

## **MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH – 168th Edition – July 23, 2006**

Created by Sherron Jones [sherronjones@shaw.ca](mailto:sherronjones@shaw.ca)

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



**Little Fox Lake – Klondike Highway- June 9, 2006**

Photo courtesy Bill Jones [ve7yi@shaw.ca](mailto:ve7yi@shaw.ca) (In Vernon)

### *The Dog-Song Tradition*

by Alf Bilton [trapper@nemontel.net](mailto:trapper@nemontel.net) (In Saskatchewan)

The songs of the sled dogs once lulled us to sleep,  
Soulful reminders of traditions to keep:  
Respect for the Northland and those came before,  
Of mushers and hardship at Winter's own door.

The dogs sang us ballads of pioneer times,  
Of treks through the mountains and ungentle climes,  
Where blizzard and white-out and frost challenged all  
To learn and to struggle, or give up and fall.

The mushers who fed them knew out on the trail  
Just smarts and endurance could help them prevail,  
That those didn't have both must fall by the way,  
Or give up and turn back and just slink away.

A big part of trail-wise is What Not To Do,  
Knowing when to just sit tight, when to push through;  
... when to make mileage, or give up an inch,  
Plus being prepared to survive in a pinch.

Those really trail-wise, who can go it alone,  
Forgo blaming others, mistakes are their own.  
They'll swear it's the choosing and not the advice  
That makes you or breaks you out there with the ice.

Some Yuppie cheechakos claim they're mushers too,  
Then do their own singing when each day is through.  
It's talc these refer to as, "hard as a rock,"  
And "rough-it's" not doing, but only some talk.

They'd like to have stop lights out there on the trees,  
And someone with tissues nearby if they sneeze.  
They don't want to learn how to think a thing through;  
...If theirs were the thinking, why, theirs the blame too!

And this danger! This freezing! These frost-bitten toes?  
Enough that the lead-dog should have a cold nose!  
They've suffered their fill, see, so now they want laws  
(And maybe dog's water needs umbrella straws)!

Real mushers ignore them, resolved to improve;  
But cheechako singers are sure they can prove  
(Through media contacts will tout what they say),  
That dog-song tradition should yield to the bray.

Copyright © 2006 by Alf Bilton

[Alf Bilton](#)

Whitehorse, Yukon

## **GOVERNMENT NOT LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE**

It's an interesting fact of life here in The Yukon that the political boys and girls don't listen too well to the people they're trying to serve. The "Larger that life" issue is one of them. I would like to correct the Government with respect to some other labels that have become screwed up.

The Klondike Highway South from The Cut-Off to Carcross is really The Carcross Road.  
The Klondike Highway North is The Mayo Road.

The Golden Horn Subdivision at the intersection of The Alaska Highway and The Carcross Road is The Cut-Off.

The stretch of road between Carcross and Skagway is The Skagway Road.

The intersection of The Alaska Highway and The Mayo Road is The Mayo Turn-Off.

And there's probably quite a few other things that the transient Bureaucrats in the government have changed solely to get their own names immortalized. Oh well...don't get me started.....

Douglas Trim

Whitehorse, Yukon Territory

[dtrim\\*northwestel.net](mailto:dtrim*northwestel.net)



Grade 6 – 1956 – Whitehorse Elementary School

Photo courtesy Maribeth (Tubman) Mainer [mainerml\\*shaw.ca](mailto:mainerml*shaw.ca) (In Burnaby)

Grade 6, Miss Bernier's class, is also sort of labelled.

This was my last school year in Whitehorse. I finished out the school year before joining my parents in BC.

Maribeth (Tubman) Mainer [mainerml\\*shaw.ca](mailto:mainerml*shaw.ca) (In Burnaby)

*Names written on rear of photo – Marshal Perrin, Jane Wilson, Vivian Irvine, Carol Parker, Anne Taylor, Cory, Ann Meuser, Malcolm Dawson, Diane Bidlake, Jim, Gordon Sudbury, Miss Bernier, Kerry McLaughlin, Fred, Lorne White, Laverne Little, Murray Morrison, Mary Beth Ilot, Maribeth Tubman, Karen Hume, Marie Herbert, Jean, Carol Bowers.*



**Yukon Forest – Near Dempster Highway and Klondike Highway intersection.**  
Photo courtesy Bill Jones [ve7yi@shaw.ca](mailto:ve7yi@shaw.ca) (In Vernon)

## **Pack Dogs to Helicopters**

Author Pat Callison – copyright.

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **EARLY YEARS (cont'd)**

While horses had played a major role in my life they were losing out to the fascination of automobiles.

When I was about 15, my 18 year old brother Lynch, owned a 1918 model T Ford and I would ride around with him, just itching to get behind the wheel, I watched every move he made with his hands and feet, he would allow me to crank it to start it and when he got stuck in the mud he didn't object to me working like hell to get him out, and because the car had no headlights I would hold a flashlight for him to see by - and I loved every minute of being Lizzie's handmaiden, but I still wanted to drive and that, Lynch would not let me do, saying I was too young and too small, but I just bided my time.

One day I realized that everyone had left the homestead except my mother and me, even Lynch was not to be seen and - the car was parked in the front yard. My mother was busy in the house, the coast was clear, and what was I waiting for?

I went and opened the front gate so I would have nothing to stop; me, I checked the car over, cranked it up, jumped in behind the wheel, released the brake and went rocketing out of the yard, missing the gate post by a few inches.

I had only gone about 20 feet when my mother heard the noise and came running out of the house, waving her apron telling me to stop, but I was on my way.

A short distance down the road there was a narrow pole bridge and I hung onto the wheel and jounced over the bridge with out taking off the sides.

I went about a mile before I found a place to turn around in, then drove back home and parked the car in the yard - no damage done; just the way Lynch had left it.

My great feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction didn't last very long when Lynch found out what I'd done, but it all blew over and eventually I was allowed to drive the Model T.

Four years later I owned my first car, a 1920 Model T for which I had traded two packhorses.

It ran pretty well for awhile, I kept on the road during the rodeo season when a bunch of young fellows would drive to the stampedes being held around the country, ride broncos and steers, take part in most of the events on the programs, dance most of the night, get a few hours sleep and do the same thing all over again the next day.

Anyway the time came when my car needed new transmission bands and I took it to a fellow who said he knew how to take care of the problem.

When I got the car back, three friends and I started out to a stampede at Hythe a town in Alberta, and we were about 15 miles from town when the engine started to knock, the main bearings had burnt out, the "mechanic" had used brake bands in the transmission so the metal got into the oil and cut the bearings out of the engine.

So there were the four cowboys stranded on a country road. After awhile a truck came along and towed us in to Hythe, not exactly a dashing arrival at the stampede.

I got \$150.00 trade in on what was left of the Model T and I bought a new 1930 Model A for \$800.00.

I always thought of the Model A as a good little car and this opinion was born out when, 35 years later, 1965, when I was in New Zealand and out for a walk one morning in Christchurch I saw a car parked on the street that was the identical model to the one I had bought at Hythe. This one looked like new and I had heard that there is no place in the world where one will find old model cars in mint condition and still being used.

Apparently the import tax on autos brought in to New Zealand is so excessive that a person only buys one car in a lifetime and it is considered as a valued possession. The cars in New Zealand are serviced very much as we do airplanes. When a car goes in for a regular overhaul it is stripped down, checked and reassembled.

Horses are horses but mules are a different story. My father kept an old jackass for breeding with mares to raise mules which he found to be strong and tough in harness. Anyone who has been around mules can tell dozens of stories about them, being stubborn is only one characteristic, they are unpredictable and sometimes act as though they are

smarter than the mule skimmers. I really believe mules stand around dreaming up situations to belittle the male human race.

I've broken them to saddle and broken them to harness and have a good collection of scars to prove it.

One fall my brother and I were getting ready to go out on the trap line and decided to take a couple of 3 year old mules to pack our supplies, but first they had to be broken. We drove them in to the corral and I walked in with my lasso and roped one of them. This character instead of trying to get away as any normal beast would do, just laid his long ears back down his neck and came straight for me. I started to run for the fence but knew I couldn't make it, so stopped, picked up a 3 foot stick, about 3 inches thick and walloped him over the head. It stopped him alright but the stick had a 4 inch nail sticking out of it and got jammed into my hand and I was hurt worse than the mule, so for the next two weeks on the trail I had to go about with a bandaged hand trying to tie ropes and load packs, it was a long time healing. I still have the scar.

There are good mules and bad mules but I think there are more bad ones than good ones.

\* \* \*



*Our first home in Peace River country. 1914*



*Five brothers, 1927.  
L. to R.: Lynch, Lash,  
John, Dennis, Pat.*



*Pat on saddle horse.  
1931*

After finishing the mail contract in the summer of 1930, I used my boat on the Peace River working for a survey party, moving crew and supplies as required for the survey.

One job I did that summer was on the South Pine River which flows into the Peace River about 10 miles below old Fort St. John.

The chief surveyor was Bill Moffat and his young helper was Gerry Davis. The plan was to go up the South Pine about 100 miles by boat. At that time the river had not been properly surveyed or "tied in" as it is technically known, meaning not mapped accurately, it was simply shown as a straight line on the maps.

Mr. Moffat was to traverse the river using a transit, and making a shot by line of sight, from one bend to the next, show all the bends of the river and tie them in the proper latitude and longitude.

I am certain that no one had attempted to travel the south Pine using a power boat. It is a small river to start with and inconsistent. In places it was quiet and deep enough to run the outboard, then without warning it would become shallow and fast.

The Chief Surveyor wouldn't have shown much patience if I had wrecked my motor, with no way to get replacements, so I wasn't taking any chances. We would putter from bend to bend, then when the surface of the river looked a little shallow, Gerry, who was standing in the prow of the boat holding a measuring stick, would test the water for depth. If it were shallow I would shut off the engine and Gerry and I would pole until we got deeper water. Three men, food, camping gear, an outboard motor and survey equipment made up a good weight to pole against the current. If it were too shallow for us to pole through, Gerry and I would jump into the river, and Gerry at the prow pulling, and I pushing on the stern, would wade until we reached water of sufficient depth for me to start up the motor again.

We did that for a month - soaked to the skin in cold river water and we stayed wet until we made camp and would wring out our sox and pants and let them dry over a campfire. When the weather was good the mosquitos got us, we had no "OFF" or such deterrents, and on other days we were soaked from wading and rain coming down at the same time. But Moffat got the information he needed and South Pine got on the maps as a narrow, winding 200 mile tributary of the Peace River.

Nowadays people can navigate these rivers trouble free by using jet boats which only require sufficient water to float the boat. Our old outboards needed at least 15 inches to keep out of trouble.

Before we started on the boat part of the survey, Moffat had been using packhorses and a crew - assistant, Gerry Davis, packer Jake Smith and Bill the cook. When it came time to use the boat, Moffat left Jake and Bill to look after the camp and the horses. So all the time we were away all they had to do was to cook for themselves and keep an eye on the horses.

Jake was an old cowboy, with the sack of Bull Durham tobacco in his shirt pocket, only took off his black stetson when he went to bed. When we got back to the camp we started to tell them about the rough time we had had, Jake told us about how hard he had worked looking after the horses and carrying all that water for the cook.

After listening to Jake's story, Bill said, "Jake hasn't been feeling well of late; he keeps waking up during the day".

I lost track of the men on that particular crew, except Gerry Davis, who became in turn, a member of the B.C. Police force, a B.C. Forest Ranger, a well known prospector and about 10 years ago he was mining jade about 50 miles east of Dease Lake on Boulder Creek, the same place where I would be placer mining in 1937.

To be continued....

## **GRADE 5 STUDENTS NAMED**

I'm just looking at the Grade 5 '55 photo, and can help with some names. These kids were a year behind me, but I knew a few.

In the back row: Eugene J. may be Eugene Johnson, Bucko F. is Donald Fraser (Joy's brother).

In the second row: Carol B. is Carol Bowers.

Front row: Mike K. is Mike Kerry

By the way, Axel's name is spelled Rehkatsch. His sister Barbel was in my class.

Thanks. Ralph Lortie [rlortie001\\*sympatico.ca](mailto:rlortie001@sympatico.ca) (In Mississauga)



Yukon Rose still waiting her turn to serve on the river.

She is sitting on the dike in Dawson – June 2006.

We were unable to track down Marc Johnson. – Sherron Jones

Photo courtesy Bill Jones [ve7yi\\*shaw.ca](mailto:ve7yi@shaw.ca) (In Vernon)



We were successful in tracking down **Jim Robb** and **Les McLaughlin** in Dawson on June 10, 2006 – Les jokingly had Jack London join them. We just missed Cal Waddington. The trio were in Dawson working on a project about the history of mining. How lucky Yukon is having people like this trio recording and producing all the interesting topics of the past. Well done gentlemen and wonderful to finally meet you. –

Sherron Jones

Photo courtesy Bill Jones [ve7yi@shaw.ca](mailto:ve7yi@shaw.ca) (In Vernon)

### **Watson Lake Winters, Part II**

By Aksel Porsild [yukoner1@shaw.ca](mailto:yukoner1@shaw.ca) (In Courtenay)

Watson Lake winters were not all about curling and bonspieling, though. Lots of other activities went on because of course we had no TV and very little radio. Baby making was popular but not really a group recreation and so little was heard of it until later next summer!

But we played badminton in the school gym at least once a week and the group was usually large enough for two to three doubles games at a time. Some of us got pretty good at this game and indeed, one summer after an intense badminton season, we were invited down to Cassiar for a tournament. This would have been in 1962 or so. I and my wife attended, Paulsons, a couple of the single bank guys, and my partner Beryl Champion, wife of the Forest Warden; she and I won the mixed doubles. Again, the Cassiar Asbestos people put on a great show for us with the tournament, and supplied all the prizes, as well as accommodation and meals; as a bonus we got a tour of the mine site, mill and the top of the mountain. I recall there was a token entry fee for the games but I don't recall how much it was.

Also in winter there was at the “Airbase” a square dancing club which met once a week too, with Gordon Bremner the caller. Two or three couples from the town and several from the airport (DOT) staff made up the club and we had coffee and goodies after the sets. I remember Lloyd and Evelyn Kostiuk, Harvey and Anita Douglas, and Neil and Pearl Harvie, among others. The women even went so far as to design and sew their own square dancing skirts, all the same colour and pattern. We men just wore our old rags, of course and the only criteria were long sleeves. Was a great pastime for those cold evenings, and the DOT Rec hall was a comfortable one.

In the Army camp, we organized an ongoing Bingo game, with prizes consisting of vouchers for merchandise. Carl Gebert, the senior clerk at HME Headquarters, ran it and managed the prizes. The vouchers were in different denominations so that a win for a single line on a Bingo card was one voucher, and that for a “Z” pattern maybe two or three, and a blackout card was I believe 4. The prizes were all on display and you could immediately cash in your voucher, or save until you had maybe 10, to get a wall hanging or a lamp. This went for about two winters then sort of died out, but it was popular while it lasted and involved not only the DND people but the citizens at large in the community.

I want to say a few words about our Volunteer Fire Department of the era. This was run by the Army and they supplied the truck and equipment, and it was kept in the DND garage in a dedicated stall. The chief at the time I was a member was Don Birdsell, the current staff sergeant in charge of the Army repair depot (RCEME) and he recruited the members, half of whom were DND people and the rest town residents. We didn’t fight too many fires but I fondly remember the Practice evenings, every second Tuesday. We met and reviewed procedures, got some water pumping if it wasn’t too cold, and practiced getting ladders off the truck and hoses strung out. This would take about an hour then we’d repair to the RCEME shop’ office in the same garage, and have a drink or several, with potato chips, nuts, salami, cheese and such. This was provided by the Chief, who earned a small stipend from the Army to do the job, and he spent the money that way. (He didn’t tell his wife about the extra little bonus, and when she eventually heard about it, we had to donate for some of the goodies!) About once a month we’d have a real blowout and as a result most of us were not very swift next day at work!!

As for work, the town was pretty quiet during winters, and the only busy ones were us highway maintenance folk, who kept the roads clear of snow and the hills sanded. We ploughed snow every week and sometimes every day, and had almost one hundred miles of the Alaska Highway to keep clear, from Contact Creek to Transport Café (Rancheria River) plus the Airport access road of eight miles. We also ploughed the Cassiar Road to the BC boundary, about three miles down from the Alaska Highway. In addition, we had other highway related chores as well and also worked keeping the residential areas clear or at least partly cleared of the area’s very large accumulation of the white stuff. The workshops were busy since this was the time when all the highway equipment was overhauled and repaired for the next season. A staff of five or six mechanics were involved with this, as well as some of us permanent staff, who helped out when we weren’t on the road. Camp foreman at that time (‘61-‘64) was Vince Peterson, and Paul Rivest was camp mechanic. The Area Pool personnel also were stationed in Watson Lake and comprised the crusher crew foremen, other roving crew foremen and the float truck driver, Frank Higen. Our jobs often crossed and as I noted above, we of the road

maintenance staff often worked on getting equipment ready for spring, along with the Pool people. Pete Gilowski and Tom Wallman were crusher crew foremen, and lived in permanent quarters in the Pool area, as did I, as the Culvert Crew foreman.

This housing was relatively new or newly constructed from old prefab materials and they were in the form of six duplexes. They were built on the hill above the main maintenance camp which comprised elderly WWII-vintage converted prefab barracks huts. Others in this ‘new’ area were: Birdsell and Svendsen, our only military families, Harold Devoe the Pool welder, Morgan Chaddock, Pool’s master mechanic, and Jake Melnychuk, later Fred Corcoran, bridge crew foremen. The headquarters staff: Harry George, our superintendent, clerks Carl Gebert and John Jamieson, each also had one end of a duplex on the hill.

So these were our activities during the long cold winters in Watson. Every few weeks or so when there wasn’t a bonspiel going on there was a dance at either the DOT, Town or the Army recreation hall, always well attended. One year a pickup band was established and while their music was not too professional, it provided a welcome change from the “canned music” of 45 RPM records. One winter, a mechanic of DND who shall remain nameless made a batch of double distilled moonshine, which was colourless and very potent. A bit of this in a rye-and-ginger and you were away for the entire evening—a really good way to go to sleep early!



Dawson Masonic Temple

Photo courtesy Bill Jones [ve7yi@shaw.ca](mailto:ve7yi@shaw.ca) (In Vernon)

The refurbished Dawson Masonic Temple looking wonderful in the summer sunshine. We were lucky enough to be allowed in and take a quick look through this wonderful building. Saw the names of lots of folks we knew including Pete Foth.

Don Frizzell in Whitehorse had encouraged us to view it. The building is one of three in Dawson which are clad with metal inside and out to prevent them from burning. Don explained that the building had originally been used for a library, when it was built there was a program where funds were available from Carnegie for building with such construction. The Commerce Bank building on Front Street in Dawson is another constructed with metal cladding. It is currently in need of paint so we didn't photograph it.

*Have decided to place the requested **CARCROSS** information in regular editions of the MocTel as I get it. So **Ken Jones** – This is for you !!! Ken made the request - to gathering information about his beloved Carcross. Hope he too will share some memories of growing up there. – Sherron*

## **LIFE IN CARCROSS**

By Merna Hensley (formerly TREBELL) [mhensley\\_1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mhensley_1@sbcglobal.net) (In Whitehorse 1967-92, Nares Lake 92- 2000) Now in Ohio.

### **Carcross Yukon**

It was a move that changed my life. In 1986 I was enjoying a busy day at work in my salon, listening to women talking about all kinds of subjects, when someone brought up camping, one of my favorite topics. I listened with great interest when Dorothy McLennen started talking about a cabin she had down Nares Lake, about 2 miles from Carcross. I asked her a couple of questions about the cabin and if she still used it. She said "no", that Don didn't like to go down there anymore and it had been standing unused for about 8 years. I mentioned that I would be interested in renting and she said it was in such disrepair that it would take too much work to get it up and running again. At that time I was young and full of energy just ready for a challenge. I said, "so if I cleaned it up and fixed what needed to be repaired, could I rent it from you." She said, "If you clean it and fix it, you can use it". So off we went the next weekend, full of enthusiasm and big ideas. There was no road into the cabin so just finding a way into the cabin was a trip in itself. We weren't sure how to get there so we picked Hurshel and Mamie Smiths path. Big mistake, it was straight down a long steep hill to the narrows and another mile along the shore to Dorothy's cabin. After that I thought even being young and strong, it was going to be hard to do that hill every week dragging coolers and tools. Once I got onto the cabin location and felt the peace and serenity, the hardship of getting there faded in a hurry. There was nothing that would have kept me from doing whatever it took to have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and peace of Nares Lake and all it had to offer. We could see that the place had been boarded up for a long time and it was going to take some work to get it even usable, but we were ready. As we went up to the door and opened it slowly, we weren't quite ready for what we saw. It was packed with "stuff" and most of it was junk that needed to be hauled away. Right away we started looking for another route into the cabin. Which we found on a flat part of the lakeshore. I had a Big Red three wheeler and a small trailer but it would take many trips along the beach, to haul away the old mattresses and junk that we couldn't burn.

Thankfully my friend, “John MacDonald” had a 4x4 truck and was willing to try and drive the shoreline from a small trail we found. It worked and we had the junk loaded and the place free of most of the larger pieces by the end of the first weekend. My next challenge was to clean out the mouse poo, which I have always said, “there was enough poop in the cabin to fertilize most green houses in the Yukon”. Not that anyone would want to use it for fertilizer. It took awhile but I got the job done.

One afternoon while I was cleaning out the back room of the cabin I found a waste basket full of something that looked like foot long cardboard sticks. Not knowing what it was, I picked up the basket and placed it out on the veranda of the cabin. Went back in that kept cleaning, a little while later Bill came in to see what I was doing and noticed the basket on the deck. He yelled at me and said it was about 10 sticks of dynamite in which the nitro had all settled to the bottom of the basket, even the caps were in the bottom. At that time he gingerly picked up the basket and carefully took it down to the sand point about 100 ft away from the cabin. He then took off on the three wheeler and went into Carcross and call the bomb squad in Whitehorse. A couple of hours later three RCMP arrived at the cabin to discharge the caps and burn the dynamite. I guess ignorance is bliss for me because they all said I was very lucky it didn't explode when I picked it up, never mind placing it on the deck with any kind of jolt at all.

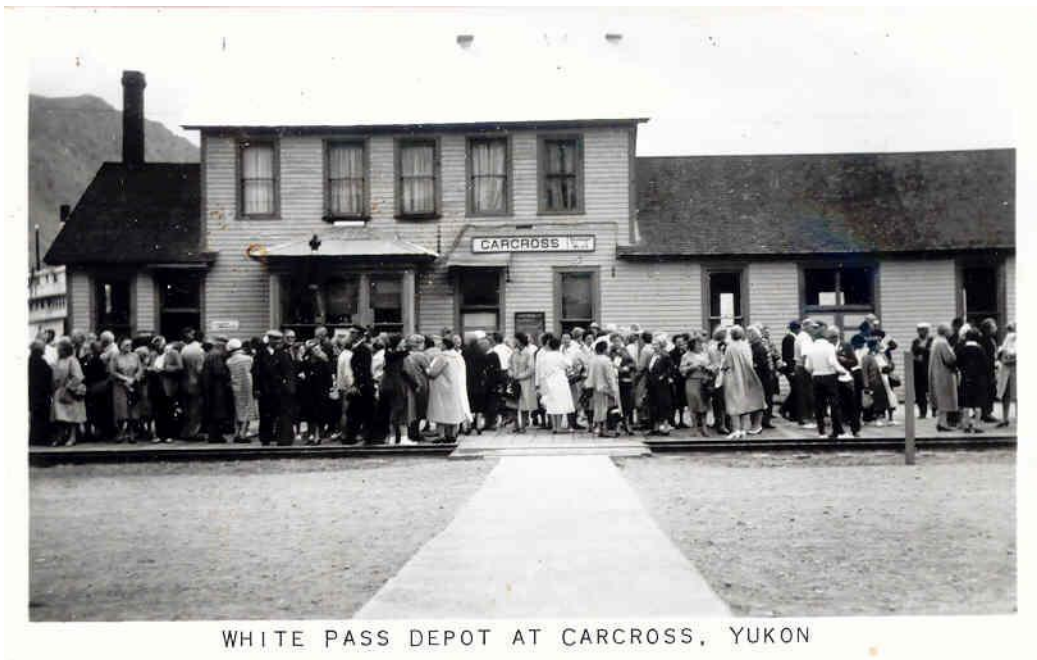
We worked hard on the cabin and yard for the rest of that summer and well into the winter. Finally we had it clean and comfortable to use without having to work every minute we were there. It was a great place to get away from the city and gave me time to sit and gaze out over the water to think about all that had actually taken place right before my eyes. If I would have been there 85 years earlier. Knowing that most of the gold crazed miners would have had to drift, sail or row within 100 feet of my front door, made it very exciting for me to be there even many years later.

I spent many hours walking through the woods behind the house, finding many items left behind by the north bound miners. “Gold pans, picks, shovels, even brooms made from tied together willows. It was all very exciting to me and I hauled it all back to the cabin where I nailed it on the old shed.

The next summer I was fortunate to be able to purchase the cabin. This was a big thrill for me and over the next few years we made many changes to the cabin and enjoyed every time we got to spend time there. I have many great memories from that cabin but of course there are some sad times too. One that comes to mind first was the burning of the Tutshi. I remember walking around the point from the cabin early in the am and seeing the smoke from Carcross. Knowing that it must be something big, we took off into town to see if we could be of any help, but by that time it was all but over. Remembering the Whitehorse and Casca burning years earlier, now the Tutshi, I just knew it was another big loss to anyone who loved the history of the Yukon. Some more of the Yukon's history had just gone up in smoke. A lot of Why's and how could that happen were tossed around but of course I never did get what really happened. A lot of speculation and gossip flew around for years after, just never the truth. Which maybe was for the best in the long run.

In 1992 I purchased a log home from Helo and Wolfe Becker next to Agnes MacDonald, on what I understand to be Bladda Point. I sold my house in Whitehorse and made the move to Carcross permanently.

I enjoyed living on the mountain and was able to watch the sheep come to the salt licks most days in the summer. Every week there was a different story to tell about some animal that wandered onto my property. Bear, moose, deer and caribou and of course the sheep at a distance. All were welcome and it was a great experience to have wildlife pass by so close. Many people pay a lot of money to see these animals in cages or see in the wild while on a holiday, but I was fortunate enough to live with them all around me. Something I will treasure always and with my minds eye camera I can recapture the memory every time I see a picture of an animal in a magazine or on TV. Over the next 8 years I made friends in the Carcross and Skagway area. Snowmobiling and curling in the winter and fishing and boating in the summer were a big part of life in Carcross. In the off season socializing was something that happened at the drop of a hat. Everyone enjoyed getting together to help at haying time or just to get together. It didn't take much to get a party started and you never knew how many would show up when you invited a few people over. Nobody was ever turned away, just threw another bean in the pot and wiener on the barbeque, everyone was welcome. Another great thing about living in the Yukon.



WHITE PASS DEPOT AT CARCROSS, YUKON

Submitted by Gertrude (Rose) Squirechuk

## **MEMORIES OF CARCROSS**

By Gert Squirechuk (Submitted by snail mail.)

E-mail via her daughter Carol Kowal [carioca@telus.net](mailto:carioca@telus.net) (In Lethbridge)

Congratulations Sherron, you have done a great job on the Moccasin Telegraph. You sound like you had a great trip to the Yukon. The majority of people you met I remember.

I think I told you my mother and dad moved to Whitehorse in 1925, my sister Nancy was four when they moved. My Dad had a brother in Whitehorse working in the shipyards. As my dad was an Engineer he soon got the job in Carcross as Engineer on the Tutshi. They went out to Vancouver in the fall of 1926 and stayed in Vancouver for the winter. My dad went back up north in the spring and mother waited in Vancouver until I was born. I arrived in Carcross at the age of 15 days in 1928, so I don't remember anything in those days.

I don't know anything about the Scott Hotel. I did have a picture of a school class in front of the Scott Hotel so I imagine the classroom was there.

I phoned Doug Watson to see if he remembered anything and he like I just remembered it burned down.

I started school at the age of 5 in an old garage next door to George Simmons house. I remember a Mrs. Gideon running the Caribou Hotel. A relation to Mrs. Gideon came and took over. Mrs. Dawson and her son Harold Dawson and his young daughter who was a little younger than me. Her name was Caroline (Dawson) Downes. A few years later Grace Corley a sister to Harold Dawson, she had two children Don Corley and Joan (Corley) Lucas. I still keep in touch with Lilian (Grant) Eutslec, Moe Grant's sister. Doug Watson, brother to the late Bob Watson and Jean (Begg) Hardie.

The Tutshi had tourists most days in the summer, (June until September). They would arrive in Carcross at noon from Skagway and from the train they would get right on to the boat and would be served lunch as soon as they had their room. They would stay on the boat until the following morning and arrive in Carcross around 9:00 in the morning. They would spend about two hours in Ben-My-Chree, a beautiful spot. They had beautiful gardens, Mendenhall Glacier and lovely mountains. The tourists would go up to the house and have homemade Dandelion Wine and sponge cake. My dad would play the organ (which is in the Museum in Whitehorse) and have a sing song. The boat would tie up for a few hours then on to Carcross. They wandered around until the train took them back to Skagway.

In Carcross they would visit Matthew Watson Store. Mrs. Watson had a fox and mink ranch which they visited. Then there was a Yukon Ivory Shop which was run by Elliott's. Then Patsy Henderson was the Indian Chief, he would dress up in Indian costume and put on quite a show. He had stuffed animals and would show how they trapped them and would sing and dance to his drum.

After all that the tourists would go back to the station to catch the train back to Skagway. In those days we didn't have any roads or cars, no running water or electricity.

I forgot to mention, when the tourists arrived in Carcross in June they would take the Tutshi to Blatta's Point and anchor in there and take the tourist down on a barge, quite an experience.

There would be a train in the afternoon off to Whitehorse, a few tourists would stop off in Carcross and get the train the next day. Sometimes Northern Airways would bring people from Teslin, Dease Lake and Atlin, to catch the train to Skagway and would stay at the hotel. Hunters would probably stay over night at the hotel. Tractors coming with their sleds over the night to pick up freight for Atlin would stay overnight at the hotel. They always served meals there. When the Army moved in, in 1942 they were quite busy. I'm not sure when Dawson's moved out and went to the States. A Mr. & Mrs. McKay took over the Hotel.

Anything else I can help with, give me a call. - Gert

*I sent Gert's message on to Joyce (Richards) Yardley hoping perhaps she may have some comments. – Sherron*

This is fascinating material for me, Sherron, as it is around the time I was growing up (in Whitehorse) and a year before we moved to Carcross. So some of these people Gert mentions had left by that time. The Dawson's for instance: but I certainly remember the name and the fact that they had indeed been running the Caribou Hotel before Adele McMurphy took over. They were probably the recipients of Polly the Parrot when her owner was drowned in the wreck of the Princess Sophia in 1918. Google has a lot of information on that ship, and books pertaining to it.

The people she mentions here I remember well.

*(Copy: In Carcross they would visit Matthew Watson Store. Mrs. Watson had a fox and mink ranch they visited. Then there was a Yukon Ivory Shop which was run by Elliott's. Then Patsy Henderson was the Indian Chief, he would dress up in Indian costume and put on quite a show. He had stuffed animals and would show how they trapped them and would sing and dance to his drum.)*

Thanks for the memories, Gert!

Joyce Yardley [Joyce\\*dataspan.ca](mailto:Joyce*dataspan.ca) (In Nanaimo)

## **Filmmaker turns lens on his own family. – Bishop Stringer**

Solange De Santis Staff Writer – Anglican Journal  
(Article shared by Maribeth (Tubman) Mainer)

After years of filming documentaries on such subjects as native housing in the North and Canadian Finns in Russia during the 1930's, Richard Stringer has turned to his Anglican family history for his latest film.

*The Bishop Who Ate His Boots* is a labour of love and work in progress, being the story of Mr. Stringer's grandfather, a well known Anglican bishop named Isaac Stringer who worked in the western Arctic in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bishop Stringer kept an extensive diary and made films of the North, documenting a now-vanished way of life.

Although a classic Christian missionary, he also adopted the ways of the native people and much of his low-pressure evangelizing took the form of what would be described today as social work.

He and his wife Sadie lived for several years on one of the most remote places imaginable – Herschel Island, off the north coast of the Yukon in the Beaufort Sea. She sturdily adapted to the life in the North, even giving birth to two children in the mission house, with only her husband for help.

It has been a similarly arduous journey for Richard Stringer, who has completed principal photography on the film, which he estimates will run about 50 minutes in a television version and 70 to 80 minutes in a film version.

“I started in 1990 with the idea of making the film,” said Mr. Stringer, who was born in 1944 and never met his famous grandfather, who died in 1934. But he did have memories of his grandmother, who lived until 1955. Mr. Stringer’s father, Wilfred (the Stringers had five children), died in Esquimalt, BC, of hepatitis shortly after the Second World War. His mother, Clare, a British war bride, took young Richard to live in Winnipeg where he grew up.

Educated in Toronto at Ryerson University’s film school, Mr. Stringer has had a long-established career, working on feature films, TV movies, TV episodes, commercials, corporate videos and documentaries. He won a Gemini award in 2000 and Canadian Society of Cinematographers Awards in 2000 and 2003.

In 1990, he talked to Pierre Berton, who was raised in Whitehorse and knew the Stringers. “Berton said he (Bishop Stringer) took movies, 16 mm black and white film in the 1920’s and 30’s interesting documentaries of the North, great shots of people building igloos, making boots. From 1905 to 1930, my grandfather was bishop of the Yukon he showed his films at the local church,” said Mr. Stringer.

Mr. Berton, who was born in 1920, told Mr. Stringer that “it was a big thing – the Bishop’s films – we looked forward to that!”

In 2004, Mr. Stringer began to discuss his idea for a documentary with broadcasters at the Toronto’s HotDocs film festival, but ran into competition with other Arctic programming. Nevertheless, he filmed an interview with Mr. Berton (who died in November, 2004) and in 2005 he received a \$30,000 grant from the Ontario Arts Council and began shooting more interviews and doing research at such institutions as the Anglican national church archives in Toronto and the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, which holds his grandfather’s films.

He realized that the film was more than just another documentary for him. He wrote in the grant proposal that “I will be on a personal quest to find out more about my grandparents... What made Isaac go up north? ... Was Isaac in conflict with the

church's treatment of the natives or did he participate in unjust actions? Was he responsible for any residential school activity? What was my grandmother really like?"

What he found were two dedicated, resilient people. When Bishop Stringer arrived at Herschel Island in 1893, whaling ships were active in the Beaufort Sea, but the Europeans brought alcohol and disease to the native population along with trade goods. Bishop Stringer worked with the local Hudson's Bay Co. manager to stem the alcohol flow.

Now, on the Yukon Territory's Web site (Herschel Island is now a territorial park)' an Aklavik elder is quoted as saying "You know that time when they first started to come, they had no priest ... they started drinking, they try to kill each other, fought, drank. Their wives, they lost them to those white people... When that preacher came, just like that, all the bad people stopped. Bishop Stringer, yeah!"

Sadie joined him in 1896. When her first child was born, she wrote in her diary, "My husband, who had some medical training, was my only attendant. I was tough and healthy and didn't worry and the little girl's birth seemed a happy omen."

Isaac learned some of the native languages and survival techniques. The latter served him well in 1909 when he and another missionary were lost in the wilderness for 30 days. They boiled up an extra pair of seal skin boots, giving them just enough animal nourishment to hang on until they reached a native camp. The story hit the newspaper and Mr. Berton said he believed it was the inspiration for Charlie Chaplin's boot-eating scene in the 1925 film *The Gold Rush*.

In 1914, the Stringers traveled to England on a public relations and fundraising tour and King George V asked to meet them. In 1930, Bishop Stringer became the archbishop of Rupert's Land, the vast western region of the Anglican church. Shortly thereafter, he discovered that nearly \$1 million had been embezzled from the church. The strain wore down his health and he died in 1934 at the age of 68.

Last fall, Richard Stringer traveled west to do research and film exteriors in the Yukon. Mr. Stringer has also been coping in the past year with colon cancer diagnosis, but he said that despite chemotherapy treatment, he felt fairly good. "At this stage, I have no problem with energy," he said, but he added that some of the footage shows he lost some hair due to the chemo.

His investigative work left him feeling "pretty positive" about his grandfather, who did not appear to have much connection with the much criticized residential school system, preferring to work toward the establishment of day schools for Inuit, white and Métis.

Now he wants to finish the film, looking toward the HotDocs festival next year. Being his own director and cinematographer, lugging equipment, scrounging for funding, preserving through adversity – sounds like Richard Stringer is a worthy descendent of his Episcopal grandfather.

*The book - The Bishop Who Ate His Boots – written by Rev. Dr. Frank A. Peake and published in 1966.*

## **DON MACHAN THOROUGHLY ENJOYED ANOTHER MOCTEL**

I thoroughly enjoyed the most recent edition of MocTel, especially Gus Barrett's poem. He perfectly expressed my sentiments about this little bit of paradise we call Qualicum Beach, sometimes known as Vancouver Island's best kept secret. I must confess that more and more people are discovering our secret. In fact, so many retirees are discovering Qualicum Beach that it's population has the highest average age of any community in Canada (57). I am really enjoying Pat Callison's story. I had met Pat when I was in Yukon during the 50's. Donna Clayson's account of her visit to Yukon made me envious and tempting me to follow her example. However, at age 81, I suspect that most would consider me mentally incompetent to consider the idea, but the spirit is willing, even if the flesh is weak. It was a pleasure to read Henry Breaden's contribution. You just can't keep a good man down. I was delighted to hear from Claude Campbell and I am hoping that Claude and Jardy will attend our V.I Yukoner's Picnic on August 12th. My wife and I were their wedding attendants when they were married in Alberta in 1956. They are celebrating their 50th this summer.

I greatly appreciated the information about the Van Bibber family supplied by Commissioner of Yukon, Geraldine Van Bibber. It was generous of her to take time from her busy schedule to provide the information. I was sorry to learn of Clara Van Bibber's passing, and extend my best wishes to J.J. and family.

I am looking forward to meeting many of the Yukoners who attended classes in Watson Lake Airport school (51-53; 56-58) and Mayo School (53-55; 58-61) at the V.I Yukoners picnic. I hope that it will be a reunion of many old friends, and I trust that I will be forgiven for my shortcomings as a teacher, and for any hardships or punishments I may have administered.

Is the Weldon Pinchin who contributes to MocTel occasionally a son of Ted Pinchin?

I knew Ted quite well when I was in Whitehorse in 1955-56. I seem to recall that he owned a building next to the Bank (Montreal, I believe) on Main Street.

Keep up the good work, Sherron.

I would like a copy (CD) of the 2003-04 MocTel, and 2005-2006 MocTel if available, and you could bring them to the Yukoners Picnic if you are planning to attend, as I hope you will.

Sincerely, Don Machan, [demachan@telus.net](mailto:demachan@telus.net) Qualicum Beach, B.C.

## **NOTE TO READERS**

Just a fast note....Starting next Monday, CBC TV is showing "Northern Town" a 6 part mini-series that was filmed around the Yukon.....it was written and produced by Daniel Janke.....thought perhaps your southern readers might want to tune in, to see if they recognise any locations....I know they filmed in Dawson and Whitehorse...or around

Whitehorse, and maybe Haines Junction area....plot is about someone seeing a meteorite landing and the aftermath of looking for it etc. Lots of local talent I understand.

Kathy Gates [kmgates\\*northwestel.net](mailto:kmgates*northwestel.net) (In Whitehorse)

P.S. I'm off to the Dawson Music Festival that is coming up this weekend...along with the annual Midnight Dome Race.

### **Northern Town – to air on CBC – Monday's starting July 24<sup>th</sup> at 9 PM.**

Northern Town was shot in Whitehorse and they are hoping to have a few more seasons added on if this one goes well.

Episode #1: "Brian" July 24th 9PM

Episode #2: "Iverson" July 31st 9 PM

Episode #3: "Mona" August 7th 9 PM

Episode #4: "Hatshe & Suko" August 14th 9 PM

Episode #5: "Fran & Hendy" August 21st 9 PM

Episode #6: "George and Grampa" August 28th 9 PM

### **ARTIST TALENT**



**The Challenge**

By Fred Aylwin

Photo courtesy Fred Aylwin [fbaylwin\\*shaw.ca](mailto:fbaylwin*shaw.ca) (In Vernon)

## **FUNERAL FOR PETE FOTH**

Made a quick trip down to White Rock for the funeral service for Pete Foth. Wanted to pay our respects to Pete and be of some support to Brownie who has been such a good friend since meeting her through the MocTel.

The church was packed, a testament to a good man and his wonderful family. Many former Yukoners were in attendance. Gillian Campbell sang Amazing Grace and was recognized by many.

At a reception held at the residence where Pete and Brownie have lived for the last few years there were about 130 people. Met Danny Jurovich for the first time. He also lives in White Rock area. Saw Sandy Campbell, Lowell & Lyn Blieler, Gus & Blanche Barrett, Maribeth Mainer, Mary McDonald, Sue Morrison, Don Murray who brought his aunt.



Gillian Campbell, Sandy Campbell, Gus & Blanche Barrett.  
Photo courtesy Sherron Jones [sherronjones@shaw.ca](mailto:sherronjones@shaw.ca) (In Vernon)

Gus prepared a poem in Pete's honour and presented it to Brownie who has sent it along to share with you. – Sherron

By Gus Barrett [sourdoughs2@shaw.ca](mailto:sourdoughs2@shaw.ca) (In Qualicum)

### **PETER FOTH – 1912 – 2006**

Life has come to an end  
For a treasured old friend,

Yet we come here today, not to grieve.  
We have come to reflect  
And to pay our respects,  
For a wonderful life he achieved.

For Pete never had  
Any cause to be sad,  
Or to regret any part of his life.  
His heart it would swirl,  
With the love of his girls,  
And an enduring love for his wife.

To his legion of friends  
He was true to the end,  
He was mindful of duty and truth.  
From a life of hard work,  
He was never to shirk,  
With a smile and the vigor of youth.

A goldmining man,  
With a shovel and pan,  
Or a giant dredge churning the creek.  
He toiled in the cold  
For that glittering gold,  
He was a man destined to seek.

Now, today we rejoice  
And recall with one voice,  
Great memories down through the years.  
Knowing angels will greet,  
And look after our Pete,  
A Klondike pioneer.

© 2006 Gus Barrett

## **OBIT**

### **NEEDHAM, MURIEL MARY JANE**

Passed away on Wednesday, July 19, 2006 at the age of 90. She was born in Vancouver, BC, attended business college, and was an active grass hockey player. She began work with Canadian Pacific Airlines in 1942, in the reservations department. On occasion, she flew with the search and rescue missions when needed as a spotter. In 1944, she was transferred to the office in Whitehorse, Yukon where she worked in reservations and joined the then growing CPA contingent there. Muriel met and married John W. Needham, a local merchant. Later, they purchased the Kee Bird Store in Whitehorse, where they remained until the late 60's. They then relocated and retired to Kelowna, BC.

Both Muriel and Jack were avid golfers, going south to Arizona in the winters. She enjoyed painting, gardening, and watching the Blue Jays and the Canucks. Muriel and Jack were life members of the Yukon Pioneers Association and the Yukon Order of Pioneers in Kelowna. Muriel will be very much missed by her remaining family: daughter, Donna McLean of Kelowna, BC; sons, Jack Needham of Vancouver, Richard (Jane) Needham; grandchildren: Susanne, Ryan and Sara of North Vancouver and sister-in-law, Margaret Doman of 100 Mile House. Muriel was predeceased by her brothers Perry Doman, Les Doman, and her husband, Jack Needham. Muriel Mary Needham and her family: Jack Needham, Richard Needham and Donna McLean would like to thank all the staff of Westside Care Centre for their loving care of our Mom. She was always grace and dignity - and was treated as such. We also thank the staff and managements of We Care for their wonderful assistance. A Memorial Service will be held on Tuesday, July 25th at 1:00 pm at the Chapel of Springfield Funeral Home, 2020 Springfield Road, Kelowna, BC, followed by interment at the Kelowna Memorial Park Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Salvation Army, 1480 Sutherland Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 5Y5. Condolences may be sent to the family by visiting [www.springfieldfuneralhome.com](http://www.springfieldfuneralhome.com). Arrangements by SPRINGFIELD FUNERAL HOME LTD. 250-860-7077.

## **Lorne Kitchen**

KITCHEN, Lorne "**Tiny**" On July 3rd, 2006, our father and brother passed away peacefully at the U of A in Edmonton. Survived by his daughters Dianne (Rob) and Martha, both of Mississauga, ON; his brothers Rusty (Lori) of Calmar, AB, and Mervin of Bear Lake, BC; grandchildren Tanya, Kenny and Thomas; nieces and nephews Marlene, Ken, Kim, Kerry-Lynn, and Millicent. Dad was born March 17, 1928 in Orillia, Ontario and **made his way west in the early 40's, eventually settling with his family in Teslin, Yukon. He was extremely proud to be one of the engineers/builders of the Alaska Highway. He left the Yukon in the early 70's** and went to Cowichan Bay, BC, then Bechtel in Fort McMurray, and finally retired in Perryvale, AB. It was Lorne's wish that no funeral or memorial service be held for him. If you wish to contact the family, you can email: [doran-mississauga@rogers.com](mailto:doran-mississauga@rogers.com) or by mail at Box 88, Perryvale, AB T0G 1T0. Donations can be made to the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society, Vancouver, BC, 1-877-223-4766. Published in the Edmonton Journal on 7/22/2006.

## **FITZ-GERALD, DESMOND REX St. Clair**

February 3, 1931 - July 16, 2006 We regret to announce the passing of Rex Fitz-Gerald of Marsh Lake, Yukon and originally, Kelowna. Rex is predeceased by his wife Velva, parents George and Anne Fitz-Gerald, and one brother Gerald. He leaves to mourn his passing, his new wife, Edith May Davis, two sons Gerald (Jane) Fitz-Gerald of Kelowna and Kevin (Berni) Fitz-Gerald of Los Angeles, one daughter Maureen Baulne (Ron) of Kelowna, one brother John Fitz-Gerald of Vancouver, one sister Mary Rowles (Sidney) of Coquitlam, and one cousin Bruce Duggan of Winfield, as well as numerous

grandchildren, great grandchildren and a host of sisters and brothers-in-law, and nieces and nephews of several generations. ....Friday, July 21, 2006.  
KelownaDailyCourier.ca

**RUTHERFORD, NORA CATHERINE - Born in Whitehorse, YT on December 17, 1949**, passed away on July 18, 2006 at the Pasqua Hospital. Nora was predeceased by her parents Lorne and Avis McDonald. She is survived by her husband Rod; daughters Tanya and Cindy (Brent) Hoffman; grandchildren Michael and Nicholas; brother Kenneth McDonald; and sister Sheila Mulvey. A private family service will be held at Speers Funeral Chapel. In lieu of flowers, donations in Nora's memory may be made to the Regina Humane Society, PO Box 3143, Regina, SK S4P 3G7. An on-line book of condolences may be signed at [www.speersfuneralchapel.com](http://www.speersfuneralchapel.com)  
Published in the Regina Leader-Post on 7/20/2006.

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*Everywhere is within walking distance if you have the time.*

## RECIPE OF THE WEEK

*Need more recipes. Didn't find time to type one in from a book of Yukon recipes I have here. – Sherron*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Island Yukoners Picnic Aug 12<sup>th</sup> at St Mary's Hall in Nanoose Bay.  
For further information contact Blanche & Gus Barrett at [sourdoughs2@shaw.ca](mailto:sourdoughs2@shaw.ca)

## 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](mailto:sherronjones@shaw.ca)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Moccasin Telegraph**  
c/o Sherron Jones 9205 Orchard Ridge Drive  
Vernon, BC V1B 1V8 (250) 549-2736 (phone or fax)