

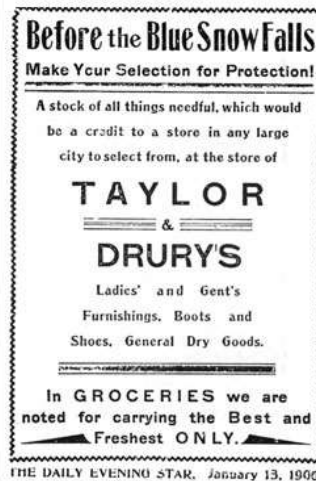
MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH –407th Edition – May 31, 2015

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COURTESY WHITEHORSE STAR – YUKON HISTORY SECTION -

This article appeared in the Whitehorse Star's 90th Anniversary edition.



Left: 1906 Whitehorse Star editor "Stroller" White.

Photo by Whitehorse Star

Ad: Taylor and Drury Department store goes along with the Ice Worm story and advertises "Before the Blue Snow Falls - Make Your Selection for Protection!".

Ice Worms & Blue Snow

Whenever there was a lull in local news or the overland telegraph broke down, Star editor "Stroller" White lapsed into memories of the deep south, or "interviews" with local colourful characters whose authenticity was left to the readers imagination.

He brought up many subjects in his columns and many of them are with us to this day.

Here then was Whitehorse's introduction to those greasy little critters "Ice Worms", from the Stroller's column **January 20, 1906. Incidentally, the actual temperature in Whitehorse on that date was -68(F).**

"It is not generally known that the father of the venerable Indian who resides in the village across the river from Whitehorse, and who is known as "Canadian Doctor" is still living. As "Doc" claims to be 88 years old his father must, at the least calculation, be 108

and, judging from his looks, the Stroller would not be surprised if he was even 30 years older; in fact, from information gleaned from conversation with the old man, he is evidently not less than 120 or 125 years of age."

"Hearing of the existence of this venerable member of the primeval race, the Stroller sought the village one day recently and, by means of a plug of T.& B. bribed "Canadian Doctor" to show him his father, which he did by unrolling a large bundle of furs in which the old man was wrapped, finally revealing the most unique specimen of bric-a-brac the Stroller had ever seen."

"Not until the Stroller had operated on the old man with his hypo-gun could he get anything out of him, but no sooner had the "hop" began to work than a spark of life asserted itself in the eyes, which before had resembled burned leather work, and he became quite communicative. Asked for some ancient history regarding the weather of winters of this locality one hundred years or more ago, the relic of two centuries of the past said:"

"Many snows ago when I stood six foot three instead of three foot six, as I do now, the figures having been reversed by the ravages of time and the great weight of years upon my shoulders, there was weather here that was worth talking about."

"I recall an incident of the cold of the first winter after I had annexed my wife, Sore-Eyed Sage Hen, she was called. I had gone out to pole rabbits and toward evening I returned to find Sore-Eyed Sage Hen firmly fastened to a tree."

"She had stepped out of the wigwam to see if I was coming and had breathed against a tree where it had froze and anchored her right there. She had neglected to back up while emitting her breath and if I had not arrived just when I did she would have been frozen stiffer than a wedding reception and as cold as a pastoral call on wash day."

"The only way we kept from freezing to trees and other fixed objects that winter was to eat plenty of ice worms which, being very greasy, made the breath so slippery that, while it would freeze, it would crumble easily, the grease serving as a sort of shortening."

"The winter of 1821 was also a cold one... a veritable corker. Then the ice in the river froze solid and by spring there was none, as it had all been eaten up by ice worms. Me and Sore-Eyed Sage Hen dried enough ice worms that winter to make soup for the next fifteen years. In fact, that boy Doc was raised principally on ice worm soup."

"Since 1850 I have seen ice worms but seven times and blue snow only four times oftener. Not for thirty snows have I been forced to drink carbolic acid to keep my innards warm... The above statement by me to the Stroller has been read over by him to me in my own language and I hereby certify that it is correct in every detail."

The Stroller had already introduced his readers to "Blue Snow" in a January 12, 1906 story headed "Tenderfeet Think It Cold".

In the article The Stroller said that although first year residents might think the present -45 degree weather was cold they could count themselves lucky that blue snow hadn't fallen because "when it comes it's time to combine the family bedding.

Perry Davis' Pain Killer freezes, and rabbits freeze so stiff they run in a straight line because they cannot turn their heads gee or haw." But it could still come, warned the Stroller, and when it does everyone will know that the temperature is at least 74 below, for that was as warm as blue snow ever fell.

Quick on the uptake, in the next issue a quarter page ad from Taylor & Drury's department store trumpeted, "Before the Blue Snow Falls - Make Your Selection For Protection."

Much to the Strollers surprise the temperature DID fall to below -74 degrees on January 22 and he quickly ran the following column under the headings "**Regarding Blue Snow - It Only Falls When The Wind Blows From The East - Numerous Ice Worms Reported Short Distance North Of Town**".

"In explaining to its chechako friends the peculiarities of blue snow, the Star neglected to state that it never falls except when the wind blows from the east; therefore, notwithstanding that the temperature for the past several days has been favourable to blue snow, the wind has not been right. We are sorry to not have explained this before as we learn that several of our chechako friends have lost considerable sleep by staying up to look for blue snow."

"Numerous ice worms are reported in the neighborhood of the steamer Monarch about a mile below town. While they are not yet larger than vermicelli, they are growing rapidly and if the weather should remain for a month as it was last night, they will have rattles and a button."

"Should the cold weather continue one more week Burns and Co. may as well close up as everybody will be eating ice worms."

"They may be stewed with dumplings, fried, fricasseed, roasted or eaten raw with salt, pepper and vinegar."

"Ice worms have no scales until after they obtain a length of four feet. They grow a head on each end."

Calls "We" a Liar

The following from the Philadelphia Ledger was reproduced in PUCK of **March 27, 1907:**

IN THE YUKON

Whitehorse Y.T. Jan. 25 1907.- Last Sunday at Yukon Crossing the temperature went to 82 below zero...Nearly an inch of blue snow fell at Tantalus... At Minto ice-worms began to chirp at midnight Saturday, and many of them attained a growth of several inches by Monday, when the temperature rose to 45 below, causing them to die of heat. If the temperature rises many more degrees, the suffering caused by the intense heat will be terrible - News item, Whitehorse Star.

Oh, liar, we address you, in humble awe,
And pray that heaven bless you, with tardy thaw.
Blue Snow we all admire, But seldom see,
For news of it, great liar, We look to thee.
The ice worms here are dumb, No chirp have they;
Yet in our ice are some, Bad germs, they say.
To Yukon, land august, Where zeros burn,
The local liar must, With envy turn.

YUKON NUGGET

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin
Courtesy Rolf & Marg Hougen marg*hougens.com (In Whitehorse)

The Story of Stroller White

The Yukon has had more than its share of characters. But perhaps the most observant was a lifelong newspaper man who covered the Yukon for 17 years, and whose columns depicted a slice of life which would otherwise be forgotten.

It seems when he was born in Ohio in 1859, Elmer J. White was born a newspaper man. His first paper was the Gainsville News in Florida. Later, he moved to Washington State, where he was living when news of the Klondike gold strike hit the outside world.

He joined the rush with his wife Josie and small daughter, ending up working for the Skagway News. It was here, as an Associated Press correspondent, that he wrote the accounts of Soapy Smith's gang, and covered the shoot-out on the waterfront between Soapy and Frank Reid.

In 1899, White went to Dawson, where he covered all manner of local stories but, more importantly, began a column called 'The Stroller by E.J. White'. He left Dawson for Whitehorse in 1904 to edit the Whitehorse Star and carry on the traditions of telling all, or making up the truth - whichever came first.

When he wrote of blue snow and iceworms that chirped lustily at 70 below, the Smithsonian Institute, that prestigious scientific body, wrote asking for more information.

It was Stroller White who encouraged Robert Service to publish his poems - much to Service's undying gratitude.



Skagway 1899

He sold the Star in 1916 and moved to southern Alaska, where he was elected to the state House of Representatives. White's view of journalism is best summed up with a few lines from a long letter he wrote to his nephew, who was about to become a journalist.

White wrote: *"In the first place Walter, the newspaper profession in a sense is the ruination of all who engage in it as no other calling gives so much insight into human nature. No-one, my dear nephew, who would succeed as a newspaper man, will ever allow sympathy or sentiment to interfere with the publication of news. If it comes to your attention that your beloved pastor or Sunday school teacher was seen emerging from the back window of the house of parishioner who is away from town on business at 2 a.m., do not allow his second calling to prevent the publication of the story. If he has no respect for his calling, why should you have? Use adjectives freely in writing of the ladies. While*

Mrs. Arabelle Bourbon was homely enough to stop a mill that grinds mud for a brickyard, your uncle always referred to her as "the beautiful, charming and accomplished daughter of our distinguished and blue-blooded fellow citizen, Colonel Bourbon."

White continued *"Always boost the patrons of your paper. If Mr. and Mrs. Pat Cassiday give a party and every male goes home with his nose peeled and his eyes bunged shut, refer to it as a swell society party. It will please the Cassidys and other people will see the brace of humour"*. That letter, written in January of 1906, captured in part the essence of E.J. Stroller White, northern newspaper man who died on September 28, 1930.

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin

CHRIS BARTSCH'S EXPERIENCES - HIS FIRST TRIP INTO THE KLONDIKE - AS TOLD BY HIMSELF

Story submitted by grandson Gordon Bartsch

Part 1

My first trip North was in 1897, aboard the "George W. Elder", which left Portland, Oregon, on 15th August, 1897, with three hundred passengers. We arrived in Skagway on the 20th August, and had to anchor two miles from the shore in Lynn Channel.

Some of the passengers were billed to Dyea, an old Indian village on the opposite shore from Skagway, where the route began leading to the Chilcoot Pass. We were anchored about midway between the two places.

Two big barges were on hand to receive the cargo, one for Skagway and the other for Dyea. The one for Skagway was shoved in by the in-coming tide, and the out-going tide took the other barge to Dyea.

The livestock, mostly pack-horses, were thrown into the water and compelled to float with the tide until they could gain their footing, while the passengers were taken on top of the cargo. When the barge got as close to shore as possible, they had to wade the rest of the way through two feet of water. Many of the men had high-top wading boots and some of them assisted the women by carrying them on their backs. Everyone scurried to find a dry spot on which to put their belongings. Then began the big task of unloading, each one sorting out his possessions. There was great hurry and confusion for the barge must be unloaded while the tide was in, so that, when unloaded, it would drift back with the next out-going tide.

I had no outfit to speak of, so was unhampered while I was looking for a place to shelter, I met a man from Seattle, Herman Ayers, who had come up on a boat before me. He had been sent there by the Frye Bruhn Company of Seattle to establish a meat market, and I helped him to open the first butcher's shop in Skagway. By the time the little shop was completed, we had received a shipment of dressed meat from the plant in Seattle, and thereafter we had a shipment on each boat that was equipped with proper cold storage facilities. We did a splendid business. Many restaurants sprang up in no time, and the little frontier town of Skagway grew like wild-fire, thousands of people arriving each week.

I was not satisfied to stay in Skagway, for my mind was made up to reach the interior. So when Waechter and Sons came along, late in September, with one hundred head of steers to be driven over the White Pass, en route to Dawson City, I joined them.

We took fifty head of the cattle and started out for Lake Bennett over the White Pass, a distance of forty miles. We were ten days making this most hazardous trip, with rain and snow most of the time. When we arrived, we found that Lake Bennett had started to freeze over, and navigation was closing up. There was no feed for the cattle and no chance of getting them farther. We were compelled to slaughter them, and put the meat in a cache, the meat being frozen by this time.

The other fifty head of cattle left in Skagway had either to be shipped back to the coast or put on feed for the winter, which we did, shipping in the feed from Puget Sound. It was in March, 1898, that Waechter decided to haul the beef cached in Bennett to Dawson, over four hundred miles. We assembled our equipment, which consisted of horses and feed for them, sleighs, and camping outfits. This meant many trips back and forth over the White Pass trail to Skagway. It was about the 1st April when we really got on our way.

The caravan consisted of twenty single-horse outfits drawing double-end sleighs, loaded high with quarters of frozen beef. We made only about ten miles a day, as the lake was frozen over, with a very rough surface, and so the going was slow. We camped on the ice every night in sub-zero weather. We had only heavy blankets with which to cover the horses. We got over Lake Bennett, Windy Arm, and over Lake Tagish and Lake Marsh to Fifty-mile River, to within twenty-five miles of White Horse. Then, to our great dismay, we found a stretch of the river was open, the water flowing freely, and no possible chance of going any farther.

After considering our predicament, we decided to make camp and unload the beef, which we put into another cache, covered with spruce boughs and snow. This done, we decided there was nothing else to do but send the outfit back and get tools and equipment to build a scow, and also bring back a ton of salt --- just in case. We left four men at the camp to cut timber and build a whipsaw frame, preparatory to whipsawing lumber with which to build a scow.

On my return with this equipment, we immediately began to whipsaw two-inch planks. We set the keel for the scow near the water's edge and started to build. By this time, the weather was turning pretty warm; days were getting longer, and the sun, stronger. Travellers coming from Dawson informed us that the Fifty-mile River was open in many places between there and Lake Laberge, and that Miles Canyon was wide open and the White Horse Rapids breaking up.

After the completion of the scow, we opened our cache and, to our delight, found the beef still frozen hard. We loaded it into our scow in good condition, covered it with a heavy tarpaulin and spruce boughs to protect it from the sun.

We were under the impression, and falsely believed, that the White Horse Rapids were at the end of Fifty-mile River, and we had no knowledge that Lake Laberge was always late in breaking up and not navigable until June.

On the 13th of May, we broke camp early in the morning and drifted happily down Fifty-mile River, which was wide open. We ran into another surprise when the current slowed down and we could see no outlet ahead; then we noticed a group of men on the opposite shore building boats. These men had been going over the ice to Dawson and were stranded here, as we had been twenty miles above. We were at a loss to know what to do, but finally decided to pull over and investigate.

To our surprise, we found we were right at the head of Miles Canyon and the White Horse Rapids. There was no mention made of the Squaw Rapids, between the Canyon and White Horse Rapids. We tried to get a pilot to take us through, but could not find anyone who had experience.

We were told that our scow was so heavily loaded that it drew too much water; the risk was great, and a safe passage almost impossible. We managed, however, to hire a couple of men to go along with us. Neither of them had ever even seen the rapids, but we had no choice other than to pull out and take the risk. It was not very long before we were sucked smack into the mouth of the canyon, which is about ninety feet wide with perpendicular walls on either side, the water rushing through with terrific force. It was a breath-taking three minutes. The thirty foot oars, or "sweeps" as they were called, were not much use, and the tumultuous, swirling waters had us at their mercy.

Coming out of it, we ran into a foaming whirlpool that widened into more shallow water infested with large rocks. We were under the impression that these were the White Horse Rapids that we had heard so much about, and were congratulating ourselves on being able to dodge the rocks. However, we found ourselves badly mistaken when one fellow shouted, "Look ahead, boys. There is the real White Horse!" And no sooner said than we were into it: a mountain of foaming water with spray dashing high all over us and the cargo. The good heavy tarpaulin, with which we had covered our meat securely, saved the scow from filling with water. The spruce boughs we had placed on top of the tarpaulin to keep the meat from thawing were all washed away. Out of this terrific tumult

we plunged, as if over a cut bank, into the eddy at the end of the rapids. We considered ourselves very lucky in coming through unhurt and with our cargo intact.

We put over to the shore and tied up, made a big fire, dried our clothes, and camped there for the night. Many graves were seen in the vicinity of our camp, victims of the White Horse Rapids, drowned during the fall of 1897. Tons of food and merchandise, laid out on the river banks to dry, surrounded us.

We started again next morning, floating down the river between banks with cakes of ice piled high on both sides, and arrived at Lake Laberge that afternoon. Here we encountered another group of men who had managed to get as far as this on the ice, and they also were building boats and waiting for the lake to open up. It was in the last stages of break-up and not safe to travel on. No one could tell when navigation would really open up, but the sun was getting stronger every day. We again covered our meat with spruce boughs, hoping in that way to keep it from thawing. We waited here for about ten days, having an anxious time, hoping the channel would open up so that we could go on. At last, our meat started to soften. We waited another two days and then decided to salt down the beef, for that was our last resource. We found many willing hands to help us unload and clean out the scow. We cut the meat up and laid it down in salt in the bottom of the scow. This took several days and, when at last we had finished, we covered it again with the tarpaulin. Now we were able to rest with more ease while waiting for the ice to break up, which took about another week.

By this time, there were at least two hundred boats and scows of all descriptions ready to descend the Lake. Two small boats ventured out to look for a channel through the ice. If they found one, they would go on; if not, they were to return and report. As they did not return the next day, we knew they had got through, and every outfit that had the boats ready to launch pulled out the next morning. There were about fifty crossing in line over the lake, and the trip was made with the use of sails (we used our tarpaulin as a sail) and the sweeps.

(To be continued)

WHISKEY FLATS

Hello Sherron,

Duncan Sinclair suggested I talk to you as I am working on a project involving Whiskey Flats. He thought perhaps you might send a note out to people and if they were interested they could get back to us.

The project is to try and chalk on the lawn and the parking lot of the SS Klondike site, the outlines of where the houses of Whiskey Flats used to be.

I'll attach our press release.

This project is happening for a special event called Whitehorse Nuit Blanche. For one night all of Whitehorse is invited to events which start at 7pm and end at 7 am. (Ha ha for those of us who don't stay up late anymore!!)

My friend Bonnie and I will take up residence at the SS Klondike Parking Lot on June 20 from about 6 PM. We'll have a small fire, tea, maps, photos - and with all of this we will try to figure out where people's houses were.

So, we're inviting anyone with Whiskey Flats stories to come by. We will collect stories, take photos, and have fun.

Please let me know if you can be of assistance in getting the word out.

Arlin

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For Immediate Release

As part of the events of Nuit Blanche, Whitehorse edition, Arlin McFarlane and Bonnie Fordyce announce:

Re-Mapping Whiskey Flats. A Site-specific Interactive Art Event.

With maps and ground plans and photographs from Yukon Archives and EMR the duo will attempt to identify and lay out on the grass, outlines of where a number of Whiskey Flat homes used to be.

“We are inviting former residents and the general public to come down and help us interpret our archival material and assist us in the re-mapping,” says McFarlane. “I just got fixed on this idea of actually laying down lines that represented the foundations of people’s home. People could actually walk around inside them and if it was their home: maybe they’d remember where the kitchen was or the back door or other things. So we’re inviting people down to help us do this laying out of lines and sharing of stories”.

“Jim Robb has had some really great suggestions and we’re hoping to turn up some stories for Pat Ellis as well” adds Fordyce: “It’s about stimulating memory and rousing imagination, so, we’re going to do that.”

The pair will have a tape recorder and they hope to capture any oral history that comes to visit. For anyone who wants to commit a story to tape they will ensure that it is recorded as their story. It’s “like an oral story project,” chimes in Fordyce.

Fordyce, as a child, lived in Whiskey Flats. Her dad and sister have kept alive a family memory of Whiskey Flats. Fordyce herself wrote the story that fostered the idea. “I have some pretty strong images from that time” says Fordyce, “and I’m interested in the concept of dispossession, of having to move, of being forced off the place you call home. And of looking at how many times that happened, and to who. Because, after all, the area has long been a stopping ground for aboriginal people”.

The two are at work with the SS Klondike National Historic Site to determine the details of the project.

“No grass will be dug up,” laughs McFarlane. “We call it Arteology” replies Fordyce, “and there will be guests. You’ll have to check our facebook page for our complete outline of 12 hours of storytelling, music and fun.”

Clearly the two are having a grand time together. Artists with an idea, old friends and a place called Whiskey Flats. Oh yes, and 12 hours to hang out together with whoever else comes by to visit.

Join the fun. Come by the SS Klondike National Historic Site parking lot between 7 PM and 7 AM, June 20-21, 2015, and join in by: reading the maps, interpreting photos, sharing memories, and just plain coming by to see what’s up. For a complete schedule of what is happening and when, check Re-Mapping Whiskey Flats on Facebook.

Should you require further information please call either Arlin McFarlane 336-2015 or Bonnie Fordyce 689-6407.

[I replied to Arlin with some potential contacts, a couple of question and here is her reply. – Sherron]

Thank you so much for your very newsy note. Bonnie is one of Jim's daughters. Bonnie went to the City last week but was disappointed they couldn't help her to find some map of the area with people's houses on it. We do have some aerial photographs and they have some detail but not as much as would like.

Our Facebook page is called Re-Mapping Whiskey Flats and we are posting the stories we get there.

We do know that Rotary Park used to be Whiskey Flats North and we are inviting everyone to come down however we will only be mapping Whiskey Flats South this time round!

Please keep in touch with us. Perhaps we could arrange a cell phone call on the day and you can visit!

Best,
Arlin McFarlane

Weldon Pinchin – 80th Birthday Party – Mayne Island

Who'd a thunk it! If I'd known I was gonna last this long I would have taken better care.

Weldon Pinchin justamereplacemi@gmail.com (On Mayne Island)



Weldon Pinchin



Weldon's son and his family.



Weldon Pichin sampling the birthday cake.



Friends gathered to celebrate with Weldon.

Hank Karr

I have not heard of these before. You?
I wonder what year these were done.

George Bliss georgebliss@live.ca (In Regina)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKBbhcEKdCA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f17OnIJqwBM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vIXPSoeaCA>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wj4HQ1_Un_w

Listen to some more videos which include clips of Hank and parts of Yukon.

White Pass Yukon Rail

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOKbyueLfwI>

After Yukon

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEu5U_QoJEk

Sherron Jones

Hanks reply, re the record date on his early album - "Stealin' My World"

Hello Sherron, Vancouver was great we all had a great time got see people we haven't seen in a while. That album was recorded 1967 the year I appeared at Expo 67.

Hank Karr hkarr@northwestel.net (In Whitehorse)

Old Crow

Found this of interest.

A place most Yukoners never see.

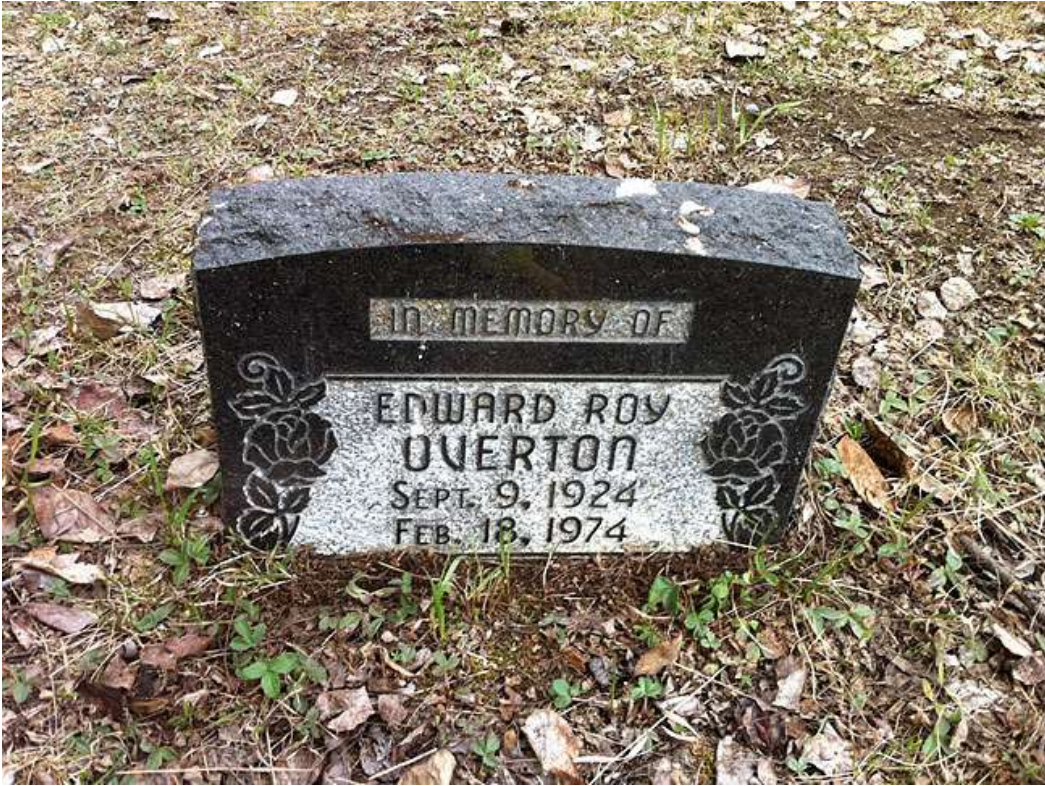
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/life-in-yukon-s-only-fly-in-community-1.3081251>

George Bliss georgebliss@live.ca (In Regina)

The last ride of the man called Overshoes

Doug Sack Friday May 22, 2015

Doug Sack/Yukon News



The tombstone of Eddie Overshoes at Hillside Cemetery in Dawson City

When your given and legal name is Edward Roy Overton from Laval, Quebec, and you are a former Canadian paratrooper and Korean war veteran who first viewed the Yukon from beneath a silk canopy while drifting above Kluane National Park on pre-deployment airborne maneuvers in the early 1950s, maybe it's inevitable you would be handed some kind of Yukon nickname, and "Overshoes" was the one that stuck.

In subsequent winter training jumps into the Upper Lakes near Lake Bennett, Overton decided he would settle in a Carcross cabin if he survived the war and live out his days with a fishing rod, so impressed was he with the mountains, lakes and scenery. Of course, when that day finally arrived, even idealistic vets need jobs to survive and Dawson City had lots of those with the dredges so Overshoes settled into a 25-year visit to the Klondike which he always considered temporary.

As soon as he made and saved enough money for his dream cabin near Carcross, or Tagish or Atlin, he would live out his fishing fantasy and that would be the last anybody would hear of the old warrior.

That day never came. By the time I met him in Dawson in the early 1970s, he was a middle-aged fixture in the heart of the Klondike and one of the most popular and well-liked men in town who may never have had another enemy once he gave up on war.

He tried “the company” - Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation - briefly working on the thawing crews but said it reminded him too much of the military with its hierarchy and no overtime. He next tried working for Parks Canada’s historic sites branch on the restoration crews putting new foundations under the many old buildings in Dawson scheduled for a new lease on life. He found he was ideally suited for this kind of work because of his height, which he called “five foot, nuttin.”

Short and strong were attributes for working under buildings and Overshoes was both but he found his true calling in life by bartending, notably in Hank DuBois’ Downtown Hotel where he and his buddy Patty Kane entertained customers with their stories and jokes as much as their off-key singing.

That was how he met the Clear Sky Boys from central Alaska, a friendship which proved pivotal and, ultimately, fatal.

* * *

The Clear Sky Boys were cold warriors, highly trained civilian contractors who worked on a mysterious military base located somewhere close to Clear, Alaska just a short distance south of Fairbanks on the road to Denali and Anchorage. Their jobs were “top secret” and they were not allowed to discuss them with anybody.

One of them once took me aside and said: “Look, we all know you are just a nosey young friend of ours from Canada but you’ve got to stop with the questions. Technically, we’re supposed to report anybody who questions what we do to our security people, who you don’t want to meet. Our work is classified intelligence and all you’re doing with your questions is making all of us feel uncomfortable, OK? So clam up.”

I suspected “the base” was a Distant Early Warning site and their jobs were to be the first line of defence in the event of a surprise Russian nuclear missile attack at the height of the Cold War. I also surmised it was a suicide job because married men were not allowed to do it.

If the Russians ever attacked to start WW III, Washington wanted the first nukes to detonate over central Alaska, not the nation’s capital. And they were all paid ridiculously big money to see that it happened that way.

There were seven of them, five from Washington and Oregon and one each from Idaho and Minnesota. In a nutshell, they all got rich by spending their working careers in a remote Alaskan bunker waiting for the Russians to attack. Off duty, they were all avid hunters, fishermen and party animals, typical Alaskans who sported big, bushy beards. They looked more like hippies than cold warriors, which was part of their cover. It was a ritual every spring as soon as the snow was gone from the Top of the World Highway between Tetlin Junction and Dawson City to head for the Klondike for a weeklong soiree, which is how they got to know Overshoes.

The ringleader was a short, stocky airplane enthusiast from Oregon named Bruce Hardin who got married and had to quit his job. So he purchased Clear Sky Lodge which was their off-duty party base. Overshoes introduced me to all of them on one of their spring jaunts and I was immediately accepted because any friend of Overshoes was a friend of theirs, even if he asked too many dumb questions. It also helped that I had served in the U.S. Marine Corp. and was a Vietnam veteran. They respected that.

After so many trips to Dawson over the years to party with Overshoes, they were frustrated that they were never able to talk him into coming to Alaska so they could repay the hospitality at Clear. Hardin told me they tried everything to get Overshoes to Alaska, including offering to fly him over in Hardin's prop, but they couldn't get him out of Dawson because he was an avid gardener in the summers and liked to hibernate in the winters.

Finally, an opportunity presented itself and it was all my doing, something I've never been able to forgive myself. If I hadn't taken Overshoes to Alaska, he might have lived to become an old man instead of dying at the young age of 47.

[Headstone reveals 49 years old]

* * *

Overshoes loved boxing, a true fight fan and he could talk for hours about it, even though he'd never seen a championship fight in person. His favourite fighter was Joe Louis and his favourite fight was when Louis KO'd Max Schmelling, Hitler's fighter. That was the fight when Louis said: "He can run but he can't hide," which Overshoes quoted frequently.

Although I wasn't a fight nut like Eddie, I was a big Muhammad Ali fan and I knew his upcoming third match with Joe Frazier was going to be a classic. Frazier pounded Ali in the first one, knocking him on his butt in the 14th round, the first loss of his career. Ali won the second with his speed and footwork, which kept him out of range of Frazier's lethal left hand, and it was anybody's guess who would win the rubber match. I knew the fight was going to be shown in a theatre in Fairbanks on closed circuit, so I phoned Hardin in Clear to see if it was possible to get tickets and told him I was trying to talk Overshoes into coming with me. That was all he needed to hear and he phoned back saying he had 20 good seats and everybody in Clear was going to arrange a week off work if I could get Overshoes out of Dawson. The party was on.

Eddie wanted to see the fight so bad, it really wasn't much of a chore to talk him into it. His only worry was his house freezing up while we were gone for two weeks, but a friend volunteered to keep an eye on his place.

Since it was winter, we had to take the long route to Alaska, which meant going down to Whitehorse for a couple nights at Cal Miller's Capital Hotel, where Patty Kane was bartending, then up the Alaska Highway to Fairbanks and another hour south to Clear.

Going through Kluane, he pointed out the exact spot where he first parachuted into the Yukon and fell in love with the place, near Slim's River, and we spent a night touring Second Ave in Fairbanks, which was like Dawson City with nothing but saloons. We tried to have a drink in every one but were not successful because we were outnumbered.

Then it was off to Clear for a week of pre-fight partying and anticipation and you would have thought Overshoes was visiting royalty the way he was treated. It was beyond red carpet treatment with a huge wild-game feast every evening, unlimited free drinks, two complimentary rooms and a veritable parade of partying Alaskans who came out to finally meet this Yukon legend they had been hearing about for years.

And he didn't disappoint. Overshoes knew when it was show time. He must have done his FDR imitation 20 times for different audiences: "We, the people of the United States of America, hate war. I, your president, hate war. My wife, Eleanor, hates war ... and I hate my wife, Eleanor."

The Clear Sky Boys wanted Overshoes' week in their town to be memorable, something they would never forget, so they arranged bands to play in the lodge, and their jobs may have prevented them from having wives but there was no mention in the regulations about girlfriends. They were all over the place and they all wanted to dance with Eddie, who surprised me with his outdated footwork and stamina.

Alaskan women are crazy, even the ones who think they aren't, and Alaskan parties don't end early. They go on for days. After a dance, one asked me the time, which I told her was five o'clock, and she said: "Morning or evening?"

I won't recap the fight, that's been done elsewhere many years ago, but Overshoes, the fight expert, agreed with the decision in Ali's favour even though he was pulling for Smokin' Joe. He made a comment about Frazier jabbing with his head that summed it all up. Frazier must have thrown 50 big left hooks in that fight which hit nothing but air. Ali was just too quick for him.

On the way back down the highway to Whitehorse, Eddie said the whole thing was one of the best experiences of his life and he'd never forget any of it. When we got to Whitehorse, he was aglow telling Patty and Cal some of the stories of what we saw and did in Alaska, and I felt good knowing Overshoes had a full magazine of stories to get through the rest of the winter.

Within a week, he was dead.

The friend, who was supposed to look after his place, didn't. The pipes had burst and his kitchen looked like a glacier. Instead of moving into Hank's hotel and working on drying his house from a distance, he stayed in it during the cold snap and got pneumonia. His funeral was the biggest and saddest I ever saw in Dawson. It was like the whole town lost its best friend.

He's buried in the Dome Road cemetery in Dawson.

Doug Sack was the first sports editor of the Yukon News and later a longtime sports editor of the Whistler Question and a columnist and features writer for Ski Canada magazine. He is currently semi-retired in Whitehorse.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Life is about change, sometimes it's painful, sometimes it's beautiful, but most of the time it's both. - Unknown

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

SWEET Strawberry Salad

2 lbs strawberries cut into bite sized pieces
2 c. cottage cheese
2 1/2 c. whipped topping
1 large box strawberry Jello

Mix all ingredients together. Refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving.
This recipe can easily be doubled or tripled for large groups!

DATES TO REMEMBER

VANCOUVER YUKONERS' ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING

June 18, 2015
11:30 am-2:00 pm

Croatian Cultural Center
3250 Commercial Drive, Vancouver
Parking plentiful and free
Transit accessible – Handicap accessible
Bring a friend
Lunch \$10

RSVP k29j32@gmail.com
604 819-7630

Okanagan Yukoners Picnic

Summerland Gardens at the Agricultural Centre on Hwy 97

28 June 2015 10am to 1pm

Pot luck will be at noon

You will need to bring your own liquid refreshments and utensils as well as a dish to share in the pot luck lunch.

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.

An easy way to send a money transfer is via your internet banking. Log into you bank's website, find "Money Transfers" or "Email Money Transfers" or however your bank may list it, enter the amount, my email address of sherronjones@shaw.ca and enter a password ie: moctel and press "Send". It's that easy. Then please send me an email to confirm your payment.

– Sherron Jones sherronjones@shaw.ca

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

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