

YUKON HERITAGE INVENTORY

Phase 3: Part 2

Mercantilism: A Theme Study

Prepared For  
Heritage Branch  
Department of Tourism  
Government of Yukon

By David Porter  
Midnight Arts  
January 1990

# Mercantilism: A Theme Study

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Historical Overview .....	2
Early Fur Trade .....	2
Development of Mercantilism .....	8
Boom Time .....	10
Communication .....	12
Transportation .....	14
Storage .....	16
After The Boom .....	18
Structural History .....	26
Endnotes .....	38
Bibliography .....	40

This paper will deal with the history of mercantile activity in the Yukon followed by a discussion of the extant remains of structures related to this theme.

Mercantilism, in the context of this paper, is understood to mean the interchange of goods and commodities; the act of trading, and the selling and buying of goods.

#### INTRODUCTION

Mercantile activity in the Yukon has a long and varied story. The earliest occurrences of trade are not particularly clear but there is evidence from both archaeological findings and from oral tradition that the indigenous peoples, who lived in very separate groupings, traded amongst themselves for those items of food or resources which were not typically available in the area in which they lived. Trade goods could include specific kinds of furs, a variety of foods and particular raw materials for the making of tools and weapons. Trading partners were established and trading was carried out yearly at established trading locations. It is also known that, as early as the first part of the nineteenth century, Russian trade goods were being carried inland by the coastal Indians to exchange for furs, with

the inland Indians. This may not be strictly viewed as mercantile but it no doubt set the stage for direct trade by the non-native or Europeans in the decades to follow.

For the purposes of this study only the activity that occurred after 1840 or starting with the coming of the Hudson Bay Company to the area now known as the Yukon Territory will be discussed in any detail.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### EARLY FUR TRADE

The impetus for the growth of mercantilism in the Yukon was originally the trade for furs. For many years furs were in great demand by a European market. The clothing industry utilised fur because of its durable quality and ability to provide warmth while being light weight.<sup>1</sup>

The Hudson's Bay Company came into the Yukon River drainage system in 1840 looking for rich sources of furs. They found in various parts of the Yukon River valley an enormous supply of furs and over a span of the next 50 years the HBC established 10 posts throughout the territory. The posts that HBC established were not all successful, some operated for only a few years, while others had considerable more success. The posts were opened at various time through the 50 years as new areas were

explored and new opportunities for trade appeared.

In 1840 Robert Campbell and his party, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, was exploring north of the Liard River area. On Frances Lake Campbell built a small cabin, which he called Glenlyon House. From here Campbell continued to explore the rivers running north and west. Campbell and his men travelled as far as the Pelly River. He named the location where he first spotted the far bank of the Pelly River, Pelly Banks, close to the mouth of Campbell Creek. In 1842 Campbell and his men returned to Glenlyon and built a permanent post which he named Fort Frances. This was the first HBC post built within the boundaries of the Yukon. Once Fort Frances was established, Campbell sent some of his men on to Pelly Banks to construct a shelter and a canoe for his planned exploration down the Pelly River. In 1843 Campbell journeyed from Frances Lake to Pelly Banks and then travelled downstream to a large river that he named, Lewes River. They continued downstream on the Lewes (later discovered to be the Yukon) but were warned by Indians they met that the Indians farther downstream were extremely hostile and would probably kill them and eat them.<sup>2</sup> Campbell reluctantly turned back.

Following Campbell's report of his travel and findings, he was advised by the administrators of the HBC to build a trading post at the confluence of the Pelly and Lewes rivers. After spending some time at Fort Frances establishing a healthy trade in the area, Campbell returned to the Pelly Banks area and

established a post near the location where he had first sighted the Pelly River several years earlier. He spent two years at Pelly Banks trading and building boats for the journey back to the Lewes River. His next task was to build a fort where the Pelly meets the Lewes River. In June of 1848, Campbell and his men began the construction of Fort Selkirk on the left bank of the Pelly River as it enters the Lewes. This location was abandoned for a spot across the Lewes River, on a high bank, as the original site was plagued by high water levels in the spring. The relocation took place in 1851/52.

Fort Selkirk was in a position of conflict with the trading Chilkats from the Pacific coast. The Chilkats had for many years been the exclusive traders with some of the Northern Tutchone in the area of Fort Selkirk. Trading here had not been as successful as expected. Due to the proximity to the coast, the interior Indians were able to get better prices for their furs from the coastal traders. Fort Selkirk, over several seasons, had poor yields for the amount of work involved in supplying the post with goods. The administrators of the HBC at Fort Simpson were of the opinion that Fort Selkirk should be closed and possibly moved one hundred miles downstream to an area where the Indians were not already trading with the Chilkats. The Chilkat traders themselves saved the HBC from further quandary over what to do with Fort Selkirk. Sometime in late July of 1852, a group of Chilkats descended on the fort, carried off everything they deemed to be of value and destroyed what they left behind.<sup>3</sup>

Campbell was distraught over the turn of events and was left with no choice but to make his way to Fort Simpson in hope of getting permission to rebuild at Fort Selkirk.

Fort Selkirk is a case in point of a trading endeavour which faced great difficulties, difficulties which would not be overcome until the next century. Campbell was constantly plagued by slow and ineffective communication, transportation was difficult and unpredictable and dependent on the seasons, and his competition was able to trade at a better return. Fort Frances was later closed for reasons of poor returns and the risks to human life involved in supplying such a remote post.

While Campbell was trading in the south and east of the Yukon River valley, John Bell, also with the HBC, entered the Yukon River drainage system from the northeast. In 1842 Bell crossed the Richardson Mountains and explored the Rat, Bell and the easterly portion of the Porcupine rivers. Once again in 1844 Bell entered the Porcupine drainage area following instructions to explore the river to its mouth. He established a satellite post, Lapierre House, on the Bell River, approximately 35 miles upstream from the Porcupine River. Bell then continued his exploration of the Porcupine River to its meeting with the Yukon River. With the knowledge that the confluence of the Porcupine and the Yukon River was well west of the 141st meridian, placing it within Russian American territory, the HBC challenged the Russians traders in their own territory by establishing a trading post there. The HBC was not willing to watch the competition

take all the rich furs out of the area without a fight.<sup>4</sup> An HBC agent, Alexander Murray, began construction of Fort Yukon on July 1, 1847. Trade at the fort began even before the buildings were finished.<sup>5</sup> Trading continued to do well in the area except for some minor competition from the Russian American Company trading on the lower section of the Yukon River.

The HBC was not alone in its trading interests in the northwest part of North America. In 1867 the United States purchased the land called Alaska from the Russians and by transfer acquired the defunct Russian American Company, a company which had harvested sea otter pelts along the Russian Alaska coast since 1799. The Russian American Company was purchased by a group of American businessmen in San Francisco who renamed the company the Alaska Commercial Company. They recognized in the Yukon River valley a huge potential for the trading of furs as well as supplying the slow but steadily growing numbers of prospectors moving into the region. The search for gold had become an additional incentive, attracting adventurers and fortune seekers to the north.

These businessmen were also well aware of the presence of the British in the form of the Hudson's Bay Company, and its continued activity in the Yukon River valley. After completing a survey in 1869 the Alaska Commercial Company in no uncertain terms ordered the HBC to vacate Fort Yukon as it unquestionably lay within American territory. Having done so, the Alaska Commercial Company quickly occupied the fort and carried on

trading with the Indians. The HBC moved its operation upstream to a location identified years earlier by Murray.<sup>6</sup> The new post was called Rampart House but it too was discovered to be on American soil. This time, in 1870, the buildings were burned to the ground in order to prevent the Americans from using them for trade. Rampart House was re-established in 1872 and they operated there until 1889 when they discovered again that the post was still within the American boundary. This time when Rampart was moved, HBC was sure to move it a few hundred yards east of the 141st meridian.<sup>7</sup>

Elsewhere in the territory, fur trading on the Arctic coast by American whalers began to occur during the 1870's. The Inuit of the coastal area had been exposed to a trading network with the Russians and had white trade goods in their possession. Fur trading became a lucrative sideline for the whalers. They had cheap transportation costs, no posts to maintain and they were not paying customs duties on the trade goods that they were bringing into Canada. As a result of these advantages, the Whalers were able to offer much better prices.<sup>8</sup> These prices were so good in fact that the G'wichin of the Porcupine River area abandoned their practice of trading at Fort MacPherson, La Pierre House and Rampart House. The Hudson Bay Company could no longer compete with the coast traders. The last HBC post was withdrawn from the Yukon in 1894. This marked the end of the Hudson Bay Company trade dominance in the northern part of the territory, at least for a time.<sup>9</sup>

### DEVELOPMENT OF MERCANTILISM

Fur trading was not the only economic activity in the Yukon River drainage system. In the early 1870's, placer gold mining in the tributaries began to attract attention as another possible gold rush area. Using topographical maps, a prospector by the name of Arthur Harper speculated that since the Yukon River had its headwaters in the same auriferous areas of British Columbia as other gold bearing rivers (the Peace and Liard), the tributaries of the Yukon River were worthy of prospecting.<sup>10</sup> In the spring of 1873, Harper, Leroy McQuesten and several others drifted down the MacKenzie River and used the portage to the Porcupine River, developed by John Bell of the HBC.

McQuesten, acting as an agent for the ACC, established a trading post in 1874 on the Yukon River, at a spot six miles downstream from the mouth of the Klondike River.<sup>11</sup> The post, known as Fort Reliance, was moderately successful and one of the first independent trading posts to be established in the Yukon.

The lure of gold was ever present in the minds of men like Arthur Harper and Leroy McQuesten who, in addition to trading at Fort Reliance for the ACC, found time to travel throughout the area prospecting for gold. They were not the only men who had dreamt of finding gold and found themselves living in remote areas under less than ideal conditions. There were prospectors

spread all along the Yukon River and its tributaries. As word of significant gold strikes spread into the different areas, these prospectors began to congregate in small communities. The first of these small communities to support a post was at the mouth of the Stewart River.

In 1885 there were enough miners in the area to encourage McQuesten and Harper to establish a trading post at the mouth of the Stewart. This strike was short lived as a wealthier strike was made on the Forty Mile River in 1886 leaving the Stewart area nearly abandoned. Within a year, nearly 300 men were living in the community which sprang up at the mouth of the Forty Mile River, just a few miles from the Yukon/Alaskan boundary.<sup>12</sup> The townsite was known as Forty Mile and very quickly was able to support a store. A year after the strike on the Forty Mile River Harper and McQuesten moved their trading business from Stewart to the new town site.<sup>13</sup> In 1889 the ACC arrived on its own steamer, the *Arctic*, at Forty Mile. This out of the way town was able to boast of ten saloons, a debating society, and a library staffed with volunteers.<sup>14</sup> The business of supplying the mining communities in the north was drawing much interest and attention in the south. In 1892 the North American Trading and Transportation Company (NAT&T) was formed to compete with the ACC. In 1893, the NAT&T established itself at the mouth of the Forty Mile, across from the settlement. The new store was called Fort Cudahy.

Harper continued to move around, but finally settled at Fort

Selkirk in 1889. He applied for some land and started a small farm.

In the midst of the mining and trapping activity the mercantile companies were responding to the greater demand for goods. The means of transportation was continually being improved with bigger vessels that could carry large quantities of supplies as well as larger pieces of machinery and equipment. The boats were also becoming faster, more powerful and better able to negotiate the upstream journey.

#### BOOM TIME

The search for gold soon became the primary activity of practically every one in the region. The entire Yukon River valley was being so thoroughly prospected it was only a matter of time before someone stopped to pan for gold on Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River. In August of 1896 Skookum Jim, George Carmack and Tagish Charlie were fortunate enough stop and test the gravels of Rabbit Creek. The strike was rich and when the news swept through the various mining communities, the populations en masse headed to the Klondike valley to stake a claim.

Following the news of the discovery of gold on Rabbit Creek, later renamed Bonanza Creek, Joseph Ladue recognized the level

expanse of land at the mouth of the Klondike River as a likely place for a town site, which such a gold strike was bound to need in the very near future. Ladue arranged for a patent for 178 acres of swampy marsh land and soon after had it surveyed. Based on previous experience with boom towns, he moved his sawmill from its Sixty Mile site to his land and built a two storey building to be a trading post and saloon. He knew there would be a demand to supply the incoming stampeders with lumber for houses and provide supplies for the approaching winter. By spring there were thirteen buildings on the Ladue townsite along with a scattering of well-worn canvas dwellings which were increasing daily.

Staying true to its reputation as an aggressive and adventurously operated business and having the experience of numerous other boom town opportunities, the Alaska Commercial Company steamer, the *Alice*, arrived on June 2, 1897 at Dawson City (Ladue named the townsite after George Dawson, a Canadian government geologist who had spent much time in the area in 1887). The *Alice* was the vessel which shortly thereafter carried the gold rich men whose arrival in San Francisco started the Klondike gold rush. By July, both the ACC and the North American Trading & Transportation had started the busy work of constructing stores and warehouses close to the waterfront. These two companies were conspicuous by the number and size of buildings erected.

1898 was to be a year like no other in the history of the Yukon as thousands upon thousands of gold seekers arrived in Dawson looking for the proverbial mother lode. Authorities estimate that close to thirty thousand stampedeers arrived at Dawson that year. Most of them arrived too late to stake their own claim but, in order to survive, would work for another man lucky enough to have arrived first. A portion of the incoming population however also arrived seeking a fortune but their means of doing this was by supplying the miners with the essentials of food and hardware for the task of mining gold on the creeks.

The companies that were already set up and operating in the Yukon River valley, namely the Alaska Commercial Company and the North American Trade & Transportation Company, had an easier time moving into Dawson. They were able to get there first in 1898 and secure the best waterfront property which put them in a good position to dominate the mercantile market. They however did face the same communication, transportation and storage difficulties as the other business ventures in the north.

### Communication

The problem of communication was eventually resolved in 1901 but prior to that it caused numerous complications. During the latter half of the nineteenth century communication with the centres to the south was slow if it existed at all. The

companies that were supplying the Yukon River valley were able to order only when supply vessels from the south were making their return trips. Orders for the winter season were placed in early summer with the hope that orders would be received before freeze-up. This system worked fine as long as the population remained small and the lifestyle of the miners and trappers remained meagre. At this point there were still many miners who would return south in the fall and so could usually outfit themselves for the time they were in the area.

At the time of the large population influx there were no speedy and dependable communication links with the supply centres in the south. An order or message could take up to two weeks just to reach Vancouver.<sup>15</sup> Mail sent to the south had to travel by boat down the Yukon River to the Bering Sea and then by ocean going vessel south along the coast to Vancouver or Seattle. With this kind of unpredictable delay, ordering had to be done well in advance to ensure an adequate supply of goods. The ordering process was also complicated by a varying population base which was constantly changing never allowing the merchants a clear picture of what the market would be six months from the time the order was placed.

With the increased access to the Yukon River via Skagway and Dyea orders were being sent upriver to Skagway to the ships heading back to Vancouver and Seattle. By September 1899 a telegraph line from Dawson to Skagway was in place which reduced greatly the time required to place an order with suppliers.<sup>16</sup> A

through telegraph connection with Vancouver was made in 1901 and this again, significantly reduced the time needed to place an order.<sup>17</sup> The postal system was equally improved by the completion of the rail line to Whitehorse.

### Transportation

Due to the rugged terrain of the region travel by boat was clearly the easiest and quickest method to access nearly every part of the territory. The Yukon River provided an excellent transportation corridor through some of the richest fur and gold bearing regions of the Yukon. Transportation of goods and supplies into the Yukon River valley at the start of activity in the area had followed an all water route from San Francisco, Seattle, or Vancouver north along the Pacific coast, west along the Alaskan coast line and then north through a portion of the Bering Strait to the mouth of the Yukon River. From here a large area of the interior of Alaska and the Yukon could be accessed. The fur trade and gold mining activity for the most part was supplied by this route. There was a brief time when the fur trade was being supplied by routes over the Richardson Mountains from the MacKenzie River and from the Liard River basin area into the upper tributaries of the Yukon River, notably the Pelly River, but this was short lived. The moving of large quantities via these routes was far too difficult and time consuming to be

economically viable. With the introduction of steam operated paddle wheelers to the Yukon River, the water route from the Bering Sea became the most popular. The ice-free season on the lower Yukon River was generally 3 months long. Using this route and means of transportation meant less handling of freight plus large items and large quantities could be carried with each shipment.

A significant addition to the transportation network was the completion of the White Pass & Yukon Route through to Whitehorse in 1900. This rail line connected the ocean port of Skagway, Alaska to Whitehorse at the head of navigable waters of the Yukon River. Other than the manageable Five Finger Rapids, navigation on the stretch from Whitehorse to Dawson City was fairly uncomplicated. The upper section of the river was ice-free for a month longer than the lower section.

Transportation always has been and continues to be a critical consideration in operating a mercantile business. Due to the northern latitude of the Yukon River's location there were definite obstacles imposed by it, on the nature of managing a business in the Yukon.

As long as the river remained ice-free, it was used as an economical way to transport goods and people. However, the river only remained ice-free for approximately 3-4 months of the year. This meant that the timing of ordering supplies was critical. If ordering was late, the merchant risked having his order leave on the last boat of the season and perhaps get trapped in the

freeze. The merchant's supplies would have to sit there on the boat until break-up the following spring. Once orders started being shipped via Skagway and Whitehorse, there was the option of having these supplies taken off the boat wherever it was trapped and the supplies hauled overland to Dawson. Of course this added substantially to the cost of shipping in the goods, costs which had to be handed on to the consumer. Stock-taking, ordering and shipping became a part of merchandising that required an understanding of the seasonal patterns, both in transportation and population demands, and good timing. As early as January, the experienced merchant would start to determine what to order in late March for the first shipment that arrived in early June.<sup>18</sup>

The cost of transporting goods long distances was an issue of concern for merchant and customer. The transportation costs were figured into the retail price of items. Use of the White Pass & Yukon Route rail line greatly reduced the time to move goods from the south to Dawson. This improvement however cost the merchant more money and had to be passed on to the customer.

The problem of transportation is one that continues to plague suppliers to the present day.

### Storage

One of the consequences of a short shipping season in the

Yukon was the requirement of year-round facilities for both warm and artificial cold storage. Very quickly the Dawson streets were dominated by long, low corrugated iron warehouses where most of the winter's supplies were stored.<sup>19</sup> Since many of the smaller businesses could not afford to build their own long-term storage facilities, nine large firms made available space to them. In 1900 one firm, the Yukon Dock Company, charged \$7.50 a ton per month for warm storage and \$15.00 a ton per month for artificial cold storage. The rates were high but equally high were the taxes and insurance rates that the storage companies had to pay.<sup>20</sup> Fires were a constant concern. The early years of Dawson witnessed many fires which destroyed whole city blocks in a few hours. The insurance rates in 1902 were between 5 and 7% of the value of the building.<sup>21</sup> Nearly all traders throughout the territory found it necessary to build storage buildings. As previously mentioned, supplies only arrived a couple times a year so quantity of goods were often larger than what the store could handle. Two small buildings were easier to build than one large structure and the not uncommon occurrence of fire might make the difference between having all the stock lost in the blaze or only half. So under the conditions of many of these remote trading posts, a separate storage facility was simply good management. Some of the bigger companies used metal siding to build their storage buildings.

### After The Boom

During the high point of the rush, the population of the Dawson area was an estimated 40,000 in 1898. Almost as quickly as the population grew in the Dawson area, it began to shrink. Gold strikes in Atlin, B.C. and Nome, Alaska caught the attention of thousands of stampeders who, having arrived at Dawson City too late to stake their own claim, took off again with renewed enthusiasm for the "new" goldfields. The gold mining that was occurring was being done by larger companies who could afford the machinery needed to extract the gold. Mining was less labour intensive and more mechanised.

The 1901 census put the territorial population at 27,000, with 9,000 of those in Dawson. The Klondike gold fields was home to the majority of the remainder of the population.<sup>22</sup> Merchants in Dawson who had been able to develop a large customer base and usually backing from outside the territory were able to carry on while the rest were forced to close. Competition continued to be fierce. Improved communication with the centres in the south helped to improve the situation, as well, reliable transportation networks were in place to ensure quicker delivery of the orders.

As the population figures indicates, the territory population was now spread out with two-thirds of the inhabitants living outside of Dawson. There was still much prospecting going on, scattered throughout the territory. As well, trapping continued to be a viable livelihood, especially since the price

of furs rose considerably after 1900 and again in 1905.<sup>23</sup>

As was the pattern, traders and store operators would go to where there was a need to provide supplies to those living far from major trade centres and transportation corridors.

The independent merchant quickly moved to supply the many outlying and less populated regions of the Yukon. One of the more successful independent trading companies was Taylor & Drury, General Merchants and Fur Traders. When the White Pass rail line was completed as far as Whitehorse, they opened a store on what is now First Avenue. Shortly after that Taylor & Drury, established a chain of posts along the Yukon River and many of its tributaries. The first trading posts were at Hootalinqua, Little Salmon and Teslin. These were followed by Ross River, Pelly Banks and Fort Selkirk. Fort Selkirk became a major centre for T&D because of its location at the confluence of the Yukon and Pelly rivers. Taylor & Drury purchased a building from Frank Vodika at Fort Selkirk in 1917.<sup>24</sup> Taylor & Drury operated there until the 1940's when most the resident Indians moved away from Fort Selkirk to work on the government road that was being built between Whitehorse and Mayo. With the discovery of rich silver-lead ores near Keno Hill in 1919, the town of Mayo, which sat on the bank of the Stewart River where the Mayo River joined it, became a major supply and transportation centre. Taylor & Drury found this area busy enough to create a thriving business. The store closed here in the early 1950's. They also had a satellite outlet of the Mayo store in Keno. To better supply the Mayo

store, Taylor & Drury purchased a ninety foot sternwheeler called the Thistle from White Pass. Stores were then opened at Coffee Creek and Stewart Island.

In 1905 the store in Whitehorse was destroyed in a fire. The next store was built at the corner of Main Street and First Avenue. To the east on Teslin Lake, where the newly established community of Teslin existed, T&D set up a trading post to trade in this fur rich region.

Few sternwheelers were suitable to navigate all the tributaries of the Yukon River. In 1909 the company had built a small paddlewheel boat, the *Kluhane*, to reduce their dependence on other carriers. Twice a year on the Pelly River, Taylor & Drury supplied their post at Ross River and on Teslin Lake, Taylor & Drury made three supply visits a year to Teslin.

To the northwest T&D established posts at Champagne and Burwash. During the 1920's T&D had a total of thirteen stores operating throughout the territory.

In the 1930's, Taylor & Drury opened a General Motors Chevrolet dealership on Second Ave. in Whitehorse, which is still in operation.<sup>25</sup>

Late in 1942, the Alaska Highway and the Canol Road were built as part of the war effort. Taylor & Drury were given special permission to travel on these roads to supply their stores in Teslin, Ross River and Sheldon Lake. Taylor & Drury could now supply their stores by truck, more often than just a few times during the summer and fall. Populations shifted after

the highways were built and fur prices dropped, forcing Taylor & Drury to close many of the trading outposts.

Another entrepreneurial duo was Schofield and Zimmerlee who set up a trading business at Fort Selkirk at the turn of the century. From here they did a healthy trading business as well as trapping of their own. Later, Schofield and Zimmerlee established a trading post at Russell Creek on the MacMillan River, approximately 300 miles from Fort Selkirk. In 1938, the Hudson's Bay Company bought out Schofield and Zimmerlee's business at Fort Selkirk.<sup>26</sup>

The Northern Commercial Company, formerly the Alaska Commercial Company, was able to hang on to its position in Dawson as a major supplier to the residents and gold mining companies of the area. In 1920 the NCC changed hands to a group of men interested in doing business in the north.<sup>27</sup> The Dawson store continued and the name remained the same. Two years later the NCC moved into Mayo.<sup>28</sup> Mayo, due its location on the Stewart River, had become the transportation hub for the region. The ore from the mines at Keno, about forty miles north of Mayo, was trucked to Mayo and there placed on river sternwheelers, bound for the Yukon River and south to Whitehorse, to the rail line.

In 1927, the NCC started a mercantile business in Whitehorse and over a period of several years purchased two adjacent buildings which they connected with archways. Unfortunately the

NCC lost its store to a fire in 1943. By the end of the year, NCC had built a new store and opened its doors to a waiting crowd, despite 40 below zero temperatures. The construction of the Alaska Highway and the presence of military personnel inflated the population in Whitehorse to over 20,000 by 1945. Needless to say, business was good.<sup>29</sup> However, the boom and bust pattern of the Yukon again occurred. Once the Canadian government took over the Alaska Highway, the population of Whitehorse dropped significantly.<sup>30</sup>

In 1951, the NCC opened a modern self-service type groceteria, similar to those to found in the larger cities of the south. Much of the business done by the NCC store in Whitehorse was in heavy machinery used in the mining industry across the Yukon. The store also provided repairs and parts replacement.<sup>31</sup> When the NNC finally shut its doors in Whitehorse, Taylor & Drury bought the building for its own store.

Meanwhile in the northern part of the territory, the Hudson's Bay Company had withdrawn from Rampart House on the Porcupine River because of the strong competition from the whalers on the Arctic coast. The Indians who had been trading there had to travel great distances to trade at Fort Yukon, at Fort MacPherson and or at Herschel Island. In 1905, a Scotsman by the name of Daniel Cadzow, re-established a trading post at Rampart House. He moved into the HBC buildings and in a short time developed a profitable trade. Cadzow's success was due to

his sound trading practices and attitudes, which were very much similar to the HBC way of doing business, even to the point of trading goods that the HBC had used in the area. And he traded fairly, giving good prices for furs which helped to attract the local Indians and develop a loyalty by them to trade with him. All of Cadzow's supplies came by way of Fort Yukon, which often meant that he had to transport the supplies himself from there to Rampart. In 1914 Cadzow purchased a 43 foot steamboat which had the registered name of Rampart.

Cadzow made the most of good prices for fox furs by operating his own fox farm near his home. He died in the spring of 1929. By August of that year, the RCMP and customs post were closed at Rampart and moved to Old Crow.

On the west shore of Kluane Lake, gold was found in quantities that some hoped would start another gold rush. Two brothers from France arrived in the Yukon looking for a fortune from this gold. Louis and Eugene Jacqout were relatively successful in their gold mining attempts. In 1904 the brothers established a trading post in the area that is now Burwash Landing. They used the wagon road that existed between Whitehorse and Kluane Lake. At Christmas Bay, on the east shore of Kluane Lake they built a warehouse and from there they would take the supplies by boat across the lake to Burwash Landing.

Harry 'Shorty' Chambers, a refugee from American justice,

escaped to the Yukon around 1897-98. After spending time in Whitehorse, he moved west to Champagne and opened a trading post. He married a woman from Champagne and raised 2 boys and 2 girls. Shorty developed a reputation as an honest trader and was backed by one Louis Leoy from San Francisco who supplied Shorty with supplies. Shorty died in 1930 and his son George continued to operate the trading post and was also instrumental in the construction of the Alaska Highway in the Kluane area.

A building in Old Crow, built in 1912 had been used by a series of merchants since that time. The Jackson brothers, followed by Joe Netro, operated a store in Old Crow as early as 1938.<sup>32</sup>

After pulling out of the Yukon in 1894 from Rampart, due to the trading competition presented by the whalers on the Arctic coast, the HBC returned to the territory in 1938. In that year the Company opened a store in Fort Selkirk. They also had trading permits for Whitehorse and a store on Frances Lake. The store at Fort Selkirk was purchased from the company of Schofield and Zimmerlee. The HBC managed to maintain a presence at Fort Selkirk until 1951.<sup>33</sup>

There were numerous other traders working throughout the territory during the period of 1900 to 1955. Most of them remained in business for only a short time, leaving very little

physical evidence of their time on the land. Some of these locations have not been visited in many years, so it is not known what remains of some of the posts.

#### SUMMARY

Mercantilism exists in some fashion wherever groups of people live. In the Yukon mercantilism began with the fur trade and for over one hundred years furs were traded at posts and stores throughout the territory. The trappers and traders were soon joined by prospectors and miners. The trading companies were willing to travel most anywhere in order to be accessible to those who were involved in trapping, prospecting and mining. This willingness called upon the trading companies and independent traders to wrestle with transportation difficulties, communication voids and isolation. These difficulties were dealt with slowly but over time solutions were found.

As populations fluctuated following the gold rush, the number of mercantile related businesses also fluctuated to provide for this population. The construction of the Alaska Highway and then the Whitehorse-Mayo and Whitehorse-Dawson roads brought about changes which altered the way the outlying supply centres were supplied. Soon many of the trappers and traders were able to get themselves to the larger supply centres to purchase supplies. The need for the outlying posts diminished, leaving only abandoned buildings to witness to their earlier activity.

### Structural History

At the present time there are scattered throughout the territory structures which are associated with the theme of mercantilism. These buildings are in various states of repair and condition. Some are currently being used for selling supplies, others have been adapted to other uses and some have been abandoned.

According to the Yukon Heritage Inventory guidelines, buildings which have been moved from the original construction site no longer have their initial historic integrity. However, if a building was moved very early in its history, it retains some of its historic significance.

These buildings have been recorded in the Yukon Heritage Inventory.

#### Taylor & Drury Warehouse - Teslin

Date of construction ca. 1910's. Structure is single storey, simple plan, metal clad building. Originally located on waterfront and moved in the 1940's when a store was built near the highway. The building was moved again in 1988 to its location on museum property. Significant for its structural details of warehouse construction.

Source: YHI, 105C/2/8.

#### McLeery Store - Teslin

Date of construction ca. 1940's. Structure is single

storey, simple plan, frame building. Condition of the building is good. Originally built as a store and used as such for five or six years. Rented by the Hudson's Bay Mining Co. 1948-50. Used as a residence from 1956-65. Moved to its present location ca. 1979. Significance is related to its association to an independent trader.

Source: YHI, 105C/2/32.

#### Matthew Watson Store - Carcross

Date of construction ca. 1911. Structure is single storey/two storey, complex plan, frame building. History of building is unclear. Believed to have been moved to Carcross from Conrad after the great fire of 1911. Two buildings were moved and joined together. The condition of the building is good. This store was run by the Watson family for over sixty years.

Source: YHI, 105D/2/41.

#### White Pass Warehouse - Carcross

Date of construction unconfirmed, possibly 1900's. Structure is single storey, simple plan, metal clad building. Originally used as a warehouse. History of the building in any detail is unknown. Condition of the building is good. It is presently being used as a restaurant/theatre during the summer. Historic significance is its close association with the themes of storage and transportation. Possibly the last warehouse on a

water front which was serviced by rail and sternwheelers.

Source: YHI, 105D/2/43.

#### MacKenzie Home - Tagish

Date of construction ca. 1917-18. Structure is one and a half storey, simple plan, log cabin. Originally used as part of fox ranch, trading post was added later. Later operated by Harold White who ran the mink ranch and store. Building is in good condition, currently being used as a residence. Additions have been made to the original structure.

Source: YHI, 105D/8/2; YGR I, Series 4, Vol. 1, File 23B.

#### Hudson Bay Company Store - Frances Lake

Date of construction ca. 1934. Structure is single storey, simple plan, log cabin. The condition of the building is fair to good. This may be the only surviving HBC store in the Yukon of the historic period.

Source: YHI, 105H/6/1.

#### Northern Commercial Company Warehouse - Mayo

Date of construction unknown. Structure is single storey, simple plan, metal clad building. The NNC, along with Taylor & Drury, supplied Mayo for many years. This building is the last NCC building still standing in Mayo.

Source: YHI, 105M/12/14.

#### Taylor & Drury Residence and Warehouse

Date of construction unknown. Structure is single storey, simple plan, frame building. Taylor & Drury provided residence for its employees. This building was also used as a warehouse. Condition of the building is good. This building is one the few Taylor & Drury buildings still standing.

Source: YHI, 105M/12/15.

#### Taylor & Drury Store - Mayo

Date of construction unknown - thought to have been in operation until the 1950's. Structure is a single story, simple plan, frame building. One of a few remaining mercantile related structures in Mayo. Suspect that it is not the original T&D store in Mayo. The building has been modified (covered with plywood sheeting) on the exterior to retain its usefulness. Currently used for storage.

Source: YHI, 105M/12/16.

#### Taylor & Drury Store - Champagne

Date of construction unknown. This building retains much of its original fabric, however its condition is fair to poor. Little is known of its history.

Source: YHI, 115A/16/20.

### Shorty Chambers - Champagne

Date of construction 1902. Business run by Chamber's family members past the time of the construction of the Alaska Highway. The building is fair to good in condition rating and has maintained much of its historic integrity.

Source: Research record form 115A/16/13.

### Brewster Store - Burwash

Date of construction 1946. Structure is single story, simple plan, log cabin. Built to house staff for Jacqout Bros. Bill Brewster used this building as a store ca. 1950 for a brief time. Currently being used as a residence. Building in fair to good condition. One of the few remaining buildings associated with the independent, one location store operator.

Source: Field Recording Form YHI, 115G/7/15.

### Taylor & Drury - Fort Selkirk

Date of construction ca. 1900 - Structure is two storey, complex plan, log and frame building. This building has been stabilized and partially restored by Heritage Branch, Dept. of Tourism, YTG. Historic data nearly complete. Good example of large mercantile establishment used by one of the most successful merchant firms in the Yukon.

Source: YHI, 115I/14/22.

#### Burien's Store - Stewart Island

Date of construction ca. 1940. Structure is single story, simple plan, frame house. Virtually no history known, possible association with Hudson Bay Company Activity in the area. The building has been continually used and maintained by the Burien family who live on the island and therefore structurally the building is in good condition.

Source: Field Recording Form, YHI 1150/6/2.

#### Old Store - Stewart Island

Date of construction unknown, thought to be the oldest building on the site. Structure is single storey, simple plan, frame house. Virtually no history known. Condition of the building is good.

Source: YHI, 1150/6/4.

#### Winaut's Store - Dawson

Date of construction 1902. Presently under the jurisdiction of Klondike National Historic Sites. This building has been restored and maintained and the display windows are used as showcases for interpretive purposes by KNHS.

Source: YHI, 116B/3/31.

#### Harrington's - Dawson

Date of construction ca. 1900. Originally used as a grocery store and residential space. Also used as a tailor shop at one

time. Presently under the jurisdiction of Klondike National Historic Sites. This building has been restored and maintained and is now used as an interpretive centre by KNHS.

Source: YHI, 116B/3/33

#### Tremblay's - Dawson

Date of construction 1900. Presently under the jurisdiction of Klondike National Historic Sites. This building has been restored and maintained and the display windows are used as showcases for interpretive purposes by KNHS. The store is also being used as a retail outlet much as it was used during its historic period.

Source: YHI, 116B/3/37.

#### Klondike Thawing Machine Co. - Dawson

Date of construction 1901. Structure is single storey, simple plan, frame building. Presently under the jurisdiction of Klondike National Historic Sites. This building has been restored and maintained and the display windows are used as showcases for interpretive purposes by KNHS.

Source: YHI, 116 B/3/39.

#### Northern Commercial Company Warehouse - Dawson

Date of construction 1898. Structure is single storey, simple plan, frame building. Built originally for storage. This

building has been restored and maintained by KNHS.

Source: YHI, 116B/3/48.

#### Strait's Second Hand Store - Dawson

Construction date 1901. Structure is two storey, simple plan, frame building with a boom-town facade. Originally used as a residence and general merchandise and auction house. Historic record incomplete beyond 1918. The building is in poor condition, it has been braced for safety reasons and truly beyond restoration potential.

Source: CHIB 2-HC-6; YHI, 116B/3/87.

#### Strachan's Grocery - Dawson

Date of construction ca. 1903. Structure is two storey, simple plan, frame building. The building has been used as a restaurant, clothing business, grocery and hardware stores. The building is in fair to good condition. The building is an example of reuse as one business moves out and another takes its place. The building would have to be one which could be adapted to a variety of uses.

Source: CHIB 3-B-13; YHI, 116B/3/178.

#### Strachan's Warehouse - Dawson

Date of construction ca. 1940's. Structure is single storey, simple plan, frame building. The building has always been used for storage. History of the building is brief and

unclear. Condition of the building is unknown. Significance may be its association with an independent business.

Source: CHIB 3-B-14; YHI, 116B/3/179.

#### J & J Emporium - Dawson

Date of construction unknown. Structure is a single storey, simple plan, frame building. Originally thought to be a Christian Science Reading Room/Library. It may have been moved from 7th Avenue, yet to be confirmed. The building is on good condition as it is still in use as a store. New foundations were added several years ago. The building has a long history of use as a store.

Source: CHIB 3-B-20; YHI, 116B/3/185.

#### Caley's - Dawson

Construction date ca. 1900. Structure is two storey, simple plan, frame building with a boom-town facade. Used as a furniture store, rooming house, an 'eating house', and hotel. The building is in good condition and has been stabilized for future considerations. The building is currently unused and the exterior has been recently painted. This structure is one of the last few buildings of its design and multiple use.

Source: CHIB 3-I-14; YHI, 116B/3/209.

#### Caley's Warehouse - Dawson

Date of construction ca. 1902. Structure is a single

storey, simple plan, log building. History of the structure is unclear. Note on file states that the building was moved to this lot by F.G. Caley in the 1950's. Present condition of the building is unknown.

Source: CHIB 3-I-18; YHI, 116B/3/213.

#### Metal Clad Shed (#1) - Forty Mile

Date of construction between 1895-1901. Structure is single storey, simple plan, metal clad building. Condition of the roof and walls are good and foundation is poor. Historic significance unclear at this time; may have association with the Alaska Commercial Company.

Source: YHI, 116C/07/03.

#### Store and Machine Shop (#3) - Forty Mile

Date of construction between 1895-1901. Structure is one and a half storey, simple plan, metal clad building. Condition of the roof is good and walls and foundation are poor. Historic significance unclear at this time; may have association with the Alaska Commercial Company.

Source: YHI, 116C/07/04.

#### Cadzow - Rampart

Date of construction unknown. Structure is a one and a half storey, simple plan, log building. Condition of the building is fair. The building was used as a store as evidenced by the

counter and shelves inside. The building is now abandoned. One of the few remaining buildings associated with the independent, one location store operator.

Source: YHI 116N/7/1.

#### Building #12 - Rampart

Date of construction unknown. Structure is a one storey, simple plan, log building. Condition of the building is fair. The building may have been used for storage. The building is now abandoned. The building is likely associated with the trading business operated by Cadzow.

Source: YHI 116N/7/12.

#### Joe Netro Store - Old Crow

Built in 1912. Structure is a single story, simple plan, log structure. The building has had several owners, most notably the NCC and Joe Netro. Used as a store for much of the time, last used as a residence. Now owned by the Old Crow Co-op and has been used since 1985. Building generally in Fair condition. One of the few remaining structures north of

Source: Letter on file with Heritage Branch from Alice Frost, letter found in YHI file - 1160/12/1.

#### Northern Whaling & Trading Co. Warehouse - Herschel Island

Date of construction ca. 1926. Structure is single storey, simple plan, metal clad building. Used as a warehouse by

Pederson from 1926-36 for his trading business. Condition of the building is fair to good and has been worked on by YTG as part of the territorial park.

Source: YHI, 117D/12/1.

These buildings are not listed in the Yukon Heritage Inventory.

Taylor & Drury - Whitehorse

Beloud Post - Dezadeash Lake

ENDNOTES

1. Robert McCandless, Yukon Wildlife (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1985), p. 103.
2. Allen A. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza (Sidney: Gray's Publishing Ltd., 1976), p. 41.
3. Ibid., p. 72-73.
4. Ibid., p. 49.
5. Ibid., p. 55.
6. Ibid., p. 118.
7. Kenneth Coates, Furs Along the Yukon: Hudson's Bay Company - native trade in the Yukon River Basin, 1830-1893 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Department of History, 1980), p. 23-27.
8. Ken Coates and William Morrison, Land of the Midnight Sun (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1988), p. 125.
9. Rob Ingram and Helene Dobrowolsky, Waves Upon the Shore. An Historical Profile of Herschel Island (manuscript for Heritage Branch, Dept. of Tourism, YTG, 1989), p. 149.
10. Allen A. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza (Sidney: Gray's Publishing Ltd., 1976), p. 124.
11. Ibid., p. 126-127.
12. Ibid., p. 162.
13. Ibid., p. 181.
14. Ibid., p. 247.
15. Margaret Archibald, Grubstake to Grocery Store: The Klondike Emporium, 1897-1907 Manuscript Report Number 178 (Parks Canada, Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1972), p. 68.
16. Ibid., p. 67.
17. Ibid., p. 68.
18. Ibid., p. 68.

19. Ibid., p. 73.
20. Ibid., p. 74.
21. Ibid., p. 74-75.
22. Kenneth Coates and William Morrison, Land of the Midnight Sun (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1988), p. 147.
23. Robert G. McCandless, Yukon Wildlife; A Social History (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1985), p. 108.
24. John Gregg, "Fort Selkirk". The Beaver. July 26, 1938.
25. C.D. Taylor - Pam 1988-78.
26. John Gregg, "Fort Selkirk" The Beaver. July 26, 1938.
27. L.D. Kitchener, Flag Over The North (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1954), p. 225.
28. Ibid., p. 230.
29. Ibid., p. 228.
30. Jim Lotz, Northern Realities (Toronto: New Press, 1970), p. 54.
31. Ibid., p. 229.
32. YA, YGR I, Series 4, Vol. 1, File 23B.
33. John Gregg, "Fort Selkirk" The Beaver. July 26, 1938.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archibald, Margaret. A Substantial Expression of Confidence: The Structure and use of the Northern Commercial Company Store in Dawson, Y.T. 1897-1951. Parks Canada, 1980.
- Archibald, Margaret. Grubstake To Grocery Store: The Klondike Emporium, 1897-1907. Parks Canada, 1972.
- Bennett, Gordon. Yukon Transportation: A History. Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History No. 19, Ottawa: Public Information Branch, 1978.
- Coates, Kenneth. Canada's Colonies. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985.
- Coates, Kenneth. Furs Along the Yukon: Hudson's Bay Company - native trade in the Yukon River Basin, 1830-1893. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Department of History, 1980.
- Coates, Ken S, and William R. Morrison. Land of the Midnight Sun. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1988.
- Kitchener, L.D. Flag Over The North. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1954.
- Lotz, Jim. Northern Realities. Toronto: New Press, 1970.
- McCandless, Robert G. Yukon Wildlife. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1985.
- McClellan, Catharine. Part of the Land, Part of the Water. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987.
- Minter, Roy. White Pass, The. Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1987.
- Stuart, Richard. Provisions for the Yukon: S.S. Klondike Cargo Hold in the late 1930s. Manuscript Report Number 411. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1980.
- Tanner, Adrian. The structure of Fur Trade Relations. Thesis for M.A., Dept. of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, 1965.
- Zaslow, Morris. The Opening of the Canadian North. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971.