cherish. I will receive strength from the love I get from my family and friends, and also in the companionship of those who share my loss.

Sherron, if you haven't already done so, feel free to use whatever information or pictures you can use out of the Whitehorse Star and Yukon News.

When I get home and get organized, I will be sending you more information and pictures from time to time.

Bye for now,

Rusty Reid (In Whitehorse)
Phone: 867 633-5663
Cell: 867 334-4046
Email: rustyreid@northwestel.net

* * *

The Mayo Road

By Joyce Hayden

Introduction

In 1955 my husband Earle left John A. MacIsaac Construction Co. and went to work for United Keno Hill Mines Ltd. (Transport Division) hauling ore from Elsa to Whitehorse, Yukon. With Earle away from home much of the time, our lives changed considerably. The road, its condition, the type of truck he drove and the other drivers and their families had a huge influence on our lives. In looking back, it seems important to record our memories of the early days of what is now known as the Klondike Highway.

History

The Klondike Gold Rush put the Yukon on the map, and in the 21st century it continues to be a source of fascination for miners, historians, naturalists, Yukoners and visitors alike. There is another less well-known story that has impacted the Yukon and Yukon people almost as much as the gold strike near Dawson City. It is the story of United Keno Hill Mines Ltd. (UKHM), its silver, lead, zinc and cadmium deposits in the Elsa, Calumet and Keno City area of the Yukon. It is also the story of the rugged truckers who hauled that ore to the railhead in Whitehorse through all types of weather and road conditions.

Prospectors had been searching the Mayo area for minerals during the late 1800s, but it wasn't until 1901 that placer mining for gold began in earnest, with a rich strike on Duncan Creek. At about the same time many underground deposits of silver, lead and zinc were found. In 1928 Treadwell Yukon established a thirty-man camp and mill on their Elsa claim, about 37 miles (57 kilometres) northeast of Mayo. In 1929 the community of Elsa was established on Galena Hill. By 1936 the Second World War was imminent. Due to the effects of the Great Depression, production at the mine didn't begin until 1937 when war materials, especially lead for bullets, and zinc were in demand. The mines then became practical and profitable.

Elsa was destined to play a major role in shaping the economy of the Yukon for the next fifty years. In 1942 when the owner died, the Treadwell Company was dissolved. Almost all mining activity in the area ceased until 1947 when United Keno Hill Mines purchased the assets of Treadwell Yukon. Work on several of its 323 hard rock silver claims proved them to be some of the richest in the country, indeed, in the world.

From 1947 to 1990, these mines produced 148 million ounces of silver, 488 million pounds of lead, 331 million pounds of zinc and 4 million pounds of cadmium. But it still had to be shipped south to be processed. Hundreds of people from across Canada and from around the world were employed by United Keno Hill Mines. In its heyday, the company was the fuel that fed the Yukon's economic engine. Until the early 1950s ore was shipped from Mayo to Whitehorse on barges that were pushed by steam-powered sternwheelers on the Stewart and Yukon Rivers. In the 1950s it was hauled from Elsa to Whitehorse by tough, hardy truckers over the new, roughly built, narrow, dusty, unfinished highway then known as the Mayo Road.

From 1900 until 1924 The White Pass and Yukon Route (White Pass) owned and operated a regularly-scheduled horse-drawn stagecoach route north to Dawson City with road houses every twenty to twenty-five miles. The Cat trains that replaced the stagecoaches could haul sleighs and cabooses and travelled non-stop, but it was a cold, miserable, seven-to-eight day journey from Whitehorse to Mayo. They were used primarily to haul freight.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s the area was occasionally serviced by small, sometimes open-cockpit airplanes. In winter, when weather and road conditions permitted, passengers and freight were hauled by horses and sleighs and later by trucks to Dawson City over the Old Dawson Trail. At Stewart Crossing a winter road branched off to the northeast some 33 miles (53 kms) to Mayo.

In summer, White Pass ran a number of steam-powered sternwheelers to both Dawson City and to Mayo Landing. They carried passengers and supplies down the Yukon River and up the Stewart River as well as passengers and ore back to Stewart Landing and to Whitehorse, where the ore was loaded onto the narrow gauge White Pass train and hauled to Skagway, Alaska. From there it was shipped to the United States and later to British Columbia for processing.

In the late 1940s, a few hardy truckers carried freight north over the Old Trail to Mayo. Whitehorse resident Laurent Cyr, who operated a trucking company until 1954, says it was often a risky business. He remembers: "On my first trip up the old trail by truck, I crossed the log bridge on the Takhini River about twenty miles west of Whitehorse, then drove on to Kluane Junction at 31 Mile. The trail skirted the south end of Kluane Lake. My brakes gave out on me there, and I ended up in the lake!" Such were the hazards of early day trucking in the Yukon. It wasn't until the early 1950s that Yukoners were able to drive their own vehicles between Mayo, Dawson City and Whitehorse.

The Early Years

On April 1, 1947, UKHM, operating under the ownership of Fred M. Connell of Conwest Explorations Ltd. and Frobisher Ltd. began milling ore from the Hector-Calumet mine near Elsa, Yukon. Thus began the incredible saga that supported the Yukon's mining boom for the following three decades. UKHM operated several mines, a mill, and the company town of Elsa. Between 1947 and 1950, company trucks hauled ore the 35 miles (56 kms) from Elsa to Mayo, where it was stockpiled along the banks of the Stewart River. With the arrival of spring break-up, sternwheel steamboats arrived, pushing barges loaded with supplies. They returned to Stewart Crossing, where their load was transferred to a boat on the Yukon River allowing tons of stockpiled ore to be delivered to Whitehorse.

Once it became clear that UKHM's mineral claims were going to produce a massive amount of ore, F. M. Connell (known to the company truck drivers as "Fifty Million" Connell) took an interest in the project. Through his connections with the federal Progressive Conservative government of John Diefenbaker, he successfully lobbied for an all-weather road to be built from Mayo to Whitehorse. Mannix Construction won the contract, and in the spring of 1949, began work on several sections of the road.

Pelly resident Bob Curry is one of the original United Keno Hill truckers. He worked for the company for thirty years, until it shut down in 1979. When Curry hauled ore from Elsa to Mayo, drivers received the going wage of \$1.10 an hour. When he began hauling to Carmacks, and later to Whitehorse, they were paid by the mile, which was a considerable improvement. Trucks began using portions of the unfinished road in 1950. The last section to be completed was the 109 miles (175 kms) between Carmacks and Whitehorse.

Before UKHM's Transport Division went into operation, at least two independent truckers hauled ore from the stockpile in Mayo. Former Mayo resident Emery Shilleto, who later became the Sergeant-At-Arms in the Yukon Legislature, drove truck for Yukon contractor Bud Fisher. Shilleto remembers: "In the early spring of 1950, when the roads were still frozen, and glaciers were icing up, we hauled four tons of ore for United Keno Hill Mines from Mayo to Whitehorse. Bud and I travelled on the new road as far as Carmacks, then took the Old Dawson Trail on to Whitehorse. There we unloaded by hand those 135 pound (54 kilogram) sacks of ore at the White Pass docks." Shilleto believes it was the first load of ore trucked from Mayo to Whitehorse.

Emery Shilleto, with Louis Kazinsky, continued to haul ore to Whitehorse through 1950 and 1951. He describes the road's condition as "pretty awful. When Mannix built the Mayo end of the road, they started with the first twenty-four miles (38 kms) out of Mayo. It had been a woodcutters trail before then. The men working on the road had to cross the Mayo River by foot on a big log. A bridge was built shortly thereafter."

Mannix Construction worked on various sections of the highway in 1949 and 1950. Shilleto recalls: "In many places the ditches were better than the highway. The road was dusty, all washboard and full of potholes. Just north of Carmacks, the cloud of ash from an ancient volcano kicked up by our trucks was so bad that we could only travel about five miles an hour. The truck behind had to wait fifteen to twenty minutes to allow the ash to settle. We were always cleaning out the truck's air cleaner."

Laurent Cyr, who at one time operated twelve trucks in the territory, hauled a load of ore from Mayo to Whitehorse in the winter of 1950, using the Old Dawson Trail between Carmacks and Whitehorse. He, like Emery Shilleto, believes he hauled the first load of ore from Mayo to Whitehorse.

Cyr remembers: "I had hauled freight to Mayo, and I wanted a back-haul, so I picked up a load of ore and brought it to the White Pass docks in Whitehorse. They said they didn't want to store ore there. I told them I sure wasn't going to take it back to Mayo. So they finally found a flat car for me to unload it on. In those days, we had to load and unload those heavy ore sacks by hand."

There is no agreement as to which driver made that first trip with ore. What is clear is that in the winter of 1950, both truckers hauled ore down that incredibly rough, unfinished highway, driving across the ice on the Stewart, Pelly and Yukon Rivers. They made that first trip, and many others prior to 1951, when UKHM began hauling their own ore the 290 miles (466 kms) from Elsa to Whitehorse. United Keno Hill Mines grew rapidly, and in the early fifties it operated sawmills and lumberyards, and maintained the newly-built road under contract with the Yukon Government. In 1951 UKHM established a large, Whitehorse-based Transport Division comprised of twenty to thirty trucks, a garage, an International Truck dealership and the offices of Territorial Supply. They

employed hundreds of miners, mechanics, mill-workers, ferry operators, office workers, carpenters, cooks, road repairers, maintenance staff and truck drivers.

The Yukon government ferries that carried the ore trucks over the Stewart, Pelly and Yukon Rivers for ten years presented many challenges. The Pelly River ferry was controlled by two cables -- one to hold it in place, the other to pull it back and forth across the river. A Wisconsin engine provided the power for the capstan (a machine for moving heavy weights by winding cable around a vertical spindle-mounted drum). The Stewart and Yukon River ferries were motor driven.

Former truck driver Neil Corbett remembers those early days: "The hardest part of the trip was backing onto the Stewart and Yukon River ferries. As the river level dropped, the approach was pushed further out into the river. We had no power steering, and sometimes we had to back our trucks up thirty feet or more, in slush and mud and everything else. If you didn't get it right the first time, you could be there for half an hour".

Truckers still talk about the time Morris Matwick backed his load of ore onto the Stewart River ferry. The front end of the ferry tipped and Matwick's truck began to slide forward on the slippery deck, coming to rest on the ferry apron. At that point the cable tying the ferry to the shore snapped and the ferry kicked out from under the truck, plunging truck, driver and ore into the icy waters of the Stewart River. The story is told that Matwick rose out of the river, to stand on the cab of his truck, dripping water, with his usual large cigar still clamped firmly between his teeth. He was rescued with a pike pole. His truck was hauled out of the river the next day, and eventually put back on the road, but until that happened drivers said they could see the truck's lights shining brightly under the river water. His truck was thereafter known as 'Matwick's Submarine'.

UKHM's trucks evolved from the early single axles that could haul about eight tons of ore, to KB8s, Westcoasters (184s) and even larger tandem wheel 190s that hauled ever increasing tons of ore. As the loads grew heavier, pontoons were fitted onto the ferries. They operated 24 hours a day, only shutting down for meal breaks.

Ferry operators included several members of the Van Bibber family - Pat Sr., Dode, J. J., and George, as well as Jack McDiarmid, Dave Silas, Johnny Tom-Tom, Gerald Kelly, Danny Joe (who was elected to the Yukon Legislature in the 1980s) and well known former riverboat pilot, Frank Slim. They, and others, held the responsibility of safely transporting the trucks across three of the Yukon's greatest rivers -- the Yukon, Pelly and Stewart.

Ice bridges and bitterly cold weather were as much a part of those early years as was summer heat, dust and unreliable ferries. There was no air conditioning in the vehicles, and in the summer, drivers' feet burned on the hot floorboards of the old single axle trucks. It is said that Dick Dixon drove in his bare feet, just to cope with the heat. Others hung their left foot out the window to cool off.

In the winter they had to wear fleece-lined flight boots, heavy parkas and mitts while driving. Even then, they were cold. Temperatures between Mayo and Carmacks hung for weeks in the 50 and 60 below zero F range (-45 to -50 C), not counting wind chill.

One winter the temperature dropped beyond 70 degrees below zero F (-55 C) at Stewart Crossing, and stayed there for a week. As Neil Corbett and Jose McDonald reached the Stewart River, McDonald's truck froze up. Corbett stopped with him, and before the night was over, his truck had frozen, too. The following day they worked for

hours in the unrelenting cold, with two propane torches and tanks, trying to start their trucks. One tank and torch was used to heat the truck motor, and the other to keep the tanks of propane from freezing. At last the trucks started, and they drove on into Elsa.

Former driver Ralph Fitzsimmons recalls his truck breaking down just the other side of Midway Lodge near Minto, when it was extremely cold: "I was there for quite awhile. I built a fire and put on a balaclava, to keep from freezing. When Doug Joe (who also drove for United Keno Hill) came along he first asked if I was okay. When I said yes, he started to laugh. My balaclava had frosted up, and he told me: 'Fitz, you look just like Santa Claus'."

Bitter cold, icy rivers and summer heat weren't all that the drivers had to cope with. In the unusually hot summer of 1958, forest fires ravaged much of the Yukon. One fire raged along the Mayo Road, just south of Braeburn Lodge. The trucks continued hauling ore, although the fire was burning along the highway, and jumping back and forth across it. Joe Urbanowski and Earle Hayden were driving north while the fire burned beside them. Hayden remembers: "The tarp on the top of Urbanowski's load of groceries caught on fire. Embers from burning trees had blown onto it, and it began to burn. When we got to Braeburn we stopped and beat out the fire, then we carried on to Elsa." On their return trip, the forest fire was still smouldering, and they had to drive through dense smoke. In those early days, UKHM trucks never stopped -- not for fire or flood, and not even for Christmas.

By 1959 the federal government agreed that it was time to retire the ferries, and to build bridges across the three rivers. The Department of National Defence (DND) that was still responsible for maintaining Yukon highways, did the planning and engineering of the bridges. Poole Construction and possibly other companies got the contracts to build them. In 1960, the bridges were opened to general traffic.

The road had improved considerably over the ten years it had been in use. Trucks were bigger, better equipped and better maintained, and driver safety had become a consideration. However, they still hauled day and night, through all weather and road conditions. It was an incredible accomplishment.

But it was all soon to end. By 1989 ore prices were low and the operation shut down. The mines were put up for sale. There was no interest and by the year 2000, UKHM was bankrupt, and their assets sold. It was a sad finale to a bold, exciting and successful northern enterprise.

However, in 2002, hope revived. It was believed that the mine would go into production again under the new ownership of an American mining entrepreneur named, appropriately, Phil Cash. He vowed to bring the mine back into operation. By 2003 he had failed to do so, and the mine was, once again, up for sale.

More than twenty years after United Keno Hill Mines stopped hauling ore and supplies to and from Elsa, the old Mayo Road has been renamed the Klondike Highway, and stretches from Skagway, Alaska, to Dawson City, Yukon. The well-used Silver Trail branches off from the Klondike Highway at Stewart River Crossing to Mayo and Keno City. The community of Elsa is a ghost town. Only time and world metal prices will decide if it will ever open again.

Those early truckers were a unique blend of hardy individuals who were unfazed by cold, danger and exhaustion. Some were Yukon-born, and others came from various provinces of Canada. They were tough, hard working men who lived life to the fullest.

Now they are growing older, and some have passed on, yet their legacy remains. They leave the wider, chip-sealed Klondike Highway to a new, younger breed of truck drivers to carry on the old traditions.

Joyce Hayden jhayden@ykn.net (In Whitehorse)

PUBLIC CARVERS – RENDEZVOUS SNOW SCULPTURES – 2006 – WHITEHORSE

These two were from the "Public Carvings." I was told they put several blocks of snow in front of the federal building and "the public" were encouraged to carve away. These are two examples of a very talented "public" I'd say.

Doug Bell dougbell@ykn.net (In Whitehorse)



“Public Carving”

Photos courtesy Doug Bell dougbell@ykn.net (In Whitehorse)



“Public Carving”

MEN GATHER TO CLEAN UP WHITEHORSE - 1951

Sherron: This 1951 photograph is of a group that gathered early one morning to clean up Whitehorse. It may be of interest to Moc-Tel viewers.

The participants included the City of Whitehorse, The Board of Trade and the Kiwanis Club.



In the photo, from left top right are:

Arthur Petley Jones, Manager of the Bank of Montreal; W. D. (Bill) MacBride of White Pass; Jim Hannah, Optometrist; Bill Hamilton, White Pass; Alan McGregor, Manager Territorial Supply, a United Keno Hill company; ? ; Percy Hewitt, City Manager; Mayor Gordon Armstrong of Burns Meat Market; kneeling, Ted Myles, Yellow Cabs; Jim Gentleman, General Hospital; Sam McLimon, Owner of the Capitol Theatre; Jim Norrington, Manager Pan American Airways.

The picture is in front of the TC Richards owned Whitehorse Inn and at the Taxi Stand operated by Lloyd Camyre.

Regards,

Rolf Hougen marg@hougens.com (In Whitehorse)

PHOTOS FROM MARIBETH MAINER

Computer glitches solved but these pictures were meant to go with what I wrote last week.



Maribeth floating in the washtub in the back yard,
Nanna (Gladys Hoggan) holding my hand.



Maribeth Tubman & Jean Smith
The only photo from the period where I am the big girl.



Tom Portlock and I at probably 2 1/2 at the time, 1947.



Matching sleighs captures the plywood sleigh, my grandfather John Hoggan built so that Mom could get around with my handicapped brother. Note the miniature one he made for my dolls, identical in every detail. The construction in the background became the living room.



Beth & Skip Tubman

Note the wolverine fur on my brother Skip's snowsuit. Nanna was quite the seamstress. She recycled the fur from an RCMP parka. She did the same for me a few years later.



The winter of 47-48, my grandfather John Hoggan, Emil Thibault and I.

Maribeth (Tubman) Mainer mainerm1@shaw.ca (In Burnaby)

NEWS FROM DAWSON

We are having our March weather, cold nights (-30) and beautiful clear sunny days. Then it warms up to -10 and snow melts off the roof in the sun. We had a great time in Hawaii and seem to have come home just in time. We missed all the rain and flooding in Hawaii. The rain was just starting when we left. On my way home from Whitehorse last Monday was noticing the lack of snow between Stewart Crossing and Whitehorse, am thinking that if we don't get a wet summer we are going to be burning up the north again. Dawson is getting the Trekkers from Alaska. We have had 2 groups over and one more to come this weekend. Between 140 and 150 snowmobiles each weekend make the Trek from Tok Alaska to Dawson, the last weekend in Feb and the first 2 weekends in March. This is their 13th year. It's quite a site to see the machines lined up on both sides of the street at the Downtown Hotel. Then we have Dawson's Spring Carnival and its time to get ready for spring, people who are gardeners are getting their seeds started, even if there is 2 feet of snow on the ground. Ice Pool Tickets are on sale, another sign of spring. This has been going on since 1898. Was saddened to hear of the passing of Bill Reid and Dick Wallingham. Two more of our Pioneers and longtime Yukoners have left us.

Hello to all our MocTellers.
Myrna Butterworth myrnab*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

SNOWMOBILERS TREK – TOK TO DAWSON – 13th Year



Trekkers in Dawson City –March 2006

Photo courtesy Lorraine Butterworth mlbbearcreek@hotmail.com (In Dawson)

This is a picture of some of the Trekkers snow machines from Alaska. They come to Dawson over the Top of the World Highway, from Tok Junction Alaska. Three groups of 135-140 machines make the Trek, three weekends in a row, they take part in a Poker Run, visit the Casino, which is open on weekends, have a steak BBQ done by the local Firefighters Association, as well as races etc against the local Snowmobile Club. (Photo by Lorraine Butterworth) The temperature today was -32 this morning but in the sun this afternoon it was a balmy -15. Great to live in Dawson City
Myrna Butterworth myrnab*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

Further details of this event can be found at <http://www.trekovertop.com/dawson.html>

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note my new change of address to:
nandesmarais@hotmail.com thank you! Nancy Desmarais

NEW ADDITION LAST WEEK

Thanks for the welcome!

I was born in Dawson as were my parents, so my roots go along way back! Joe Redmond is my brother. Yes my Uncle Clarence Craig died just over a year ago-- he was 3 months short of 100 years. It would have been my Mom and Dad, Joe and Ginny Redmond, who attended the Tubman wedding.

I left the Yukon in the late 50s to go into nurses training in Vancouver. I've spent most of my adult years in the greater Vancouver area, aside from nearly 10 years in Eastern Canada. I moved to Nanaimo last spring and am really enjoying living on the island. Blanche and Gus Barrett are good friends. There are several people I grew up with living in Nanaimo so it's been great reconnecting.

I have already heard from Myrna Butterworth since you put my name out. I would love to have Geraldine VanBibber's email address; I was thrilled that she is the new Commissioner.

I'm looking forward to receiving your news letters.

Sharon Redmond sredmond@uniserve.com (In Nanaimo)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

If you don't risk anything, you risk even more.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

I am also attaching a recipe for pickled grayling. This is absolutely delicious. I understand this recipe is also good for any white-meat fish but is not very good for pink fleshed fish such as trout and salmon.

Stan

PICKLED GRAYLING

Submitted by Stan Marinoske smarinoske@klondiker.com (In Whitehorse)

2 large grayling
4 tablespoons coarse salt
White onions
Pickling spice
Sugar

Mazola oil (not olive oil)
Vinegar

Fillet two grayling, sprinkle coarse salt (about 1 tablespoon per fillet) on grayling, refrigerate for 36 hours.
Wash off grayling, dry with paper towel and cut into bite size pieces.
Put into container alternating layer of finely sliced onion and grayling chunks until container is nearly full.
Put in 1 teaspoon pickling spice, 3 tablespoons sugar, 2 tablespoons Mazola oil, cover fish with vinegar.
Let stand for a minimum of 4 days. Enjoy.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Date: April 8th, 2006

Location: Hyatt Regency Vancouver, Regency Ballroom, 3rd Floor

Tickets: \$55.00/Person, Advance purchase a must.

Cheques gladly accepted. Mail to Mary MacDonald
#309-5166 Halifax St., Burnaby, BC, V5B 2N6

Phone: 604-299-7533

Please provide the full names for each guest,
and advise if there are any food allergy issues.

Whitehorse: Tickets available from Gudrun Sparling

Phone: 668-3958

Vancouver Yukoners' Association
Annual Banquet - Premier Event of the Year

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THE MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

If you have received this copy of the Moccasin Telegraph from a friend and wish to sign up to receive future editions yourself, the criteria is that you **are or were a Yukoner**. The goal of this project is to provide an opportunity for folks to reconnect.

– Sherron Jones sherronjones@shaw.ca

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