

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH – 416th Edition – December 20, 2015

Created by Sherron Jones sherronjones*shaw.ca

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



Gillian & Edward 2015

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

MRS. GRACE BARTSCH'S FIRST TRIP TO THE KLONDIKE,
AS TOLD-IN HER OWN WORDS

Part 6

We were within a day of the head of Labarge, and we had to be there in that time. The largest and the best raft was unloaded and with the aid of ropes and timbers cut nearby, this was quickly converted into a ferry boat. The narrowest place nearby in the river was selected and a large, long rope for cable was fastened and dragged across the river by two men in the canoe. It was stretched as tight as possible and fastened to a tree on that side, thus making a good strong cable to keep the ferry from going down stream. The sheep were loaded, a few at a time, and with another two inch rope and a team of horses, were drawn across guided by the cable but the ferry had to be drawn back for reloading by man power. This was a slow process and lasted away into the night. Our little raft had been made fast in a cozy arm of the river, below the ferry, just a few yards away on the shore;

some of the men had built a camp fire and were idly telling stories, many of which came to my ears, though they were not intended for me. Their laughter filled the air and the glow of the fire made the trees look like sentinels as they towered toward the starry sky, for it was a perfect night. The hour grew later and the night darker, but with torches and lanterns, the men continued their work of driving the sheep on the ferry, amid many trials. Sheep are stubborn animals so with many curses, mingled often with song and laughter - for there were men of all dispositions in our crew - the work went on. As a poor little sheep would be frightened at the unusual proceedings and would either plunge backward into the woods or forward into the water, or leap over the side of the crudely built ferry, it would bring an exclamation of some kind, which echoed far and near in the pure keen night air of this vast northern world. Mingled with the bleating of the sheep was the howl of the mighty wolf not far away. They knew a feast, but could not quite reach it. These native animals with their beautiful fur coats (our robe was made of these pelts) and fleet feet, infested the Yukon country and would soon make short work of the sheep, if they were not carefully guarded.

There were many bears throughout the country too, and I was told that in a few months there would be quantities of wild berries to be found all along the river, but at that time the bushes and trees, excepting the evergreens, were not yet leafed out, although I could notice the leaf buds swelling. From my secluded spot on our "private ship" I could see nothing of the proceedings --- could see nothing but the medium tall trees standing everywhere. The dark firmament jewelled with glittering stars and the glow of the firelight dancing on the river; the men of the camp fire were now sleeping, for soon they would have to be the good shepherds. The loss of one sheep, as I have said, meant considerable expense and as ours was the only mutton on the trail, we were looking for good prices. The voices of the men grew very subdued before the task ended, and the wolves either ceased their howling or my senses became numb with sleep, for everything was growing very silent and I was wondering when my dear pal would be seeking our camp, and the few comforts of our drifting home, when he stepped upon the raft, wet to the skin, hungry and tired. With a change of clothing and a drink of hot coffee, came the close of a long hard day, lying beneath the robe on some sacks of bran, we closed our eyes and left the stars to keep watch over all.

May Seventh, 1900. After a few short hours of rest, the entire camp was again a stir and the five rafts with their men and loads were drifting on down ahead of us. We also broke camp early and drove the sheep on down about half a mile, where there was a good shore for feeding the sheep. I preferred walking this morning, and it looked very gloomy on the raft. The men were all very angry with Nanny this morning, and felt like killing her. She was in the lead and as they were picking their way around a bluff, she cocked her ears, turned her saucy little head up the hill, and with a wise look began to climb. Every sheep in-the-bunch followed her and reached the very top of the steep bluff before the men could head her off; Bill and Red had a difficult time getting the bunch rounded up again. This was the second or third offense this morning, so the boys with much displeasure (or perhaps it was pleasure to them), put a rope around her neck and led her after that. Nanny was in great disfavor, even with Chris. Goats possess much more intelligence than sheep;

they are very wise, while sheep are dumb heads.

About ten o'clock the clouds disappeared and the sun shone very brightly; the rain drops glistened everywhere on the leafless trees and bushes. We had not been out long before we were bedraggled and wet; with the sun, came the mosquitoes from somewhere, I could not say where. They were indeed large and swarmed over the sheep in flocks. We stopped at noon and built a fire by which we rested and dried our clothes, and had our dinner on the raft. Chris went on with the stock, with Bill and Red, but I stayed on the raft with Green and Roy, Sometimes I could see anxiety. Chris knew he must take care of the stock; must see that they were handled right and he felt that the trip was, perhaps, too much for me. If I were not there he would be with the cattle, for that is what he liked best. He did not like to handle sheep. I did not want him to worry about me, for I was happy and well, and enjoying every minute of this most wonderful experience, and living next to Nature's heart. One of my heart's desires was being fulfilled. However, to go on with the experience of the day. The raft was progressing beautifully when we came to a division in the channel at the point that divided the waters into two channels --- one a broad and swollen stream and the other much narrower and insignificant looking --- we noticed a sack anchored, and floating. This, we discussed and wondered what had happened there. We thought perhaps a miner had lost his sack of gold, and had in this way marked the spot; or perhaps, some poor stampeder had lost his life there and a friend had anchored this sack to mark the grave for at least a short while. Never did it occur to us that the experienced pilot of our own outfit had marked the channel for us. So we drifted on in the good-looking channel which proved in the end to be a blind slough about five miles long. We had not gone far, when we lodged on a gravel sand-bar and had considerable trouble to get off, only to lodge on another. About five o'clock we found ourselves high and dry on one, off which we could not get our raft. With our united efforts we could not move it. we were at least fifty yards from the shore, with open water and drifting ice all around us, and no possible chance of either going forward or even going back to start over again, for to our regret, we had decided that we had taken the wrong channel. Rather gloomy thoughts filled my mind, for I knew Chris would be terribly worried, as he was far ahead and would be wondering what had happened. There would be nothing for him to do but to come back to find out, and that perhaps would be late. Roy and Green were fine fellows, as far as I knew, but the prospect of spending the night in their company was not exactly pleasing either.

These thoughts did not have occasion to haunt me very long, for soon the woods and the mountains were echoing the voice of Chris as he gave the Swiss Alpine call, time after time, and quickly I gave back to the night a call that was familiar to him, which would help him locate me, I'm sure the Indians and the wolves wondered what new species had come with the spring. However, we soon located each other and when he saw the predicament we were in, he expressed himself to Green and Roy in a way that was not polite, but deserving and appropriate, for they had made no attempt to reach the shore after they knew we were hung up for the night.

Chris leaped from one cake of ice to another, and in this way came as close as he could to the raft, but the ice gave out and he had to wade the remaining distance. The water was

not deep, but cold. He carried me to the firm ice; then went back and sacked up the cooking utensils and bedding. He rolled the robe in as small a roll as possible, which was bulky even then, but weighed only fifteen pounds. These he threw over his shoulder and came back to me. Together we made our way to the shore. Green and Roy were left to stay with the ship until help came in the morning.

We walked through the woods, following the trail made by the sheep only a few hours before, until we came to the end of Fifty-Mile, the very head waters of Lake Labarge. Here we found the poor tired flock, with Bill and Red still guarding them. After a lunch of cold beans (Klondike strawberries), flapjacks that had been made at noon, and a cup of coffee with no cream or sugar, we began to consider how we were going to spend the night, as the only piece of bedding amongst the four of us was the fur robe, for the boys bedding was still on the raft. The robe was ten by eight feet and would have covered us all, but Bill and Red refused with many thanks our hospitality so Chris and I took the precious robe under a little ~ spruce tree, whose sheltering boughs almost swept the ground. Bill and Red built up a roaring bonfire near the sheep, and lay stretched beside it most of the night. The Indians were camped on the opposite shore, a distance of perhaps a quarter of a mile. We could hear them calling in weird voices as they flitted to and fro past the fire light, doing their fantastic dances. The little spruce tree shut out the stars tonight, but with the monotony of the tum-tum of the Indian drum, I fell asleep, though the revelry of the men, whom, authority says, are a cross between the Eskimo and the Japanese, the latter having been shipwrecked, or in some unknown way, was thrown among the Eskimos, now went on for several hours.

May Eighth, 1900. I was feeling very hilarious this morning and beat a lively march on the dish pan as we went from our temporary camp of last night to the main one about a mile below, where we had breakfast. It was a march that our drummer boy beat every morning at school when we teachers had lined our pupils up and marched them to our different rooms. Mine, of course, had a dish-panny sound, which would have been most objectionable at home. However, it gave a swing to time that employed the feet, heads and; even the little stubby tails of the sheep, as they went frisking along. I am sure it awakened all sleeping things for miles around as it resounded from mountain to mountain.

We had now arrived at the long thought of point in our journey toward the big gold camp, the head of Lake Labarge. The lake was thirty miles long, and varied from three to twelve miles wide. It was still one vast sheet of ice, but the pangs of winter having loosened their hold, the sun wind were fast making their impressions and rapidly converting it into water. All the streams this far, we had found, were running water. They were laughing and playing after their long silence, and as they emptied their waters into this great basin, it helped to melt the ice from below, so with winds, the sunshine and the warm air, we found the ice which we were planning to cross with our precious outfit, so very very soft, indeed. The men were all very doubtful and downcast when we reached here this morning; breakfast was over and the entire crew, who were waiting Chris's orders did not have to think long, for no one knew but ourselves that the little raft with two men upon it was still miles from here, stranded on a sand-bar and awaiting help. Immediately, Chris

Billie A. and Old Joe, cut long poles, took their waders and returned to the scene of the raft. With their united efforts they lifted and dragged it clear off the sand-bar, but they saw it was impossible to make their way through the sand-bars ahead, so there was nothing to do but pole it back up the stream to where we had seen but not heeded, the sack marking the proper channel. Once around the point and into the river proper, the little craft, carrying her five men and cargo, came quickly into camp and all was well.

To be continued.

COURTESY WHITEHORSE STAR – YUKON HISTORY SECTION –



Photo by Whitehorse Star

AFTER THE FLOOD. Two souvenir shops here, Dawson Arts Crafts and the Klondike Gold Nugget shop, once stood side by side, close to the Yukon River, but now they are barely upright and are facing each other. The tremendous power of the river water gushing over Front Street early Thursday morning has turned them around.

Disaster! Dawson City Flood

By **Whitehorse Star** on **May 3, 1979**

The swollen Yukon River broke free of its icy mantle and poured into Dawson City.

A heavy snowfall and spring ice-jams on three rivers caused the Yukon River to pour into this historic gold rush town despite last-minute efforts by the town's residents to sand bag the river.

The water burst through the makeshift bank at midnight but fortunately most people were awake and alert so there were no lives lost.

This was not the first time the gold mining settlement had been ravaged by flooding water. History shows Dawson City was flooded 22 times since 1898.

Most of the floods were minor. Others were serious. Floods in 1925, 1944, 1969 and 1966 caused considerable damage.

That fateful night, a blower rounded through the streets of Dawson and drew people down to the river front to pile sand bags. At that point, former Klondike MLA Fred Berger declared it was an exercise in futility. The river then poured over the banks. Within 40 minutes of breaching the dyke, the river had flooded the town up to two metres in depth in some places.

The flood was caused by ice jams on the Yukon, Indian and Klondike Rivers. Buildings which shifted off their foundations began drifting among the chunks of ice. Silty water filled homes and turned trailers upside down. A greenhouse with a wood heater still burning inside bobbed along the flow. Historic artifacts washed away.

After the waters receded, Dawsonites recounted stories of the flood. Postmaster Lambert Curzon lost his house and most of his things that night. The Front Street building he was rented lifted, along with a log cabin, a dog house and some propane tanks. It floated a block south before coming to rest in a hollow. It was totally flooded when he found it later. "A crib board came floating out the window," he said. "Inside, the water was a foot and a half from the ceiling. I was wiped out."

Oddly enough, Curzon credits the flood with turning his life around and giving him a purpose. He sought a better job, bought some property on 7th Avenue, later sold that and built a large house at the north end of the same street. "It really gave me a boot to do something." But it made him careful too. "I've definitely stayed on high ground since then."

Parks Canada collections curator Michael Gates remembers quite clearly the events surrounding the flood. "The flood started at midnight, but during the day preceding, people were standing along the dyke watching the water come up and down with apprehension. I came to work at 9-10 p.m. and looked in the basement. Water had poured in."

Gates proceeded to move documents, filled his truck with bedding and moved to a house he was taking care of on higher ground. "I filled up the bathtub and started waiting for

radio reports. At that time, it was barely dark. I stayed up all night and could see the water coming."

In the morning, he paddled around town in a canoe to look at the damage. "All kinds of things were floating around, wood and sidewalks, and I could smell diesel fuel everywhere."

"One home was left in a hurry. Everything was left in place on the dinner table." And he observed a greenhouse floating, buoyant with air, with its wood heater still burning. "At that time, we were approaching the federal election.

The residence I was living in floated out into the middle of Main Street."

Since Main Street was the dividing line between the two ridings, Gates was unsure which riding his main residence was in.

Later that day, the water ebbed away into the river after work crews dug a hug trench in the Front Street dyke to let water out.

For the next few days, residents were warned to avoid walking in any water because of the danger of stepping in the wooden sewer boxes, since the lids had floated away. Warnings were issued to boil water before drinking it, as flood waters were mixed with fuel and gas. In addition, sewage lines were backed up by the flood.

Gates said the Parks Canada had 20 some properties in the area of the flood plain. Some emerged intact while others shifted or lifted off on their foundations and floated away.

Work on old structures and artifacts continued for many years after the flood. Parks Canada spent hundreds of thousands of dollars repairing and restoring flood damaged buildings and artifacts, he said. A dozen homes were written off by assessors, leaving owners permanently homeless and with nothing to build from.

The day after the flood, the Yukon government announced that 20,000 pounds of food supplies and equipment were being airlifted to the stricken town. The Emergency Measures Organization arranged for water pumps to be flown in.

Approximately 270 claims for flood damage totaling \$2 million were registered. The Yukon government created a disaster assistance policy to help pay the costs of getting Dawson City back to normal.

But the flood was not the last of things to come. More than two weeks later, a fire destroyed one of three stores in Dawson.

The DCW Trading Post and a warehouse was gutted by flames, another blow to residents recovering from a disastrous flood. The DCW was Dawson's only hardware store, major grocery outlet, mail order shop, camera supply depot and magazine rack.

Conservative MLA Alan Nordling, then manager of the Klondike Visitors Association, dryly commented: "Flood, fire, and now maybe famine."

YUKON NUGGET

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin

Courtesy Rolf & Marg Hougen marg*hougens.com (In Whitehorse)

Dawson City, 1962

After years of neglect, Dawson City in the early sixties had the classic look of a rundown ghost town. However, plans were underway to spruce up the most famous gold rush town in the world.

In 1962, the federal government began an effort to restore some of the old gold rush buildings and turn Dawson City into a tourist mecca. The centerpiece of this effort was the Palace Grand Theatre built by Arizona Charlie Meadows at the turn of the century. Meadows was a veteran of the Wild West Shows, having worked with Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill's wild west shows in the United States. On his way to the Klondike, Meadows picked up loose change by shooting spots off a deck of cards. He also carried with him a portable bar, selling booze to stampeders at various camps along the way.

To build the Palace Grand, Meadows used lumber from two steamboats he had bought. By the spring of 1899, the theatre opened and featured a stage play called 'Camille'. Charlie Meadows would also stage wild west shows of sorts at his Grande Theatre. But it didn't last long. For all intents and purposes, the gold rush ended in the fall of '99, just two years after it began.

For years the Palace Grand stood as a rundown reminder of those glorious gold rush days at the turn of century. Then, in June of 1962, the restored Palace Grande opened with a sparkling ceremony which included the opening of a new Broadway play called FOXY. The star of this light-hearted musical comedy was Bert Lahr, who had gained world-wide fame as the cowardly lion in the famous movie 'The Wizard of Oz'.

The staging of a Broadway play in Dawson City took considerable cheek and money. The play itself didn't achieve critical acclaim and the timing of such an elaborate stage show was questionable. Dawson City didn't have the facilities to support much tourist business. It would be many years before the town would be fully restored. Yet with the renovated Palace Grand came the determination to put the spirit of the Klondike Gold Rush back into the Klondike.

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin

MEMORIES

By Gus Barrett sourdoughs2*shaw.ca (In Port Alberni)

Yesterday afternoon at about three P.M., the weather in Port Alberni was cold and miserable, totally socked in with fog. Not at all inviting for any outdoor activity. So instead, I sat down with a glass of wine in front of the TV to watch the Grey Cup game. I am really not much of a football fan, but since it is a bit of a Canadian tradition, I try to watch the cup final each year. Anyway, after watching the game for only a brief period I found myself drifting away in thought, until suddenly I was hearing a very different game, in a very different place and many years ago. I found myself back in Whitehorse in the mid to late fifties listening to the game at the old D.O.T. Rec. hall.

This was before the days of TV in Whitehorse but we did receive the play by play via radio. Each year on cup day a group of us young guys (Well we were young then) would gather at the Rec. Hall for the occasion. Some of our readers may remember names such as John Story, Ian Campbell, Dave Busby, Dennis Walsh, Keith Snide. There would probably be twenty to thirty in all.

Many of us had no official connection with the D.O.T. but through friendships etc. were welcome guests at their various functions.

On arrival, Keith Snider who usually acted as MC for the occasion would have the room set up around a centerpiece of a ping pong table and a large cabinet radio. Tables and chairs would be arranged at each end of the table and whether you were an Easterner or Westerner determined where you sat. The ping pong table of course represented the playing field, and as the announcer called the play by play, Keith, who knew football well, mapped out the plays on the "field". Everyone had to purchase a pool ticket of course and there was a lot of kibitzing and side betting going on between East and West as the game progressed. In the kitchen there was a bottomless pot of Clam Chowder, and at the bar a bottomless pot of hot buttered rum which could be purchased at rock bottom prices.

It was a glorious way to spend a cold November afternoon.

About then Blanche came in from the Kitchen where she had been cooking good things for dinner and asked me what the score was. I could tell her all about that game in Whitehorse though.

Hi Sherron:

Herschel Island is a part of Yukon history that may be of interest to MocTel readers.

Karl Crosby fore65@shaw.ca (In Penticton)

In the latter part of the 19th century the Yukon's Herschel Island became the summer operational base and wintering quarters for the Pacific Northwest Whaling

Fleet. The island's population grew to over 2000 people including Canadian and American whalers and Alaskan and Canadian Eskimos. Because there was some question in the 1890's that Herschel Island might be considered US territory, the Canadian Government sent customs officers to establish a post on the Island followed by the Northwest Mounted Police and an Anglican Mission in a strong show of sovereignty.

In the early 1970's Herschel Island was of much interest to the Yukon Territorial and Federal Governments when oil exploration and the possible transport of Alaskan oil by tanker in arctic waters was under study. Canada's National Historic Sites and Monuments Board also showed some interest in Herschel Island and even tourism potential was discussed.

In 1973, I had the pleasure of joining Yukon Commissioner James Smith on his annual tour of the territory which included Herschel Island. Commissioner Smith took a large Canadian flag to Herschel Island's only resident Bob McKenzie who lived there with his family at that time. I think the idea was for Mr. McKenzie to fly the Canadian flag on Herschel Island so that there would be no mistake over who actually owned this small corner of Canada's Arctic. The history of Herschel Island and what took place there from the 1880's to the 1930's represents a little known story in the unique history of the Yukon.

Somewhat like Dawson City, many of Herschel Island's original wooden buildings remain as a stark reminder of its turbulent history. A survey in the 1960's mapped the location of the Northern Whaling and Trading Company's warehouse, Canada Customs warehouse, RCMP buildings, native sod houses, Hudson's Bay Company store and warehouse and the Anglican Mission Building. These are the oldest buildings in the Yukon. There are a number of graves including whalers, RCMP and natives found on Herschel. Many are in a state of advanced disrepair and during my visit coffins which had been brought to the surface by heaving frost were plainly visible. The bibliography for Herschel is very long with well over 100 references for the Island.

In preparing the following, I am using material prepared for "North" Magazine by Alex Stevenson, and an historic background on Herschel Island by Iris Warner.

The Herschel Island Story

Herschel Island is a small island off the northern coast of the Yukon Territory. About 10 miles from east to west and about seven miles from north to south, Thetis Bay on the southeast side of the island offers safe anchorage for vessels drawing up to 18 feet. The island was inhabited by Inuit people long before Captain John Franklin of the Royal Navy led an expedition there in 1826. He named the island for Sir John Frederick William Herschel, a noted English astronomer and chemist who died in 1871. This was Franklin's second expedition to Canada's Arctic in search of the fabled Northwest Passage for which he was knighted on his return to England. Franklin, now Sir John

Franklin, returned to the Arctic in 1845 and perished with all his men prompting the largest search ever undertaken by the Royal Navy. In September, 2014, an underwater exploration team headed by Parks Canada discovered one of the Franklin expedition's ships in Victoria Strait, the 'Erebus', adding the latest chapter to the 170-year mystery of the disappearance of the ill-fated Franklin expedition.

Other European visitors to Herschel Island included Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson who traveled down the McKenzie River and westward along the coast to Herschel Island in the summer of 1837. Simpson recorded in his journal... *"we had intercourse with other parties of the natives who were pretty numerous along this part of the coast. We found on the island the skull of a whale eight feet in breadth; and whalebone is everywhere an article of extensive use among the natives, especially for the making of their nets and the fastenings of their sledges"*.

Years before the Yukon became world famous for its gold rush, the lucrative whaling industry was booming in the frigid waters near Herschel Island where whalers from San Francisco were harvesting record number of bowhead whales. Whalebone or baleen was in demand for making women's corset stays for the fashionable 'wasp' look of the era and whale oil was used for lighting. At up to \$5 a pound for baleen one whale could produce between \$8,000 and \$10,000. A successful voyage could generate up to \$50,000 for ship's owners.

The Yukon's whaling 'rush' is believed to have started in 1888 when an adventurer named Joe Tuckfield heard from northern Alaskan Eskimos that many whales were seen in the summer close to Herschel Island. Obtaining supplies for his small boat, he hired a family of Eskimos as a crew and sailed east from Point Barrow, Alaska. When he was within 30 miles of Herschel he saw whales by the hundreds and managed to capture one even though his ship was not equipped for whale hunting. Upon his return to Point Barrow, the story spread and the following Spring when the whaling fleet arrived from San Francisco, many in the fleet set course for Herschel Island.

The arctic whaling industry really started when Captain Royce in the American bark "Superior" passed through the Bering Strait to the Arctic Ocean in 1848. Besides being numerous, whales in this area were fairly tame and "easy to strike". Adventurous whalers followed. From the period 1848 to 1858 over 300 vessels were engaged in the industry, but most did not go further north or east of Point Barrow to complete the season. They would enter the ice by the middle of April and drift north watching and waiting for the bowheads in their spring migration to the Beaufort Sea and Arctic Ocean. The whalers usually remained in these waters until the forming pack ice pushed them south at the end of October each year.

Moving eastward along the coast, the American whaling fleet reached Herschel Island in the summer of 1889. Finding the protected anchorage afforded at Herschel Island, the "Grampus" and the "Mary D. Hume" of the Pacific Steam Whaling Company were the first vessels to winter at Herschel Island and return south with large catches the following year. Every winter from 1889 onward, whalers anchored on the south side of

Herschel in Pauline Cove, a snug natural harbor protected from the movement of ice and the north winds. This cove was likely named after Pauline King Stockton, the wife of Commander Stockton of the US Coast Guard who later became the president of George Washington University. It is believed that, if he had pushed on eastward during that summer of 1889, he would have been the first to discover the long-sought Northwest Passage. Herschel Island enabled the vessels to winter in the arctic and avoid the 5000 mile voyage from San Francisco each Spring. It also gave them early access to the migration area of the whales in the Beaufort Sea. Prior to the period of wintering at Herschel Island many of the ships originating from New Bedford, Massachusetts, the world's centre for the whaling industry had transferred their headquarters to San Francisco for the North Pacific whale hunt.

There is a long history of men pursuing great whales. These mammals appear in legends lyrics and drawings down through the ages from primitive man. The Basques living on the shores of the Bay of Biscay in northern Spain and western France were the first to develop whaling into an industry more than a thousand years ago. From about 1300 they improved boat-building to allow them to sail farther afield. They were off the banks of Newfoundland around 1372 and were the first to design and construct floating factory ships to process whales. Whalebone was extracted and the blubber boiled down for oil and stored in barrels in the ships hold.

In the early 1600's, the Dutch and Danes entered the whaling industry, and early in the 17th century England and later American colonists became skilled whalers. As whales began to decrease in numbers whalers began to explore and hunt in the Hudson Bay, Davis Strait and the Greenland Sea. They primarily hunted bowhead whales, a species weighing up to 100 tons. Almost one-third of the bowhead is mouth where strips of whalebone or baleen hang down from both sides of the upper jaws in long strips with hair-like bristle on the inner edge. The baleen was valued for its flexibility and used primarily in corset stays and whip handles.

When Captain Royce in the American Bark "Superior" passed through the Bering Strait in 1848, the Bering Sea or Arctic Ocean whale fishery started. Within the next 10 years, there were as many as 300 ships involved in the industry. The years 1892-93 was the greatest season on record with 300,000 pounds of baleen taken from the waters off Herschel Island valued at approximately \$1.5 million. Today that would be approximately \$15 million. There were obviously fortunes to be made in the whaling industry.

(To be continued....)

(A former journalist, Karl Crosby was the director of tourism for the Yukon from 1970-1980 and is a life member of the Yukon Visitors Association (YVA).

Legion Magazine - heads up about this article from Cliff Armstrong ss*still.net (In Cranbrook BC)

Clearing the Canol Road

December 14, 2015 by Tom MacGregor



A supply convoy makes the five-kilometre crossing of the Mackenzie River to the Canol camp.

RICHARD S. FINNIE/LAC/PA-175986;

Early in 1943, an enticing notice offering jobs for men appeared in newspapers in Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, St. Louis and Tulsa.

It read: “Working and living conditions on this project are as difficult as those encountered on any construction job ever done in the United States or foreign territory. Men hired for this job will be required to work and live under the most extreme conditions imaginable. Temperature will range from 90 degrees above zero to 70 degrees below zero. Men will have to fight swamps, rivers, ice and cold. Mosquitoes, flies and gnats will not only be annoying but will cause bodily harm. If you are not prepared to work under these and similar conditions—DO NOT APPLY.”

But men did apply, attracted by good wages and the romance of Canada’s far north, known to Americans only by the writings of Jack London and others. The project itself was kept secret, known only as the Canol project. Even today there is some dispute over the name. While most sources say Canol was a contraction of Canadian Oil, some sources say it was a convoluted acronym for Canadian-American Norman Oil Line.

Whatever the truth about the name, the Canol pipeline went hand-in-hand with the building of the Alaska Highway, an engineering feat matched in the 20th century only by the building of the Panama Canal. Once the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the U.S. was determined to secure a safe route for transporting personnel and supplies from mainland U.S. to Alaska. That meant building a road through Canada’s Yukon.

JUNE 15 42

THIS IS NO PICNIC

WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS ON THIS JOB ARE AS DIFFICULT AS THOSE ENCOUNTERED ON ANY CONSTRUCTION JOB EVER DONE IN THE UNITED STATES OR FOREIGN TERRITORY. MEN HIRED FOR THIS JOB WILL BE REQUIRED TO WORK AND LIVE UNDER THE MOST EXTREME CONDITIONS IMAGINABLE. TEMPERATURE WILL RANGE FROM 90° ABOVE ZERO TO 70° BELOW ZERO. MEN WILL HAVE TO FIGHT SWAMPS, RIVERS, ICE AND COLD. MOSQUITOS, FLIES, AND GNATS WILL NOT ONLY BE ANNOYING BUT WILL CAUSE BODILY HARM. IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO WORK UNDER THESE AND SIMILAR CONDITIONS
DO NOT APPLY

Bechtel-Price - Callahan

A stern warning is given to those applying for jobs.
RICHARD S. FINNIE/LAC/PA-171534

Once the highway was built though, oil was needed to be refined into gas, diesel and airplane fuel to support the military traffic to follow. Since the U.S. Navy could no longer guarantee safe passage of oil tankers on the Pacific Ocean, the question was, how does the fuel get there?

It was known that there was oil along the remote Mackenzie River in Canada's Northwest Territories. Imperial Oil Ltd. had started a commercial operation in Norman Wells, N.W.T., in 1933. The oil had a wax base and would flow in extremely cold temperatures.

A top-secret plan was developed by the U.S. Army and the American Board of Economic Warfare to build a pipeline and its accompanying maintenance road from Norman Wells to Whitehorse, a distance of 825 kilometres. And why not? They had just finished the 2,451-kilometre Alaska Highway.

The army originally agreed to start the road from Whitehorse and work east, but it needed to create a private sector consortium to build the refinery and start the road west from Norman Wells. W.A. Bechtel Company and the W.E. Callahan Company were well-established construction companies while the H.C. Price Company was a well-known welding company. Together they formed the consortium of Bechtel-Price-Callahan (BPC). The Imperial Oil Company, under the direction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, undertook to develop the field to its capacity. The project started in June and was supposed to be completed by Christmas.

All this was planned in the U.S. The War Committee of the Canadian Cabinet approved the project and granted permission to proceed. The House of Commons was informed just before the deal was signed.

The Whitehorse portion was simple enough. Supplies would come to Edmonton by rail and be shipped to Prince Rupert, B.C. There they would be reloaded onto barges and shipped along the coast to Skagway, Alaska, and then by rail again to Whitehorse.

The Norman Wells portion was more difficult. The Canol site was 2,400 kilometres north of Edmonton by the ordinary water route. There was no road, trail or railway. The end of the railway line was a Hudson's Bay Company post at Waterways, 480 kilometres north of Edmonton. That left more than 1,600 kilometres of interconnecting rivers and lakes to reach the final destination.



An oilman checks the welding on a section of the pipeline in June 1943.
HARRY ROWED/NFB/LAC/PA-174542

With the short ice-free season from the beginning of July to the beginning of October, the workers would have a three-month window to ship supplies.

The herculean task is described in much detail in a document called *Oil to Alaska* by C.V. Myers. The undated document held by the McBride Museum in Whitehorse is

marked “Passed by U.S. Censor” and covers the period from the start-up to when the oil began to flow in 1944.

The first step was to build a camp at Waterways, now a suburb of Fort McMurray. It took 250 men to build the camp and unload the freight from the train onto barges. The barges had to take the Athabasca River to Lake Athabasca, cross the lake and enter the Slave River. But when they got to Fort Smith, the rapids were too dangerous to navigate.

The solution was to go overland. Huge trailers were built, big enough to accommodate the barges. Caterpillars were used to pull the barges onto trucks and move all the equipment overland 25 kilometres and into the water again. All this was done within 10 hours.

From there, the convoy followed the Slave River into Great Slave Lake, crossed it and moved into the Mackenzie River for the final portion of the trip.

Despite all this effort, only 18,000 tonnes of the 27,000 tonnes of supplies had been shipped before the winter freeze; some of it had sunk in the rough waters of Great Slave Lake.



Major-General W.W. Foster of the Canadian Army (below, at right) and his aide chat with workers on the pipeline in June 1943.

HARRY ROWED/NFB/LAC/PA-174543;

A second phase of the supply link started in Peace River, Alta., where a new camp was built for the construction of a winter road, which was used successfully to transport 8,000 tonnes of equipment to Norman Wells.

When it was clear the job would not be finished by Christmas, schedules had to change and the Canol site had to be prepared for winter. The only communications possible would be by air. Airstrips were built at Embarras, Fort McMurray, Hay River, Providence, Simpson and Wrigley. How much the Canadian government knew about these side projects is still debated by historians.

Once the supplies got to the Canol site, the actual work could begin. The maintenance road had to be started and that meant crossing the formidable Mackenzie Mountains. BPC hired surveyor Guy Blanchet along with three native guides to blaze a trail by dogsled from the east. They followed a native route which took them through MacMillan Pass, which crosses the divide between the Mackenzie and Yukon rivers.

Three days before Christmas, 23 men under J.B. Porter, general superintendent for the construction company, set off in a convoy pulled by trackers. They were to set up an office and radio cabin, repair shop, two mess halls, bunkhouses, kitchen and kitchen storeroom. With temperatures at -60°C , they stopped sometimes every 15 minutes to thaw lines and repair vehicles. Motors were kept running all the time out of fear that they would freeze up.



Superintendent Bob Shivel makes the final weld on Feb. 16, 1944;
RICHARD S. FINNIE/LAC/PA-172825

Porter and his men cleared 170 kilometres in 47 days before fuel ran low and the crew returned to Norman Wells to wait for better weather. It would be another year of gruelling work, crossing mountains, streams and rivers, and dealing with permafrost and ferocious insects before the maintenance road was built. To the men on this job, once the road was built, laying the pipeline would seem easy.

On the west side of the project, army personnel who were to build the road from Whitehorse were called away to other duties. BPC took over responsibility for completing that section as well.

“The difference between the East Side and the West Side was that Whitehorse was accessible,” wrote Myers. “Canol was not. Whitehorse handled several projects simultaneously, built the refinery and employed thousands of men. Canol handled only one [project].”

The two crews were to meet up by Dec. 31, 1943. On Dec. 30, the two groups were 11 kilometres apart. The Whitehorse crew had brought up photographers for the historical meeting and had gone to bed, anticipating the historic event of meeting the Canol crew would follow easily the next day. But at three o’clock in the morning, the Canol bulldozers came crashing into the Whitehorse camp, having worked through the night to make the deadline. The photographers went back to Whitehorse disappointed.

Myers’ report comes to a rosy ending. It had been hoped that the Canol project would be able to produce 3,000 barrels of crude a day. Instead, it was able to produce up to 20,000 barrels a day.

According to Cryofront, the Electronic Journal of Cold Region Technology, between July and November 1944 the project provided all the motor vehicle requirements for military needs between Watson Lake and Fairbanks and also exported between 20 and 40 million litres to Skagway.

But it was hardly enough. The productivity did not match the cost. Twelve tankers full of oil were still making it through to Alaska while the Canol project was producing only the equivalent of one tanker load.



Bechtel employees and U.S. Army soldiers wait outside a bank in Fort McMurray, Alta., on payday during preparations to supply the Canol camp in August 1942.

RICHARD S. FINNIE/LAC/PA-164900

The Canol project was not the triumph of the Alaska Highway. The oil was pumped only from Dec. 19, 1943, to April 1, 1945. The refinery was sold in 1948 and moved to Leduc, where Alberta's oil boom was beginning. The pipeline between Canol and Whitehorse was removed and used in other projects. Cabins, bridges, trucks and other equipment were simply abandoned and are still found there today by those adventurous enough to go there.

From an estimated cost of \$30 million, the final cost of the project had been \$134 million, prompting a scathing review by a U.S. Senate inquiry headed by Harry Truman, shortly before he became president of the United States. In the end, U.S. Undersecretary of War Robert P. Peterson conceded, "I suppose that we must bow to the verdict, that the project was useless and a waste of public funds."

Whatever the waste of U.S. public funds, the Canol project did have its benefit to Canada. The airstrips were the beginning of a system that would open much of Canada's north in the years following the Second World War.

Today, the Northwest Territories portion of the road has become the Canol Heritage Trail, running 355 kilometres from Norman Wells through the Mackenzie Mountains to the Yukon border. Most hikers take 14 to 22 days to complete the trail.

Only the Yukon portion of the road is still usable, but travellers with rugged vehicles must be prepared to bring the extra fuel and food needed, as there are no stores or gas stations along the way. Once they reach the end, there is no alternative but to turn around and drive back the way they came.

The end.



A friends' Christmas Tree 2015 – Sherron Jones
(Note hand painted clear glass balls which include Disney and other characters.)

Vancouver Island Yukoners' 2015 Christmas Lunch Party

by Harvey Burian hburian@telus.net (In Parksville)

“Oh the weather outside is frightful
But the fire is so delightful
And since we've no place to go
Let It!”

The words to that familiar Christmas carol came to mind (with rain and wind rather than snow being the “frightful” weather!) as we gathered for the Christmas luncheon party of Vancouver Island former Yukoners at the ABC Country Restaurant in North Nanaimo on December 10th this year. Though the “frightful” weather and, for some, medical procedures, prevented a number who had intended to be present from attending, the 21 of us that were able to make it enjoyed a great time of friendship, laughter and reminiscing, along with delicious food.

Special mention for attendance is due the St Jean family with Betty, Gerald, Paul and Perry all present. It was also wonderful to have Harry Miller with us as he shared his experience of having a double lung transplant during the past year and his joy of no longer having to have an oxygen tank constantly at his side.

The main door prize this year was a large framed photo of the steamers *Casca* and *Whitehorse* sitting in the Whitehorse BYN/White Pass shipyard donated by Sharon Redmond. This photo was originally from Carol Clarke and has now been passed on to another former Yukoner to enjoy. The appropriate winner was Betty St Jean! The table decorations, lovely poinsettias, were also prizes for three of the attendees.

Harriett Butterworth and Sharon Redmond once again took on the responsibility for making all the party arrangements. We missed Harriett at the lunch as she was having cataract surgery, which Sharon advises went well. Sharon ably hosted in her absence. A BIG THANK YOU to these ladies for what you do to bring us all together!

Best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.





L to R – Harry Miller, Ralph & Janice Beaumont,
Gerald St Jean, Betty St Jean, Paul St Jean, Perry St Jean



L to R – Carol Pearce, Mickey McAllister
Donna Mercier, Julie Trueman, Bev Mason-Wood, Carolyn Moore



L to R – Warren Rongve, Ted North, Sheila Firth, Valerie Duckworth,
Sharon Redmond, Harvey Burian, Colleen & Ron Butler
Photos courtesy Harvey Burian [hburian*telus.net](mailto:hburian@telus.net) (in Parksville)

Frederick H. Collins Secondary School Building Farewell

By Donna (Storing) Clayson

I attended the F.H. Collins farewell Thursday, Dec 17. It was solemn, happy and fun being part of this momentous occasion. I'm not the only one that will miss FH but what will really strike home is when it is actually, physically gone as it faces the wrecking ball. I'm sure I'll not be the only one watching - and shedding tears to see it go like Whitehorse residents did when the boats burned. It's just a building, right? Well no, it holds so many memories for the 8000 grads that walked across the stage to receive their diploma, for all the students that ever attended. The first kiss, the wedding proposal by the bike racks, the snow sculpture of a sternwheeler, the Brownies' classes that were held there, Student Council, The Warriors, the list goes on and on. I learned to type there and got a job with the Government, I learned to make my first lemon meringue pie in Home Ec., learned the rules of Basketball, Volleyball, oh my, again, the list goes on. Even the office visits to the principal when I got into trouble; can't remember why now.

The Harlem Globetrotters, Sadie Hawkins dances, The Irish Rovers, Robbie Mackay and so many others playing for the school dances. I even went to see Al Oeming and his Cheetah in the gym. Whew, the memories flood back so quickly I can't write them down fast enough.

I quit school two weeks before the end of grade 12. Two of my most disliked teachers, Mrs. Tomlinson and Mrs. Stenbraten, approached me and offered to tutor me on the weekends and evenings if I would allow them. Another memory - early May I wanted to retrieve a book I had forgotten from my locker for Mrs. Tomlinson's class. As I was kneeling down to find the book in my locker Mrs. Tomlinson approached me and ordered me back to the classroom (with a failing mark on the paper I was doing. but needed the book for). I was angry and jumped up, hitting her on the shoulder and face so hard she stumbled backwards. I had enough of both these teachers and I quit 5 weeks later because of them, so the offer by both these teachers came as a complete surprise. Imagine their surprise when I agreed, I needed that diploma for my future. I worked hard and they worked hard over the summer and by September I had earned my diploma and all because of them. I never thanked them, embarrassed by my actions I guess. I wish I could do it now but it's too late. I need to do this: Thank you Mrs. Thomlinson and Mrs. Stenbraten, for believing in me, thank you for my career.

I have attached some photos that I took while perusing the school yesterday. I saw some students from my graduating class of 1969. I recognized them, they didn't recognize me. All I can say is 'THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES F.H. Collins, you'll be missed.

Donna Clayson bdclayson*northwestel.net (In Whitehorse)



Books ready for move to new school



Buses picking up students on last day. Photos courtesy Donna (Storing) Clayson



Students loading on buses for the last time from FH Collins.



Class Photos. Photos courtesy Donna (Storing) Clayson



Classroom



Empty Locker, pencils left behind.
Photo courtesy Donna (Storing) Clayson



Entrance to FH Collins High School- Wing to the right.
Photos courtesy Donna (Storing) Clayson



Exit – from FH Collins High School.



Hallway in FH Collins.
Photos courtesy Donna (Storing) Clayson



Hallway and clock in FH Collins School.



'Wing', Main entrance to the left side of this photo. Photos courtesy Donna Clayson



New FH Collins School as seen from old school.



Photo by Whitehorse Star

FONDLY REMEMBERING F.H. COLLINS SECONDARY SCHOOL – Ted Garland, now retired but still living in Whitehorse, teaches English as a Second Language in 1982 at F.H. Collins Secondary School.



Photo by Whitehorse Star. Students hold a 12th birthday celebration for the school in 1975. It's been a week of memories for the school, with special ceremonies held Thursday afternoon, as depicted on pages 6 and 7 of today's Star. (1975)



Photo by Aimee O'Connor

SUDDENLY, its 1966 – Commissioner Doug Phillips points Thursday afternoon to his graduation photo from 49 years ago at F.H. Collins Secondary School.



Peter Grundmanis Photo by Whitehorse Star



Photo by Vince Fedoroff

WATCHING AND REMEMBERING – Those participating in the goodbye events held for the old F.H. Collins Secondary School watch a presentation in the school’s gym Thursday afternoon.

An emotional farewell to a venerable school

It was a high school reunion like no other as generations of students, teachers and staff gathered Thursday afternoon for the final assembly in the gym of the old F.H. Collins Secondary School.

By **Stephanie Waddell** on **December 18, 2015**

It was a high school reunion like no other as generations of students, teachers and staff gathered Thursday afternoon for the final assembly in the gym of the old F.H. Collins Secondary School.

As the display for those entering the school – some with old yearbooks in hand – summed up with words, photographs and newspaper clippings: “Great things have happened here.”

And that’s exactly what was celebrated inside the crowded gym.

Before heading inside, former students lingered outside viewing old grad photos, hugging friends they hadn’t seen in some time and recalling the good times at the school.

While some recalled cutting class to go for a smoke and play cards in the former smoking room, others remembered shooting hoops in the gym and so on.

Current students of the school were seen meeting up with their parents who were also at one time F.H. Collins Warriors and among the 8,000 graduates who have crossed the stage.

The laughter and memories continued as the crowd made its way into the gym where a projector displayed both the decades at the school, which opened in 1963, and the trends that came with each decade.

Images of the Beatles (both in the 1960s and 1970s), classic cars, Pac-Man, the Fresh Prince of Bel Air, The Office, Lord of the Rings and the logos of Facebook and Twitter came up on the screen in between photos over the years of F.H. Collins students and events and, of course, Collins himself.

Collins was the territory's commissioner from 1955 to 1962, a year before the school opened. During his term, he brought forward several changes to education in the territory, improving the standards; it's noted on the school's website.

Humanities teacher Peter Grundmanis – or, as principal Darren Hays later described him, “the best toast master dude you could get” – took the stage.

“What a journey this has been,” Grundmanis said as he assured the crowd that it really was the last day for the old school.

The opening of the new F.H. Collins School next door has been greeted with cautious optimism in recent years as delays, in planning and building have taken place.

Even at the most recent graduation ceremony in June, when construction of the new school was well-underway, staff referred to the 2015 grad class as “possibly the last grad class” of the old school.

Thursday's assembly, though, was not about the ups and downs for the new school.

Rather, it was a stroll down Memory Lane as Grundmanis ran through a slew of his own memories over the past 25 years:

- the replacement of the gym floor, which meant busing students up to Yukon College for gym class;
- the former track, which featured a manhole in lane three (“if it was a sprint, it was a hurdle in lane three,” he said);
- the decisions that had to be made on controversial issues, including whether condom machines should be placed in the bathrooms; and
- the gophers who managed to make their way into the Lewes Boulevard school.

Asked for a show of hands on how many remembered seeing a gopher in their class, more than a few former students raised their hands after Grundmanis recalled coaching archery at one time when a rodent entered the gym.

“You can't imagine what 12 kids with bows and arrows will do to a gopher,” he said.

The rodent, he assured the crowd, somehow managed to scurry away from the action unscathed while order was restored.

Grundmanis was just one of the staffers to share their memories.

The Senile Singers as they dubbed themselves – about 20 former teachers whose collective careers at the school spanned from 1968 to 2014 – soon came forward with their own tribute to school sung in the tune of the theme song from The Beverly Hillbillies. That TV show premiered in 1962, before F.H. Collins opened its doors to its first students.

The song strung together their memories of the building that's "getting tired," as they noted.

"Now it's time to bid farewell to these hallowed halls" they sang as their efforts were met with applause from the crowd.

As the farewell ceremony continued, the crowd viewed what was termed a "small sampling" of graduates who have made the school proud with their accomplishments in the years since walking across the stage for their diploma.

It was a list, staff insisted, that could not possibly capture everybody but would offer a glimpse into what F.H. graduates have gone onto.

A long list of activists, filmmakers, Olympians and other athletes, performers, artists, authors, those who have served the country in the military, and politicians were featured.

Grundmanis didn't let a problem with the sound system stop him from continuing as he looked to the future at the new school, pointing out that change can be difficult, but F.H. Collins has always risen to challenges.

He then recalled a few of the challenges – big and small – over the years at the old school from the first time the school sold pizza as a fundraiser and there were 270 pizzas left over, to changes in the education system.

Those alternations eliminated the junior high school system, with students then entering high school in Grade 8 and the concerns over Grade 8 students mingling with Grade 12 students.

And then there are the traditions of F.H.: Grundmanis still wonders how the Grade 12 class manages to make their annual mark on the building's roof, and that had him asking a question of the students who will start at the new F.H. Collins after the Christmas break.

"What are you going to make your own?" he asked of the students, before staff began playing a montage honouring the school, the students and the decades that have passed.

It began appropriately in black and white, a student walking into the school seemingly in 1963 with a Beatles lunch box and record in hand, heading over to a record player and turning on the song I Want To Hold Your Hand.

A piece of that song moved into the Rolling Stones' Satisfaction as the camera made its way through the school.

The tour of the school continued with pieces of songs from each era playing as students and staff danced and/or showed off their lip synch abilities to popular tunes from each year.

Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody garnered the most laughter through the montage. It was an eclectic soundtrack that included the works of Abba, the Village People, Survivor, Van Halen, Guns n Roses, Madonna, MC Hammer, REM, Nirvana, Brittany Spears, Spice Girls, Alanis Morrissette, Lady Gaga, PSY, Taylor Swift and a long list of other popular artists of each era.

The final parts of two songs were a clear farewell to the school as the film showed students walking out of the school to Europe's The Final Countdown and finally waving good-bye to Na Na Na Na Hey Hey-ey Goodbye.

Following the montage, the school also paid tribute to former teacher Chris McNeill who passed away in 2014.

A short video featured him as many likely remember him, riding around the gym in costume, clearly having a great time and entertaining those around him.

Applause and cheers followed as Grundmanis declared it time to "close the cover."

He then invited Hays to have the last word at the last assembly.

"One can't help but be humbled," Hays said, noting that as great as the old school has been, the F.H. Collins Warriors will make its successor even better.

After the formal event, like many who were there, he reminisced.

While many memories stand out, 9/11 – which happened just a week after he became principal – is probably the one that stands out as most prevalent.

There was "everyone scrambling" as a Boeing 747 Korean Air flight thought to have been hijacked landed in Whitehorse.

"That was pretty memorable," he said.

While reflective on the years spent in the old school, Hays said he's looking forward to the new facility.

Those who graduated from the old F.H. Collins will continue to be honoured in the new school with space designated for the grad photos that currently line the walls. And, Hays assured everyone, there's room for class photos of graduates for years to come.

Former students and staff continued to talk outside the gym, taking in the old photos and sharing memories.

As Commissioner Doug Phillips recalled, while much has changed since his days at the school in the 1960s, the stories of those days are not all that unfamiliar to current staff and students.

He was among those who started classes at what was then the "new" school in January of 1963.

As he said, they had opened the school in the new year because it “wasn’t quite ready” when it had been originally expected to open.

“It was huge,” he recalled of his first impression entering the building that winter day in Grade 9.

At the time, the Whitehorse school (now École Whitehorse Elementary) was beyond capacity, with students taking their days in shifts – he went to class at 7:30 a.m. and was finished by 12:30 p.m. when he and his friends would take off for the day.

“Marks were dreadful (that year),” he said, recalling the afternoons off with his friends.

When F.H. opened, it was back to a more standard schedule for the students and five decades later, Phillips remembers floor hockey in the gym and playing trumpet in the school band, performing in the Hougen Centre in the days leading up to Christmas.

“It was a blast,” he said with a grin. “It was the best years of my life.”

His school days at F.H. came to a close with graduation in 1966. To this day, he can find his photo on the wall.

“You won’t recognize me,” he said with a grin, pointing to the photo of a young George Phillips – for whatever reason they used his middle name for the grad photo, he noted – with the request Beatles-style mop-top haircut popular with students, but not his mom, at the time.

As the celebrations of the old school – complete with a cake celebrating each decade, including a final New Beginning cake featuring the new school – came to a close, alumni, staff and students made their way over to the new building, where basketball players were enjoying a practice in the gym.

It was easy to view the action. Windows surround the gym, screens are featured high in corners and there’s a shiny new floor for students.

There’s also an exercise room, and throughout the new facility, classrooms feature whiteboards that can project tablet screens and even high-tech chairs and tables allowing students to stand, sit or even fidget somewhat if need be.

Students had made their way over earlier in the day to claim their new lockers and get an even earlier glimpse of the building before the open house.

While many were impressed with the new facilities, a few were having a hard time saying farewell to the old school.

As Grade 10 student Jayden Demchuck recalled, the old gym is not only where she’s played basketball and volleyball and attended numerous school assemblies and events, it’s also where she grew up watching her cousin’s sporting events.

“I’m so sad,” she said.

Her mom, Jenny Pope, also has her own memories of sports in the gym and coming over from Jeckell Junior Secondary School (now Vanier Catholic Secondary) to take in and participate in sports events there before becoming a student there herself.

“It’s the attachment,” she said, noting the emotions she was sharing with her daughter.

Both schools remained open into the late afternoon, allowing alumni, students, past and current staff to walk in the past while also looking to the future.

See Monday’s Star for coverage of the new school’s features.

Dawson has a generosity of spirit, says Pohl-Weary

By Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

October 16, 2015

Emily Pohl-Weary, Dawson’s 72nd writer-in-residence at Berton House, had no idea at all what to expect in the Yukon, and began her stay here last summer with a fair bit of trepidation.

“I didn’t have very much of a preconceived notion of the Yukon or the North in general,” she said near the end of her stay in September.

“You don’t hear about these parts of the country when you grow up in Toronto, the center of the universe.”

She’s spending a lot of this year getting to know more of the country.

“I started in BC, then back to Toronto for a couple of months, and then came here, and I’ll be in Kingston, at Queens (university), and in Halifax, at Dalhousie, in January.”

The two university stays are as a more traditional type of writer-in-residence and then teaching a creative writing course.

“So I’m getting this amazing opportunity to see the country that I’ve never had before.” Dawson caught her by surprise and she says it’s captured her heart in a way she did not anticipate. Initially, she worried about being isolated and lonely. That didn’t last long. “In part it’s because of the people; in part because of the landscape, and feeling a real connection to that.”

Her Facebook postings are full of exuberant accounts of trips out on the land, up the Dempster, and sightseeing all over the area.

In Toronto, although she’s been busy in all sorts of projects there, she has had what she calls “a very close community” made up of family and friends, and that was changing, as she was about to sell the house she’d lived in for years, so her world was in flux.

“When I got here, I hadn’t spent time processing how to get through three months. I had just thrown everything into a suitcase and thought about what i would be working on.”

Connections to a professional life Outside does go on for visiting authors.

“I sat on an arts council jury –over the phone – while I was here, and I wrote an article and did a bit of work on my Ph.D. – managed to successfully defend my thesis proposal, so I get to move forward on my research now.”

For eight years she’s been leading writing workshops with inner city youth, First Nations men and other people with severe mental health issues in Toronto, as well as in women’s shelters and with women involved in prostitution. Her doctoral thesis is to examine the benefits of long running workshops of this nature involving what is referred to as “liberatory pedagogy”, and how such ideas can apply to the arts. The idea is that community writing workshops can offer a voice to those groups who are under represented in literature and well as assist people in resolving personal issues.

Pohl-Weary is a Canadian novelist, poet, magazine editor and biographer. She is the grand-daughter of Judith Merrill, an important editor and writer in the history of science fiction, and Frederick Pohl, perhaps an equally illustrious editor and writer in that field. Merrill’s classic twelve Best of the Year anthologies line many a fan’s shelves.

Pohl was an important magazine editor in the 1960s and a prolific writer, both alone and in collaboration with others. He was active well into his 90s, passing on in 2013.

Pohl-Weary won a Hugo Award – science-fiction’s equivalent of a Giller - for her biography of her grandmother, who left her an archive of biographical material to work with when she died in 1997.

Her own fiction has tended towards the supernatural, with a recent young adult book (*Not Your Ordinary Wolf Girl*) being about a young women musician who gets bitten by a strange dog and begins to have some odd experiences. She has also been the editor of several publications, and the creator of a comic book series, so it seems the gene pool continues to run deep in her.

Aside from doing a number of public readings (more than the program required of her) while she was here, she dived into presenting at the Print and Publishing Symposium in August, assisted in the Authors on Eighth annual writers’ tour and contest, spent two nights with the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in at the R-22 retreat and travelled to Inuvik.

Her major writing project while in Dawson was working on a young adult novel examining some of the same themes of trauma and loss that filled her recent book of poetry, *Ghost Sick*.

Much young adult fiction deals with first times, and with events that may be emotionally trying. She finds it a little odd that her books in this genre are liked by adults her own age.

This book is set in the older run-down area of Parkdale, where she grew up, and is inspired by events that happened to people she knew during her youth in that area. Her teen years were bookended by the disappearance of one girl when she was 12 and another that took place a few years later when she was 18.

“In my book, two girls have been living in the same house. One of them goes missing and the other decides she is going to find out what happened to her.”

Pohl-Weary’s mother gave her a strong feminist grounding in the belief that she was capable and could do and be anything she wanted to be, but at the same time there was the dichotomy inherent in warnings to be careful and not to go out alone at night.

“I lived in a area where there were a lot of prostitutes and, even at the age of 15, I was often followed on the street by men who thought I was one of them, so it was scary sometimes.

“Everywhere in the news there were these messages that said I was not safe, that there were predators out there.”

The book, which she is finding it hard to write, will be dealing with the crimes and the social situations.

Pohl-Weary said she was leaving Dawson with a real sense of the generosity of the community.

“I just had to mention that I was interested in things and people would offer to show me around. I didn’t have the right clothing and someone lent me long underwear. It’s been one thing after another that restores a sort of faith in humanity.

“It certainly seems like a place where people come for healing in different ways. Once you get here and you understand that about it, it seems to become part of you – gets under your skin.

“I’ve had so many great experiences since coming been here that involve, not just being closer to the land and the trees and the mountains and the sky that’s so vast, but also the people, that are creative in so many different ways, but still seem to have a real sense of the importance of community.

“When I think of a small town about the same size in Ontario, you wouldn’t find that kind of cohesion, that commitment to making the community itself something better and bigger than it is. The commitment to the arts, it’s a beautiful thing to see. All the stuff that happens here and the support that those things get, it’s pretty special.”



Emily Pohl-Weary, Dawson's 72nd writer-in-residence at Berton House,
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish@northwestel.net (In Dawson)



Daughter Carol Kowal, **Gertrude (Rose) Squirechuk** (age 88) and granddaughter Donya
Photo courtesy Alistair McGregor (In Vernon)

Hi Sherron,

Here's the cover to my memoir, *Journeys Outside and In*. No need to explain the word "Outside" to Moc Tel readers!

I published a second printing of *Journeys Outside and In* in 2015. A collection of memoirs, each chapter is a self-contained short-story. It explores subjects ranging from my travels Outside to Cuba and El Salvador, my time spent as a social worker in Dawson, my election and experiences as MLA for Ogilvie and my appointment as Minister of Education as well as the challenges of flying into Old Crow without an airstrip and driving at 40 below. It is a candid view of the people I have met and the journeys I have taken, both in travelling, and in maturing as a true Yukoner over 50 years.

The book can be purchased at Mac's Fireweed or for \$20 plus postage directly from me. Email me at emillard@northwestel.net or write to P. O. Box 165, Carcross, YT, Y0B 1B0. Phone (867) 821-3821.

Thanks, Sherron, and good luck with the Moc Tel which I really enjoy. I like the idea of just cutting back on the number of issues to ease the pressure. I don't always get time to read everything when it comes so often.

Eleanor Millard

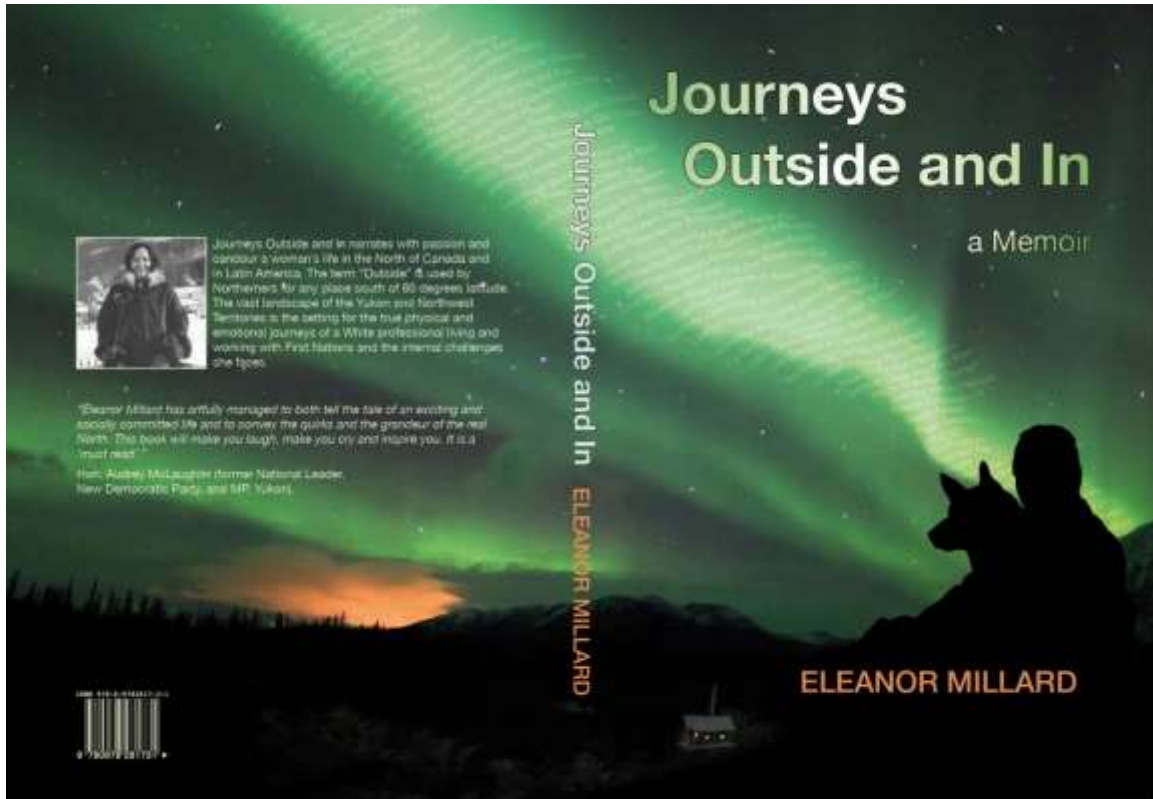


Image courtesy Eleanor Millard

OBIT



MITCHELL, DAVID ROBERT

Dec 04 1927 - Dec 04 2015

Dave was born in Fernie BC, and grew up on a farm in the Doe River area. A prankster from birth, riding his horse into the school (when it was his turn to light the wood heater)

did not go unnoticed, throwing a chicken under the blankets of his sister and her husband's bed (she never forgave him for that) and in the Yukon he had a reputation for stopping in at friends for bacon and eggs in the wee hours of the morning. All the shouting and commotion led to a lot of laughing and good fun. Dave found work on bridge crews during the early days of the Alaska Highway construction. In 1946 he married Lois Anderson in Dawson Creek. They moved to the Yukon in 1951 with Bob, Gerald and Donna in tow. Dave tried a few jobs, but settled into a career as a firefighter for DPW. When Dianne and Caren came along it was time for a bigger house. Dave loved the Yukon, the freedom, open space, endless light in the summer. He and the family made many trips hunting, camping, sledding - always eager to check out a new trail to see where it would lead. Dave and Lois transferred to Fort Nelson in 1972. Retiring early at 54 years, Dave felt it was now time to do what he wanted. So they spent the next several years travelling and working throughout the Yukon and Northern BC, Dave trapping, gold mining and truck driving. They wintered in Arizona before retiring for good in Lumby in 1990. Dave got a kick out of everyone's kids and their growing pains. He will be remembered by everyone as being quite a character, he will be greatly missed. There will be an informal Celebration of Life, at the Lumby Senior's Center on Saturday, December 12, 2 - 4pm. In lieu of flowers, donations are asked to be made in Dave's memory to the Vernon Jubilee Hospital Foundation, 2101 32 Street, Vernon, BC V1T 9Z9.

Vernon Morning Star.



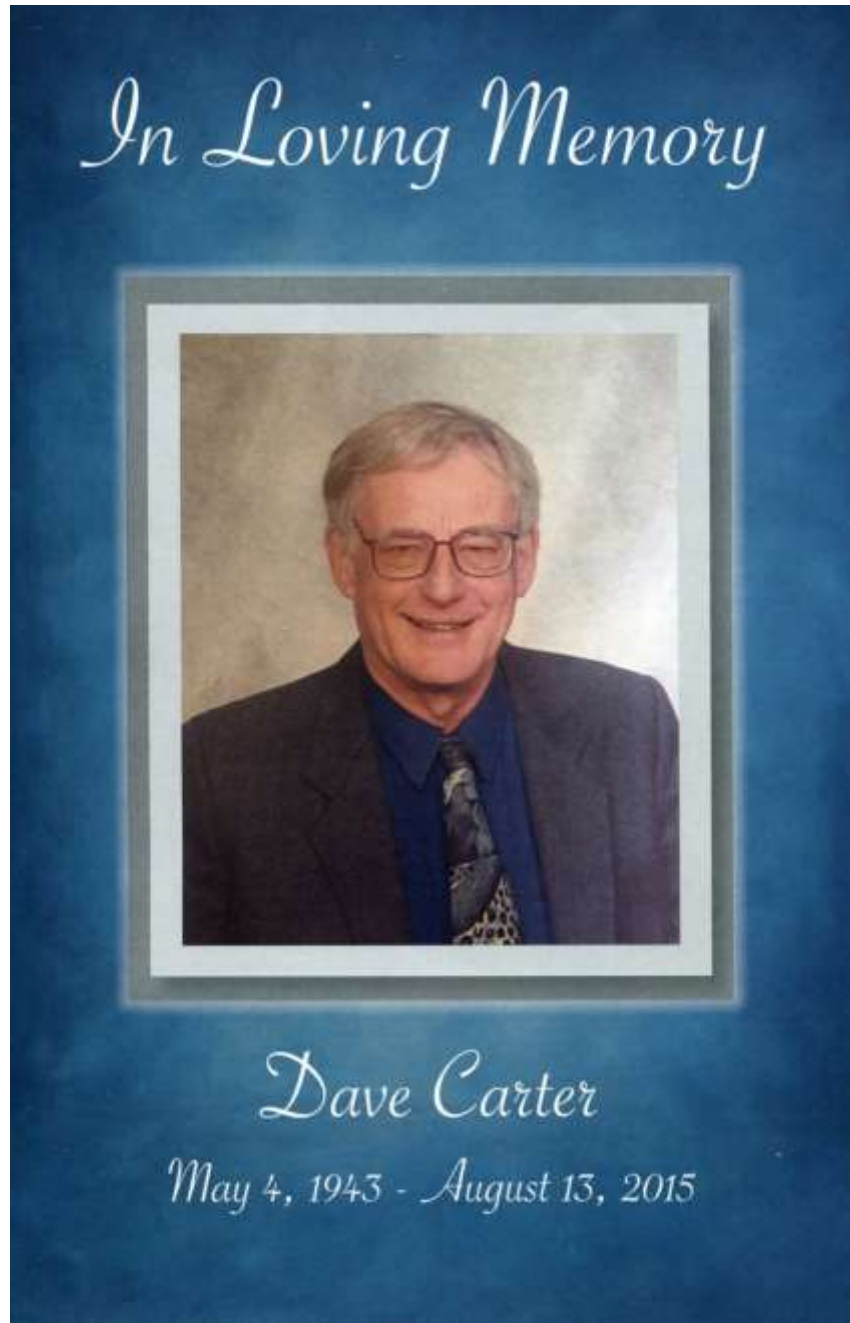
Alfred Joseph BOURASSA

BOURASSA, Alfred Joseph August 29, 1924 – December 8, 2015 It is with profound sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of our sweet husband and dad. His loving family was by his side. He is now with his Lord and Saviour and may he rest in eternal peace. Alfred will be forever remembered for his charm, his genuine smile and fun-loving personality. He truly was everyone's friend! Alfred's passion above all was to spend time with Lucy, his family and friends. An active man, he enjoyed a long life filled with his favourite things: Fishing, hunting, tennis, playing cards, carpentry, travelling, and entertaining. He is survived by his devoted wife Lucy, and his three children; Maureen (Kris) Bjornerud, Ron (Teresa) Bourassa, and Anne (Mike) Fahlman. Also his beloved grandchildren; Tyler (Robin) Bjornerud, Lianne (Jesse) Bjornerud, Riina (Jon) Cooke, Ryan (Diana) Bourassa, and great-grandchildren Kaija, Ryker, and newborn Tayah. Born in Radville, Saskatchewan as one of 12 children, Alfred is survived by

brothers; Leopold, Gerard, and Frank (Aurel), and sisters; Noelie, Marie and Isabel. He was predeceased by his parents Aristide and Orise Bourassa; brothers Omer, Arthur, and Adrien; and sisters Anna and Irene. **The family lived in Whitehorse, Yukon**, then Nanaimo, Coquitlam, Langley, and Surrey, BC. Our family would like to thank the Staff at Fleetwood Villa and Fleetwood Place for their wonderful care and attention to Alfred these past 6 years. We are forever indebted to their kindness. A Funeral Mass will be held at St. Matthew's Parish (16079 - 88th Avenue, Surrey, BC) on Wednesday, December 16 at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, donations are graciously accepted, in Alfred's name, to either: Seniors Come Share Society (specifically the Newton Branch), The Alzheimers Society of BC, or the Heart & Stroke Foundation of BC.

Retired. Cpl. **Stuart Wesley BATES** - passed away on the 26th of Nov. 2015 at Clearwater, BC. Stu was born and grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Even as a young boy he was a hard worker and had after school and weekend jobs. Through his various jobs he learned the skills and knowledge that would keep him busy throughout his life. Stu could fix small engines, build wooden boats, put in the electrical and plumbing systems in a house, design and build furniture and he also loved to garden. Stu served in the Canadian Navy during 1944-45 on the Corvette HMCS Lachute which was part of the escort convoys between Canada and England during the war. When he was discharged at the end of the war he completed his high school education and **eventually joined the RCMP in 1946 and was stationed in Whitehorse, Yukon in 1948. Stu met Ann Clendening in 1949 in Whitehorse, while she was working in the hotel to earn money for art school in New York City. They were married in 1952 and both children were born in the Yukon.** They left the north in 1956 when Stu was transferred to Swift Current, Saskatchewan. After a couple of more moves he retired from the force in 1965. The family settled in Kamloops when Stu got a job with the BC Forest Service. He worked in the Regional and District offices and retired in 1986. Stu was never still for long and continued to be active hiking in the mountains, skiing, paddling down rivers in the canoes he made well into his 80's. Stu and Ann moved up to Clearwater in 2001 where he died suddenly on Nov 26th. Stu leaves behind Ann, his wife of 63 years, son Wes, daughter Abbey, granddaughter Rae (Mark Galante) and three great granddaughters Rose, Suzanna and Eliza, nephew Jim Doak and two nieces Kathy Merideth and Margie Caparra. After retiring he worked with the BC Forest Service. Stu's wishes are to be cremated. There will be no services at this time. The family will be having a Celebration of Life for Stuart in the spring. The family would like to thank the staff at Dr. Helmcken Memorial Hospital for their care and kindness. Donations in memory of Stuart may be made to the Dr. Helmcken Memorial Hospital Equipment fund, 640 Park Drive, Clearwater, BC. V0E 1N1.

Condolences may be sent to the family online at www.NTFuneral.com



If anyone has the details for Dave Carter's obit please send them to me. – Sherron

REMOVED FROM THE LIST

Last paid in 2013:

You are a special person and do not deserve to beg for payments!

Please remove me from the list....reluctantly, but it is time. All the best!

Bonnie Dalziel bonniedalziel@gmail.com (In Whitehorse)

Unfortunately I'll have to cancel my subscription to the Moctel :(

I have enjoyed reading the MT very much; hearing about people my parents knew was/is heartwarming. Thank you for doing such a great job of keeping Yukoner's connected!!

All the Best

Barb Cook cookhart2001@yahoo.ca (In Calgary)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

You never realize how boring your life is until someone asks you what you do for fun.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

From The Star Cook Book, The Women of Yukon Chapter No 1 order of Eastern Star, Dawson, Yukon Territory, for the Benefit of the War Work 1942.

Plum Pudding

3 cups of bread crumbs
2 cups chopped suet
1 cup brown sugar
½ tsp cloves
2 tbsps. molasses
2 cups raisins
½ cup lemon peel
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp nutmeg
2 tbsps. flour
½ tsp soda
5 eggs
2 cups currants

Nuts if desired

Enough cream or milk to make batter.

Steam 6 hours.

Alice E. Bigg

DATES TO REMEMBER



**Vancouver Yukoners' Association
88th Annual Reunion
April 08-10, 2016**



Banquet - Saturday, April 09, 2016

**River Rock Casino Resort – Whistler Ballroom
8811 River Rd, Richmond BC
Free Parking in Casino Parkade**

**Hotel reservations
Telephone: 604-247-8900 or toll free 1-866-748-3718**

**ASK FOR VANCOUVER YUKONERS' RATE
1 King Bed or 2 Queen Bed Standard Room \$152.00 & 1 Bedroom Suite \$182.00
2 Bedroom Resort Suite \$232.00**

Special rates extend 3 days pre- and post-banquet based on availability
BOOK EARLY – AVAILABILITY & RATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Banquet Reception: Ballroom Foyer No-Host Bar 5pm – 6pm
Welcome followed by Dinner: 6:15 pm
For group seating reservations, please follow directions on website at
www.vancouver-yukoners.com
Check the website for updates and a list of those attending

Hospitality Room: Open Friday from 4 pm and Saturday from noon
Note: Pick up tickets in Hospitality Room

THE CANUCKS AND HANK KARR TO PERFORM FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT
.....

**REGISTER BEFORE FEB 29/16 FOR DRAW OF FREE SUITE FOR 2 NIGHTS
AT RIVER ROCK
Book early as ticket sales could be limited**

FOR TICKETS CONTACT VIVIAN STUART:

**Address: #217 – 3255 Cook St, Victoria BC V8X 1A4
Phone: 250-383-1349 email: lornellis@shaw.ca
\$58.00 per person with cheque payable in advance to**

Vancouver Yukoners' Association

(Maiden names too please – Helps to find friends of years ago)

Yukon Residents may contact Penny Sippel at 867 667-4094
303A Hanson St. Whitehorse YT Y1A 1Y5

We encourage Yukon residents to fly Air North. Contact them for any special discounts.

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 your 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

Sherron Jones
483 – 5707 E. 32nd Street
Yuma Arizona USA 85365