

## **MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH 317 – Part 2 - August 28, 2010**

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

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



**Sternwheeler Keno** with boilers lighted and steam is up ready to sail – August 23, 1960

Photo courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders@rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)

### **50th Anniversary of the Last Voyage of the KENO**

As others have noted and as was indicated in MocTel #316, this month (August) is the 50th anniversary of the last voyage of the sternwheeler Keno from Whitehorse to its final resting place in Dawson City. The Yukon News has published a commemorative article and those interested can read the online version of the story by going to this link: <http://yukon-news.com/opinions/columns/19217/>

Since our family had a close relationship with the riverboats that plied the Yukon rivers and in particular those that churned the waters and sand bars of the Stewart River, I followed with keen interest (as did many others, I am sure!) the launch, voyage and arrival of the Keno as she made her historic journey to Dawson City in August 1960. Assisting us in this endeavour were the reports that the CBC provided as the ship progressed through the watery channels of Lake Laberge and the Yukon River.

I was 15 years old 50 years ago and my father and I were building a house on our property in Mayo. Because I did not want to miss any of the reports about the Keno I had my transistor radio by my side as I worked so that as each report was broadcast I could stop and listen intently

to the account given by the reporter. I remember the excitement I felt as the report was given of the launch of the Keno. Both my father and I were saddened when we heard that our longtime family friend, Emil Forrest had suffered a fatal heart attack and would not be able to pilot the steamboat on its final voyage. But we were relieved to learn that the very able Frank Slim would take on the task so that the historic voyage could take place. Also as part of the crew, serving as First Mate, was the very experienced riverboat hand and our good friend Henry Breaden and, serving as captain, was the BC experienced Frank Blakely.

When the Keno reached Carmacks and had to be guided stern-first under the recently constructed highway bridge with the hinged smokestack down and the pilot house previously removed to the "Texas" deck, I remember almost holding my breath until the boat had safely cleared the bridge and could continue its journey down river. As the reporter described the Keno slipping quickly and safely through Five Finger Rapids, I could see in my mind the rocky bluffs and the rushing water. It was as if I were standing again on the deck of the Keno as Pilot Slim deftly manoeuvred the ship through the appropriate channel!

There was also further excitement as it was reported that the Keno had run aground on a sandbar near Minto. Though I was very young at the time, I could remember when the Keno had become stuck on a sandbar at Devil's Elbow in the Stewart River just a mile or two downstream from our home at 26 Mile and my father had been asked to help with his gas boat to run lines from the boat to the bank so they could be fastened to either large trees or "deadmen" (a cable fastened to a log and buried in the ground) and used to winch the steamboat off the sandbar. I imagined a similar operation taking place to assist the Keno off the sandbar on this last trip. Later I learned that one of the reporters, Terry Delaney, with his scuba diving gear had assisted in running the lines for the Keno on this occasion. Perhaps one of the few times, if not the only time, this rather unique method was used to run the lines to the bank from a steamboat stuck on a sandbar in a Yukon river.

I cheered silently as the report was given of the Keno arriving safely in Dawson City after 3 nights. Though it was raining in Dawson City a large crowd was on hand to welcome the steamboat to their community. I eagerly listened to the sound of the crowd as the old sternwheeler made its last docking on the Yukon River in the City of Gold. I wished I could have been there but the necessity to continue working on building our new house had prevented that from happening.

If I had the opportunity to relive this event there is little doubt in my mind that I would plead rather vigorously to my parents to travel either to Whitehorse to see the launching of the Keno or to Dawson City to welcome it along with the others who gathered in both places. However, as a 15 year old boy I did not think of the historical significance of these events. It's only as I look back at them from the perspective of 50 years that I can have a sense of what a truly historic occasion those days in August 1960 really were!

Harvey Burian [hburian\\*telus.net](mailto:hburian*telus.net) (In Parksville BC)

## **KENO LEAVES FOR DAWSON**

Sherron: I have some pictures of the launching (re-launching) of the Keno before it left for its trip to the Dawson museum. Would you be interested in having a look at them for a future edition of the Moc Tel?

Ira Saunders [sandisaunders@rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)

The Keno was built in 1922 to run from Mayo to the mouth of the Stewart River, used to carry ore by pushing a barge. The Keno could carry 400 tons by pushing a barge.



The four stern wheelers on the shore in Whitehorse prior to the refloating.

L to R Aksala, Casca, Whitehorse, Keno & Yukon Rose.

The Loon is at near left.

Photo courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders@rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)

## **YUKON ROSE AMONG THE LARGER BOATS**

You might find the following site interesting regarding the Yukon Rose's size relative to the other riverboats.



Ship Yard 1958 – Whitehorse

This photo includes the Klondike and the Loon as well as the boats in Ira's photo.

Photo courtesy Rolf Hougen

This is a shot from the reverse angle from Ira Saunder's photo (and from a much greater distance). What it does do is to show the relative size and placement of the Yukon Rose and the Loon relative to the larger paddle wheelers. The Yukon Rose is the larger of the small craft on the left between the Klondike and the Keno. A bit hard to see but still does show where it was located. Hence Ira's explanation that the Yukon Rose was a lot closer to his camera as he took the photo from the front of the boats. Also hence my initial surprise at the apparent size of the Yukon Rose.

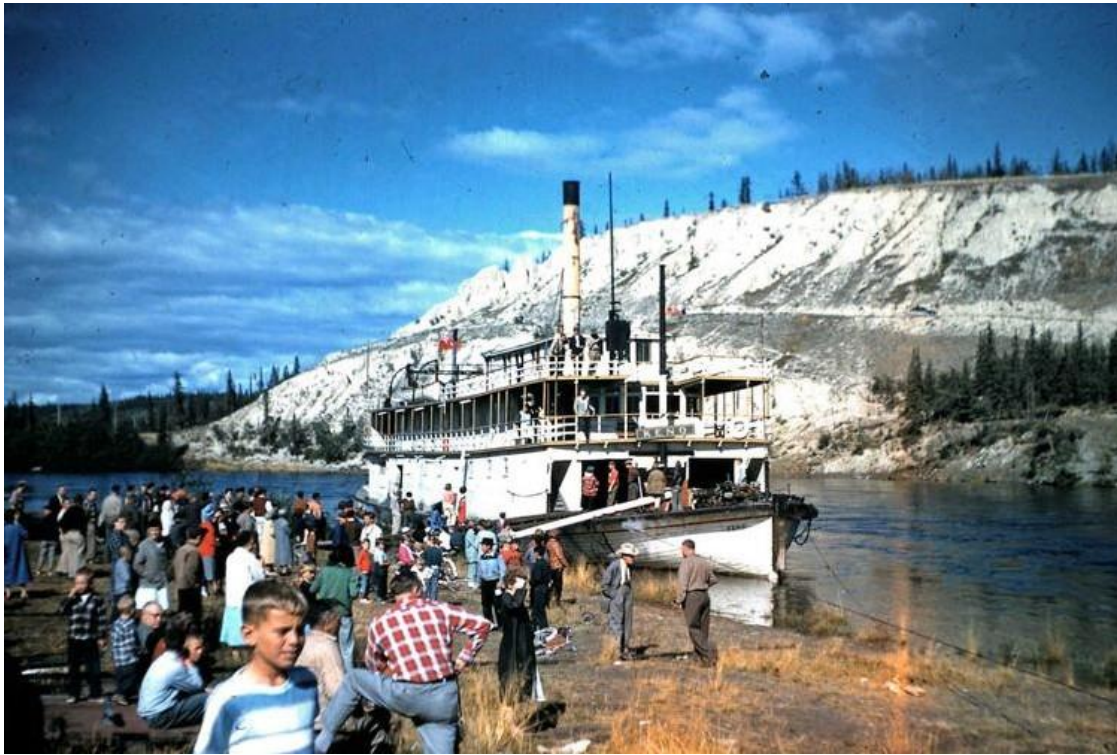
Harvey Burian [hburian@telus.net](mailto:hburian@telus.net) (In Parksville BC)



Keno and Whitehorse from the rear.  
Photo courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](http://sandisaunders*rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



Keno, White Horse, Casca and Aksala from the rear, with a barge in the foreground.  
A very careful look at this image reveals the tops of the letters of the barge name KLUKSHU.  
Photo courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](http://sandisaunders*rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



MS Keno back in the water and floating – August 1960  
Photos courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders@rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



Heading up river in order to turn around near present day Robert Campbell bridge.  
Men, women, children and even babies, out to see the final voyage.



Heading up river in front of the crowd gathered to see her off – August 1960  
Photo courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



Heading down river in front of the crowd gathered to see her off  
Photo courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



View from the air of her crossing Lac Labarge - Note the wheelhouse removed and placed behind the upper deck in order for her to get under the new Carmacks bridge. The smoke stack was hinged down for that passage also. – August 1960  
Photos courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders@rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



Keno crossing Lac Labarge on way to Dawson – August 23, 1960 – Final Trip



Keno crossing Lac Labarge on way to Dawson – August 1960 – Final Trip  
Photo courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](http://sandisaunders*rogers.com) (In Ottawa)

## **MORE TO THE STORY**

Here are two more photos taken at about the same time - the Klondike alone and the old, rotting one [Bonanza King] to the rear of the four sternwheelers. Enjoy !!!

Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](http://sandisaunders*rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



**The Sternwheeler Klondike at rest in the Shipyard 1958**  
Photos courtesy Ira Saunders [sandisaunders@rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders@rogers.com) (In Ottawa)



**The decaying Bonanza King resting behind the Aksala**  
Interesting to observe the paddlewheel is not attached

Sherron: Reviewing the last couple of messages, do you know if Terry Delaney is still alive, and if he is, do you have his e-mail address? ? ? ?

Ira Saunders

*Hi Norma Waddington*

*Could you tell me if Terry Delaney is still alive ? I believe I have heard he is not and I have just been asked.*

*For some reason I think I have seen a photo of he and Cal together. Oh yes it would have likely been from work in Radio.*

*His name has come up after discussion about the Keno's last trip. Ira Saunders has sent me quite a number of photos of it, from Whse and Lake Lebarge.*

*Sherron*

Hello, Sherron...

Norma asked me to reply to your question. Terry Delaney passed away on June 6/93, and left a huge gap in the fabric of CBC's living history. We worked together for many years on various CBC programs, specials and news events. Remember hearing about the Flores-Klaben plane crash near Watson Lake back in the '60s? The pair was found much thinner but very much alive after 49 winter days in the Yukon bush. Terry and I each interviewed one of the survivors in the Whitehorse General Hospital after they were airlifted to town.

Terry was aboard the Keno on her final voyage, and can be seen in many photos of the event, as well as in the movie which was made during the trip. Tim Kinvig has some stills of Terry and others aboard the ship during the trip, and has offered to share some of them with you if you're contemplating an article for MocTel.

Now perhaps I could prevail upon you to dig up some info for me! I'd like to know if Ira Saunders is the same person who accompanied Terry, Art and Bob Smith and me out on a frozen Lake Lebarge back in the late '50s to search under the ice for a barge-load of construction steel that had sunk there some years before. It seems that Terry had been speaking with Emile Forrest (sp?), the pilot of the little 'Loon', about a rough crossing of Lebarge that saw the barge the little boat was 'towing' (pushing) take on a little too much water. She was headed for Dawson City with a load of supplies including the steel, when the lines had to be cut to save the 'Loon' from going to the bottom with the barge. I was one of the first SCUBA divers in the Yukon back then, and Terry talked me into accompanying that team of crazies out on the spring ice to cut a hole, and make my first under-the-ice dive in search of a fortune in steel! We WERE crazy – but it was a blast! All I found under there were cases of Avoset whipping cream and other canned goods...still quite well preserved. The next day we discovered another diver bartending at the Capital Hotel, and had a second go with the two of us under the ice. But, alas - still no steel! I'm not sure whether the barge had sunk into the muck – or someone had been there ahead of us. I like to think it was the former!

And then there was the trip out on the WPYR rail line to Pennington to search for three tank cars that had left the track sometime during the 50s. By this time, probably about summer of '58, Terry had invested in SCUBA gear, and Ira Saunders (I believe) had his dry suit gear sent up. Then the three of us were taken by motorcar out to the site, and promptly found the tank cars and their trucks scattered down the under water bank. We never did follow it up, though we wanted to be a part of the salvage operation. I think the cars were finally removed some years later!

At any rate, if it's the same fella, it would be fun to chat about those escapades way back then! (If I'm not mistaken, he was a radio tech for the RCMP). Maybe he has photos?? Perhaps he could contact me.

Cheers, Cal Waddington [norma\\*coldwellbanker.ca](mailto:norma*coldwellbanker.ca) (In Carcross)

Cal: Yea, it is the same Ira Saunders who did some diving with you and Terry ! ! ! ! I was not on the Ice dive with you, but did go to Lake Bennett to dive on the tank cars. I have a picture of the three of us with the little "jigger" which we went from Carcross with somewhere, but have been unable to locate it. If I do find it, I will send it on to you. I am attaching a couple of pictures of someone diving - I can't remember who or where. Maybe you can identify the place and people.

When I left Whitehorse in '61, I joined the RCMP as a regular Member. After training in Regina, I went to Inuvik for two years (radio installations and regular detachment duties) with a coverage (travel) area from Herschel and Old Crow to Coppermine and Sacks Harbour to Fort Smith. Needless to say, I didn't have too much time for myself, but did manage to marry a French Canadian teacher in the Igloo church in 1964.

We moved to Brandon, Manitoba for a year and then the Force sent me to the University of Manitoba for my engineering degree from 65 to 69. From university, I came to Ottawa where I stayed in Communications til 1980, then to Physical, Computer and Electronic security til I retired in 1992. In the course of 46 years, we have accumulated three daughters and four grand children (two girls and two boys.)

I've gone on long enough. Talk to you later. By the way, I hadn't heard about Terry - the last dealings I had with him was when I donated some blood for his wife when she was giving birth to one of their children in April '61.

Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders*rogers.com) (In Ottawa)

It certainly has been a while, Ira! Funny, my memory sees you and Terry beetling down the ice of Lebarge in your VW - a yellow one?? Art Smith had his truck with a cherry picker - just in case we found that steel! Bob Smith (better known in those days as Cadillac Smith) and I drove out in his black (get this!) Caddy! I'm sure we were the only two who ever crossed the Marge of Lake Lebarge in a Caddy! Are you SURE you weren't there?? I, too, have a colour picture of

the three of us suiting up on the Bennett shore at Pennington. If I can locate it in the next while, I'll send it off to you.

I don't recognize the divers or the occasion in the photos you sent...but I'll study on it, and it all may come back. I don't think I was there...but Terry may have been. Also Guy Fortier got involved in the sport around that time...so who knows??

I went off to Dawson City in spring of 1959, and later that summer landed a job with CBC at their Dawson station, CFYT. My boss was Bill (Wee Willie) Anderson. I left for Whitehorse sometime that winter, and returned for a stint the next summer. Following that, I went back to CFWH in Whitehorse, and was there for a number of years with Ted North, Terry Delaney, Tom Horney, Earl Stephanson, Jack Graham, Dennis Mackie, Wee Willie and later on Les McLaughlin and others. And there lie a number of stories!! The manager in Whitehorse back then was Don Stone, and the technical guru was Ed Kerry. I left CBC for four years in '67 when my wife and I bought Dezadeash Lodge from her parents. As the lodge was a seasonal operation, I was able to return to my first love of broadcasting with CBC for the winter months. After we sold the lodge a few years later, I returned to CBC until '79 or so, when I went into the audio-visual business. I still have my video production shop in Whitehorse.

My wife and I have been in the Yukon since we were married in '61. I followed my Dad north in '52. Wife Norma was born in Whitehorse. Our kids were born here, as were our grand kids. And we're ALL still here! We lived at Lewis Lake for over 30 years with our horses and hay fields until we sold out a couple of years ago and moved to our new house on the beach at Lake Bennett in Carcross.

Maybe we can chat, as you say, later. 'Twould be fun, I'm sure! Until then, I'm gonna end this epistle!!

Cheers, Cal Waddington [norma\\*coldwellbanker.ca](mailto:norma*coldwellbanker.ca) (In Carcross)

*Ira, Did you have the yellow VW that Cal recalled ? - Sherron*

No - I had a '56 robin egg blue Pontiac - and the closest I got to diving in Lac Labarge was in the Yukon river just downstream from the stern wheelers - where the small boat launching ramp was ( or in the Takhini Hot Springs pool in the middle of winter before it burned down in the '59 fire).

Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders*rogers.com) (In Ottawa)

Sherron: I have no problems with including my exchanges with Cal in your next Moc Tel. - as long as Cal has no objection. I am cc'ing this to him also. If I think of any further comments, I will get them to you " tout suite ".

Ira Saunders [sandisaunders\\*rogers.com](mailto:sandisaunders*rogers.com) (In Ottawa)

Hi, all. I have no objections. Just wish I could remember who had the Volkswagen on the ice diving trip! Maybe it was the diver who went down with me on the second day to look for the steel?? I remember the name Harry Cross....but it WAS over 50 years ago!

Cheers, Cal Waddington [norma\\*coldwellbanker.ca](mailto:norma*coldwellbanker.ca) (In Carcross)

## PHOTOS FROM TERRY DELANEY COLLECTION GIVEN TO TIM KINVIG

### KENO LAST VOYAGE

Attached are a number of photos from the Last voyage of the Keno. Terry Delaney gave me many years back. I don't know if Terry took the photos - or someone else and they just gave him copies. - Tim Kinvig [kinvig\\*northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig*northwestel.net) (In Whitehorse)

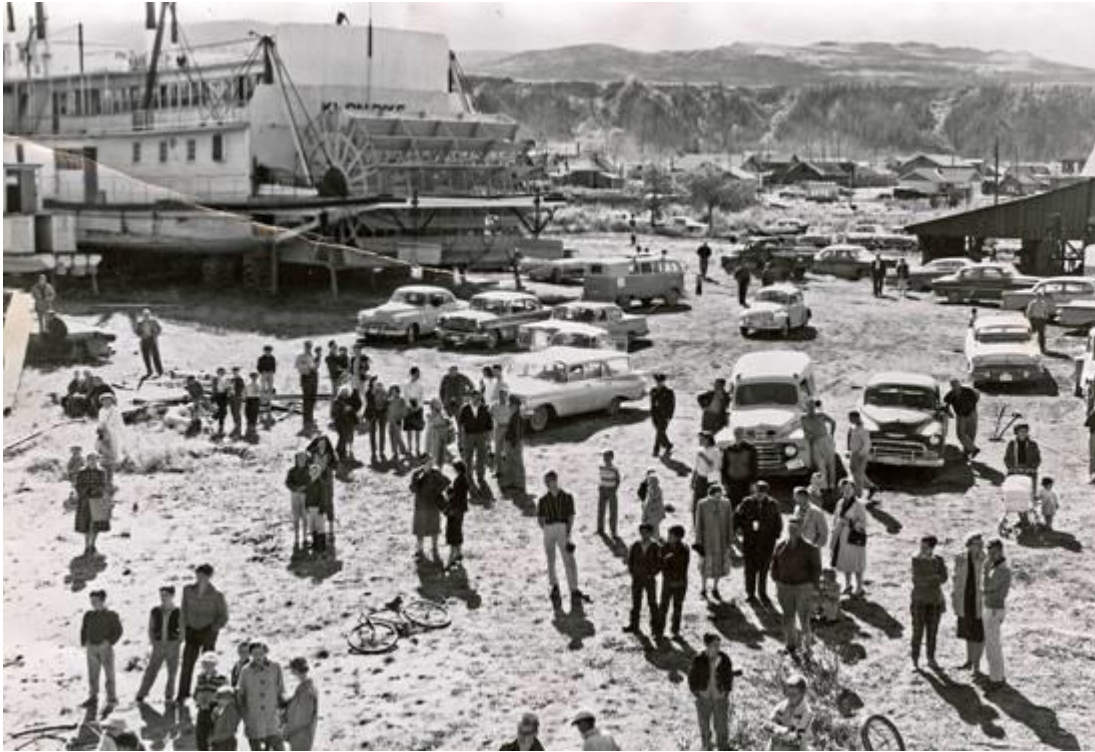


Looking up at the Keno - I would say this is in Whitehorse before they sail. CBC Yukon manager Don Stone and Terry Delaney standing in front of the mast in the centre of the photo. I don't know the names of any of the others in this photo. Maybe someone receiving the Moccasin Telegraph can help out here.

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig\\*northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig*northwestel.net) (In Whse)



Looking up the gangway – Frank Slim - pilot, Terry Delaney on the left hand side and Henry  
Breaden – First Mate on the Right hand side. Can anyone name the others ?  
Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig@northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig@northwestel.net) (In Whse)



View from the Keno, August 23, 1960.

Does anyone recognize themselves or their vehicle.

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig@northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig@northwestel.net) (In Whse)



View from the Keno leaving Whitehorse for the last time.

Note the water level. Even spectators standing on the Klondike. Afternoon shade on the roof of the White Pass freight shed.

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig@northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig@northwestel.net) (In Whse)



Looking back at Whitehorse as the Keno sailed.

Klondike, White Horse, Casca and Aksala left behind. Note the water level is high. We know the Klondike was moved to its resting place on the south access road in Whitehorse and that the Whitehorse and Casca went up in smoke where they sat, repainted and “secured” with a fence – but what happened to the Aksala. – Sherron

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig@northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig@northwestel.net) (In Whse)



Terry Delaney in his diving gear working to get the Keno unstuck from an uncharted sand bar near Minto.

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig\\*northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig*northwestel.net) (In Whse)



?? working with cable which was tied around some trees on shore and the Keno was winched off the sandbar. A blessing that Terry had brought along his wetsuit.

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig\\*northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig*northwestel.net) (In Whse)



Terry Delaney working in the temporary studio set up on board - compiling a radio report on the progress of the voyage. Equipment Terry is using there is a McCurdy SS1000 audio console and an Ampex 601 Tape Recorder. CBC Yukon technician Ed Kerry is looking on over Terry's shoulder. The Keno spent 3 nights on the river.

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig@northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig@northwestel.net) (In Whse)



Terry Delaney on board the Keno - I presume - even though the life boat belonged to the Klondike.

Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig (from Terry Delaney collection) [kinvig@northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig@northwestel.net) (In Whse)

## **A NOTE FROM HARVEY BURIAN WHO GREW UP IN MAYO AND AT HIS FATHERS WOOD CAMP ALONG THE STEWART RIVER**

*I had noted to Harvey that these photos had revealed my first close up look at a gang plank. – Sherron*

Thanks for the preview of Terry Delaney's photos. I can only recognize Henry Breaden in the photos.

I do remember the gangplanks used to move wood and supplies to and from the steamboats. As the photos show, they were double thick with reinforcements between the two sides and had the side rails to prevent the trolleys from running off the sides. (Notice the side rails consist of two separate planks so that as the inner plank wore out from the wheels of the trolleys rubbing against them, they could be replaced.) The shorter flat gangplanks, were not as sturdy and did not have side rails. They did have metal at each end to protect the ends and elongated holes at mid-plank at each end so that they could be carried by the longshore workers. They were used to extend the larger and longer gangplanks and sometimes the trolleys did go over the side of these shorter planks and a load of wood (or supplies!) would end up in the river.

As a related aside, when I worked for Taylor & Drury Ltd. in the Mayo store during my high school years in the early '60s, there were several of these old gang planks used as runways

between the warehouse and the main store and there was one of the old steel-wheeled, wooden-railed trolleys there for moving cases of canned goods and sacks of potatoes into the store. The trolley itself must have weighed close to 50 or 60 pounds but it was definitely sturdy and did the job!

Here is a link to a **YouTube video of Les McLaughlin's Yukon Nugget** on "The Last Voyage of the Keno" which readers may find an interesting supplement to the photos from Ira and Tim: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOLX8L3olRk>. Both Frank Slim and Henry Breaden as well as Capt. Frank Blakely are identified.

Harvey Burian

Video of Hank Karr singing Paddlewheeler and some paddlewheeler video.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwvMuTxdAFs&feature=related>

## **BARGES USED ON THE RIVERS**

*Hi Harvey*

*Three more photos came today and seem to have been taken about the same time.*

*Did you retain the names of the barges. It looks like the name on one could be Klukshu. (see the non cropped copy ending in 023r where the name barely shows along the bottom of the photo)*

*Sherron*

I am not very familiar with the barge names. I do know that two of the Keno barges were named Onekeno and Twokeno as this shows in several photos I have or have seen of the Keno at Mayo. The barge in the 023r photo certainly does look like Klukshu. I happen to have a photo showing 3 men on a steamboat taken from an upper deck and it shows the name of the barge as Klukshu of ..... (can't see the rest!) I don't know who the men are nor the steamboat they are on. I'll attach a copy. I asked Henry Breaden if he recognized the person facing the camera but he didn't. The nameless man was the 2nd Officer as another photo I have shows him again with two other men, one which looks like the same man in the Klukshu photo (same hat!) and you can read the label on his hat. I'm attaching a copy of that photo as well.

These little bits of information from the past are interesting, aren't they?! Also interesting is how different people have different pieces of the puzzle and how the MocTel is bringing all those pieces together to form a more complete picture of life back then!

I'll do a bit of research on the barge names and see if I can find anything.

I found a photo in Stan Cohen's "Yukon River Steamboats: A Pictorial History" on Page 78 that show the sternwheelers Aksala and Casca in Whitehorse on the storage ways and in between them is the barge with the name on the front: "Klukshu of Dawson". So that solves that little mystery!.

Now to see what else I can find!

Harvey Burian [hburian@telus.net](mailto:hburian@telus.net) (In Parksville)

I've been looking through some of the photos in the Claude and Mary Tidd Fonds on the Yukon Archives site (quite fascinating!) [Yukon Archives Image Database: <http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/545.html>] and I see that the barge I called the "Twokeno" is actually spelled "Tookeno"! I also found another photo with a barge called the "Hootalinqua" tied to the Keno at the dock in Mayo.

Harvey Burian [hburian@telus.net](mailto:hburian@telus.net) (In Parksville)

Just to confirm, there is a photo from the AK Schellinger Collection containing the ONEKENO barge on page 181 of "Gold and Galena" published by The Mayo Historical Society in 1990. The photo is of the steamer KENO docked in Mayo beside a barge which has the name ONEKENO clearly showing. The barge is unique in that it has reinforcement posts and cables on either side. I have seen what I believe to be this same barge in other photos but the name of it has not been sufficiently clear in those photos to identify it for sure as the ONEKENO.

Harvey Burian [hburian@telus.net](mailto:hburian@telus.net) (In Parksville)



Barge name – KLUKSHU of DAWSON  
Photo courtesy Harvey Burian [hburian@telus.net](mailto:hburian@telus.net) (In Parksville)



2<sup>nd</sup> Officer rank of hat.

Does anyone recognize the men ?

Photo courtesy Harvey Burian [hburian@telus.net](mailto:hburian@telus.net) (In Parksville)

## **DID YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE AKSALA ?**

*Since we know the **Keno** is in Dawson and the **Klondike** is in Whitehorse and that the **White Horse** and the **Casca** burned where they stood in the Shipyard area of Whitehorse, I thought I would ask **Murray Lundberg** if he happened to have knowledge of the whereabouts of the **Aksala** and here is his reply. – Sherron*

## **AKSALA STERNWHEELER**

The wooden sternwheeler Aksala had a colourful history, but is now unknown even to the vast majority of people who regularly drive by a large artifact from the ship on their way into Whitehorse.

She was one of two identical boats prefabricated in 1912-1913 by Nilson & Telez of Seattle, for a newly-formed WP&YR division, the American Navigation Company (AYN). The more famous WP&YR division British Yukon Navigation Company (BYN) ran boats on the upper Yukon River, and the AYN was formed to run from Dawson downriver. In the Spring of 1913 the two new boat kits were transported by ship and rail to Whitehorse. There on the BYN ways, located where the new Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre is being built, they were assembled by BYN crews. In June they were christened “Alaska” and “Yukon”, and on June 13<sup>th</sup> the Alaska left

Whitehorse on her maiden trip to Fairbanks. She was registered in Canada for a few weeks after construction, then was transferred to U.S. registry.

As built, she was 164.8 feet long, with a 35.3 foot beam and a 5.9 foot hold height. She was 642 tons gross, registered as 603 tons, and was licenced to carry 143 passengers. She was powered by a pair of horizontal high-pressure engines built in 1913 by Seattle Machine Works; the cylinders had 16 inch diameter and 72 inch stroke, producing 17 NHP at 200 pounds of steam pressure developed by a wood-fired boiler.

Her regular run was Dawson City to Fairbanks, which involves 700 miles downstream on the Yukon River, and 275 miles upstream on the Tanana and Chena Rivers. With no safe winter quarters at Dawson City, she was returned to Whitehorse to be put up on the ways for the first few winters. In 1915 she was converted to burn oil, and her 14-bucket sternwheel was replaced by one with 17 buckets for better efficiency.

By 1922, she was the only AYN boat on the Dawson-Fairbanks run, under the command of Captain J.S. McCann, who had been working the river since the Gold Rush. On August 31<sup>st</sup> that year, the Alaska was taken out of service for the season due to a lack of cargo. She was taken back to Whitehorse and hauled out. A similar thing happened in 1923, when she was taken out of service on August 13<sup>th</sup>. She would never again work as "Alaska".

When the Carcross-based Tutshi was converted to burn oil in 1925, the oil tanks from the Alaska were removed and installed in the Tutshi. In 1926, the now powerless Alaska was put into the river and at Whitehorse and used as a floating hotel during the tourist season.

In 1927, she was transferred to the British Yukon Navigation Company. Her name was changed to "Aksala", a new wood-fired boiler was installed and she went into service for a few weeks starting on August 17<sup>th</sup>. The 1928 WP&YR records report that the Aksala, Casca and White Horse "required wheel and rudder work nearly every trip they were in port. Heavy ore loads and low water at Hellsgate and Kirkman were largely responsible for this."

By 1929, the front of the hull was rotting and warped from loads heavier than she was designed for. The front 70 feet of the hull was completely replaced, with heavier keelsons and trussing used; after the work, she drew 13 inches less forward. She was not a very efficient boat - her best trip from Stewart to Whitehorse was 5 days, 7 hours, 5 minutes, with 300 tons of ore, burning 133 cords of wood. The Klondike, as a comparison, could do it with 325 tons in 4 days, 1 hour, burning 82½ cords of wood.

From 1929 through 1932, she was wintered in the water at Lower Lebarge, in order to be the first boat through to Dawson. Freight was brought to her overland.

She continued to operate until 1952, then was laid up permanently. The June 1961 Alaska Sportsman magazine reported that she was "being dismantled by Ted ter Voert, who will move the vessel to his Riverboat Cafe at Mile 900 on the Alaska Highway and set it up there. Several years ago he moved the *Neecheah* to his cafe site and it has proved to be a great attraction for visitors and tourists driving over the highway." Both boats were moved to Mile 913

(Sternwheeler Village) for a while; the Neecheah was used as a restaurant called The Captain's Locker, while the Aksala sat on timbers until it became a fire hazard and was demolished. The pilothouse and paddlewheel, though, were saved. The pilothouse was moved to a private residence, used as a greenhouse, and the sternwheel remains at Sternwheeler Village. The sternwheel was moved this past June from its prominent position next to the Alaska Highway back a couple of hundred feet into a grove of trees, and in the past few days (just before the Fall rains began!) a new paint job has been completed on it.



**Aksala** paddlewheel - Sternwheeler Village – Mile 913 - June 4, 2010  
Photo courtesy Murray Lundberg [yukonalaska@gmail.com](mailto:yukonalaska@gmail.com) (In Whitehorse)

## **ANOTHER PIECE OF THE KENO PUZZLE**

This evening [August 25, 2010] I went to the special celebration of the last voyage of the SS Keno at the Transport Museum.

While there I took this photo of Frank Slims daughter Virginia Lindsay and her son in law Scott McDougall looking over the archives material on display for the evening. Virginia is holding one of the SS Keno's log sheets which includes her brother's name, listed as one of the crew members.

Tim Kinvig [kinvig@northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig@northwestel.net) (In Whitehorse)



Frank Slim's daughter Virginia Lindsay and son-in-law Scott McDougall  
Virginia found her brothers name on the list the SS Keno log sheets.  
Photo courtesy Tim Kinvig [kinvig\\*northwestel.net](mailto:kinvig*northwestel.net) (In Whitehorse)

**LOWELL GLACIER & other spectacular photos**

Photo courtesy Erin Schnyder [goneflying\\*live.ca](mailto:goneflying*live.ca) (In Haines Junction)



**Lowell Glacier** – Lowell Lake in foreground - October 2009  
Photos courtesy Erin Schnyder [goneflying\\*live.ca](http://goneflying*live.ca) (In Haines Junction)



**Lowell Glacier.** compare this to the picture I attached taken last October... this glacier is surging. Ice has almost reached the shore in foreground. To gain perspective between the two

photos above, look at the large rock (brown) in the middle of each photo and you can see how the glacier has divided to each side and projected beyond that point. See the geological survey website for more details. <http://www.geology.gov.yk.ca/821.html>



**Lowell Glacier**

Photo courtesy Erin Schnyder [goneflying\\*live.ca](http://goneflying.live.ca) (In Haines Junction)



**Seward Glacier (R)** and north side of Mt. Cook  
Photos courtesy Erin Schnyder [goneflying\\*live.ca](http://goneflying*live.ca) (In Haines Junction)  
Below - **Seward Glacier** (looking south)





On west side of Hubbard Massive looking south over **Hubbard Glacier** towards Disenchantment Bay.

Photo courtesy Erin Schnyder [goneflying\\*live.ca](http://goneflying*live.ca) (In Haines Junction)

## **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.

There is an annual subscription fee of (\$20 - \$25. your call) for the Moccasin Telegraph.

– Sherron Jones [sherronjones\\*shaw](mailto:sherronjones*shaw).

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