

FRACTURED VEINS & BROKEN DREAMS

**MONTANA MOUNTAIN
AND THE
WINDY ARM STAMPEDE**

Murray Lundberg

**Fractured Veins
&
Broken Dreams**

Fractured Veins & Broken Dreams:

Montana Mountain and the Windy Arm Stampede

Murray Lundberg



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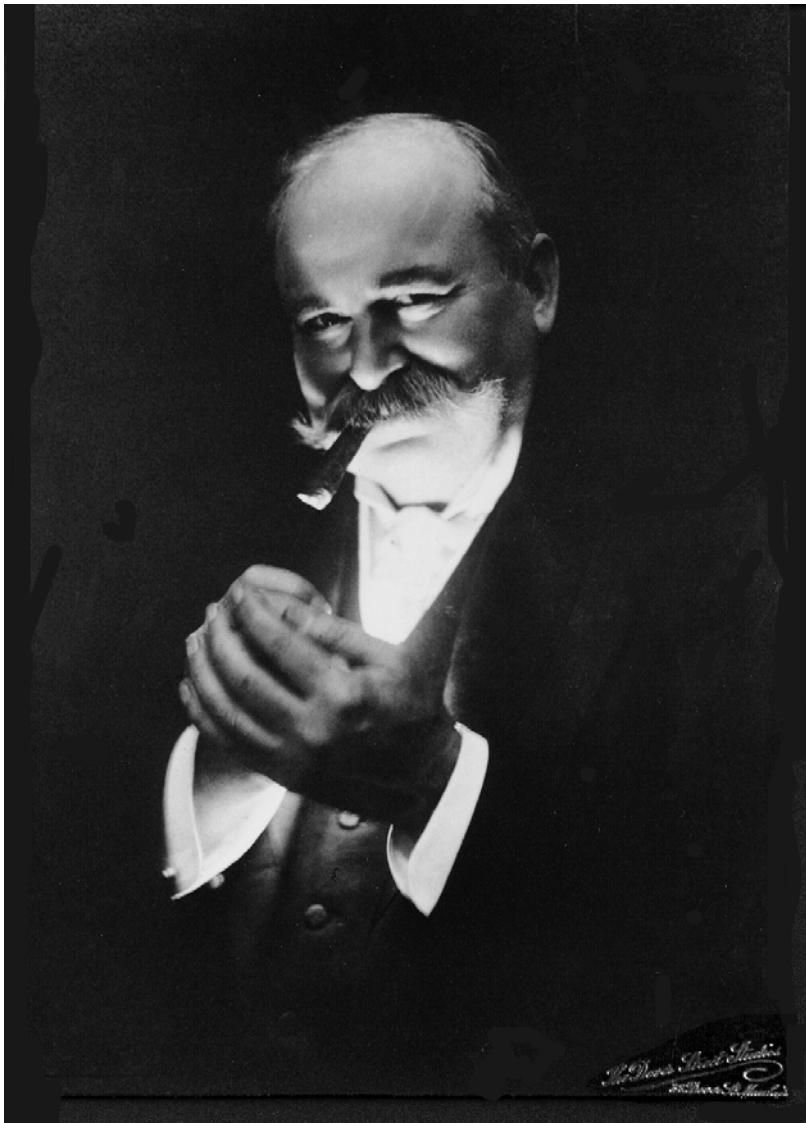
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To my father,
Robert Lundberg,
whose fascination with the Cariboo Gold Rush
planted the seed.



"Colonel" John Howard Conrad
ca.1906

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Preface

This book is the result of a life-long fascination with the history of Western Canada, and the Yukon in particular. The poems of Robert Service were the vehicle that transported me from British Columbia's Fraser Valley to the wilderness of the North; by the time I was ten years old I had already memorized several of those poems, and various stanzas were always taped to my bedroom walls. I was apparently born a Yukoner, but it took me forty years to realize it. When I finally moved from Chilliwack to Whitehorse to start driving a tour bus in 1990, I arrived with a deep love of nature, particularly of mountains, and a fascination about, and respect for, the people who have developed western Canada.

My first high-country hike in the Yukon was to Montana Mountain; when the bus dropped me off in front of the *Tutshi*, I wasn't exactly sure what I was looking for, but I found it anyway. I went home that night with a hundred questions about the ruins scattered over the mountain - who? - when? - why? - and, with one particular mine, how? I was unable to find anyone who could answer my questions in anything but the vaguest fashion. And so started the quest that soon, to use a cliché, developed a life of its own. Very little has been written about the area, and much of that is riddled with errors. The more I discovered about what had really happened at Windy Arm, the more my respect for the people involved grew.

The main actor in the Windy Arm drama was an American, John Howard Conrad. A fascinating character in his own right, Conrad is even more interesting as an example of the type of men who were instrumental in opening up the frontiers of North America. Conrad's great-grandson, Barnaby Conrad III, in his excellent family

biography, *Ghost Hunting in Montana*, expressed doubts about the validity of his search for his roots:

The Conrads weren't interesting to anybody except a Conrad. What if I had been adopted? Would I still feel this urge to trace a bloodline? How good was that blood anyway? And what did good mean in the West - killing buffalo, poisoning Indians with firewater and forcing them to eat cattle? The heat of the sun oppressed me, made me suspect a futility in my search.

But the search was worthwhile; yes, John Conrad could possibly be termed amoral by current standards. Adventure, wealth and power, and fame (or notoriety, it seemed to not matter which), were what he searched for his entire life. His character was, however, moulded by the spirit of the times, and for eighteen months, he took the southern Yukon along on his heady ride through life.

As in any project such as this, a great many people have helped bring it to fruition in various ways. A special mention is due to Amanda Graham, whose dedication to quality research about the North has been a model for me since we worked together at Atlas Tours, and who has reviewed and commented on this work twice over the past three years. Lynn Ogden, Yukon College history instructor, whose emphasis on keeping "the big picture" in mind influenced the direction this project took, also made invaluable comments when it became a term paper in 1994.

A grant from the Roy Minter Fund, administered by the Yukon Foundation, provided a much-needed boost at a difficult period in the research. The late Mr. Minter contributed in many ways during his life in spreading the word about the Yukon's vibrant past and future, and I hope that this project meets with his high standards.

The interest that the late Garnet Basque, publisher of *Canadian West* magazine, took in the project, was a great boost to keep the research going. To all of us who are working to develop people's interest in Canadian history, his death was a deep loss.

The enjoyment of the many days spent on Montana Mountain in 1993 and 1994 were greatly enhanced by the company of Simon Hutton, a geology student from Melbourne, Australia; whether we were attempting to develop a relationship with a curious caribou calf, scaling cliffs that only goats belong on, or wading through snow over our knees, Simon's enthusiasm never flagged.

My fellow staff members at the Yukon Archives have been a great help, both in assisting with accessing information, and in their moral support of the project. Fast response from the Inter-Library Loan service, through both Yukon Archives and the Whitehorse Public Library, was especially helpful in clearing up some of the details during the final stages of the writing.

Valuable, and wide-ranging, comments were received on the first draft of the full manuscript, from Michael Dougherty, David Neufeld, Jan Brault and Natalie Parenteau. Those comments resulted in a fairly extensive re-write, with more detail, and some broadening of the scope of this project, being incorporated into the final text.

A special thanks is due to Barnaby Conrad III for his support, by supplying two of the photographs of Colonel Conrad, and adding a great deal of colour to the information that I had on his great-grandfather's life.

Doug Smith contributed in a similar way to my understanding of his grandfather, Jack Stewart. He also supplied several of the photographs used in the book, and pointed out a historic site on the mountain that I had missed.

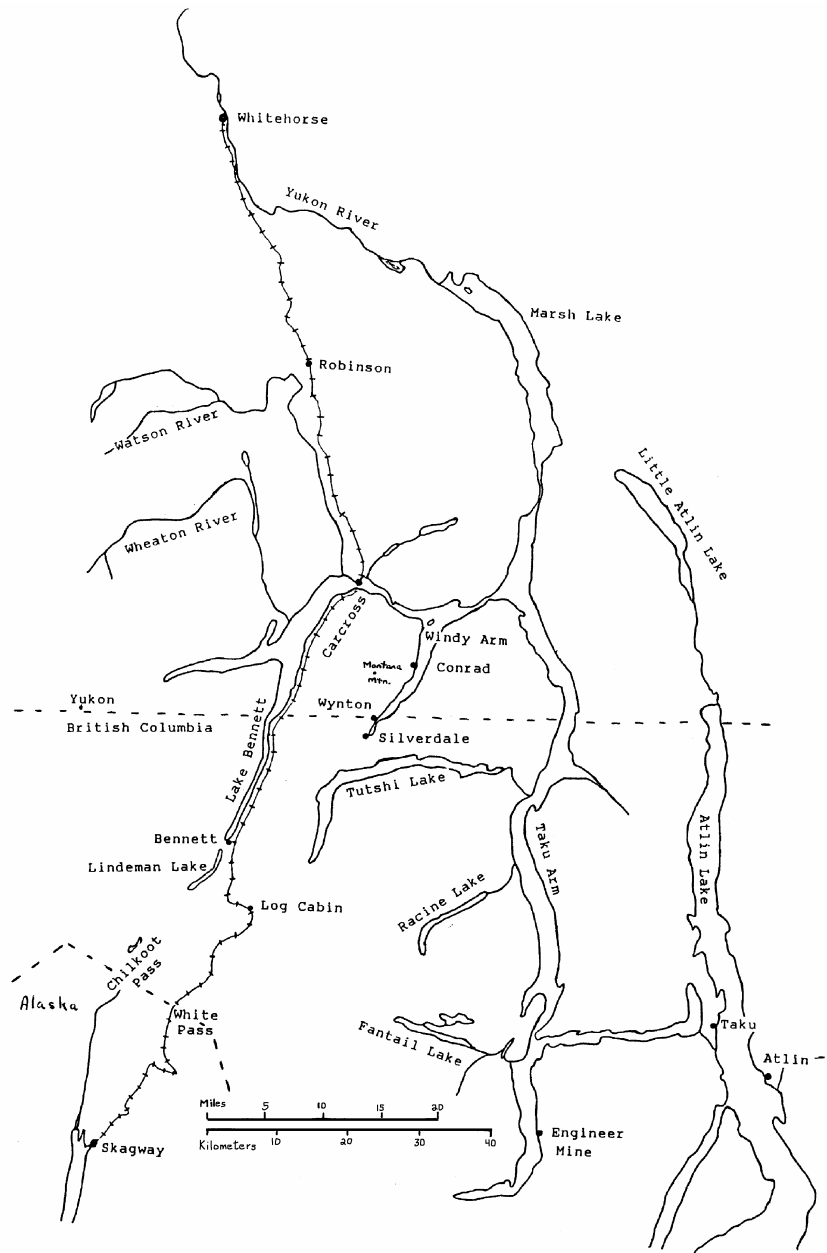
Other museums across the continent have provided material that has given a much clearer picture of some of the characters who came to the Yukon around the turn of the century. I would like particularly to thank Karen DeSeve, Laura Arksey and John Fahey of the Cheney Cowles Museum in Spokane, Washington; Brian Shovers, from the Montana Historical Society Library in Helena; Sharon Lamb, Director of the Kootenay Museum Association and Historical Society at Nelson, B.C.; Doug Whyte, Archivist in the Government Archives Division of the National Archives of Canada; Katharine Martyn, Assistant Director of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto; historian Kevin O'Reilly of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, and the General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Extensive information on the wildlife, particularly the caribou, which live on Montana Mountain, was offered by Janet McDonald, biologist for the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the environmental situation of the abandoned mines was candidly discussed by Brett Hartshorne of DIAND's Arctic Environmental Strategy.

Finally, the assistance of Fred VanDelft of Grand Designs and Bruce Binder of One Horn Photographics is gratefully acknowledged; their talent and professionalism has contributed greatly to the final look of this book.

The presentation of history is unavoidably subjective, depending on the nature of the records, both written and oral, that have been left, and in the historians' perspective and interpretation of those records. While there may be elements to my perspective that I am not aware of, my conscious purpose in this research has been to preserve the memory of, not merely the high-profile promoters, but also a few of the average working people who have helped to give the Yukon the aura, the "magic

and mystery”, that it has
today.



Introduction

One hour's drive south of Whitehorse, the mountain complex now called Montana looms 5,000 feet over the village of Carcross. Although Montana Mountain is well-known around the southern Yukon as a recreation area, the history of the mines on the mountain, and the area's importance in understanding post-Klondike Yukon history, has been all but forgotten. Today, the ruins of mines, tramways, a concentrator, and Conrad City stand as largely unrecognised monuments to the determination of not only pioneer hardrock miners in the Yukon, but also to the businessmen, teachers, ministers, labourers and others who refused to leave and let the territory die.

The period between 1890 and 1905 was one of the most volatile in North American history; along with technological and scientific breakthroughs in many areas, the entire fabric of life was changing, particularly for the average working-class family. Scientific management of machines and labour was rapidly becoming the standard, with a loss of worker autonomy and pride as an unavoidable side-effect. Although conditions for workers were slowly improving, progress was erratic, and the cities of eastern North America were years behind those in the West. While living conditions in many of the small frontier towns of the West could be difficult as a result of the few services available, the relative freedom and cleanliness offered a quality of life unavailable in most cities; as a consequence of the crowded, dirty living conditions and poor diets common in Montreal in the years following 1900, more than one-quarter of all babies born there would not live to see their first birthday.

The public's imagination was captured by the wonders of the age that seemed to make anything possible once "science" was applied to the problem:

people were able to communicate with wireless sets, telephones, phonographs and photographs; railroads were increasing their track mileage at amazing rates, revolutionizing the distribution of goods; medical breakthroughs such as the development of vaccines promised a brighter future for the nation's citizens, and a host of other inventions and discoveries vied for attention. Buildings constructed around steel skeletons came to be known as "skyscrapers" as they soared higher and higher from a modest ten-storey beginning in 1884. Tales of adventure and achievement came into people's lives in dime novels; in 1898, H. G. Wells exposed millions of people to his horrific vision of a future world when he wrote *The War of the Worlds*. In 1900 the first flights were made by Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin's flying machines, and Niagara Falls was harnessed to produce electrical power; the following year, one of Jules Verne's visions was realized when, after decades of testing, Britain launched her first operational submarine; even "darkest Africa" was being opened up, with the Nile River being tamed by the Aswan Dam. Modes of transportation that allowed for greater individual freedom, as opposed to railways, were rapidly becoming practical; by 1903, an automobile had crossed the United States from coast to coast in the unbelievable time of only 65 days, and the Wright Brothers had achieved a controlled flight.

In spite of the amazing strides being made in advancing people's knowledge in many directions, the Yukon and the interior of Alaska remained virtually unknown to the outside world until 1897. That situation was changed virtually overnight when the steamers *Excelsior* and *Portland* reached San Francisco and Seattle with word that huge quantities of gold had been discovered in the Klondike. The resulting stampede turned the eyes of the western world towards the North, which became a mecca for the ambitious, the adventurous, the

inventive, and the disillusioned. When the madness of the Klondike was past, most people who had missed out on the riches of the Klondike left the country forever; others, for reasons as varied as their personalities, stayed to either try to establish a quality life in the last frontier, or to get a large enough stake to give them another chance outside.

As well as the Klondike veterans who remained, the Yukon attracted a seasonal influx of people who left again as soon as the first snows fell. Millions of citizens of Canada and the United States were dissatisfied, obsessed with science and technology, fascinated with the "robber barons" who controlled an increasingly-large percentage of the continent's wealth, yet longing for a life that would allow them to maintain both their independence, and pride in what they were doing. Thousands of these people arrived in the Yukon each spring, looking for, or returning to work, primarily in either mining or transportation.

Most of these seasonal adventurers were strongly independent, unable or unwilling to work for long under the new industrial conditions, in which they would likely be unable to afford even the basic amenities, yet unwilling to endure the endless labour in a subsistence lifestyle that was the lot of most prairie farm families. For them, varied opportunities in the Yukon, and at least the possibility of getting a job that paid high wages, were seen as offering one of the few chances left to "make good."

Although mining booms were not unusual - and indeed are not unusual to this day - the events at Windy Arm were unique. This study looks at the peculiar combination of social, economic and geographic conditions that made the Windy Arm stampede possible, and how the events in that remote region influenced, and were influenced by, the broader development of the territory, and the lives of people thousands of miles away.

A remarkable cast of characters came together at Windy Arm for a few months, in a heroic effort to conquer some basic laws of nature, and of economics. In an intricate web of complex geology, difficult engineering, and managerial intrigue and incompetence, all of the mines eventually failed. The service town of Conrad City, rumoured in the fall of 1906 to be the next capital of the Yukon, blossomed and faded within two years, and the cast of hundreds moved on.

1 Before the Stampede

The geology and geography of the Windy Arm area, and indeed of all of southwestern Yukon, is extremely complex, and continues to draw scientists from a broad range of disciplines, attempting to unravel the secrets. Geologically, men and women have been attempting for nearly one hundred years to discover exactly what is hidden beneath the surface rocks of Montana Mountain.¹ At the risk of oversimplification, the complexity of the geology can be explained as being a result of the movement of the terranes, or plates that make up the earth's surface, over the past 200 million years. None of what is now Alaska and southwestern Yukon existed before that time;² since then, dozens of terranes have "docked" against the continental margin of North America, with each one adding dozens, or hundreds, of miles of new land to the continent. Montana Mountain is situated at the juncture of the Whitehorse Trough and the Coast Plutonic Belt, within one of the four major volcanic areas of the northwest, the Sloko Province.³ This is the result of the collision of a terrane from the south with the coast of North America about 150 million years ago. The buckling of the earth's crust and the volcanic activity associated with that collision, and dozens of others, helped form some of the most spectacular mountains on earth; the Coastal Mountain range, the visible portion of the Coast Plutonic Belt, stretches 1,000 miles from near Vancouver, British Columbia, making it one of the world's longest stretches of continuous granite.

At Montana Mountain, movements along the faults and fissures associated with its position at this major geological transition point have resulted in an intricate weaving of the variously-modified volcanic and

Before the Stampede

sedimentary rocks that have formed at various times over the past 50-150 million years. Most of the important mineral veins have been found in the band of porphyrites that forms the shell of much of Montana Mountain; in this formation, minerals have been deposited in the fissures opened and closed by movements caused by the enormous pressures deep within the earth. Gold and silver specifically have been deposited in these fissures by ascending mineral-rich thermal waters. Locating mineral deposits that are economically viable for mining has always been especially difficult on Montana Mountain because of both the irregular, fractured nature of the veins thus formed, and the microscopic form of the minerals. Although the presence of certain indicator rocks such as galena and pyrargyrite hints at the presence of the sought-after minerals, only assaying can confirm their presence or absence.

Research in the various paleontological specialties has only fairly recently been undertaken in the area of the headwaters of the Yukon River, known collectively as the Southern Lakes. While it is generally agreed that the final series of glaciers, which reached elevations of 6,000 to 6,500 feet (1,830 to 1,980 meters) above sea level (asl),⁴ had receded from the valleys by about 11,000 years ago, the progression of plants and animals in the region is less clear. Post-glacial lakes, the signs of which can be clearly seen on the mountainsides around Carcross at elevations up to 2,500 feet (760 meters) asl, largely controlled population patterns for thousands of years. The discovery several years ago of bison remains at a site near Carcross, and discoveries at Annie Lake in 1992, indicate that the presence of large grasslands mammals probably attracted the first people over 8,000 years ago.⁵

The area from roughly Marsh Lake to the White Pass, and from the Wheaton River to Atlin Lake, including Montana Mountain, is the traditional home of the Tagish

First Nation, but other, earlier groups, about whom little is known, used the area in their seasonal rounds of hunting and gathering. A relatively large influx of people is likely to have occurred following a volcanic eruption near the headwaters of the White River 1,250 years ago; much of the southwestern Yukon was buried under a layer of ash that made it uninhabitable for many generations.⁶ The harsh climate and widely varying cycles of food availability forced all of the early peoples to be semi-nomadic, and to make use of the most efficient technologies that they encountered among other groups in their travels. From microblade knives and spear heads, to snaring and fishing techniques, efficiency was the key to survival. Most of the five hundred or so archaeological sites which have been discovered in the Southern Lakes area were small camps, where a few families gathered to fish, hunt, or harvest berries or plants. These sites often yield tools that verify the existence of extensive trade networks, being made from materials from far distant locations, such as obsidian, which likely originated in either the Kluane region, or at Mount Edziza in northern British Columbia.⁷

Each elevation in the country was important to the people for different reasons, at different seasons. Fishing was of great importance in the summer, and large quantities of fish, particularly lake trout and grayling, were dried for use over the winter. In the fall, the emphasis switched to gathering berries and other plants, such as wild onions, to ensure a healthy, varied diet. As the berry season started to wane, the men would head out to hunt; this activity continued throughout the winter. Moose and caribou provided the people with the bulk of their meat, but virtually any animal or bird might be used. Arctic ground squirrels were used to make especially beautiful robes and blankets.

Montana Mountain, the mountain known to the Tagish people as *Chilih Dzele'* ("gopher mountain") was

important both for its bounty of plants and animals, and as a strongly spiritual place that was important to their understanding of their place in the world. A Tagish legend tells of how Animal Mother, before she left after giving birth to all the animals, made a swing for them, with the four ropes holding it attached to the four mountains surrounding *Todezaane* ("blowing all the time"), the future location of the village of Caribou Crossing.⁸ Higher on the mountain is *Xoots Tlaa Ta.eeti* ("grizzly bear mother's sleeping place"), where Animal Mother rested on her journey;⁹ the name of this cirque on the north side of *Chilih Dzele'* has unfortunately not been recognized by cartographers, and has no name on current maps.

As a result of their position at the head of the main passes from the coast into the interior, the Tagish people had come into limited contact with the Coastal Tlingit by about 1750, when the Tlingit started trading goods acquired from Russian traders. This contact between the Tagish and Tlingit peoples increased considerably through the nineteenth century, with the Tagish primarily acting as middlemen in the extensive trade between the coastal and interior tribes. This close contact resulted in many intermarriages between Tagish and Tlingit families, and in the eventual adoption of many Tlingit customs; most notably, the Tlingit language became the one used most frequently.

Following the arrival of European-Americans in the interior, the land began to be subjected to a search for wealth unrelated to either physical or spiritual sustenance. Inextricably linked with technological advancement was the need for metals such as copper, iron, silver, lead and zinc; the unnamed range of mountains of which Montana Mountain is a part was identified by the earliest non-native travellers as having the potential to supply some of those metals. On his journey of exploration along the Yukon River on behalf of the United States Army in 1883,

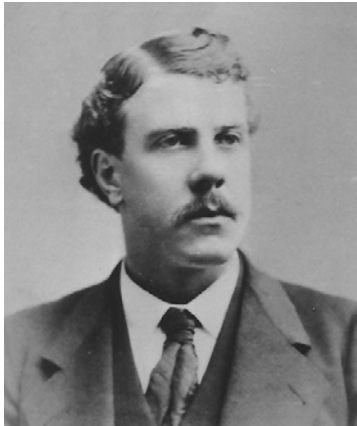
Lieutenant Frederick Swatka named them the Iron-capped Mountains because of the reddish stains visible even from their boat on the body of water that he named Lake Bennett.¹⁰

The arrival of ever-larger numbers of whites dramatically changed the lifestyle of the Tagish people. The trading and travel patterns became much more extensive and various aspects of the European culture began to be adopted, from the establishment of more permanent camps, to the use of textile clothing, steel tools and rifles. Inter-marriage became fairly common, although often temporary, lasting only for the duration of the white man's stay in the country. The most famous of the Tagish-white marriages was that of George Carmack, a Californian who had been travelling among the Tlingit since the mid-1880s, and Tagish member Kate (*Shaaw Tlaa*). In August 1896, while the two were traveling with Kate's brother, Skookum Jim (*Keish*), and nephews Tagish Charlie (*Kaa Goox*) and Patsy Henderson (*Koolseen*), they discovered the placer gold on Rabbit Creek that triggered the Klondike gold rush.¹¹

Among the prospectors that headed for the Klondike following that discovery, were some who were also searching for hardrock, or quartz, mineral deposits. Government surveyor William Ogilvie had a broad interest in all aspects of the Yukon, including possible mineral deposits; he had been through the region several times since 1887, when he was first assigned to survey the northern section of the border between Canada and the United States,¹² and had commented at length on the mineral potential of the country as a whole. During his trip back to the interior in October 1897, Swatka's "Iron-Capped Mountains" were brought to his attention specifically when he was shown "a specimen of silver ore said to have been picked up in a creek flowing into Bennett Lake, about 14 miles down it on the east side."¹³

The mineralization of the Lake Bennett/Windy Arm area may have been recognized even before the Klondike discoveries. In 1897, Arthur E. Ironmonger Sola wrote one of the first detailed guides to the route into the Klondike, based on his experiences during three years spent in the Yukon, from 1894 until 1897.¹⁴ In describing the journey to Dawson, he commented that "Lake Bennett for the first ten miles is rather narrow, with high mountains on either side, which, I should say contain a great deal of minerals, consisting of gold, silver and coal."¹⁵

In June, 1899, a sample of ore from those mountains was tested for the first time, at the assay office of the Bank of British North America in Atlin; several sacks of ore had been taken by an unnamed party from a claim "10 miles from Bennett on the lake shore"¹⁶. On the 23rd of June, Captain John Irving returned to Bennett with the assay report, which showed values of \$13 in gold and \$63.90 in silver per ton. He immediately sent two mining experts to the mine to investigate, and *The Bennett Sun* forecast that the extent of the vein and its easy access to transportation "insures a very lively boom in the Bennett mining section, and points to the certainty of Bennett City becoming the great mining centre of the inland lake region."¹⁷ Despite the newspaper's optimism, however, Captain Irving's experts did not feel that the vein was extensive enough to warrant further development at that time. Always on the lookout for new investment opportunities, however, he had already had a considerable influence on the development of Bennett, as well as Atlin and several other towns throughout British Columbia.



John Irving was the son of pioneer British Columbia sternwheeler captain William Irving, who won fame for his operations on the Fraser River during the Cariboo gold rush. Upon William Irving's death in August, 1872, eighteen-year-old John had taken over his father's company, the Pioneer Line. By 1874 he was Master of the *Onward*, and he was soon well-known for his skill and daring at the helm, as well as his flamboyant nature. He engaged in a constant series of rate wars with Captain William Moore, and always emerged triumphant. Irving expanded

his area of operations and formed several new companies throughout British Columbia; his operations on the Stikine River were instrumental in his success in the 1894 provincial election, during which he was elected as member for Cassiar, a huge riding that encompassed all of northwestern British Columbia, including Bennett.

Captain Irving first arrived at Bennett while on a reconnaissance trip in late 1897; as the highest point on the Yukon River system from which sternwheelers could operate, Bennett was chosen as the site for the construction of most of the early boats used on the headwater lakes and the upper Yukon River. Starting in the fall of 1898, one of Captain Irving's companies, the John Irving Navigation Company, freighted materials over both the Chilkoot Pass and White Pass to build three sternwheelers for use on the upper Yukon River lakes system. The *Reaper* and *Gleaner* were built at Bennett, and the *Scotia*¹⁸ at Atlin Lake. Six years after her launching, the service provided by the *Gleaner* would prove to be an important factor in the development of the Windy Arm mines. Although no further work was done on that first hardrock property on Lake Bennett, the construction of the White Pass & Yukon Route railway was proceeding rapidly, reaching Bennett on July 6, 1899;

the promise of easier and cheaper freight hauling led to great optimism regarding the future of hardrock mining in the district.

The potential economic importance of the Windy Arm area was recognized by the directives given in 1899 to Dominion Surveyor George White-Fraser¹⁹ by the Surveyor General, E. Deville. White-Fraser was assigned to set the astro-fixes, the initial control points, along the 60th parallel of latitude, which had been designated as the boundary between British Columbia and the Yukon Territory when the new territory was created on June 13, 1898. Mining was an important source of revenue for both jurisdictions; while the most important section of the boundary at the time was in the area near the Atlin gold fields, other points that White-Fraser was to determine, because of the potential for jurisdictional disputes in the near future, were at "Teslin Lake, the Taku Arm, the Windy Arm, Lake Bennett, the Dalton Trail, the Tatshenshini and Kaskawulsh rivers."²⁰ Other surveyors were then sent in, during the 1899, 1900 and 1901 seasons, to clearly mark the boundary between White-Fraser's fixes; this entailed cutting a six-foot wide swath through the trees and vegetation at the lower elevations, and setting up cairns or posts in the alpine areas.

The need for clarification of the boundary at Windy Arm became apparent soon after the arrival of the surveyors. On July 13, 1899, the "Montana" claim was staked by William R. Young; the prominent peak that towered over the claim was later named after that first discovery. Named to honour Young's home state, the property was likely staked on the basis of some native silver (spangles and wires of nearly pure silver) that Young found in



The Gleaner underway on Taku Arm

the "float" in the area.²¹ The need for extensive capital to develop such a claim, however, was obvious. Underground work was an expensive proposition in any location; in the case of the Montana, that situation was compounded by the property's location four miles from the lake, far above the trees whose wood would be needed for cribbing and buildings during development. Only the one claim was staked, and the mountain was quiet for another year while Young searched for financing.

In the early summer of 1900, partners John Mervin "Jack" Pooley and Josephus Moore "Jack" Stewart arrived in Caribou Crossing from Dawson. There they met a prospector from Seattle, Ira Petty; Petty had met William Young in Seattle, and in April, had taken a six-month option to purchase what he hoped was a rich silver property near the top of the mountain overlooking Caribou Crossing. An option was an opportunity to verify the value of a claim without purchasing it, but with the option of purchasing it at a guaranteed price at the end of a stated period. After Stewart and Pooley were shown the

Before the Stampede

property, the three agreed to work together to attempt to locate the vein. On July 24, 1900, the men tied on to the north side of the Montana claim with the Mountain Hero claim, which was staked in Pooley's name. Reaching Caribou Crossing on their way to register the claim at Whitehorse, they were able to be part of the "boisterous crowd" at the driving, on July 29, of the "Golden Spike" on the White Pass & Yukon Route railway.²²

Throughout the summer the three men worked on the mountain, attempting to determine how extensive the vein was. By early September, they had determined to their satisfaction the direction that the Montana vein ran; the "Black Jack" claim was staked on the supposed southern extension of the vein, and put in Stewart's name. The option on the Montana claim was then taken up, and a bill of sale transferred it to Petty in October.



Born in New Brunswick in 1872, Jack Stewart joined the rush north in early 1898, following the Klondike gold discoveries.²³ He and his 5 partners unfortunately chose to use the Valdez route to the interior, which proved to be one of the most dangerous; by June 1898, two months after leaving Seattle, the group had split up. Stewart met Jack Pooley, from Seattle, on the trail in the summer of 1898, and they joined forces to complete the journey to the gold fields. They finally arrived at Dawson in April 1899, to find every creek for many miles around had already been staked. Cutting wood and hay, and working at odd jobs that summer, both men went

to work in the placer mines in the fall of 1899; by the following spring, they had saved up enough money for a "grubstake" to go prospecting on their own again.

Content that they had control of the main silver vein, and needing money for a fresh grubstake, Pooley and Stewart returned to Dawson; Petty was chosen to go to Seattle to purchase the equipment that would be needed for the following season's work. As well as the usual picks, shovels, prybars, candleholders, bellows, and other tools required for their intended underground work, Petty was to take training in conducting fire assays of their ore; with fairly basic equipment, they would then be able to get a quick indication of the mineral content of the veins that they located.

Pooley and Stewart had a profitable winter in Dawson, but the lure of their silver property at Caribou Crossing made them impatient to return. In January, they attempted to restake a placer claim that had come open because the required annual assessment work had not been done; although they were the first men at the Mining Recorder's office, when the door was opened in the morning, another man was already recording the claim that they had staked. The graft in the Dawson Mining Recorder's office was already well-known,²⁴ and Pooley and Stewart decided that their chances of owning a mine were better at Caribou Crossing. They made the return trip by dogteam, arriving in the early spring.

Ira Petty had not returned to the Yukon as promised, having apparently developed other interests after marrying Sarah Whittaker in Seattle over the winter. Pooley and Stewart, however, broadened the range of their prospecting during the summer of 1901, and by August the partners had located two more veins, further south on the mountain, which were richer than any they had yet seen. They named the richer of the two the Venus, and registered the claim in Pooley's name; the other, the Uranus, was put in Stewart's name. That fall, positive that they had located a vein that would produce marketable ore, the two men started the back-breaking work of developing the Venus claim into a mine.

The first priority was to build a place to live; since climbing every day from the lake to the site of the vein, 2,600 feet above Windy Arm, was not reasonable, they blasted a ledge into a cliff on the property, and put three walls made of poles on it. They then spent weeks packing up supplies, preparing to spend the winter living and mining in one of the most spectacular spots in the Yukon. The extremely steep, exposed position of the claim prevented large accumulations of snow, allowing for year-round work, at least for the hardiest of men.

The winter of 1901-1902 was spent chipping and blasting out a tunnel that followed a small vein of fairly good grade silver; although the vein was only ten inches wide at the surface, the men were encouraged in their efforts by the fact that it kept getting wider as the depth of the tunnel increased.²⁵ The tunnel was kept just large enough to move in, in order to conserve all possible energy and blasting powder. This "gophering", however, made the mine extremely miserable to work in; the problem of cramped space was compounded by the fact that the tunnel angled so steeply down to follow the vein that they had to rig up a windlass to get the ore and waste rock up to the surface.

On the surface, they sorted the ore, laced the best of it into bullhide sacks, and slid the sacks down to the lake shore. By winter's end, with the tunnel having reached a depth of 52 feet, they had about fifteen tons of ore on the beach, waiting for open water.



The cabin that Jack Pooley and Jack Stewart blasted into the cliffs at the Venus mine in September 1901.

As well as developing the Venus vein, Pooley and Stewart did some prospecting in the nearby cliffs over the winter. Their labours convinced them that they had tapped into an extensive complex of silver veins; a particularly large quartz vein was located to the south of, and downslope from, the first claim, and the Venus No.2 claim was staked to cover it.

Due to the location of the Uranus claim at the bottom of a high valley, which gathered huge amounts of snow that melted away slowly, they were not able to start examining it until late June; in the meantime, though, they were kept busy freighting their Venus ore to the railhead for shipment to the smelter in Tacoma. By August, they had received the results of their winter's work; the 15 tons of ore had only sold for \$975 - about what a couple of

good miners would have made in wages - but the mine had proven itself. Pooley and Stewart were apparently very secretive about their discovery. They remained the only two people working on the mountain, and took their time prospecting further; not until December did they finally get around to adding the Uranus No.2, on what they felt was the southern extension of the Uranus vein.

The social and economic structures of the Yukon continued to change through the post-Klondike years. For both whites and Natives, villages and towns were replacing tent camps. With the arrival of the railway at Caribou Crossing, the majority of the Tagish people had relocated to the narrows between Lakes Bennett and Nares, known traditionally in Tlingit as *Naataase Heen* ("water running through the narrows"). Although social interactions between the whites and Indians at the time were not frequent, there were occasional meetings that became part of the oral histories of the district. One such meeting concerns veteran prospector George Dail, who was working a claim in the Coal Creek area over the winter of 1902-1903. On one of his trips to Caribou Crossing, nearly forty miles south, he was delayed by heavy snow and bitter cold, and did not arrive until two o'clock in the morning on January 4. He found the only light in town burning at the home of Tagish John (*Kaajineek'*) and his family; they were just living in a frame tent, but a fire was burning in the little stove, and Dail was welcomed in to warm himself. Dail found the family rejoicing over the birth that night of the baby girl who would one day become one of the district's most respected citizens, Angela Sidney. Mrs. Sidney's mother, Maria (*Kaax'anshee*), told her that when George Dail saw the baby, he said: "Call her Angela. She looks like a little angel. And when she is going to be baptized, let me know. I want to be her godfather because I'm the first person she saw."²⁶

The Yukon Council was well aware of the fact that hardrock prospectors like Pooley, Stewart and Dail were the key to the Territory's future stability. In an effort to stem the flow of people leaving the Yukon generally, and Dawson in particular, the Council, in 1902, started work on a series of programs to assist the development of hardrock mining operations. As the government of Ontario had made clear in 1869 when their Mining Act was introduced, the Territorial government assured people that they were not attempting, with this program, to enter the mining business, merely the business of promoting growth. Initially aimed at aiding lode gold mines that were being developed in the Klondike, the assistance program was given an appropriation of \$25,000 for expenses incurred to June 30, 1903, and another \$15,000 for the following year. Included in the initial budget were allowances for construction of a stamp mill²⁷ in Dawson and assay offices in both Dawson and Whitehorse, the purchase and free loan of a Keystone drill, and a program for building pack trails and wagon roads into promising new districts.

Spurring the development of this assistance program was an exodus of miners and others into Alaska; in January, 1903, Jujiro Wada had brought news to Dawson of rich new strikes in the Tanana country of Alaska. There was an immediate stampede of about 1,000 men, and many more would leave for the future site of Fairbanks over the next eighteen months.²⁸

A few months later, two of the heroes of the Klondike rush, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, discovered gold on Ruby Creek, in the Ruby Range about fifteen miles east of the head of Kluane Lake. Although most of the 500-600 prospectors involved in the initial rush a few days later soon lost interest, 300 men had staked 2000 claims in the area by the following March, with the number of men swelling to about 1200 by mid-May.²⁹

As the Territorial government's sources of revenues continued to disappear, there was a concentrated effort to encourage development, while collecting all possible taxes and royalties. The royalty on gold production had been replaced in 1902 by an export tax of 2 1/2 percent. The tax was collected on the honour system, but it soon became obvious that a large number of people were not paying what was due; to counter that situation, the North West Mounted Police were made responsible for searching all passengers departing Whitehorse on the White Pass & Yukon train. Male police officers could of course not search female passengers, so in July 1903, Kate Ryan was hired to search them. Miss Ryan had arrived from Glenora, where she had run a restaurant, in 1901; described as "a strapping big, strong-chinned, muscular woman,"³⁰ she was particularly adept at her new job, seizing large amounts of contraband gold. She was paid very well for her rather unpleasant work - \$3.00 per day, plus another \$1.00 board allowance.³¹ In contrast, the police officers, who universally hated the duty, were still only making \$1 per day.

In 1903, Ira Petty returned to Caribou Crossing; he was apparently unable to come to terms with Pooley and Stewart, however, and returned to prospecting alone. On August 5, he staked the Joe Petty and Little Johnny claims, located midway between the Montana and Uranus claims. With the discovery of the Joe Petty vein, there were strong indications that an extensive belt of mineralization, possibly 5 miles long, had been located. Word was starting to spread about what were by now termed "the Windy Arm discoveries"; in November, Dominion Telegraph operator Sherman E. Chambers staked the Aetna claim near the Joe Petty, becoming the first of dozens of men who would stake claims in the area on a strictly speculative basis, hoping to tie into a proven vein. The time was right to attempt to raise the capital

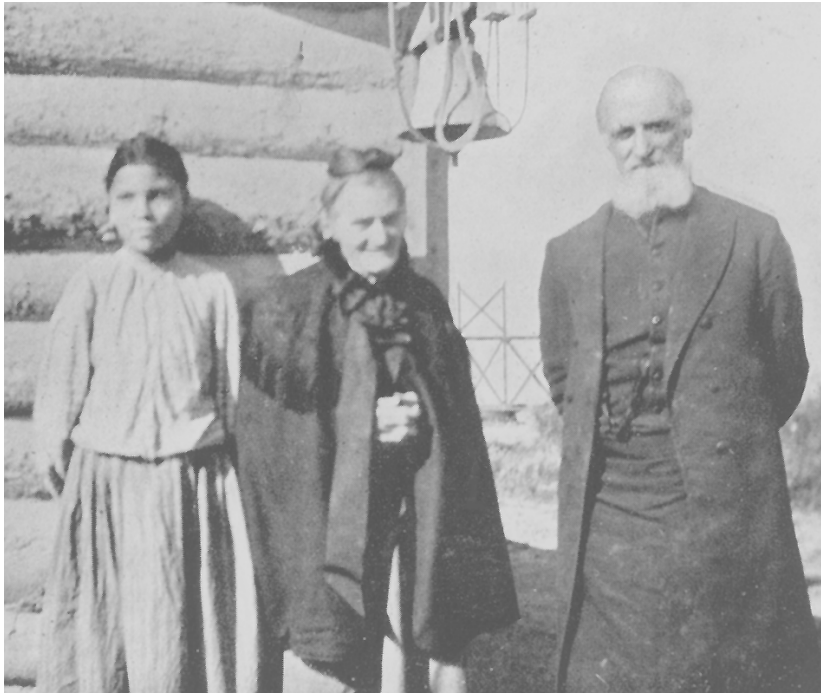
required to finance major development work on the properties.

On February 22, 1904, Pooley and Stewart formed a syndicate with two Dawson merchants, brothers Arthur Barden Palmer and Russell Henry Palmer. Feeling that the large, fairly level point at the mouth of what Stewart had named Uranus Creek would be the key property for development of the claims that had been staked so far, they purchased the eighty acres of Crown land for \$160. Pooley and Stewart were performing some minor development work on the Venus, Venus No.2, Uranus and Uranus No.2, but a lack of sufficient capital kept work to the minimum required to hold the claims. In July, Chambers added the Reliance claim to the east of the Joe Petty, and the following month, Pooley added the M & M claim to his holdings.

That summer, much of the steep, barren slope to the west of the southern end of Windy Arm was staked by George Dail and his young partner Ivan Elbridge "Jack" Fleming, a recent arrival from Red Deer, Alberta. The Dail & Fleming, or Humper, Group consisted of the Humper, Humper No.2, Red Deer, Venus Extension and Beach claims; the rugged peak on whose flank the claims lay was soon named Dail Peak.

The increasing interest in prospecting in the area had caused concern, by Bishop Bompas at least, that some of the natives at Caribou Crossing were being increasingly influenced by the bad habits of a few of the whites. In 1901, he had opened a school for the Native children, at least partly in an attempt to foster in them a better understanding of the whites' world. As the population climbed it became clear that more drastic actions were called for. On November 29, 1904, he had written to Acting Commissioner Wood asking that an Indian Reserve be set aside, "so as to exclude the whites from visiting it."³² Bompas noted that a similar action at

Moosehide and Fortymile " has been found to conduce much to the good order and discipline of the



Bishop William Carpenter Bompas, with his wife Selina and an unidentified student, in front of their residence at Carcross, ca.1905. Photo by the Rev.Hiram A.Cody.

camps."³³ Following a favourable report from RNWMP Inspector J.A.Demers, the government, acting with atypical speed, contracted Harry Dickson to survey the land. By April, 1905, two blocks of eighty acres each, stretching from the east end of the narrows along the south shore of Nares Lake,³⁴ had been surveyed and set aside for the exclusive use of the Tagish people.³⁵

2 John Howard Conrad

John Howard Conrad was born in 1855 on the large "Front Royal" plantation in Virginia's fertile Shenandoah Valley; he was one of thirteen children of Colonel James W. and Maria (Ashby) Conrad, both descendants of colonial settlers. The Conrad family traced their roots back to Joseph Conrad, who arrived from Germany in the early 1700s and was one of the first settlers in the Shenandoah Valley.³⁶ The Conrad and Ashby families became members of Virginia's plantation aristocracy, which was "a frank imitation of English country-gentry society."³⁷ Prospering through land speculation and slave trading as well as farming and general trading, this hierarchy of about 350 families "perpetuated itself by intermarriage and a virtual monopoly of political office."³⁸

By the time John Howard was born, the economy in Virginia was faltering. The Conrad family, though, was particularly well established, aided by James Conrad's position as a district judge. The respect that families such as the Conrads commanded in the community was maintained more by "the polished gentlemanly qualities of long lineage, polite manners, and education"³⁹ than it was by money per se, but the Conrads continued to live well, and James Conrad was able to continue serving as a colonel in the Virginia militia.⁴⁰ The first battles of the Civil War in 1861 were to change that, as Virginia became the centre of both political and military operations for most of the war. John Howard was to spend his formative years with the horrors of war in his front yard; his father, and two eldest brothers, William and Charles, all served with the guerilla cavalry known as Mosby's Raiders.⁴¹

The Civil War ruined Virginia, and the end of slavery tore apart what was left of the economic and social foundations of the plantations. In 1868, William and Charles Conrad headed west to make a new start. Arriving at Fort Benton, Montana, the boys joined the trading firm of I. G. Baker & Company, William as a clerk, and Charles in the freighting department. Highly respected for their fair dealings, the company had a wide variety of interests, with freight trains running from Fort Benton to ranches and mining camps from Nevada to southern Alberta. Montana during that period was still truly "the wild West", with road agents robbing miners, and Indian wars forcing wagon trains to getting increasingly larger for protection. Fort Benton, at the head of navigation on the Missouri River, was the chief supply point for not only the mining camps of the northern Rockies, but also for many of the settlers arriving on the Canadian prairies. Two of the primary trading trails in the West in the 1860s ran from Fort Benton to the Red River settlement, and from Fort Benton to Fort Edmonton.⁴²

In 1869, the I. G. Baker Company sponsored John Jerome Healy on an expedition "to prospect the government lands, and launch a scientific and economic exploration into the adjacent land of Canada."⁴³ His supplies for the "economic" segment of the exploration included cases of Henry lever-action rifles and "a substantial gallonage of 180-proof grain alcohol."⁴⁴ Setting up Fort Whoop-Up, Healy did a booming business; I. G. Baker recouped their \$25,000 investment several times over, and Healy gained experience that was to serve him well in 1893 when he and Portus B. Weare set up the North American Trading and Transportation Company at Fort Cudahy, on the Yukon River.

In 1870, John Conrad headed for Fort Benton on his own, to meet his brothers. During the trip up the Missouri River by steamboat, he went on a buffalo hunt

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with the crew; the fourteen-year-old boy not only shot a buffalo, but "ate the liver uncooked and steaming, a ritual meal of the Great Plains."⁴⁵ Upon reaching Fort Benton, John joined his brothers at the Baker Company, taking a position as a stock clerk.

The Conrad boys learned the trading business quickly; by 1872 William was a partner in the company, and shortly after, he and Charles bought the entire business. As a result of their success, the rest of the Conrad family moved to Fort Benton in 1874.⁴⁶ Life was hectic in the rough frontier town, but the family prospered, and was soon involved in cattle ranching, townsite speculation, shipping, banking and mining. The luxurious 228-foot sternwheeler *Red Cloud* became the most flamboyant symbol of their success when she was purchased in 1876.

John Conrad had apparently found his element. Heavily involved in all aspects of the family's businesses, the young man, an imposing figure at six foot three inches tall, soon developed the confidence to venture out on his own as well. By the late 1870s he was investing in a wide variety of businesses, although his main business was cattle ranching. In 1879, he established two stores and a bank in Wyoming, to serve both the settlers who were arriving, and the soldiers based there to protect them.

In 1878, I. G. Baker & Company (the Conrads kept the old name of the company) had won one of the contracts to supply beef to the North West Mounted Police and reservation Indians in Canada. By 1880, over five million pounds per year was being sold by the Conrad Cattle Company, a business which had been formed with an initial investment of a half million dollars.⁴⁷ This company also expanded rapidly; in 1881, they started supplying the Canadian Pacific Railway construction crews during their push west from Winnipeg. The Conrad family had reached the zenith of their power, with an

empire overseen by Charles Conrad, now a State Senator.

John Conrad was achieving fame in his own way during the 1880s; in his search for larger and larger grazing ranges for his thousands of head of cattle, he became notorious for his refusal to abide by the traditions of Montana's old range system. There was no legislation in place to control the use of public lands, and effective control of land suitable for grazing went to cattlemen's associations, which allotted the land to various large-scale ranches; the powerful associations also controlled brands and round-ups, and excluded newcomers. John Conrad had been one of the largest Montana cattle ranchers to take advantage of generous grazing leases and duty waivers that the Canadian government had instituted to encourage cattle ranching. However, not satisfied with being limited to operating in Canada, Conrad, in 1885, drove one of his large herds to a range north of Yellowstone that had been allotted to the enormous Niobrara Cattle Company.⁴⁸ Although the cattlemen's associations voted to not deal with Conrad any longer, the dispute received a great deal of press coverage, increasing the public dissatisfaction that resulted in the eventual adoption of a system of government-controlled grazing leases.

John Conrad's rapidly expanding commercial interests forced him to obtain capital from increasingly distant sources. He established a company based in Chicago, and while there in 1884, met nineteen-year-old Mabel B. Barnaby at the Democratic National Convention. She was the daughter of a wealthy Rhode Island merchant family, who were highly impressed by the ambitious young capitalist; the two were soon married.

John and Mabel had three children, daughters Florence and Maud, and son Barnaby, who was born in 1889.⁴⁹ During this time, Conrad became heavily involved

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in several major mining ventures in Montana, apparently getting into serious financial difficulties on occasion.⁵⁰ Despite some financial problems, though, Conrad was well respected, and in 1889, he ran for election as Lieutenant Governor of Montana, losing by only four votes.



John Howard Conrad, 1889.

Between 1891 and 1893, the most bizarre of the events in John Conrad's colourful career occurred. Upon the death of Mabel Conrad's father in 1889, the bulk of his estate of \$1.7 million dollars had been divided between

Mabel and her sister. Her mother, Josephine, however, was urged by her physician, Dr. Thomas Thatcher Graves, to contest the will; the suit was successful, and the young women received little. In the spring of 1891, Josephine Barnaby was killed when she drank from a supposed bottle of whiskey that had been received as a gift in the mail; the "whiskey" proved to be coloured water, laced with arsenic.

The truth surrounding the murder will never be known;⁵¹ what is clearly recorded is John Conrad's response. At an eventual cost to Conrad of some \$35,000,⁵² Pinkerton detectives were hired, newspaper reporters were paid to harass Dr. Graves and his wife, travel expenses were paid for thirty-eight witnesses, and jurors were possibly bribed. Conrad even offered Graves \$25,000 to sign a statement that he had sent a bottle of whiskey to Mrs. Barnaby, an offer which was refused. Following a six-week trial, the doctor was convicted of first-degree murder, and sentenced to hang; the sentence, however, was never carried out. On September 1, 1893, the doctor committed suicide in his prison cell.

The court case solidified John Conrad's reputation as a champion of "western justice", and he made plans to take advantage of it by running for governor in the 1893 elections. Before the campaign started, though, his financial and marital problems changed the direction of his life. The Conrads' marriage had been a particularly stormy one, and the situation was no doubt made even more volatile by the bankruptcy of several of Conrad's companies starting in 1892. His businesses appear to have all been heavily capitalized, and any downturn in the local economy was fatal. Stores, mines, and his bank at Horr, failed one by one.

In the fall of 1893, John filed for divorce from Mabel, charging her with adultery with a close friend and business associate of his. In a thirty-page reply in July

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1894, she not only denied those charges, but accused Conrad of "habitual drunkenness, ...extreme cruelty", a long list of adulterous liaisons, and through "threats and unkind conduct", of bilking her of almost \$50,000 for both his mining investments and his gambling losses. The lurid details of the counter-suit were splashed across the front page of *The Helena Independent*,⁵³ and likely kept Conrad out of "the better homes" of Montana for some time afterward.

Following the divorce, Conrad spent little of his time in Montana; "the few letters he wrote to other members of the family were on hotel stationery from Chicago and Seattle."⁵⁴ Regardless of past misadventures, however, Conrad was always an optimist, continually on the lookout for new opportunities; as it had for so many others, his interest in mining eventually led him north. In June, 1903 he was in Ketchikan, Alaska, examining property in which he was reported to have invested heavily, and where he was planning to build a smelter.⁵⁵ During that trip, Conrad visited the Whitehorse Copper Belt, as well as the Engineer Mine and the Gleaner Group of properties on Taku Arm; before leaving, he assured the Whitehorse *Daily Evening Star* of his high regard for the future of the Copper Belt, and his feeling that the claims were "very well worth putting money into."⁵⁶ It is very likely that this trip was taken at the invitation of Captain Irving, who owned a one-half interest in the Arctic Chief, White Horse and Golden Gate claims in the Copper Belt, as well as the Gleaner Group, which was just north of the Engineer mine.

Conrad returned to Whitehorse in February 1904. While in Victoria on the way north, he had applied for a Free Miner's Certificate;⁵⁷ this mandatory licence allowed prospectors to "enter, locate, prospect and mine for gold and other minerals upon any lands in the Yukon Territory," as well as to cut needed wood without

payment of stumpage fees, and to hunt at any time in case of need while prospecting or mining.⁵⁸ Duly registered, Conrad headed first to the Copper Belt, then on to the new Kluane placer fields, 150 miles to the west. The Copper Belt, however, still held his interest. Having found the investment opportunity he was looking for, he left for the Outside, returning on May 16th with an assayer, as representative of a syndicate that had optioned Captain Irving's Arctic Chief, one of the most promising of the Whitehorse copper properties. Conrad set himself up at the Vancouver Hotel in Whitehorse, and his room quickly became the primary mining-news clearing house in town; Conrad's reputation from his Montana mining ventures was apparently well known in the Yukon, and confidence was high that large-scale development at the Arctic Chief would soon begin. On May 24th he was at work with a crew of four men, setting up a camp on the property, and testing the property with the government's Keystone drill. The Arctic Chief did not hold his interest for long, however. Conrad had seen an article in the *Vancouver World* when he was passing through in February, reporting that miners in the "Alsek" (Kluane) gold fields were "rocking dirt running as high as one dollar to the pan." Although he had seen little to arouse his interest during his quick look at the area in March, he was never one to pass up an opportunity for adventure and possible financial gain, and left for the new diggings on June 9 "with a party of mining experts."⁵⁹ The five-week journey was enjoyable but unproductive, although Conrad's eyes were opened to the technology involved in large-scale hydraulic mining, and he determined to learn all he could about the process for future possibilities.

Conrad had little time to rest when he got back to Whitehorse on July 12; Captain Irving was leaving for Atlin three days later to check on his investments in that

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district, and Conrad decided to accompany him to further investigate properties that he had seen the previous summer, and the hydraulic operations that he now found especially interesting.

Conrad and Irving had very quickly become close friends, not only because of their mutual interest in mining and sternwheelers; their personalities were also very similar. Both were "real men" in the Old West style - sociable, hard-drinking, very capable physically and adventurous in the extreme, neither of them was likely to back down from a difficult situation, or to miss an opportunity to put themselves in the spotlight.

Most of the rest of the summer was spent with Captain Irving, investigating other potential mining investments throughout the southern Yukon and northern British Columbia. The two men heard stories that summer of the riches of the Windy Arm district; a total of seventeen claims had been staked by then, controlled by three principal groups. Following a quick look at the properties, Captain Irving decided that he could not spread himself any thinner, but John Conrad's enthusiasm over what he saw would soon change the course of many people's lives.

Conrad returned to Seattle to try to raise the large amount of capital that would be required to turn the Windy Arm silver properties into producing mines. By 1904, investment dollars were travelling in both directions between Seattle and the Yukon; the *Dawson Daily News* of December 16 reported on the investment opportunities as surveyed by L. J. Lebert, a miner from Lower Hunker Creek who had recently returned from a trip to Seattle. Lebert stated that "many Klondikers have invested in Seattle, and are reaping benefits"; in particular, he considered property in Seattle's suburbs, such as Green Lake, to be prime investments for those with \$20,000 to invest. At the same time, the political situation in Seattle

was very unstable, the crime rate was very high, and many people who had made their fortunes in Seattle were looking to divert their energies and their money elsewhere.⁶⁰

Though many Seattle fortunes were made by supplying the Klondike and subsequent northern gold rushes such as those at Nome and Fairbanks, "Alaskan" mining schemes were not enjoying a good reputation at the time; "many a Seattle man had been nipped in Alaskan mining schemes, and for weeks [Conrad's] proposition went begging."⁶¹ Through the efforts of lawyer H. R. Clise, the required capital was finally raised from several Seattle businessmen, including Andrew Chilberg, J. F. Lane, E. R. Butterworth and W. G. Norris, all of whom had made much of their fortunes either in, or by supplying, mining activities in Alaska and the Yukon.⁶²

By the middle of December Conrad was back, quietly signing documents in Carcross with his lawyer, Willard Leroy Phelps. On December 17, the Joe Petty, Little Johnny, Black Jack, Montana and Mountain Hero claims were optioned, ultimately from Ira Petty. In November 1903, Petty had optioned the properties to E. B. MacFarland for \$100,000, but after paying \$20,000 on the options, MacFarland was unable to raise the necessary development capital, and sold the option to Conrad. There must have been no doubt in Conrad's mind as to the richness of the properties; to allow development work to start on the properties immediately, he signed short-term options, for a total of \$50,000, on the properties, with another \$110,000 due in August for outright purchase. Twelve days later, Jack Pooley, Jack Stewart, and the Palmer brothers signed over the M & M, Venus, Venus No.2, Uranus and Uranus No.2 claims, and the 80 acres of property and water rights at Uranus Creek. These claims were apparently intended for future development; although development work had to be

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started on the properties by August 30, 1905, and 500 feet of underground work had to be completed by June 1, 1905, no money was required to be paid until November 1, 1907, when the entire \$60,000 was due (if any ore was shipped, before that time, however, 1/3 of the net returns had to be paid on account to the vendors). Curiously, all financial and documents transfers were to be done through the Canadian Bank of Commerce's branch in Seattle, rather than the Whitehorse branch.⁶³

In 1904, there were only two lawyers practising in Whitehorse, Willard Phelps and Thomas Wesley Jackson. Phelps had been looking after Captain Irving's legal concerns since 1900, so he was the obvious choice for Conrad to use. Phelps was one of the Yukon's pioneer lawyers, having left Ontario in 1898, joining the rush to the Klondike gold fields. He chose to come in by way of the Stikine River, which was being heavily promoted as "The All Canadian Route," the route that true patriots would use. He was apparently in no hurry, because he spent the winter of 1898-1899 in the Teslin Lake area, and the following winter in Atlin. By the time he reached Dawson in the summer of 1900, the rush was over, and he soon retraced his steps as far as Whitehorse; feeling that the small town had potential for the future because of its position as a transportation and supply centre, he set up a law practice.

Once Conrad had all the papers signed for his new operation, he spent the first days of the new year attempting to confirm the richness of his new properties. On January 9, 1905, he arrived in Whitehorse to announce that he was in charge of two new companies, Conrad Consolidated Mines and J. H. Conrad Bonanza Mines. Those two companies and ten claims were the first of what would quickly become an intricate web of nearly a dozen companies and over one hundred claims.

3 The First Windy Arm Mines

One of John Conrad's most distinctive management traits was that he never did anything half-way; whether that is seen as positive or negative in retrospect, Conrad made things happen, always hiring the top men in the field, and installing the most modern equipment that he could raise money for. On January 12th, with the thermometer sitting at eight degrees Fahrenheit (-13 Celsius), he headed for Windy Arm with a party of six men, with three dogs helping to carry their supplies. The party included two of the top quartz men in the territory, William "Bill" Clark, Captain Irving's partner in the Copper Belt properties, and George Erickson, foreman of the Copper King mine, which had shut down for the winter; Erickson picked four of his best men from the Copper King crew to accompany them. Conrad's enthusiasm and the whole party's mining expertise, however, was no match for a Yukon winter; six days later the group was back in Whitehorse, having been unable to get through "between four and five feet" of snow on the mountain to reach the claims.⁶⁴

With the value of silver on the international market rising at an ever-increasing rate,⁶⁵ development work on the Windy Arm claims started in March, 1905, as soon as the snow would allow. By late June, the Windy Arm stampede was on; there were 12 new claims staked in the district in June, 47 in July, and 57 in August.

Mining technology near the turn of the century was advancing rapidly, "at the leading edge of scientific development and industrial requirements." To put such leading-edge technology into practice, however, required an enormous outlay of capital, beyond the ability of most mines to finance. For smaller operations, hardrock mining

was still back-breaking, dangerous work for the men underground, using techniques that had changed little since men first started following veins of gold and silver into the earth. Tunnels were kept as small as could reasonably be worked, ventilation was poor, and the only light at the work face was provided by a candle or two. The use of explosives was limited almost entirely to the first few feet of a new tunnel because of the problem of venting the dust and poisonous gases afterwards; all of the first tunnels in the Conrad mines would be driven by brute force, with hammers, chisels and prybars.

Despite the crude methods employed to drive the tunnels, work progressed rapidly; on June 26th, Gustave August Singer, who had been appointed by the investors as General Manager of Conrad Consolidated Mines, reported to a stockholders' meeting in Seattle that \$12,000,000 worth of ore was already "in sight"⁶⁶ on the Montana vein alone. In mid-June, crosscut tunnels were started on the Mountain Hero and Joe Petty claims in an attempt to increase that figure by intercepting the Montana vein to the north and south.

Conrad and Singer made a quick trip to Seattle in mid-July, and ordered an aerial tramway from Royal N. Riblet. This first tramway was to be installed as soon as possible to develop, and haul ore from, the Mountain Hero and Montana mines, and it was arranged for Riblet to visit Windy Arm to survey for at least one more tramway.

The first tramway, costing \$80,000, was of bi-cable design, with the ore cars riding on a heavy stationary support cable while being pulled by a lighter "running" cable. It was to run 18,697 feet from a small bay on Windy Arm, just north of the mouth of Montana Creek, to the Mountain Hero claim, 3,464 feet above the level of the lower terminal. Crossing over two canyons, the tramway was designed with the longest span between towers in the world, 2,960 feet. Suspended from the cable were about

80 ore buckets, each carrying twelve cubic feet of ore; travelling at a little over five miles per hour, it took about fifty minutes for a bucket to travel from the mine to the discharge terminal at Windy Arm. There were also several lumber carriers, and several single-passenger chairs which were attached to the cable as needed, allowing men to reach the mine quickly, and in reasonable comfort physically. The first few trips over the canyons must have been somewhat disconcerting though, particularly as the men would usually just ride in an empty ore car.⁶⁷ One of the factors that needed to be calculated into the design of the tramway was the fairly uncommon situation of using the tramway to transport some of the smaller construction materials up the mountain as well as ore down. As a result, the support cable for the ore cars travelling up the mountain were 1 1/8 inch in diameter instead of the standard 3/4 inch.

By early August 1905, steamers were arriving at Skagway with cargo consigned to Conrad Consolidated Mines - groceries, lumber, ore cars, timbers, hand tools and all the other supplies and equipment required by the mines. On the Skagway dock, the material was transferred to rail cars for the 67 mile trip "over the hill" to Caribou Crossing.⁶⁸ From there the *Gleaner*, which the British Yukon Navigation Company had purchased from Captain Irving in 1900, took the materials to one of two beaches along Windy Arm. Klondike veteran William H. "Billy" Weisdeppe was then responsible for getting supplies and equipment up the mountain from the lakeshore, using 45 mules and a dozen pack horses that had recently arrived by steamer.

The White Pass & Yukon completed a survey for a spur line to be built along Windy Arm from Caribou Crossing, but in August, White Pass president Samuel Graves made the surprising announcement that the eleven-mile line, which would require considerable rock

work, would not be built until there was "sufficient business in sight to make a railroad to the mines profitable."⁶⁹



Herman W. Vance

In August, sixty men were working on three main groups of properties under the direction of Herman Wilbur Vance; on the adjoining Mountain Hero and Montana claims, forty men were working three eight-hour shifts, and sub-foreman George Erickson had another twenty working on the Venus and Uranus. Shafts and tunnels were being driven in at least a dozen places; the tunnel at the Montana had followed the vein down 240 feet, and ore graded at \$2,000 to \$3,000 per ton, mainly in silver, was being stoped and sorted for shipment. On August 9, Conrad announced that the Mountain Hero adit had struck the Montana vein, proving that there was ore grading at least \$50 a ton all the way between the mines, and

that one of the world's

greatest mines is about to be opened up."⁷⁰ In addition to the men in the mines, about one hundred men were at work on pack trails, wagon roads, buildings, and other services.

On August 9th, 1905, the first materials for the Montana tramway arrived at Skagway on the steamer *Al-Ki*. A large crew of men loaded twenty-two rail cars with timbers for the towers, lumber for the terminals and several tons of iron and steel tramway parts; five days

later, the parts had been landed on the beach at Windy Arm, and construction was started immediately. Twenty-five of Billy Weisdeppe's mules were diverted to the task of getting the materials up the mountain to a construction crew of fifty men brought in for the job by R. E. Lanyon of Nelson, British Columbia. Lanyon was well-known in the business, having already completed five tramways in British Columbia for the Riblets.



Driving tunnels at the Montana mine the hard way: a candle for light, and handtools and muscle to move tons of rock surrounding the silver ore.

Over the summer of 1905, John Conrad was constantly buying or optioning additional properties on both sides of Windy Arm. On August 21st, with his original option on Jack Pooley and Jack Stewart's claims expiring, he purchased all of the properties, as well as their eighty acres of prime land at Pooley Canyon.

Royal Newton Riblet was the youngest brother of Byron Riblet, one of the top tramway designers on the continent. Civil engineer Byron Riblet had built his first tramway at Sandon, British Columbia in 1897, and as a result of orders for other tramways in the area, he soon opened a factory in nearby Nelson.⁷¹ He hired both his brothers to work for the new company, with Walter as office manager and salesman, and Royal in the blacksmith shop. Although Royal had no formal training, he had developed a love for mechanics on the family farms in Iowa and South Dakota, and particularly in a bicycle shop he owned in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Royal showed a genius for translating his brother Byron's designs into steel and iron parts for the tramways, but he was always jealous of his brother, often taking credit for a great deal more of the design work than he actually did, and always allowing people to assume that he owned the company that bore his family's name. Riblet tramways sold well; unable to build a facility large enough to fabricate parts in sufficient quantity, Byron, in about 1903, sold all of his patents to the A. Leschen & Sons Wire Rope Company in St. Louis, Missouri. The money from that sale allowed them to expand their fabrication facilities at Nelson. From that time on, the Riblet brothers conducted the surveys, designed the specific tramway for each application, and fabricated the components, Leschen supplied the cable, and contract crews installed the systems.

In August, Francis W. "Frank" Farrington joined Conrad Consolidated as assayer; he came highly recommended by Gustave Singer, with whom he had spent several years working in Colorado. Although he had a good job in Colorado, for a young man to be in charge of an assay office that was responsible for testing the samples from so many developing mines was both a challenge, and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Farrington was one of many men who were arriving from Colorado, which was in the throes of a virtual mining war which had erupted as a result of the attempt by the Western

Federation of Miners to organize mine workers, starting in 1903; the mine owners in Colorado organized to stop the union's activities, and by 1905 kidnappings, murders and bombings were used by both sides, payoffs had reached all the way to the Governor's office, and martial law was instituted several times.⁷²



The earliest known photograph of the Conrad mines, taken by Case & Draper of Juneau. Although this postcard was titled with the name of the most famous mine, the Montana, this is actually the Mountain Hero camp, in about June, 1905.



Billy Weisdeppe's pack train loading with supplies for the Montana and Mountain Hero mines. The material was dropped off on the beach at the future site of Conrad City by the *Gleaner*.

As part of the Yukon government's commitment to encouraging quartz mining, Whitehorse surveyor Henry Godkin "Harry" Dickson and his assistant John Sullivan were sent to Carcross on August 13 to start laying out a road to the lower terminal of Conrad's tramway. Five days later, a crew of twenty men started work on the eleven-mile road, with Sam McGee as foreman. The men were paid four dollars per day plus board, with five dollars per day and board for McGee. To carry the road across the Carcross narrows, a wagon bridge was built upstream from the railway bridge, under the direction of Robert Henry MacDonald, who had formerly operated the MacDonald Roadhouse on the Nordenskiöld River.⁷¹ The bridge had a pair



Construction of the first of the Mountain Hero tramway towers, in August 1905. Fifty men worked on the project, under the direction of R.E.Lanyon, of Nelson, British Columbia. This photo, by Case & Draper, was also produced as a postcard.

of hand-operated windlasses installed to enable the centre sections of the bridge to be drawn up to allow the larger boats and barges through. The *Gleaner*, with a beam of 24 feet 6 inches, could just squeeze through. Although the entire project had been budgeted at \$5,000, with "no over-expenditures... allowed,"⁷² the final bill was \$6,671.60.⁷³

Working alongside the road crew was another crew working for the Dominion Telegraph System. After several weeks of negotiations, Conrad had agreed that if a telegraph line was run from Carcross to Conrad City, and an operator hired, his company would build an office and

supply board for the operator at the company mess hall. On September 16, District Superintendent Harry Gilchen went to Conrad City to arrange for construction of the line. Jack Hope, who had been working as a telegraph operator since 1901, was placed in charge of the Conrad office, and a few days after his arrival, was also hired as the Conrad correspondent for *The Daily Evening Star*.

Despite the expectation throughout the Yukon that a reliable connection with the outside world was assured when the new telegraph line from Atlin to southern British Columbia was opened in 1901⁷⁴, it actually was not very reliable. The line to the south was dead a great deal of the time due to breaks in the line caused by icing, fallen trees, and a host of other problems, with the section between Atlin and Hazelton causing most of the trouble. The *Yukon World* was rather restrained in their criticism of the system, which it termed "as poor an excuse of an institution as can well be imagined."⁷⁵ *The Daily Evening Star*, following yet another three-day loss of wire service, went much further and suggested

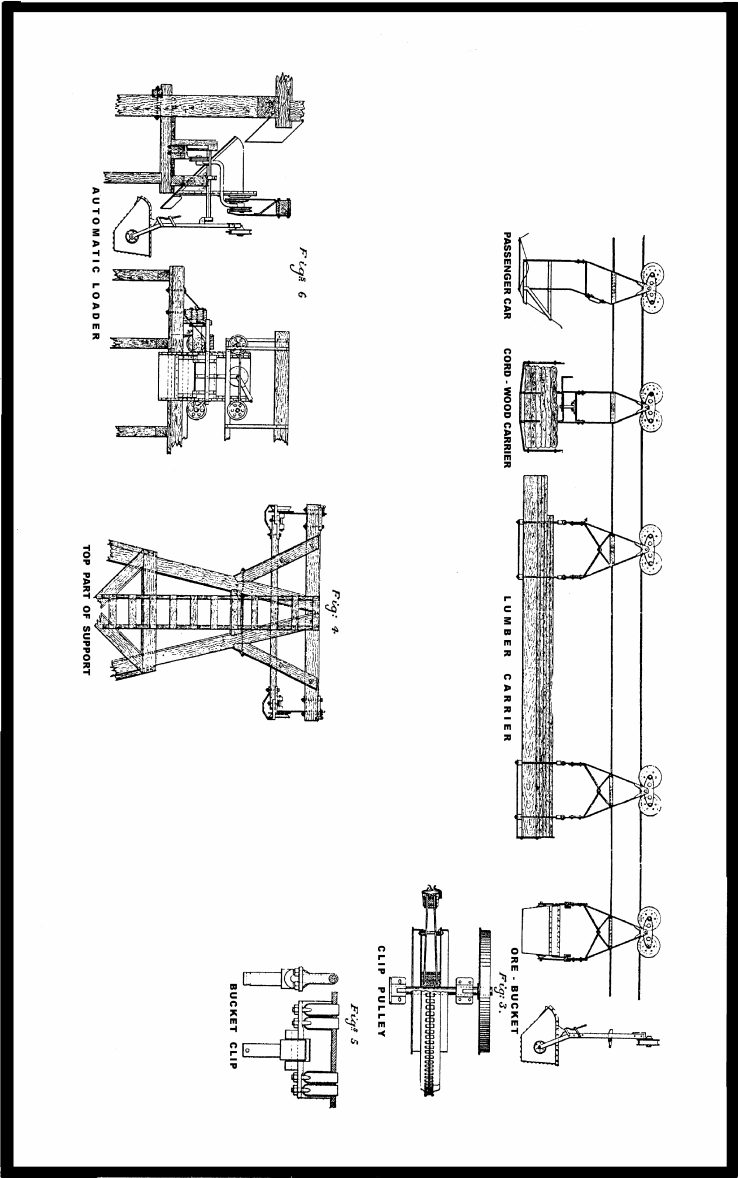
that the line be repaired in various and sundry places with shoe strings or corset laces and propped up in hundreds of places where it touches the ground with forks made from macaroni sticks. Anything would help the present decomposed and putrid service.⁷⁶

Windy Arm was truly becoming an opportunity for virtually anyone to strike it rich. James McQuarrie Murray had moved from New Westminster, British Columbia, to Whitehorse in 1901 with his wife and baby daughter, and went to work as a clerk at the Whitney & Pedlar store. He paid very close attention to the stories told by the prospectors who frequented the store to pick up

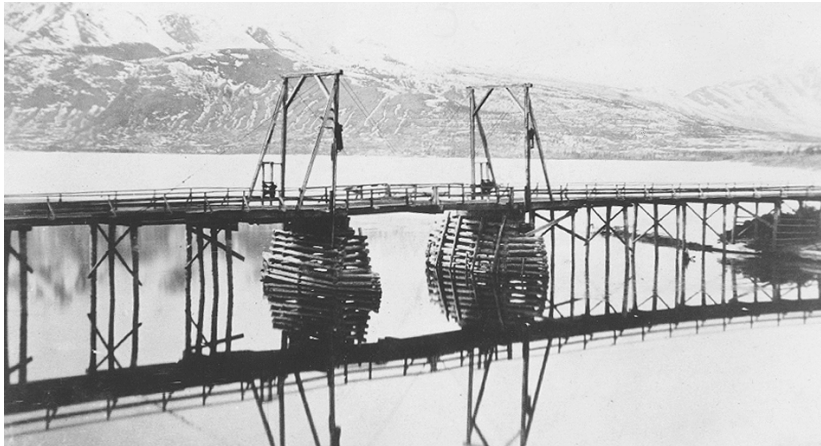
supplies, and cautiously started searching for rocks that looked

RIBLET AUTOMATIC ARIAL TRAMWAY
St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A. Spokane, Wash., U. S. A. Nelson, B. C., Canada

1914



(A plan of the Silver Cup tramway in B.C. was in the middle; removed for clarity)



In August 1905, Robert MacDonald built this wagon bridge across the narrows at Carcross, to access the Conrad Mines.

like those he heard described. Government assayer Robert Smart found himself answering more and more technical questions about rocks that Murray had found or seen. Ranging further and further afield, by 1905 the young man was spending his days off in the mountains around Carcross. In late July, on the opposite side of the mountain from all the claims previously staked, Murray staked the Caribou claim. Within two weeks John Conrad had optioned the property, which quickly became the key property in the Big Thing Group, consisting of fourteen claims. In late August, Toronto Centre Member of Parliament Edmund Bristol stopped for a look at Windy Arm on his way home from Dawson, where he was attempting to sort out some clients' legal tangles, as well as checking on mining investments of his own. Despite his claims to having initially been skeptical of Conrad's grandiose claims, within days Bristol had invested heavily

in the Big Thing Group. Twenty-five men were immediately put to work, concentrating on the Caribou, where assays from the initial open cuts on the vein had run as high as 100 ounces of silver per ton.

Everything seemed to be working in Conrad's favour to get the mines producing quickly; even the weather was cooperating, with an extremely dry summer. Though the work at Windy Arm was facilitated by the lack of rain, placer miners throughout the territory had an extremely difficult year because of the shortage of water. Even that worked to Conrad's advantage, as some of the seasonal placer miners who were unable to operate came to Windy Arm looking for work.

During September, work went on at a frantic pace to get as much as possible done before the snows fell. The 90,000 feet of steel cable needed to complete the Mountain Hero tramway was delivered, and Royal Riblet arrived from Spokane to direct Harry Dickson on surveys for three more tramways. The tramways from the Venus mine and the Vault property (which had recently been tied on to the old M & M claim) would run to Windy Arm, the one from the Big Thing to the mouth of MacDonald Creek on Lake Bennett. On the 12th, Herman Cane arrived from Skagway, and immediately put three crews to work building stone houses, 100 feet long and 16 feet wide, on the Big Thing, Mountain Hero and Thistle/Aurora claims to house the mine crews. The country rock on Montana Mountain is wonderfully suited to building such structures; it fractures in a rather squared manner, and can be set together with no mortar. For the mines' buildings, the rocks were used to form a wall about fifteen inches thick, with the spaces being filled with smaller stones and dirt.

Confusion about whether some claims being staked that summer were in British Columbia or the Yukon convinced the two governments that the boundary between the two jurisdictions needed to be more finely

delineated; in September, that task was added to the already extremely heavy workload of Harry Dickson. The project turned out to involve a great deal more work than anyone had expected. When Dickson's initial plots showed a considerable discrepancy from White-Fraser's calculations, Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) surveyor Richard George McConnell joined him for a couple of days. McConnell confirmed Dickson's figures, and as a result the boundary was moved about four hundred feet north.⁷⁷ Dickson sent his brother, civil engineer Thomas A. Dickson, to Windy Arm with assistant Ole Dixon on October 20 to attempt to complete moving all the border monuments; they returned on November 16 with the work incomplete, their work in the mountains having been halted by heavy snow.

Despite the White Pass & Yukon's statement that a railroad would not be built to Conrad City at the present time, a survey crew led by Victor I. Hahn started work, on September 12, on a line that would run from the new town to the existing railroad at Log Cabin. Newspaper articles reporting the large number of claims being staked on both sides of Windy Arm and along Tutshi Lake had already aided in raising the value of the company's stock considerably, and prompted the company to survey a loop that would service the entire district, including their new townsite at Silverdale, at the south end of Windy Arm.

Although Conrad consistently told newspaper reporters throughout North America and Europe that no shares were available in any of his companies, much of his time during August and September was spent in showing his properties to politicians and potential investors from Juneau, Seattle, Toronto, Pittsburgh, New York and many other cities across the continent. Occasionally some of the men, such as Congressman John M. Reynolds, from Bedford, Pennsylvania, Dr. J. E. Furry from New York, and Eric Armour, a partner in

Edmund Bristol's law firm, were allowed to invest a few dollars. The most important visit, though, by virtue of the credibility that the visit gave to Conrad's operation, was undoubtedly that of the new Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver. Oliver was committed to encouraging the development of western Canada and the Yukon, and on September 6, he left Carcross on the RNWMP launch *Gladys* for an overnight trip to Conrad City and some of the nearby claims. On his return he announced that he was "greatly pleased with the development and progress that has been made and the wonderful showing of the mines and the ore", and promised the miners that the government would give them every possible assistance.⁷⁹

"Coinciding" with Oliver's visit was another stampede, albeit a minor one; on September 4, two prospectors arrived at Conrad City with rich copper ore from the east side of Windy Arm. Word about the "Ram's Horn" discovery spread rapidly around the camp; "the men crossed the arm in dozens and swarmed the countryside all night and by daylight Tuesday morning [September 5] fully two square miles of claims had been staked."⁸¹ Even *The Atlin Claim* assured its readers that, despite the fact that a few hundred people were now in on the staking rush, the potential of the Windy Arm area was still not fully comprehended, and urged them to get in on the action before the best opportunities had passed. The editor of the *Claim* would soon regret that counsel, as scores of Atlin residents left for Windy Arm.

While the Conrad properties were getting most of the attention, they were not the only ones that were being worked that summer. The Dail & Fleming Group, south of the Venus, had been optioned by a syndicate based in Seattle; for an 80% share of the properties, George Dail and Jack Fleming accepted \$105,000 from the Windy Arm Mining Company. Headed by Seattle city councillor T. M. Daulton, the company also had W. H. Robeson, R. H.

Chadwick and Wirt Hansbrough, one of John Conrad's nephews, on the board of directors. In September, Robeson let a contract for the construction of a warehouse on the lakeshore, to house equipment for the development work planned for the property (renamed the Silver King) over the winter, and for the tramway that was to be installed when navigation opened in the spring.

Sam McGee's crew had only a short break after finishing the Carcross-Conrad City trail; on September 20, he started a crew of sixteen men on construction of a seven-mile pack trail from Carcross to the Big Thing mines. Every horse in the district was committed to freighting contracts, and the trail had to be built using only picks and shovels. Despite that inconvenience, the work was complete except for some final grading by October 17, when the ground froze hard enough to stop work.

On September 27th, 1905, *The Daily Evening Star* first made use of the honorary title "Colonel" when referring to John Conrad. It was a title that stuck to the large, gregarious Southern gentleman who was seemingly single-handedly bringing the Yukon out of its post-Klondike depression; to this day the title is an inseparable part of the Conrad legends in the territory. On October 1st, the Colonel was given the honour of sending the first telegram from Conrad City over the new telegraph line, and his brief news of recent developments in the area made front page headlines in the *Star*. A few days later, on the 6th, the returns from Conrad's first ore shipment were received: 50 tons of sacked ore from the Venus No.2 netted \$102.40 per ton from the Tacoma smelter. With a prosperous future now seemingly assured, Conrad announced plans to spend another \$2,000,000 on development work, including construction of a smelter at Carcross.

Colonel Conrad expressed his relief that the imminent arrival of winter would soon allow him a break

from the constant meetings with potential investors, so that he could devote his energies to completing plans for the effective development of the mines and smelter.⁸⁰ Smelting, or at least concentration of the ore was a priority, because of the difficulty and expense of transportation of ore from Windy Arm. Except in extremely rich pockets of the veins, the ore had to be hand-sorted into 100-pound sacks to assure the highest possible grade for shipping. Pack trains then brought the sacked ore to the lakeshore, where, depending on the season, the sacks went either on the *Gleaner* or a barge, or on Billy Weisdeppe's sleighs to be forwarded to Carcross. At Carcross they were transferred to the White Pass & Yukon railway, which took them to Skagway. Finally, the sacks of ore were loaded onto a steamship for the nearly 1000 mile trip to either the Tacoma or Ladysmith smelters. The railroad portion of the transportation alone cost Conrad Consolidated \$4.25 per ton, and it is likely that the total cost of getting the ore to the smelter was close to \$20 per ton.

One of the considerations for building a smelter at Carcross was that in that location, the ore from the Whitehorse Copper Belt could economically be worked as well as that from Windy Arm. Captain Irving had managed to obtain extensive new financing, and sent a wire to Willard Phelps the first week of October, instructing him to option all available copper properties. The Copper Belt had been plagued by under-capitalization for the six years since its discovery, and it was expected that, with sufficient capital available from Captain Irving, several of the mines would be shipping ore out by the following spring.

Reports on the future of the Windy Arm district were unanimously optimistic in the fall of 1905. The GSC had assigned their new Yukon specialist, R. G. McConnell, to conduct a quick survey of the Windy Arm

mines, and he spent the last week of September and the first week of October in the district with his assistant, F. H. MacLaren. In his Summary Report for 1905, McConnell described the new mining area in glowing terms: "the general outlook for the camp is exceedingly promising, and its opening marks an important event in the mining history of the country."⁸¹

Bill Clark, described by the *Star* as "one of the most conservative Quartz miners ever to come north", visited the major properties during the first days of October at the request of Edmund Bristol. On this inspection tour he was accompanied by British Columbia's Mineralogist W. Fleet Robertson and Atlin Member of Parliament Dr. Henry Essen Young. Clark's opinion, "based on years of experience in Montana and British Columbia", was that:

Undoubtedly the Windy Arm country is the richest and most extensive mineral belt discovered on the North American continent in many years. I found vast bodies of ore, the several ledges being from 3 to 5 feet in width and of practically limitless extent. The value of this ore, as you know, is enormous, running all the way from 200 to 4,000 ounces of silver and from \$2.50 to \$5 in gold per ton. ... I believe from 5000 to 10,000 men will be employed there within a year. [On the Mountain Hero property] a veritable mountain of ore has been located immediately at the interior terminus of tramway No.1. The mule pack train ... has packed 4000 tons of freight, ore, wood and supplies during the past ten weeks.⁸²

While Bill Clark may have been conservative in comparison to other quartz miners, he was by no means an impartial observer of activities at Windy Arm; on his return from his tour of inspection, he was hired as foreman of the Thistle and Aurora mines, which were operating from the same camp, at the head of Pooley Canyon.

In October, Conrad added two more companies to those under his control when Edmund Bristol, with law firm partner Edward Bayley, W. F. McRae, C. W. Mitchell and William Kelly, incorporated J. H. Conrad Yukon Mines and the Windy Arm Syndicate to operate the Big Thing Group of properties. Bristol had become one of Conrad's most vocal boosters in the Toronto newspapers. On his return from the Yukon, he had invited a reporter from *The Toronto News* to his office, where the young man found Mr. Bristol with "a small cartload of ores, mostly silver and gold, on his table, three maps of the Yukon on his office wall, and a whole living picture of the frozen north in his brain."⁸³ Following a lengthy discourse on mining in general, Bristol extolled the many virtues of the Windy Arm district, where the silver ran "1,000 and 2,000 ounces to the ton," and which he said had everything necessary, from easy access to transportation to a nearby supply of coking coal, to make it "the biggest mining camp in the world." Although Bristol denied having contracted "the Northern microbe," the reporter concluded that "he is probably mistaken."⁸⁴

October, however, also brought the most serious problems that Colonel Conrad had yet had to face at Windy Arm. Heavy snow had brought any surface development work on the higher-elevation claims to a halt by the 13th. The same day, while the cable was being stretched on the Mountain Hero tramway, one of the main capstans broke, halting the operation until a replacement could be shipped from Seattle.

Willard Phelps was spending an increasing amount of time in Carcross taking care of Colonel Conrad's business affairs. In October, he told a *Star* reporter a story that gives both another side of John Conrad, and a glimpse at the kind of spirit that seemed to be common in the people who were keeping the Territory alive in those days; when Phelps' train arrived in Carcross:

Mrs. Barbara Fern, the little washerwoman, left the train and started for Skagway on foot. Colonel Conrad offered to pay the old lady's fare but she said she preferred walking as it would give her an opportunity to prospect for quartz along the route.⁸⁵

By the end of October, all of the Conrad Consolidated mining camps were connected by a private telephone system to both Conrad City and Carcross; a total of 22 miles of lines had been strung by crews led by Paul Shakespeare Hogan, a man known for his wide array of talents. Born in Alabama in 1866, Hogan had first come north in 1899, when the rush to Atlin had drawn him. Following another rush to the Kluane goldfields in 1903, where he bought 100 acres of prime land at the mouth of Bullion Creek, he had settled in Whitehorse to raise a family. His wife and two young daughters remained in Whitehorse while he was working on the telephone line, but came down on the train to visit him in Carcross when he took a Sunday off from his labours.

On October 27, Colonel Conrad headed south on the *Princess May*, for a four-month trip to Seattle, Toronto, New York and London. He spoke to a *Vancouver World* reporter while he was passing through that city, and the article was reprinted in the *Star* on November 14th. In it, Conrad announced that three days before he left the Yukon, the Mountain Hero crosscut tunnel had finally, after four months' work, struck the Montana vein at a

depth of 650 feet; "prov[ing] the vein to be more than a mile and a half long, and ... from four to six feet wide." According to Conrad, this made the Montana vein "one of the longest or the longest chute of continuous high grade ore ever found in the world." With all the impressive figures in the report, most readers likely interpreted in a positive light the *World* reporter's closing comment that "ore in sight to the extent of \$12,000,000 by a 625 foot tunnel is something new in the annals of mining."

George Dail and Jack Fleming were getting their share of attention as well. Thirty-eight sacks of ore that T. M. Daulton had sent to the Tacoma smelter as a test netted \$72.24 per ton, and shortly afterward, Dail and Fleming turned down an offer of \$50,000 for the 20% of their properties that they had held on to.

The simple broken capstan that had delayed completion of the Mountain Hero tramway had become a disaster; the replacement capstan shipped from Seattle had been the wrong part, and Lanyon's crews had given up and returned to Nelson. Manager Singer went to the White Pass shops in Skagway to discuss the problem with their blacksmiths, who were undoubtedly the local experts in matters involving heavy steel and iron. They attempted to repair the broken casting, with no success, then decided to cast a new one. It was installed on November 10, and the heavy work of stretching the 90,000 feet of cable began. A particularly mild spell of weather had melted most of the snow off the south slopes, greatly facilitating the work, which was expected to only take ten days.



The crew of the Mountain Hero outside their stone bunkhouse. The only position in which Orientals were welcome in Yukon quartz mining camps was as cooks.

One of the first items of business that Colonel Conrad had to take care of on his trip outside was to reorganize the companies to reflect the changing nature of their operations. Gustave Singer met him in Seattle on about November 20, and together they made an initial presentation to the shareholders explaining in detail where, and to what effect, 2500 feet of underground work had been completed. Colonel Conrad then continued on to New York, leaving the shareholders in Singer's efficient hands. Singer apparently had no trouble convincing the shareholders that the richness of the mines had been proven without a doubt, and that they justified an expansion of the borrowing abilities of the operating companies. With increased capital available, more tramways, a hydro-electric power plant, and of course a smelter, could be built.

In order to get as wide a variety of professional opinions as possible on the type of smelter that would be

the most efficient, the ore being shipped from the mines was directed to smelters in addition to the one at Tacoma, and small samples were tested at several laboratories. Singer told a *Star* reporter that the mine managers "desire to escape the mistake that too often has been made of investing a fortune in a plant not suitable for the purpose."⁸⁶ In early November, fifty tons of ore was shipped south on the *Jefferson*; most of it was forwarded to the Tacoma smelter as usual, but about ten tons was shipped to the smelter at Denver, Colorado.

Any whisper of a new vein being found in the Windy Arm area was enough to create another stampede. Colonel Conrad's assayer, Frank Farrington, accompanied by Alvilla "Frenchie" Chausse and Duncan O'Hara, returned from a ptarmigan-hunting trip on November 6 with ore samples that they claimed were picked up only a mile north of Conrad City. When assay results reporting that the ore was rich in gold "leaked" out, the entire mountainside around the hunting partners' Limping Grouse claim was staked within a couple of days. However, nothing more was ever reported from any of the claims.

The citizens of the southern Yukon were thoroughly enjoying basking in the spotlight that Colonel Conrad and his supporters had sharply focused on Windy Arm. They did not take lightly to negative reports, and when the *Star* reprinted portions of an article from the *Victoria World*, it was under the headline "A Deranged Liver."⁸⁷ The editor of that paper claimed that future of Windy Arm:

is in grave danger from the absurd exaggeration of irresponsible newspaper men who are flooding the Canadian and American press with the most fantastic statements of the richness of this district. At the scene of operations on a large scale

Windy Arm is likely one day to be an important mining field, but from information to hand it is the very last section of our country to stand "booming." The statements made by the writers referred to bear untruth on the face of them and must do great injury to the prospect of what is now a very promising country.

The *World* article went on to relate some of the grander reports on the Windy Arm district that had been printed by other newspapers recently, such as the report that "Windy Arm is by far the greatest thing in the New North, greater than the Klondike ever dreamed of being." The *World* concluded that:

[i]t is this sort of arrant rot that makes the bad reputation that has so seriously retarded development of the mining resources of British Columbia. The above is the language of the wildcat promoter, of the gold brick man in the mining business, and it can hardly deceive the biggest fool in America.

Disregarding the opinion of the editor of the *World*, the Provincial Mineralogist, W. Fleet Robertson, joined the list of Windy Arm boosters with his reports of assays received from samples he had picked during his October visit. The three assays from the Montana vein came back as \$13.66, \$7.60 and \$17.60 per ton in gold, and 442 ounces, 113 ounces and 163 ounces of silver per ton. Robertson also reported that "the geological conditions existing in the vicinity of the Montana claim appeared to continue to the southward into British Columbia territory and past the southern end of the Arm."⁸⁸ Such reports were widely read and believed by people with money to invest. By the end of November, Colonel Conrad was able

to wire money from New York to Willard Phelps to pay for claim options that were expiring.

4 The Birth of Conrad City

As news spread of the incredible riches being uncovered high in the as-yet unnamed mountains beside Windy Arm, a tent city had started to grow on the broad delta of the large creek that flowed from the highest peak.

John Conrad had learned from his family's experiences in Montana that it was a good idea to not focus too tightly on the ore-extraction aspect of mining; they had made a great deal of money in townsite speculation at several locations. Windy Arm, with its extremely limited choice of building sites, offered the perfect situation for successful speculation of that type. Due to the restriction in the Yukon that a person or a corporation could only apply for one block of land in any one area, Conrad and Singer agreed to apply separately for blocks of land, on the private understanding that the joint block was for the company's benefit. On July 3rd, 1905, they each applied to the Dominion government to purchase 160 acres; Singer's application straddled the large creek, and Conrad's tied on to the north of that block. Four days later, Captain Patrick Martin, owner of the Arctic Trading Company in Whitehorse, tied up the balance of the creek delta when he applied for a 100-acre block to the south of Singer's.

The first hotel licence for the new town was issued the first week of August 1905 to Barney J. McGee, whose Vancouver Hotel in Whitehorse had burned down in the disastrous fire in May. On August 8 he shipped in not only supplies for his hotel, but also merchandise for a general store, primarily a selection of boots and clothing that would be in demand by the miners. When the new Vancouver Hotel opened in a large tent, McGee, being the first business man in town, was acclaimed as mayor as well; being a natural showman, he took to the position

with relish. The other founding business in Conrad City was a laundry and bathhouse that was set up on the waterfront by Mrs. Carrie Dodson.⁸⁹

The Daily Evening Star of August 16th reported that 300 people had spent the previous night at Conrad City, "more than half of whom had no bed but Mother Earth and no covering save heaven's canopy." This rush of people prompted Singer to start selling lots in his portion of Conrad City even

Captain Martin had arrived in Dawson on August 24, 1898, as Master of the sternwheeler *Canadian*. The *Canadian* had been built in Victoria for the Klondike trade, and Martin, an experienced deep-sea skipper, sailed her all the way from Victoria to Dawson, then on to Whitehorse. At 760 tons, she was the largest sternwheeler to make the trip to Whitehorse up to that time. By 1900, the popular captain and his wife Winnifred had settled in Whitehorse and opened the Club Cigar Store, and later the Arctic Trading Company. Located in tents on Front Street, they sold everything from groceries to paint to scows. Both businesses prospered, and they leased a real building, but were wiped out in the May 23, 1905 fire. Although their loss was listed as \$15,500, with no insurance,⁹⁰ he quickly rebuilt. His new building was one of the finest in Whitehorse; twenty by fifty feet, it was painted bright green, and the entire interior was done in varnished wood. Flushed with his success in Whitehorse, Captain Martin was looking for a new challenge, and Conrad City presented him with just what he was looking for at the time.



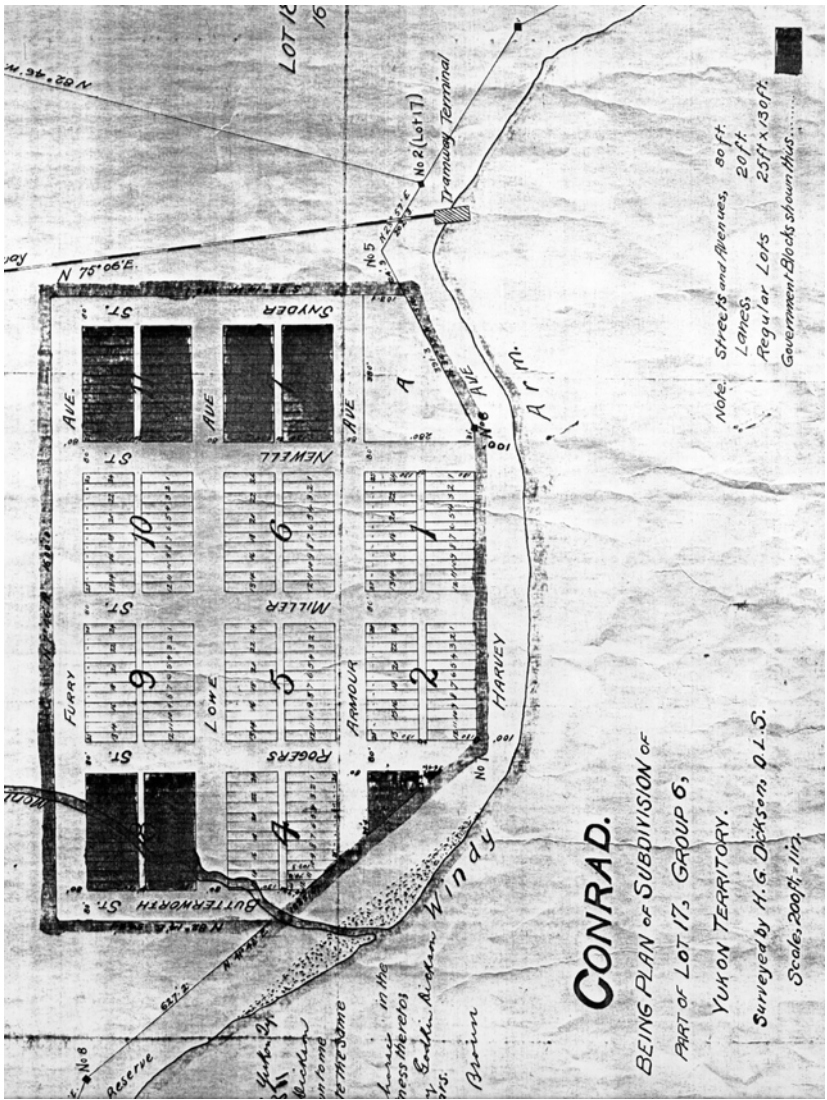
The Vancouver Hotel, Conrad City, August 1905. Barney McGee is likely the man seated to the right.

before they had been legally surveyed. During the first two weeks of September Harry Dickson surveyed out a townsite 1600 feet wide and averaging about 750 feet deep; this was then divided into 247 lots, each 25 by 130 feet, with 80-foot wide streets. Dickson started his survey by using Barney McGee's hotel, and the sidewalk that had already been built, as a baseline. A block just south of the tramway terminus was allotted for a railway station, although no allowance was made in the lot plan for an actual railway line.

The regulations controlling the establishment of a townsite in the Yukon required that one-third of the lots be given to the Federal government for their use or sale, and that a frontage of one hundred feet along the shore of any navigable waters be reserved for government allocation to "appropriate" businesses. Although having government control over the waterfront reserve had been very effective in enhancing Dawson's early development, in Conrad



The Conrad Consolidated Company's forty-man cookhouse at Conrad City, overlooking the small bay where the tramway terminus and dock were located.



Conrad City, September 1905
Survey by Harry Dickson

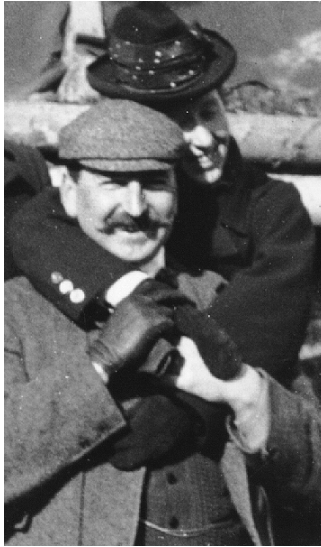
City, these regulations were handled in a rather haphazard manner, and there was little productive result. A lack of agreement on how many, and which specific lots should be allocated to the government resulted in a constant stream of letters travelling between Conrad, Dawson and Ottawa. The new Commissioner of the Yukon, William Wallace Burns McInnes was more intent on giving people what they wanted than in trying to ensure the long-term betterment of the town; against the advice of some of his officials, he approved virtually every waterfront lease application presented to him, often approving more than one application for the same ground.

Commissioner "Billy" McInnes had been appointed to the Yukon's top position on May 27, 1905, at only 34 years of age. The Territory had undergone a difficult period under F. T. Congdon during which political corruption was rampant, and there were misgivings as to whether a man of his youth could handle the situation. McInnes, however, had the perfect combination of intellect and personality for the times, and quickly won over the vast majority of the population. When he was criticized, it was generally because he enjoyed life a bit too much for some people's standards, and was too eager to please.

Conrad City was not the only place to benefit from the mining activity. As the gateway to the Windy Arm district, Carcross also experienced a booming economy. The hotels and stores run by the Scott brothers and R. J. Brittain were running at full capacity, and Customs Collector Leo Simmons complained that he was so busy he had to get up to go fishing at 4:00 A.M. or cut out fishing entirely. In early August the *Star* arranged for Archie McIntosh to send in regular reports on the business and social events in Carcross.

As a result of heavy liquor import and business licence charges in the Yukon, and as possible future shipping bases, two townsites were laid out at the south end of Windy Arm, on the British Columbia side of the border. Despite constant complaints to the Territorial

Council, liquor import permits in the Yukon cost two dollars per gallon for hard liquor and fifty cents per gallon for wine (beer was exempt until 1908), and a hotel licence in any undeveloped part of the Territory cost \$250. On the 11th of August, eighty acres of prime land immediately south of the Yukon border was applied for by Charles Edgar Wynn-Johnson, and on the same day a total of 320 acres, at the south end of Windy Arm, one and a half miles further south, was applied for by the British Yukon Navigation Company, the company's Superintendent, Dr. Percy Fremlin Scharschmidt, and H. W. E. Canavan,. Twelve days later, Alexander Roderick MacDonald, owner of the Kootenay Hotel in Atlin, applied for forty acres of land on the Yukon side of the border; although he stated that the property was for a townsite, most of it was actually too steep to build any structures except wharves on. Within a few weeks, Wynn-Johnson's townsite, named Wynton after its owner,⁹¹ was starting to divert business from Conrad City.



Charles Wynn-Johnson had been born on the banks of the Thames River to the wife of a wealthy lawyer, R. Byron Johnson.⁹² Johnson had spent a few years in British Columbia after joining the Cariboo gold rush, and Charles had inherited his father's frontier spirit. After training as a civil engineer, he became secretary of a group of companies operating light railways, but less than six months later, he had quit and headed for British Columbia. Within weeks of his arrival, in the fall of 1891, he was raising sheep on Lasqueti Island. That venture did not last long, and he had wandered up and down the west coast,

settling for short periods at Dawson, Fairbanks, the Stewart River, and, most recently, Skagway, where his wife and two children joined him.

The residents of Conrad were still glowing from the warmth of Frank Oliver's praise when Commissioner McInnes arrived on the *Gleaner* with a large party of government officials and other VIPs on September 26. Their visit fuelled rumours that Conrad was to become the new capital of the Territory, but the *Star* considered those rumours to be "premature":

While Conrad City will no doubt have a large part of the territory's population within the coming year, it is too far out on the edge to be chosen as the capital. Whitehorse is a better site for that purpose.⁹³

The Yukon government had been petitioned to assist in the construction of a road to Atlin, and after leaving Conrad City the Commissioner's party continued on to Atlin to assess the situation. At a banquet given in

their honour at the Caribou Hotel on their return to Carcross on the 30th, McInnes, though noncommittal on specific initiatives, expressed the utmost confidence in the future of the area.



The RNWMP launch "Gladys" at Carcross, September 30, 1905. The third man from the left is RNWMP Inspector A. E. Snyder, next is Commissioner W. W. B. McInnes, then John Conrad. Second from the right is the Reverend John Hawksley, and furthest right is RNWMP Captain Fitz Horrigan.

One of the many people to whom Conrad City gave another chance was Herbert Major Wooldridge. A farmer from Manitoba, he had arrived in the territory too late to cash in on the gold strikes in either the Klondike or Atlin. Like so many of the pioneers, though, Wooldridge had ambition and a vision; on March 6, 1899, he applied for land to start a stock farm at Ten Mile Point, ten miles above the Tagish Police Post.⁹⁴ The initial lease of 120 acres, for \$60 per year, was quickly added to. His wife, Josephine, joined him, and they imported cattle, horses, mowing machines and hay-presses, and grew oats, hay,

turnips, potatoes, carrots and other vegetables. The farm was very successful; in October 1902 they sold 70 tons of hay on the Atlin wharf for \$70 a ton.⁹⁵ In 1903 and 1904, however, the unpredictable Yukon weather turned against them; the garden and hay crops were total losses. Bert started selling off pieces of Ten Mile Ranch in 1903, and by 1905 Josephine was working in a hotel at Discovery, in the Atlin placer fields, to try to keep up payments. Bert opened a restaurant in a tent at Conrad City in June, and it was an immediate success, as much because of Bert's talent for story-telling as for any skill at the stove. On September 22nd he opened a new restaurant in an 18 by 25 foot log cabin that he had built near the waterfront.

On September 15, the residents of Conrad City gathered at Barney McGee's hotel to express their gratitude to their member on the Yukon Council, Robert Lowe, for his "tireless efforts" on their behalf. Colonel Conrad told the assembled group that he had never in all his mining experience had such support from a government, and that, if not for the roads and trails that had been built, operations at the mines would surely have been suspended for the season.

When the lots in Gustave Singer's part of the Conrad City townsite finally went on sale officially, on September 16th, 41 lots were sold in 3 hours for prices ranging from \$25 to \$300, depending on the location. Charles Watson, bookkeeper for the Bullion Hydraulic Company at Kluane, had been hired as townsite agent, and the lively atmosphere of the new boom town was apparently very much to Watson's liking; a week later, he purchased the Vancouver Hotel from Barney McGee, reopening it as the Windy Arm Hotel. McGee enjoyed huge, lavish dinner parties like the one he had hosted for Bob Lowe, and had already tired of the small town; he immediately took his money back to the bright lights of Whitehorse and went into partnership with Peter Richen in the newly-rebuilt Commercial Hotel.

With winter rapidly approaching, Colonel Conrad decided it was time he had a house so that he could properly entertain his important guests. Possibly to avoid the industrial hustle and noise of Conrad City, he ordered a 20 by 60 foot house and a separate mining office built on the government waterfront reserve at Carcross.⁹⁶ The house, with three rooms and a large open fireplace at one end, would allow him to entertain his important guests in a more appropriate manner. Having recently brought in his nephew, Wirt Hansbrough, as his private secretary, Conrad put him in charge of supervising the house construction as well.

Colonel Conrad had worn himself out over the past few weeks; on October 3, he was hospitalized in Whitehorse with a severe cold "that threaten[ed] to turn into a case of pneumonia." Within a couple of days he was fairly well recovered, and was able to talk to a *Star* reporter, who facetiously reported the Colonel as being "comfortably propped up in bed, smoking a black pipe and figuring the profit on four million tons of ore at \$627 41 1/2 cents per ton."⁹⁷

Although Barney McGee had brought in a few items of general merchandise for sale, there was still a need for a full line general store at Conrad City. In late September, "Frenchie" Chausse ordered a shipment of groceries, clothing, tools and other necessities from Vancouver; on October 5, his stock was on the way, and he went to Carcross to purchase materials to build a small store.

On October 14, the King's Mill at Carcross burned to the ground. Built in 1900 by Mike King, the mill was always in financial trouble, and Harry A. Munn from Victoria had seized it in 1904 for a mortgage that was in default. He had made extensive repairs to the equipment, and Len Cousins from Whitehorse was just finishing off installation of a new planer when it burned. The timing could not have been worse; every possible board that the mill could produce was needed for the building booms at

Carcross and Conrad City, as well as the rebuilding that was continuing in Whitehorse.

Wirt Hansbrough was getting so involved in his own business interests that he had little time left to take care of his uncle's correspondence. With more people arriving on every train, many needing supplies for the winter, the Scott Brothers store was not able to keep up with the demand; there was obviously business enough for another general store. Hansbrough arranged for financial backing from W. H. Robeson, one of his mining partners, and on October 17 he left Skagway on the *Princess May* for a very quick trip to Vancouver to order stock.

With the population of Carcross growing larger by the week, RNWMP Superintendent A. E. Snyder realized that a stronger police presence was needed, and on November 1, Captain Fitz Horrigan was transferred to the post as commanding office and police magistrate. Captain Horrigan had gained a solid reputation since arriving in the Yukon five years previously, and the residents of Carcross welcomed him as "not only a pleasant companion, but a just magistrate who never swerves from the path of right and justice."⁹⁸

It seems that virtually everyone who had the opportunity was joining the Windy Arm stampede in some form. On November 2, August Voelpel incorporated The Voelpel Power, Light, Water and Telephone Company, Limited in an attempt to cash in on the boom. With powers to deal in real estate and install all manner of dams, flumes, transmission lines and other services within fifty miles of Carcross, Voelpel's company had two of the most influential men in the southern Yukon as Directors, Superintendent Snyder⁹⁹ and Robert Lowe.¹⁰⁰

The Palmer brothers, who had backed Jack Pooley and Jack Stewart in 1904, were very busy as well, attempting to tie up the rights to all of the most important land and services around Conrad City. On November 2, they applied for 1500 feet of waterfront to the north of

Colonel Conrad's, and the following day, they applied for a timber berth that covered the entire east side of Windy Arm for fifteen miles. The waterfront lease was approved at one dollar per foot per year, but when Commissioner McInnes expressed his approval of the timber berth with only a slight change in the wording, R. C. Miller pointed out the possible consequences:

... [there are] already 25 or 30 mineral claims on the ground applied for, and there are likely to be a great many more next spring. If the timber were sold off these I fear it would arouse widespread dissatisfaction, most likely resulting in a most undesirable agitation as well. It should also be borne in mind that practically the only wood on Windy Arm is on the eastern shore. The town of Conrad must, therefore, look to this as its present source of supply; and such being the case I need not point out the danger of such supply in any way being monopolized. Finally, there is very little timber - as such - of any value on the land. It is mostly fit for cordwood only.¹⁰¹

Eight days later, the Palmer brothers published legal notices announcing the most ambitious plans for Conrad City yet. They had incorporated three companies, the Conrad City Water & Supply Company, the Conrad City Telephone Syndicate and the Conrad City Electric and Power Company. With this powerful-sounding trio, the Palmers hoped to be able to secure the government franchises for all the basic services in Conrad City, Carcross, and Whitehorse. Both Voelpel and the Palmers either ignored, or were not aware of the fact that Bill Anderson had made application six weeks previously for the crucial water rights to Montana Creek.¹⁰²

The owners of *The Daily Evening Star*, "Stroller" White and A. B. McEacheran, while taking every opportunity to stress in their newspaper the opportunities presented by the Windy Arm boom, were being very cautious with their own money; although they had gotten in early and bought "one of the most centrally located lots on the townsite" for the planned office, they announced in October that they would likely wait until the spring to build.¹⁰³

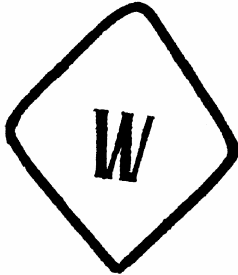
The material most in demand at Windy Arm in the fall of 1905 was wood in various forms. Captain William Bamfield was the first person to bring in timber in large quantities, pushing in rafts of logs in front of his small steamer. On November 10, the first fairly serious accident of the Windy Arm boom occurred when Captain Bamfield drove the bit of his axe into his left foot while limbing logs. Sam McGee was finished his road-building for the winter, and with Captain Bamfield out of commission, he acted quickly to try to fill the void. He and Frank N. Johnson leased Cariste Racine's old sawmill at Tagish, and started working to get it back into shape. It needed more work than they had planned on, however, and they were not able to ship out any lumber until the spring.

Expanding rapidly, Bert Wooldridge had replaced his tent with a log cabin, then added on to the cabin, opening the Conrad Hotel and Restaurant in early December. To keep up with his booming business (and to allow him to go hunting for a few weeks) he brought his brother Cecil up from Vancouver.

During the winter of 1905-06, the frozen surface of Windy Arm became a highway, with dog teams and horse teams hauling all manner of building supplies, mining equipment, store fixtures and other signs of prosperity into the new town. Since the close of lake navigation, orders destined for Conrad City had been piling up at Scott's store; on November 27, Mark Gilliam decided to try the lake ice, and mushed a dog team hauling some of that freight into Conrad City. Less than three weeks later,

Captain Bamfield, healed and back in business, brought in the first horse team with supplies. The new Hansbrough and Robeson store in Carcross had opened on December 12, and was soon sending shipments to Conrad virtually every day. By Christmas Billy Weisdeppe was back from a recuperative period at Hoonah Hot Springs, 50 miles west of Juneau, and his "Diamond W Stage Line" was making round trips to Carcross daily with 4-horse sleighs, taking between one hour and forty minutes and two hours for the trip each way. The route was also used for recreation, with people using ice-skates to travel between Carcross and Conrad City.

Land and businesses changed hands rapidly, for ever-larger sums of money through the early winter, and buildings and partnerships underwent frequent revisions. By the last week of 1905, Conrad City had two hotels, Charles Watson's Windy Arm and Bert Wooldridge's Conrad; at least two restaurants; Alex Chisholm's hardware on Harvey Avenue; Carrie Dodson's laundry and bath house; Alvilla Chausse's "general resort and solo emporium", a tobacco store on Watson Street owned by Eli Proulx and James Hume, Gustave Singer's office, and the telegraph office. Dozens of commercial and residential buildings were under construction, the largest of them being a two-storey office building being built for August Voelpel by Whitehorse contractors Cousins & Hume for \$1,950. Of special interest to the residents of Conrad, a group from Juneau announced that it had let a contract to build a large dance hall. It was reported in the *Star* on December 19th that the residents of the new town, not wanting to appear too pretentious, would henceforth call it just plain "Conrad".



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WM. WEISDEPPF Mgr. M. J. BRITTAIN, C. W. WATSON
Agt. at Caribou Agt. at Conrad

The Weekly Star,
February 22, 1906

When the government decided that a weather reporting station was needed in Conrad City, the unanimous choice as weather observer was Charles Watson, well-known for his philosophical and intellectual bent. In December, a simple recording station was set up behind the hotel, and each day Watson telegraphed his reports to Whitehorse to be included in the newspaper.

The Caribou and Scott Hotels in Carcross, having enjoyed a very prosperous year as a result of the labours of the men on Windy Arm, invited all of the single men in the area to a free Christmas dinner and dance. Billy Weisdeppe brought his four-horse rig in from Conrad with the Wooldridge brothers, Jack Hope and several other men. With two fiddles and a piano providing the music, the men, with several Carcross women, danced into the wee hours.

In his year-end report for 1905, the Assistant Commissioner of the RNWMP,¹⁰⁴ Zachary Taylor Wood, quoted part of Bill Clark's *Star* interview regarding the riches of Windy Arm, then added a sentiment that, in the enthusiasm of the moment, was lost on most Yukoners:

While fully appreciating the business energy and welcoming the capital of the owner and his associates, it is to be regretted that the development of the southern portion of the Yukon is not in the hands of our own countrymen; instead of the greater portion of the proceeds of the mines remaining in Canada, to the advancement of the resources of our own country, it will go to the American cities on the Pacific coast, just as the output of the Dawson district.¹⁰⁵

5 1906 - The Zenith Year

As the new year dawned, Windy Arm and Colonel Conrad were drawing attention in newspaper accounts from across the continent. While the Dawson newspapers virtually ignored the southern part of the territory (as the *Star* ignored Dawson as much as possible), the *Atlin Claim* now grudgingly acceded to the fact that there may indeed be more opportunities at Windy Arm than at Atlin.

Wirt Hansbrough was keeping himself very busy, working as Colonel Conrad's secretary, supervising the construction of his uncle's house, running his general store in Carcross, planning another store for Conrad, and doing a fair bit of his own mining trading. During his trip outside in November, he had joined the board of directors of another Seattle-based mining syndicate; the Ruby Silver Mining Company had N. S. Leithead as president, Hansbrough as vice-president and R. H. Chadwick as secretary-treasurer. On January 8th, Hansbrough announced that the company had purchased the Ruby Silver property, for \$15,000, from William H. Ireland, Jack Stager and George Erickson. Ireland had staked the Ruby Silver the previous June, on the supposed southern extension of the Venus vein. While prospecting on the mountain he had found a good showing of large, dark red crystals. Although he had never seen anything like it before, he had heard other prospectors describe a mineral they called ruby silver that sounded like what he had found. He quickly staked the property, then headed for Whitehorse to have Robert Smart test his crystals at the government assay office. When Smart heated the crystals, they quickly melted into a round shiny globule, then into a dull gray button. The button was then dissolved in nitric acid, and when a curd formed on top of that solution after hydrochloric acid was added, Smart was able to confirm to the excited Ireland that he had indeed discovered a deposit of pyrargyrite. Pyrargyrite was known to the prospectors as ruby silver because of its colour and form, and its composition, which is almost 60% silver.

A few days of severe weather, with temperatures dropping to about 65 degrees below zero on January 21st,¹⁰⁶ plus a strong wind, curtailed virtually all outside work, even stopping the White Pass & Yukon trains for three days, but as soon as the weather moderated, activity was quickly back to full

speed. Confidence in the future of Conrad was unqualified; by early February, many of the buildings, which had been set up as rapidly and as economically as possible, were being rebuilt in a substantial manner which would be a credit to any small town. Alvilla Chausse had formed a partnership with George W. Curtis, owner of the Imperial Hotel in Whitehorse, and started rebuilding his premises as the Northern Hotel. Bert Wooldridge was making plans to tear the Conrad Hotel and Restaurant down and replace it with a first-class establishment, with a barbershop added. David Cochrane, newly-arrived from Atlin, was putting up a two-storey building on Harvey Avenue to be rented as stores and offices. Leo Simmons, the Carcross Customs Collector, started work on a small commercial building on Armour Avenue. Alex Chisholm had decided to expand his hardware store, and announced plans to build a two-storey building on Harvey Avenue, with a hardware and grocery store on the ground floor and offices above. Charles Watson started adding a modern new barroom to the Windy Arm Hotel. George Mellott and Gustave Singer gave new impetus to the real estate boom in Conrad with their announcement that they would soon start work on a hotel expected to cost \$15,000. Peter Richen had come to Conrad with a special delegation of Whitehorse businessmen on the 31st of January, and announced his intention to build the largest hotel yet; it was to be two and a half stories, 30 by 80 feet, with an 18 by 30 foot annex. Probably the most-discussed proposal, though, was still that of the dance hall that had been announced in November. "Stroller" White, in the style of writing that made him so famous, lamented the fact that the dance hall was not yet in operation, stocked with "those dear, soulful creatures who always seem to know in what pocket the pay envelope is carried":

Six years ago the Stroller knew a man in the Klondike who, but for the dancehalls, would have sent his money outside and it would have been lost to the country forever. He very nearly sent some money to his wife at one time but a "casual drop in" at a dancehall prevented its going out of local circulation. ... What matter if the children could not go to school and that Willie and Tom had to wrap gunny sacks around their feet when they went down to the beach to see what the tide had brought in that could be used for fuel? The money was kept in the country and circulated in channels where it would do the most good.¹⁰⁷

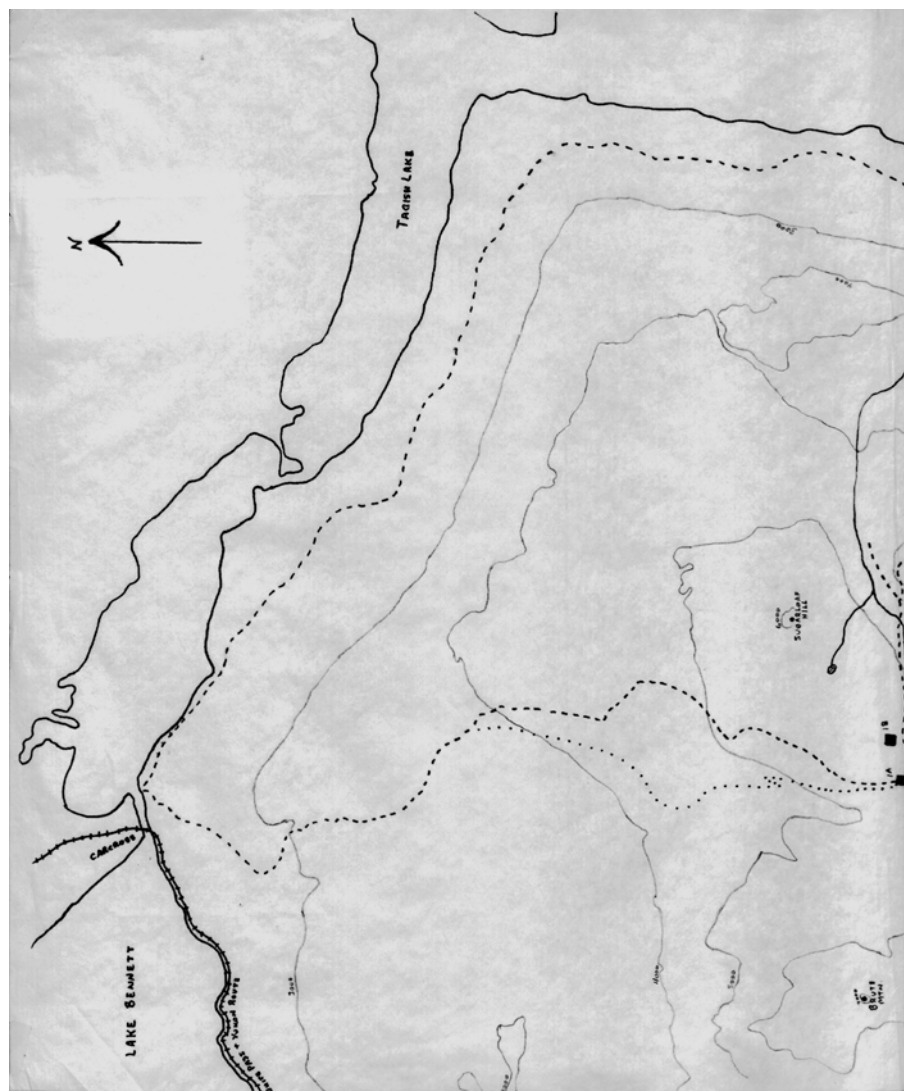
A legal decision was handed down in Dawson in early February that was of great interest to all business people in the Yukon, particularly those who were looking to open or expand a business at Conrad. Big Alex MacDonald, one of the Klondike Kings, had sued the Canadian Bank of Commerce over interest rates that ranged as high as twenty-four percent per annum. In his ruling against the bank, Mr. Justice Macauley stated that the bank could not charge interest rates higher than seven percent.

Two pack trains were hauling ore to the beach from the Montana mine, where 3,000 tons of ore were stockpiled. In an attempt to increase the amount of ore he could move on the rough trail down the mountain, Billy Weisdeppe was experimenting with using small sleds behind each mule. From the beach, Diamond W transferred the ore to Carcross; despite warm weather that brought the heaviest snows of the season in early February, five tons of ore were being delivered each day. Although the tramway capstan cast by the White Pass shops had been unable to withstand the strain of supporting eight miles of cable, there was no doubt that the problem would soon be solved, and as a result, Weisdeppe was unwilling to bring more mules and horses up from Vancouver, or to put any more labour than absolutely necessary into upgrading the trail.

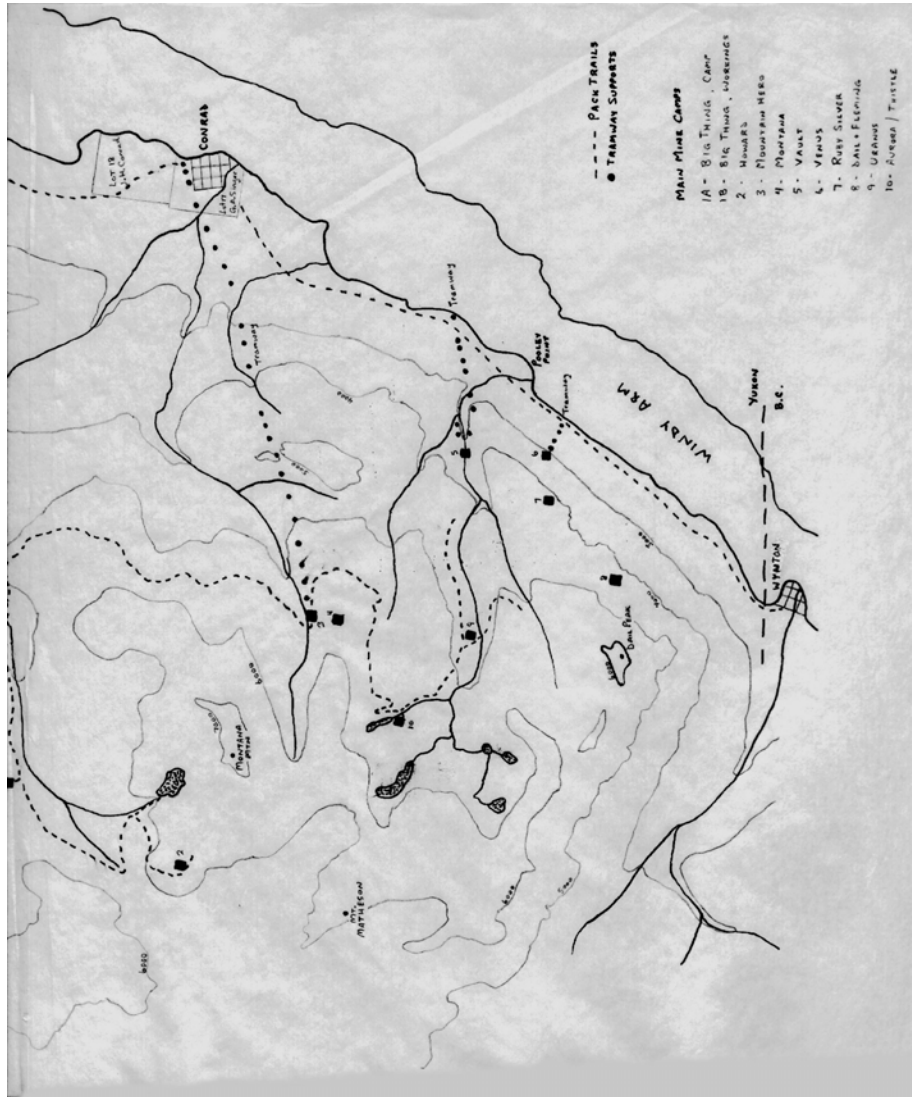
Frank Farrington, for reasons that are not clear, was working as a bookkeeper for Conrad Consolidated by January, having been replaced as assayer by W. N. Musgrave. Farrington did not appear to be worried about his future job prospects, however. He had finished building a house and buying all new furnishings, and at the end of January he brought in his new bride; the *Star* noted that "he would like a dish of ice-worms for his cheechaco bride, and would be willing to pay a good price."¹⁰⁸

In the middle of February, with his new store in Whitehorse doing very well, Captain Martin opened a branch office in Conrad. Always a fairly cautious businessman, he decided not to erect a permanent building until the new town had proved itself, and opened for business in a tent set up on the waterfront reserve, 300 feet north of the public dock.

Colonel Conrad had been keeping the people of the Yukon abreast of his activities outside with a regular stream of telegrams. A summary of the information contained in those telegrams was reported by Atlin Member of Parliament Henry Essen Young in February. By his calculations, Conrad had raised a total of three million dollars, half in North America and half in Europe, for future development work at Windy Arm. The B.C. Mining Exchange had a different version, having "received assurances" that a



Montana Mountain



Townsites, tramways and major claim blocks by September 1906

syndicate of French and English capitalists had incorporated a five million dollar company. Whatever the exact details of the financing, there was a great deal of money available. Starting on February 20, Colonel Conrad and Gustave Singer were sending telegrams from Toronto to several owners of claims at Windy Arm, offering to purchase their properties. Mine foreman Herman Vance was ordered to double the workforce to 120 men and get the ore out as rapidly as possible, and the assumption was made that a smelter was going to be built at Carcross as soon as Conrad and Singer returned from the east.

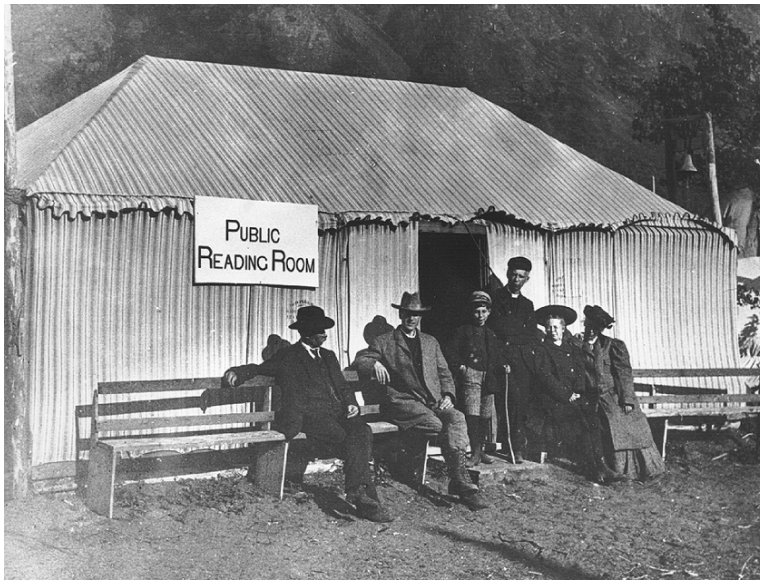
Due to its easy access from Whitehorse, the new mining camp had religious services offered from a very early point in its life. Services for the Anglican church were conducted over the winter of 1905-1906 by lay minister George Curtis, who was in Conrad regularly to keep an eye on the Northern Hotel, which was rising quickly out of the snow. When time allowed, Curtis made the journey up the mountain to conduct services at the Montana mine as well. On February 19, the Reverend Hiram Alfred Cody, pastor of Christ Church Episcopal Church in Whitehorse, went to Conrad to determine the feasibility of conducting regular services and establishing a church.



On March 23, 1906, the Anglican Church moved supplies to Conrad to set up a reading room, and a tent residence for William Young. This photograph, by Rev. H. A. Cody, shows the clearly-defined ancient beach terraces on the

slopes of Nares Mountain.

Cody had been ministering to the spiritual needs of Greenwich County, New Brunswick when he saw a letter from Isaac O. Stringer in the Church of England's magazine in February 1904.¹⁰⁹ At that time Stringer was rector of the Whitehorse Anglican church, and his letter passed on a call from Bishop Bompas for at least three new missionaries in the Yukon. One man was needed to work with the native people on the Pelly River, one to work with the natives around Whitehorse as well as the miners in the Kluane placer fields, and another for the miners' camps in the Klondike. By June Cody had said goodbye to the members of his scattered congregations, made arrangements to return for his fiancée, Jessie Flewelling, and was settling himself in with the Stringers and their three children in Whitehorse.



The Anglican reading room was set up in the south end of Conrad, on the waterfront reserve. The bell that had hung outside Bishop Bompas' home in Carcross was moved to Conrad to announce services. On the left is William D. Young, the lay worker in charge of the reading room, and to the right of the door is the Reverend Arthur Eugene O'Meara.

On March 23, William Dobbs Young, the uncle of Bishop Stringer's wife Sadie, arrived in Conrad to open a reading room and lending library for the Anglican Church. Young had considerable Northern experience, having spent a year with the Stringers at their Herschel Island mission in 1897-1898. Ignoring Singer's townsite plan, he picked out a piece of the government waterfront reserve at the south end of town, near Montana Creek, and set up a large tent to serve as combined reading room and church. It was about five hundred feet away from the bustle of downtown, but the tent was very conspicuous, not only because of its location on the waterfront, but also because of its covering of blue-and-white vertical stripes. To announce services, Bishop Bompas offered Young the large bell that had hung outside his house at Carcross since his arrival in 1900.

With fifteen buildings, several of them projected as hotels, at various stages of construction in the middle of February, the *Star* voiced the hopes of many of the miners in Conrad: "we hope the good work of building hotels will flourish, as it will be a great benefit to the human race if competition is so keen that beer could be purchased at two for a quarter."¹¹⁰ Competition tended to be more of a factor in the southern Yukon than it was in Dawson, because of the relative ease of transportation, particularly in the summer. Judging by the lack of complaints about prices in Conrad stores, they competed with merchants in Carcross and Whitehorse; the Taylor & Drury store in Whitehorse was advertising hams at twenty-five cents per pound, eggs at forty-five cents a dozen, tea at fifty cents a pound, and sugar at twenty pounds for \$1.90. The *Star* also noted that the hare population had crashed for the first time since Whitehorse was settled, and there had been no "bunnies" on sale all winter.

Before August Voelpel's office building was even finished, he had leased half of the ground floor to William A. McKeown, owner of the Whitehorse Pharmacy. Leaving the Whitehorse store in the hands of a manager, McKeown headed for Conrad on March 14 to open his new store; the following week, the new store was also being used by the Reverend Cody to hold services. Whitney & Pedlar, the Whitehorse dry goods and clothing merchants, had leased the other half, but decided to hold off opening until lake navigation opened.

The glowing reports from Windy Arm during the summer of 1905 had attracted the attention of Canadian railroad tycoon William Mackenzie. On

March 26, 1906, Mackenzie announced that he and several partners had bought out most of the original investors, including Gustave Singer, Dr. Furry, E. E. Harvey and Robert Lynn.¹¹¹ The new syndicate guaranteed close to one million dollars to continue development work at the mines. For that guarantee they gained a 50% share of the companies, all led by John Conrad, which controlled the principal claims.¹¹² With the new infusion of virtually unlimited capital, the staking rush accelerated, and development work expanded to the limit of the available manpower. Following the signing of the deal, Singer went from Toronto to Chicago and Denver to purchase a wide variety of the most modern equipment available, including eight gasoline engines, hoists, air compressors and air drills.

Herman Vance had found that he could contract out some of the underground work in the mines at a considerable cost saving to the company. Winfield Scott "Fred" Whitman, a hardrock miner originally from Ohio, took the contract to drive a 500-foot tunnel at the Venus. At the Vault, the contract for a 200-foot tunnel was awarded to George Rich, but he was soon gone, replaced by George Lawrence, Charles Ward, Claude Irwin and Scotty Birney. By the first week of April, the Vault tunnel was in 120 feet, and ore was being reported with assays ranging from 100 to 400 ounces of silver per ton. At the Montana, the vein, which was from eighteen inches to five feet wide, had been followed for 450 feet.

With the better lots in the main townsite filling rapidly, the Conrad Mining and Townsite Company brought in Harry Dickson to survey an extension to the north, into the block owned by Colonel Conrad. As spring progressed, an increasing number of teams were put to work clearing land and grading the streets in the higher levels of the original townsite, and moving behind Dickson as he staked out the extension. While Dickson was there, Captain Martin arranged for financial backing from the Palmer brothers to survey his property into townsite lots as well, and Harry Dickson brought his brother Tom down to conduct the work.

Despite the Windy Arm boom, the population of the Yukon continued to drop. One of the strongest indicators was the tonnage of goods shipped in on the railroad; the 1905 total was down to 25,920 tons from 34,652 tons the previous year. With the opening of navigation in 1906, many people stopped at Conrad at least for a look on their way outside, and many of those stayed to give the Yukon one last chance. On March 21st, the *Star* commented sarcastically that "a late arrival from Dawson says 200 people will leave

Dawson for Conrad as soon as navigation opens. About 50 of that number probably expect to open coffee houses and the remainder hand laundries."

Lake Bennett lumber baron Otto Partridge decided that with all the competition from small mills cutting local timber, he could do better by importing lumber and speciality woods from British Columbia. As he result, he chartered a steamer in April to bring in a shipment of all the materials needed to set up lumber yards in both Carcross and Conrad, and hired a crew to build a house-boat to enable him to live comfortably wherever the business was.

Gustave Singer returned triumphantly to Whitehorse on April 11, and announced that 100 tons of mining machinery was on its way north. Among the work to be started within the next few weeks were three more tramways, a large wharf and warehouse at Conrad, an eight-room house for Colonel Conrad and a smaller house for Mrs. Singer and himself. As well as the mining equipment he had purchased, Singer had bought a large pre-fabricated hotel on his own behalf. The building was three stories high, 36 by 120 feet. He ordered the front half, and its "elegant furnishings" to be delivered immediately, the rest to wait until lake navigation was open in June.¹¹³

The dock that had been built at the terminus of the tramway rapidly became too small for the quantity of material being unloaded for the mines and the town. As well, its location was not convenient for businesses in town, and residents had become tired of paying what they considered to be excessive wharfage fees to Conrad Consolidated for the use of the dock. By the middle of April, \$500 had been collected for the materials to build a public wharf at the foot of Miller Street, the heart of the town.

With the first signs of spring appearing, there were workmen unloading railcars at the Carcross siding twenty-four hours a day; entire trains arrived with materials for Conrad-related activities. Otto Partridge got the first eight carloads of his shipment, and his Carcross lumberyard was open for business by late April; a special train (with no passengers) brought in a large cargo of explosives for Conrad Consolidated, followed by six carloads of machinery, and three of timbers and lumber.

Colonel Conrad was attracting many of the top men in their fields in the north to his management team. The Canadian Bank of Commerce was shifting men around in several offices to permit Harold M. Lay, manager of the Skagway branch, to take over as Conrad's accountant. When Lay left

Skagway for Windy Arm on May 25, he was replaced by J. A. Smith from Fort Frances, Ontario; once navigation opened, Smith was to then exchange places with Donald Ross in Atlin. J. P. Rogers resigned as Superintendent of the White Pass & Yukon Rail Division, and after a holiday outside, returned to accept, at the "princely salary" of \$295. per month,¹¹⁴ the position of General Manager for Conrad Consolidated; following the buyout of his Conrad interests by William Mackenzie, Gustave Singer had resigned to pursue his own business interests. Both Rogers and Colonel Conrad arrived at Skagway on April 26, though on different ships; the *Star* was unrestrained in its enthusiasm:

Colonel John Howard Conrad, the man whose exploitations of the mineral resources of the Windy Arm district has made Southern Yukon famed the world over, the man whose enterprise and strenuousness of purpose has awakened a thrill never before experienced in quartz mining circles in the north, the man who has "made good" by interesting millions of money in the development of what was only a few months ago practically unknown territory, has returned from a five months business trip to Europe and to the large cities of Canada and the United States. ... Several hundred tons of mining machinery preceded Colonel Conrad to the mines where Manager Singer is busy in its installation and by the time the spring is fairly open the Windy Arm mining district will, figuratively speaking, blossom as a rose and flourish like a green bay tree.¹¹⁵

A civic booster club named the "Ten Thousand Club" had been formed in Carcross, with Otto Partridge as president and Archie McIntosh as secretary; the group's name was derived from estimates of the number of residents expected to soon be in the town as a result of the mining activity. When the Colonel arrived in Carcross, he looked the part of a globe-trotting millionaire, dressed in high fashion, and carrying a cane (silver-tipped, naturally). The members of the "Ten Thousand Club" printed an effusive welcome to the Colonel that was posted around town on the day of his arrival, and was reprinted in the *Star*:

... All through the long winter months we have toiled, waited and hoped, and although clouds of doubt have

often made more arduous the hardships of the winter, yet from time to time there came floating back to us through the newspapers, or word of mouth, a spark of your own tireless enthusiasm and dauntless courage. And now with the return of a new season you come back bringing to us the warmth of your own personality, together with the armaments of capital that will wrest from the eternal mountains her hidden treasures.¹¹⁶

The letter of welcome concluded by declaring April 27 to be "Conrad Day."

One of the signs of the optimism of the day in the southern Yukon was the number of men who were bringing in brides. Frank Farrington had been merely the first of many to "take on the position of benedict" in the spring of 1906. George Erickson had used his share of the proceeds from the Ruby Silver sale to build a cabin in Carcross; he had then gone to Spokane and, on St. Valentine's Day, married a young woman from England. Seeing a new land of opportunity, Gelas Beauregard and Caroline Van Huerck had left Douglas, Alaska, gotten married at the courthouse in Skagway on April 3, and headed for Windy Arm. John Pugh's taxidermy business in Carcross was flourishing, and he brought Elsie Victoria De Bow up from Vancouver, marrying the young lady in the rectory of St. Saviour's less than an hour after she stepped off the *Princess Beatrice* on April 28.

As the population of Whitehorse continued to drop steadily, it became clear that there was, at least temporarily, not sufficient support for a daily newspaper. *Star* owners A. B. McEacheran and E. J. "Stroller" White made the difficult decision, after putting out a daily paper for two years, to revert back to a weekly as of May 1st. Once the cash flow situation in Whitehorse was under control, they were able to purchase the equipment for the promised branch in Conrad, and started making arrangements for construction of their new office.

The *Star* carried a constant stream of reports on large and small happenings at Conrad and Carcross through the spring; George C. Mellott resigned his position as White Pass agent in Whitehorse to open a hardware in Conrad; the Reverend John Pringle was leaving Dawson to open a Presbyterian church at Conrad; Sam McGee and Frank Johnson were shipping lumber from Racine's mill; tennis courts were being built at Carcross; Colonel Conrad would be spending \$35,000 a month on development work to start, and his dream was to drive one or two tunnels

from near the lakeshore to tap the veins from below, "thus providing drainage and ventilation as well as the most economical avenue of transporting ore to the water's edge."¹¹⁷

There were occasional notices that indicated that the Yukon was more heavily impacted by events outside than many people wished were true. In May, workers at the Tacoma smelter won huge improvements in their working conditions; four hundred furnace men had their hours of work reduced from twelve hours per day to eight, with no decrease in wages. Such improvements would obviously raise the smelter's costs to the point where some low-grade ore would no longer be profitable to mine; at Windy Arm, men thanked their good fortune of having ore of sufficiently high grade to not be heavily affected by the rise in costs.



Even with the large amount of work to be done in Conrad, Willard Phelps made time to do some fishing, here at the mouth of Montana Creek.

One of J. P. Rogers' first orders as Manager was that the company's telephone system needed to be completed to all of the mining camps so that he could maintain tighter control on activities. Within days, Jack Stager, Ole Dickson and a Mr. Oakley were at work putting in lines from the Uranus to the Thistle, Vault and Venus, and then from Carcross to the Big Thing and Mountain Hero to complete the circuit.

A spirit of optimism showed itself in many ways; the Empire Day celebrations on the weekend of May 26 and 27 had been planned for months to be the most elaborate in the short history of Whitehorse. The Infantry band from Fort William H. Seward at Haines was going to be providing music during the day, as well as for a huge free dance to be held on Saturday night. There was a total of \$500 being offered as prize money for a wide

variety of games, with the sports highlight to be "the greatest baseball carnival ever held in the north."¹¹⁸ To bring celebrants to town from Windy Arm, Captain Richards of the *Gleaner* "bravely ploughed through ice two feet thick on May 24, steaming proudly up to Conrad and on to Wynton."¹¹⁹

The RNWMP, with a Yukon strength of 300 men in 1903 (at the height of the Alaskan boundary dispute), were down to 140 and still dropping. The police were often in a no-win situation in the Yukon; every mining camp wanted a police presence, but enough people thought that the Territory as a whole had too many police that a petition had been presented to Frank Oliver the previous September to have the Force in the Yukon reduced to about fifty men. Opening and closing detachments as miners shifted their operations was a constant headache, and for various reasons, the police were not always on the spot as soon as the miners, as legend suggests.¹²⁰ An application by Superintendent Snyder for four 25 by 130 foot lots in Conrad for a detachment was rejected by the government in March because the land requested was too valuable, and it was felt that four lots was unnecessary in any case.¹²¹ In June, Corporal Arthur Edward Acland and Constable Hugh Gaffen Randlesome were transferred to Conrad anyway, but due to the lack of agreement on the detachment's status, they were forced to live in a tent, and have their meals at hotels. Acland and Randlesome were not strangers to mining camps, with Acland having been posted at Livingstone Creek and Kluane, while Randlesome had been posted at Livingstone Creek since joining the Force in the fall of 1904.

In early June, the RNWMP finished refitting their trim little steam launch *Gladys*, installing new gasoline engines and boilers. She was pronounced



In June 1905, RNWMP Corporal Arthur Acland and Constable Hugh Randlesome opened the Conrad detachment. Photo of Acland ca.1899 by H.C.Barley.

seaworthy and efficient after a short trial, and was put on regular patrols between Carcross and Conrad starting on the 23rd.

By June, Wynton had two hotels completed, A. R. MacDonald's Wynton and Bill Anderson's Lakeview, another reported to be under construction, and a sawmill was being operated by Baker & Parker. The British Columbia government had shown enough faith in the new town to transfer British Columbia Provincial Police Constable J. Conley to Wynton in the combined capacity of police officer and Mining Recorder. A group of local businessmen had started construction of a road to the Venus mine, and the government had promised to slash rights-of-way to Log Cabin, along the eastern shore of Windy Arm to Colonel Conrad's Ram's Horn properties,¹²² and along Tutshi Lake to Taku Arm.



The townsite of Wynton, British Columbia was purchased from the government by Charles Wynn-Johnson in August, 1905. The Wynton Hotel was built by A.R.McDonald, owner of the Kootenay Hotel in Atlin. It was sold in 1906 to contractors Gauld & Simson. The Lakeview was built by "Big Bill" Anderson, who had owned a series of hotels throughout the Yukon and Atlin.

That summer, the people of the Yukon demonstrated clearly the common belief that all obstacles to progress, even the weather, could be overcome by a sufficiently powerful application of scientific methods and technology. Placer mining requires huge quantities of water; in the Klondike, there was never enough. The financial havoc caused in the Dawson placer fields by the dry summer of 1905 had prompted a group of miners to contract with Charles Hatfield of Los Angeles to make rain during the 1906 season. The Territorial government had agreed to pay half of the cost of the contract, which guaranteed Hatfield \$5,000 plus expenses for himself and an assistant if he was successful. Reporting the departure from Vancouver of Hatfield and his brother Paul on their way north, *The Weekly Star* quipped that the residents of Whitehorse "might get him to give us a shower here - just a little one for fifteen cents or two for a quarter."¹²³ Although Hatfield's smoking tower of chemicals on top of King Solomon's Dome created quite a stir in the Klondike, and he was credited with being "a world-beater as a cloud

producer,"¹²⁴ a seven-man council decided that no more rain than usual had fallen; the experiment was declared a failure, and Hatfield left Dawson on July 28 with only expense money paid.¹²⁵

On June 2, GSC geologist Delorme Donaldson Cairnes and his assistant, H. Matheson,¹²⁶ arrived in Whitehorse, planning to spend the next four months working in the southern Yukon. The Windy Arm district was to be their primary focus, and all of Colonel Conrad's men were ordered to give their fullest cooperation and support to Cairnes' crew.

A brothel was usually one of the first businesses to be established in a new mining camp, and Conrad was no exception; as was also normally the case, the police left the women alone as long as they kept a low profile. In June, though, Violet De Vere and Beatrice Collins, two of Conrad's "soiled doves," went on a major drunk with a couple of Indian men from Carcross; "having partaken too freely of Conrad and Carcross oil of joy, ... [they] proceeded to paint the latter town a brilliant vermilion."¹²⁷ The party was broken up by a RNWMP constable who offered them free lodging for what was left of the night; in the morning, the group was brought before Inspector Fitz Horrigan, who fined them \$10 each.

In late May, a crew of men had been hired by Mary M. Turner of Carcross to build a private hospital in Conrad. She was the widow of John B. Turner, Customs Collector at Dawson until 1902, and then at Carcross until his death in 1905. Although not formally trained as a nurse, Mary's daughter Bertha had been a nurse in Vancouver; when Bertha became very ill in 1902, she came to live with her parents, and until she died in 1904 at the age of 26, she had taught her mother a great deal. Mary Turner had a beautiful home in Carcross, and was known as a very cultured woman; a tourist from Cincinnati, Ohio, wrote in his diary in 1903 that John Turner had invited him and his wife to his "log mansion", and the couple "were served cake and coffee from dainty china, and sat on a divan covered with priceless furs, near a good piano."¹²⁸

The lots that Mrs. Turner had started building on, in the northwest corner of Singer's townsite, overlapped the lots which had already been applied for by the Rev. John Pringle on behalf of the Presbyterian Church. Although Rev. Pringle "[did] not appear to be willing to waive his claim in any way,"¹²⁹ the Miner's Refuge hospital was operating by the middle of July, and the three lots requested were finally granted to Mrs. Turner in September.

On the 8th of June, 1906, one of the Yukon's most famous pioneers died at Carcross. After devoting his life to doing what he could to help the original peoples of the north, the Right Reverend William Carpenter Bompas, D.D., passed away quietly at 72 years of age. Following a service conducted on June 10 by Bishop Isaac O. Stringer, Rev. O'Meara of Conrad and Rev. Cody of Whitehorse, the body was taken by boat to the village cemetery, and buried "among his own flock, the natives of the North."¹³⁰



Myrtle, Bertha and Mrs. Mary Turner at their home in Carcross, ca.1904. Bertha died in July that year.

In June, Territorial Mine Engineer A. J. Beaudette and Whitehorse assayer Robert Smart spent nearly a week examining the Windy Arm mines; they returned to Whitehorse on the 9th and verified all the claims that had been heard to date of the richness of the properties. Although they were very impressed by the Montana, they felt that:

the Venus is the banner claim of the entire district so far as yet exploited, its ledge running all the way from 14 to 20 feet in width, of a known depth of several hundred feet, and with an ore value of from \$650 to \$1000 per ton. Mr Smart says that there is sufficient ore in sight on the Venus claim to employ an average sized smelter for a period of 60 years."¹³¹

That same month, the residents of Conrad were given proof that their town was indeed to be taken seriously. There was considerable excitement at the public wharf when a printing press was unloaded from the *Gleaner* and hauled up the hill to a cabin that had just been built; a few days later there was a line of people at the door of that cabin when the first issue of the *Conrad City Miner* came off the press, with the famous "Stroller" White as editor.¹³²

Contractors Archie Gauld¹³³ and W. H. "Simmie" Simpson had been extremely busy in Conrad; as well as building several of the cabins and commercial buildings, they were selling lumber that Sam McGee and Frank Johnson were rafting in on a regular basis. On June 15, they surprised their neighbours by buying the Wynton Hotel from A. R. MacDonald and Norman D. Macauley; Gauld moved to Wynton to manage their new enterprise.

George Mellott and his partners Charlie Barnes and A. B. McDonald hosted Conrad's grandest party to date on June 15 to celebrate the official opening of the Yukon Hotel. Fred Ronkendorf, well known for his culinary talents at the German Bakery & Cafe in Skagway, had opened next door to the hotel, and was co-sponsoring the free dinner and dance. The day after the celebration, Mellott started preparing to open a hardware store across the street, with Harry Baxter as his partner in that venture.

Charlie Watson, with the best commercial lot in town once the railway arrived, was slowly but surely putting up a 25 by 60 foot addition on the lake side of his little Windy Arm Hotel. Unlike many of his neighbours, Charlie was cautious about going into debt, or a partnership, to finish it off quickly, but when it was completed, everything would be first class for his guests. The bar and poolroom were being finished in antique oak brought in by Otto Partridge, and several bathrooms were being installed among the rooms on the upper floor, which had beautiful views over the lake.

Bert Wooldridge opened the "palatial" new Conrad Hotel and Restaurant

in early July. With over nineteen hours of sunlight every day, work was going

Windy Arm Cafe
Conrad City, Y. T.

Dinner Bill of Fare
ALL SIDE ORDERS 25c. EXTRA

Soup

Fish (Starters 25c. Extra)

Boiled

Entrees

Roast

Extras

Salads, Vegetables, Etc.		
Potato Salad.....25c	Asparagus.....50c	Olives.....25c
Lebanese ".....50c	French Peas.....50c	Chow-chow.....25c
Shrimp ".....50c	Mushrooms.....50c	Dill Pickles.....25c
Chicken ".....50c	Tomatoes.....25c	Sauce Spanish.....25c
.....	Corn.....25c	Tomato Sauce.....25c
.....	String Beans.....25c	Cream Gravy.....25c

Dessert

Orders for refreshments given to waiters will receive prompt attention

1906 Menu

on around the clock, and Bert served meals twenty-four hours a day to the hungry men.

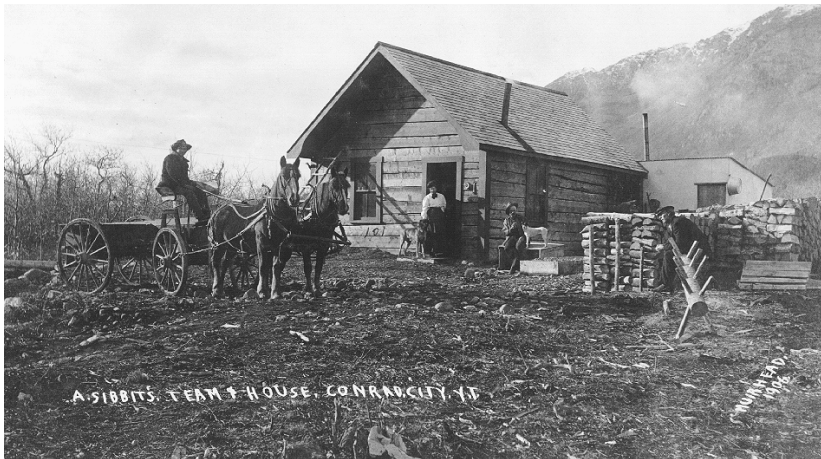
Allan J. MacDonald, a carpenter from Bellingham, was building boats on the beach, and was unable to hire enough men to keep up with the demand. He had made time, though, to help "Simmie" Simson and Billy Robison with a trim little sailboat that they launched in June (and which nearly cost Robison his life soon after when he took her out in a high wind while he was drunk.)

On the mountain, the new air compressor and drills that had been installed at the Venus were performing beautifully, and the men were driving the tunnel ten feet further each day. The Mountain Hero tramway that had become such an embarrassment to both Royal Riblet and Colonel Conrad was finally operational in late June, 1906. The Venus tramway was under construction, the materials for a tramway to the Vault were on the way, and the survey and design work had been completed for tramways for the Uranus and Big Thing mines. The number of men was increasing by the week; the extremely heavy snow of the previous winter was still slowing work down in late June, but by the second week in July, a total of 154 men were working for Conrad Consolidated. As well as the tunnels being driven at the Venus, Vault, Montana and Mountain Hero mines, a tunnel had been started on the Joe Petty to tap the Montana vein at a depth of 900 feet. On the other side of the mountain, various underground work was being carried on at the Caribou and Vega, under the direction of foreman John McInnes, and on the Howard group to the south. On the Dail & Fleming properties, sixteen men had sunk a shaft on the Venus Extension and were drifting along the vein, and open cuts were dug on most of the properties.

Robert C. Miller, Mining Recorder for the Whitehorse Mining District was unable to keep up with the deluge of mining claim applications; on April 2, Percy Reid was assigned to make preparations to open a Mining Recording Agent's office in Conrad. Reid had served as Mining Recorder on several Klondike creeks from 1899 until 1904, when he was transferred to the new Kluane gold fields. Winding up his duties as Recorder and postmaster at Kluane, Reid, considered "one of the most competent and popular of all the territorial officials,"¹³⁴ arrived at Conrad in early May. He faced an awesome backlog of claims to record, and was back and forth

between Conrad and Whitehorse several times, but on July 1, he officially opened the Conrad office. Having gotten the start-up confusion straightened out, he was then able to take his dogs out and get down to some serious fishing for Windy Arm's famous monster trout.

On July 1, 1906, a post office also opened, with James M. Murray resigning his position at Whitney & Pedlar's store in Whitehorse to take over as Conrad's first postmaster. Murray was also kept busy managing the affairs of Robert Lowe's branch office, which included everything from firewood, hay and liquor sales, to the rental of road-building equipment. Lowe started construction of a large new building in July, and Murray was also responsible for supervising the construction and keeping Lowe informed of its progress.



In June 1906, Arthur Sibbitt built this lovely cabin of sawed logs in Conrad, and shortly after went outside and got married. Sibbitt ran a successful freighting business, and remained in Conrad until about 1909.

In early July, George Curtis and Alvilla Chausse came to a parting of the ways, at least partly over the direction to take with the Northern Hotel. A twenty by fifty foot addition to the hotel had been completed by Duncan O'Hara, but when Curtis had lumber delivered to add another storey to the building a few days later, the break came. Things were moving too rapidly

for Chausse; he sold out to Curtis and moved to his old home in Montreal, where his aged parents still lived.

Although a few rumours had started drifting down from the peaks about problems in some of the mines, there were enough optimistic reports to overlook the others. The tunnel at the Vault was running in lenses of solid galena that were up to six feet thick; on the Uranus, Charles Ward had gone in 100 feet, in high-grade ore all the way; and Billy Weisdeppe's supermen (and supermules) had succeeded in getting a huge fifty horsepower, gasoline-powered compressor set up at the Mountain Hero to power drills and provide ventilation.

Conrad was appearing less like a boom town by the week. While the town's residents were still largely male, and most of them single, families were appearing regularly; on July 6, Whitehorse contractor Len Cousins and his obviously pregnant wife Rose had set up a tent on the hill, and Len immediately got to work on a cabin. Billy Weisdeppe got a contract, paid for by public subscription, for street grading, and once the streets were graded, businessmen were encouraged to have sidewalks built.

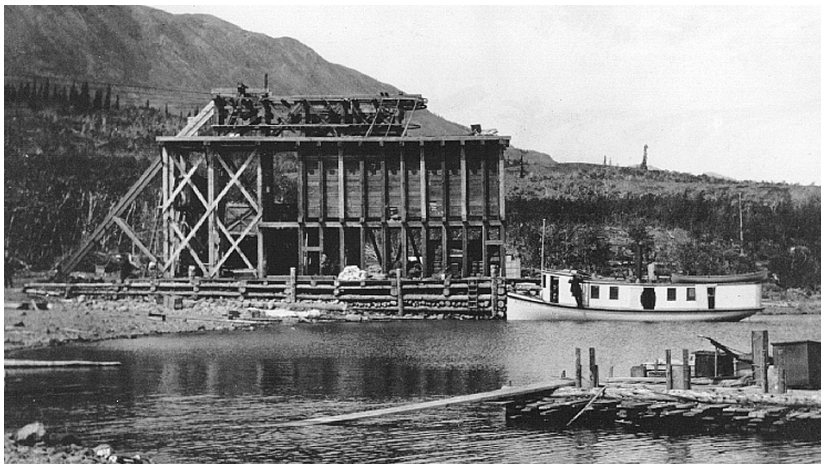
That summer, Conrad had most of the amenities needed to establish itself as a stable family town, including three churches, a doctor, a visiting dentist, and a private hospital. In an attempt to attract more experienced miners, wages increased substantially, from \$3.50 per 8-hour day to \$5.00 for machine men, hand drillers and muckers, \$5.50 for blacksmiths and carpenters, and \$6.50 for foremen.¹³⁵ Commissioner McInnes announced plans to open a school at Conrad in the fall, saying that "unless the white channel experiments or something of the kind give the Klondike a new impetus, there will be more people around Conrad a year hence than there are near Dawson."¹³⁶ Despite all the activity, and the fact that at least four companies had been incorporated to provide power and water, the town had neither yet.

The *Gleaner* was running twice-weekly service around the Southern Lakes, with several stops at locations that served the mines, including Conrad, Pooley Canyon, Wynton, Silverdale, and Ram's Horn Creek. As well as the scheduled trips, extra trips were frequent, hauling explosives, towing rafts of logs or pushing barges packed with equipment.

With hundreds of prospectors combing the country for miles around Windy Arm, few stones were left unturned. In early July, some rich "float" gold quartz was reported from "the neighbourhood of the headwaters of the

Watson river."¹³⁷ The following week, the *Star* reported, under the headline "Goes \$5000 Per Ton," that "one of the biggest stampedes ever witnessed in this end of Yukon territory has been on this week, the rush being to Hodnott and Gold Hill mountains ..., about twenty miles from Robinson."¹³⁸ Colonel Conrad had grubstaked some of the first stakers, and by July 19 he had set up a box-car camp at Robinson, and sent in 49 men to start work on the claims. Values of \$5,000 in gold per ton were reported, making it, according to Colonel Conrad, "by long odds the greatest and richest strike yet made in the north."¹³⁹ On the 27th he applied for 160 acres of land near the head of Morrison Creek. The land, "a small level plateau" was apparently planned as a townsite to serve the entire region. D. D. Cairnes immediately shifted his survey for the GSC to the Wheaton district, and the resulting report, considered "a most noteworthy scientific achievement,"¹⁴⁰ was instrumental in his appointment as the new Yukon specialist the following year.

Back at Windy Arm, Captain P. H. Johnston had finished rebuilding his little steamer *Mabel F.* and on July 23 she pulled into Conrad for the first time, towing a raft of logs from McGee and Johnson's mill. Two days later, he started on a twice-daily schedule running from Conrad to Carcross, with



The *Mabel F.* at the discharge terminal of the Mountain Hero tramway.

the trips timed to enable passengers to meet both the north-bound and south-

bound trains at the Carcross station. The announcement of the new service by the *Mabel F.*, which was licenced at ten tons and able to carry fifteen to twenty passengers, was greeted warmly by people who could not afford to wait for the *Gleaner*. The Conrad Consolidated Company had already instituted their own water taxi service with a small launch shipped in by J. P. Rogers to enable company personnel to quickly reach the Venus and Ram's Horn mines, as well as Carcross.

Despite the initial signs that Wynton was going to grow at least as rapidly as Conrad, it soon became apparent that Wynton was too far from the main action.¹⁴¹ Corporal Conley was transferred back outside, and Jeff Butler, purser on the *Gleaner*, was made a sub-agent of the Atlin Mining Recorder in late July. In the first five weeks that Butler's floating office was open, he registered forty claims that had been staked on the British Columbia side of the border.

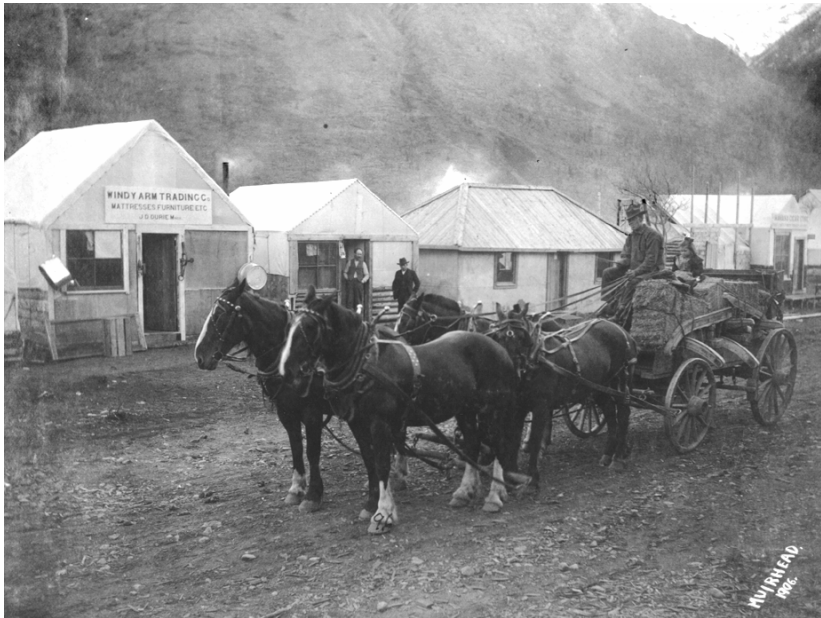
On August 1, Percy Reid got another promotion; the increasingly-optimistic reports from the mines resulted in the creation of the Conrad Mining District (it had been a sub-district of Whitehorse up until that time), with Percy Reid appointed as the first Mining Recorder of the District.

On August 9, the telegraph line from Conrad to Carcross was shut down, having been replaced by telephone service. In late June, J. P. Rogers had notified Harry Gilchen that as of July 1, Conrad Consolidated was closing their mess hall at Conrad, and as a result they were no longer willing to supply Jack Hope's board; as well, the company would no longer perform repairs on the building housing the telegraph office. The lowest bid by a hotel to supply meals was \$40 per month, which brought expenses for the Conrad office too high to make a profit. William Frost agreed to act as agent for a telephone system, for a twenty-five percent commission; in July linesman H. Gagne was brought out from Atlin to do the installation of the wire. One set of telephone equipment was initially installed at McKeown's drug store, and another at Sam Chambers' new office in Carcross;¹⁴² Jack Hope, who was regarded as one of the most reliable telegraph operators in the Yukon, was then transferred to the Lake Laberge office.

On August 3, a banquet was held at the White Pass Hotel in Whitehorse, to honour the visit of British Columbia Premier Richard McBride. Colonel Conrad spoke at length, and stated that, with the resources of the Copper Belt, Wheaton River and Windy Arm developed, there should be 30,000 people between the Takhini River and Log Cabin within two years.

Of five white births in the southern Yukon during August 1906, two were in Conrad, two in Whitehorse and one on Fourth of July Creek, in the Kluane goldfields. On the 6th, Sarah Curtis gave birth to a baby boy in the family's rooms in the Northern Hotel; George immediately changed the name of his company to Curtis & Sons. Five days later, Rose Cousins presented Len with a daughter.

The new air- and steam-powered mining equipment, while being extremely efficient, was also dangerous for men not used to such speed and power. The problems of integrating the new technology safely were compounded by the labour shortage, which made it necessary for the mines to hire men who had never worked in a mine or handled equipment before. One of these newcomers to mining was Peter Bokein, who had his right thumb crushed to pulp by a steam hammer on August 15. A surgical amputation of what was left of his thumb was far beyond the abilities of Mary Turner at the Miner's Refuge, and it was necessary to take him all the way to the Whitehorse hospital to have the operation performed. By the time the hospital was reached nine hours later, poor Bokein was "almost demented by his suffering."¹⁴³



One of Billy Weisdeppe's teams poses outside James Durie's furniture and mattress shop. It was located on the waterfront, 100 feet north of the public dock.

At the Venus mine, work had shifted to the lower tunnel, the Venus No.2, where the veins were proving to be richer and more consistent. The 1,850-foot long tramway from the Venus No.2 to the beach, completed at a cost of \$5,330, was hauling ore by mid-August. The Mountain Hero tramway was bringing down ore from the Montana, as well as some from the Thistle and Uranus; the practical limits on tramway length and tower spacing had apparently been exceeded on this project, however, and breakdowns plagued the operation.

New claims were still being staked on the mountain; although virtually none of the new properties were ever worked, there was one notable exception. On August 19, Willard Phelps staked a piece of ground that had strangely been missed, immediately to the west of the Big Thing Group; since the name of the large group was unofficial, he named his claim the Big Thing. It was soon purchased by the Conrad companies, and a tunnel started on it to catch more of the complex pattern of veins being followed in the many shafts and drifts of the original Big Thing mines.

These were days of unbridled optimism in the southern Yukon, with extensive work being conducted at Windy Arm, Wheaton River, the Kluane placer fields, and the Whitehorse Copper Belt. At the Copper Belt, Byron White had optioned the Pueblo and several other properties for \$15,000, and was doing extensive work. In the first month, White reported that enough ore had been exposed to pay back the amount he had paid for the mine, and he would not take \$250,000 for it now. The government had a crew at work blasting out a road to the mine, so that shipment of ore could start.

The Yukon Council finally came to agreement in 1906 that special regulations were needed to cover applications for land intended for agricultural purposes. In July, George Elzear Petittclerc and William Kinloch applied to purchase twenty acres of Crown land to the south of Captain Martin's townsite at Conrad. They were already operating a market garden on the site, and were told that since the land was agricultural, they must apply for it "under the new homestead regulations when they come into effect."¹⁴⁴ In May, 1907, they filed one of the first homestead applications in the Yukon; twenty acre plots were not covered in the regulations, however, and they had to apply for 160 acres, of which most consisted of steep, rocky

slopes.

Unlike the Klondike gold rush, during which commercial photographers were among the very early members of the stampede, Windy Arm attracted only sporadic interest from practitioners of that profession until the late summer of 1906. Case & Draper, who were based in Skagway, spent some time at Windy Arm in the early summer of 1905, but very few photos from that period have survived. By the spring of 1906, five postcards were available, four of which were produced from Case and Draper prints. Included were a view of the Mountain Hero property before the tramway was started, Conrad City with only a few tents, a crew working on one of the lower tramway stands, and Billy Weisdeppe's pack train being loaded at the lakeshore.¹⁴⁵ During August and September, Lewis P. Muirhead gathered a fairly extensive record of work at the Conrad mines, and his work remains the primary photographic evidence of the Conrad mines. Jerry Doody, who was working with Ephrim J. Hamacher in Whitehorse, spent about three weeks in the area, and Hamacher himself spent several days in the Conrad area, having come up in his speedy new gasoline launch.

A federal Railroad Commission, on its way to Vancouver from Dawson, met with about twenty local business people in Whitehorse on August 26 to discuss complaints of exorbitant freight rates on the White Pass & Yukon Route. The White Pass had been hounded since its inception to lower freight rates, and the Yukoners who made presentations to the commission were confident that members had been shown that not only the rights of "crushing, grinding, blood-sucking corporations" must be considered, and that:

the country is grovelling beneath the iron heel of monopolistic oppression, that the development of her resources is utterly and wholly impossible under existing conditions and that her only hope of salvation, future development, growth and greatness depends on a general and material reduction of transportation charges, both freight and passenger.¹⁴⁶

Colonel Conrad was back in Seattle for meetings in late August, and when he returned, he brought with him his seventeen-year-old son, Barnaby, and a nephew from New York, W. E. Price. Barnaby was living with his mother in England, but was spending the summer with relatives at several places across North America. The trip to the Yukon was a surprise for the

boys, but, with school approaching quickly, the visit could only last a couple of days; they headed south on August 29.

On August 31, Corporal Hugh Randlesome purchased his discharge from the Royal Northwest Mounted Police;¹⁴⁷ he had gone on a prospecting trip with Montana mine foreman Mark Gilliam during August, and the mining bug had hit him. Following his discharge, he went to work at the Montana mine, for more than three times the wages he had been receiving as a constable.

Colonel Conrad's attention was increasingly focused on the Wheaton valley, which he claimed was much richer in minerals than Windy Arm. By early September, twenty men had built pack trails in to several of the claims, driven a tunnel 100 feet on the Gold Hill property, and built a stone house for the crews. Part of the difficulty in developing any of the mines in the Yukon was the chronic shortage of labour; Captain Irving told the *Vancouver Province* in August that there was room for fifty miners in the camps around Whitehorse.¹⁴⁸ That appears to have been a very conservative estimate, as T. M. Daulton alone was unsuccessfully looking for twenty-five men for the Humper group, to work a rich new vein that assayed at \$175 per ton in gold.

The Reverend Arthur O'Meara moved into his new house at Conrad during the first week of September. It was the finest home to have been built in the new town yet; twenty-five feet square, the interior of the two-storey structure was finished in fine woods from the southern coast.

Construction of hotels at Conrad and Wynton had proceeded more rapidly than the population increase required to support them, and competition was intense. In September, several hotel owners, including George Curtis and Charley Watson, headed for Whitehorse to have a look at a new mechanical marvel that had the potential to attract customers to their establishments. Their destination was the North Star Athletic Association Hall, where a new player piano mechanism from Chicago was being installed in their upright.

The government's handling of waterfront leases at Conrad was a constant source of friction, with leases authorized for uses that were supposedly beneficial to the community being sub-leased to anybody with the money, and squatters on every available foot of waterfront, whether leased or not. One of the very few applications for the lease of waterfront land that Commissioner McInnes rejected was that of the Church of England; in

October, nearly six months after the application was sent, Bishop Stringer was told that property "away from the water front" would be more suitable for church purposes.¹⁴⁹

By the fall of 1906, the rumours of trouble at the Windy Arm mines were being verified; no longer were the official reports unanimous in expressing unrestrained enthusiasm about the mines' progress and potential. Despite the reports of one year previously, the tunnel on the Mountain Hero claim had not found the Montana vein, only a small one which, though similar in composition, soon tapered off. When further tunnelling revealed only more barren ground, work on the claim was suspended. The location of the tramway was now quite inconvenient, although it was used to carry supplies to the other claims near the summit of the mountain. Unfortunately, the tramway was designed primarily to carry ore down the mountain, with gravity as its only motive power. To get buckets carrying 200-250 pounds of supplies to travel up the slope, it was necessary for the down-going buckets to be loaded with 1000 to 1200 pounds of rock;

as no ore was available to load the buckets it was necessary, in order to work the tramway, to keep several men shovelling loose rock from the mountainside into the buckets, this rock being afterwards dumped near the lower end of the tramway.¹⁵⁰



The lower tramway towers were gradually disappearing under piles of waste rock used as ballast.

Despite some setbacks, an enormous amount of work was still being carried on, from open cut testing of properties to elaborate services. At the Vault, a comfortable camp had been built on ledges blasted into the cliffs of Pooley Canyon, and a tramway had been installed. The walls of Pooley Canyon are rugged in the extreme, and at least two pack mules fell to their deaths bringing in lumber for the construction of the mine camp and tramway. The Vault tramway was designed for fairly light loads, using the half-inch cable that had been used to haul in the main cable on the Montana tramway. Because it had little change in elevation, the tramway was powered by a gasoline engine. It only reached from the mine to the north side of the canyon, the closest place that a pack trail could reasonably reach; from that point to Conrad, pack animals were still used. At the Venus, a tramway was in operation, and in early September, the road connecting the mine to Conrad was completed by Sam McGee; Gilbert Skelly was working on upgrading the southern end of the Carcross-Conrad road to wagon standards.



The crew of the Vault, the most difficult of the mines to access.

In late 1905, Colonel Conrad had written to the highly-respected Sisters of Saint Ann in Dawson, requesting that they establish a school and hospital at Conrad. The residents of the mushrooming town circulated a petition to that effect in the spring of 1906, and Sister Benedict, a trained nurse, had come up from Dawson with an assistant in early August to meet with the people. With a promise from the mine company to donate four lots for their use, as well as other support, approval was quickly given by the Order to establish a foundation in Conrad. Father F. Joseph Allard moved from Whitehorse to Conrad, and construction was started on a church, and buildings for the Sisters, including a twenty by twenty-four foot log hospital. For a wide variety of reasons, however, the plans were reconsidered and the project scaled down. This was at least partly due to the poor response the Sisters had received in Whitehorse in 1903 and 1904; they found that there were few practising Catholics in the district:

for some, the thought of gold monopolized their minds and hearts. For others, having left home and familiar surroundings, the incommunities and strangeness of frontier life led to the breaking of religious habits and encouraged forgetfulness and indifference.¹⁵¹

The Catholic church was determined to establish a presence, however; construction continued on the church, and Father Allard held services in his new building for the first time on September 16, 1906. Although not large, it had been well built, a twenty by thirty foot frame building with two rooms at the back to serve as Father Allard's residence.



Life on the White Pass & Yukon tracks was a world away from that in Carcross or Conrad; the hard, low-paying jobs on the section crews were generally taken by new immigrants who spoke limited English, and occasionally by Indians. This photo by Lewis Muirhead shows J.D. MacDonald's crew working just south of Carcross in September 1906.



The Conrad Hotel in September, 1906, shortly after Archie and Lulu Gauld purchased it. They, with "Dimple", Lulu's daughter from a previous marriage, are likely in the centre of the group. Photo by Lewis P. Muirhead.

Business at Wynton had slowed down to the point where Archie Gauld

decided that moving from Conrad had been a mistake. Lulu and her daughter wanted to spend the winter in a town that offered a school, so, gambling that a school would be opened at Conrad, they bought the Conrad Hotel from Bert Wooldridge. After closing up the Wynton Hotel until things looked more promising, they took over their new hotel on September 21.

On the same day, James Murray had succeeded in moving the post office and his family into Robert Lowe's new office building. The ground floor was divided between the post office and Lowe's offices, while the Murray family had the top floor. James had, however, pushed himself too hard. While moving some of the heavy equipment, he had strained his back badly; during the two weeks he was laid up recovering, his wife Mary took over most of the office duties, with seven-year-old Jean running errands for her.

Although a school had been promised by Commissioner McInnes, it was still only a rumour by the time school started in September. Sergeant Acland had conducted a census of school-aged children just prior to a visit by the Territorial School Inspector, Mr. Bragg, in early September and found twelve, which placed Conrad well within the requirements for a fully-funded school. However, several of the women with school-aged children, including Mrs. Curtis with her two daughters, and Mrs. Martin, moved to Whitehorse for the winter.

In October, "Stroller" White had another difficult decision to make regarding the future of the *Conrad City Miner*, following the unexpected death of his partner, Sam McEacheran, on the fifth of the month. Although he attempted, for a short time, to keep both the *Star* and the *Miner* going, by the end of October, the *Conrad City Miner* was history, and the "Stroller" had moved back to Whitehorse.

6 J.B.Tyrrell - The Crash

Colonel Conrad's genius had always showed in his abilities as a promoter, rather than as a rancher or a miner; unfortunately for him, in 1906 William Mackenzie hired "as capable a geologist as Canada had produced to that time"¹⁵² to check out the Windy Arm properties that he had invested in. Although eminently qualified for both the physical and intellectual demands of his new position, that geologist, may, however, have arrived with some prejudices that made it unlikely that a favourable report would result.

Joseph Burr Tyrrell had been born in 1858 in a huge stone mansion in the small village of Weston, Ontario. He developed a strong interest in all facets of nature as a child, and, although he graduated from the University of Toronto in law, all of his optional courses were taken in the natural sciences. His career as an articling student with a Toronto law firm was very boring and very short; in 1881 he abandoned his father's dreams for his future and landed a job at the Geological Survey of Canada. He eventually badgered the GSC into sending him into the field, and his explorations, particularly those to the "Barren Lands" in 1893 and 1894 gained him international acclaim. Tyrrell always felt that the GSC did not value him as highly as they should, and a survey trip to the Yukon in the summer of 1898 convinced him that he could do better on his own. On his return to Ottawa, he resigned, and on January 19, 1899, he left for Dawson again.

Before he left Ottawa, he had gone into partnership with E. H. Bronson and C. C. Ray, intending to set up a hydraulic concession in the Klondike.¹⁵³ Although the legal, political and technical problems involved in that project took up a great deal of his time, there was little money coming in, and it took Tyrrell many months to get his independent business established. There was no shortage of men in Dawson at the time trying to pass themselves off as mining experts; although he was probably the most qualified, he had to prove himself.

Even with his \$100 per day fee, Tyrrell's business and investments earned him little but headaches; he was a very practical man, and his vision of large-scale hydraulic mining had been thwarted by men that he considered crooks. In 1905 he gave up and moved back to Ontario. He was forced to return to Dawson several times after that, but it was always to appear in one lawsuit or another. Not until May 21, 1906 was the final judgement handed down in his suit against Bronson and Ray.



Joseph Burr
Tyrrell
at Dawson,
ca.1905

Tyrrell had started work as William Mackenzie's mining advisor in May 1906, for a salary of \$3,600 per year, nearly double what he had been earning with the GSC.¹⁵⁴ Mackenzie's main interest, however, was railroading; mining investments were merely designed to develop freight markets for those railroads; the investigation of Conrad's property was the first project undertaken for Mackenzie in which Tyrrell was able to put his experience to practical use.

Having been taken in by promoters himself, Tyrrell strongly advised his clients to recognize the difference between mining and gambling; mining

properties should be evaluated strictly by weighing known ore reserves against market values. Tyrrell was also a strong believer that gold, the "noble metal", was the only mineral worth mining, because it was not subject to huge market price fluctuations as were other minerals. Mackenzie could be quite certain that if Tyrrell erred in his evaluation of a mine, particularly a silver mine owned by a promoter such as Conrad, the error would be on the side of caution.

Tyrrell arrived at Windy Arm on September 16, 1906, in the company of J. H. Hoare, of Hoare & Williams, Mackenzie & Mann's Vancouver agents, and Louis Lukes, Mackenzie & Mann's comptroller. The three companies in which Mackenzie had invested held at least 84 valid claims, totalling over 4,000 acres, by the time Tyrrell arrived to examine them. While the majority of the claims were on Montana Mountain, sixteen were on the east side of Windy Arm, four of them on the British Columbia side of the border.



Billy Weisdeppe's "Grasshoppers" taking a break from packing materials from the Mountain Hero tramway to the Big Thing mine, early September, 1906. Photo by Lewis P. Muirhead.

Winter hit early in 1906; by the 18th of September, the Montana mine reported ten degrees below zero (-23 C.), with "considerable snow." The heavy snow resulted in the layoff of dozens of men who had been working on trail upgradings and open cut development work. Many of the men who were put out of work either returned to their homes in Whitehorse, or went outside to spend the winter.

In the last days of September, newspapers across the north carried the terrible news of the worst shipping disaster to ever hit the Yukon; on September 25, the sternwheeler *Columbian* was destroyed in a fiery explosion after a crew member shooting ducks slipped and his shotgun discharged into a load of blasting powder. Because the cargo included explosives, no passengers were on board (except one stowaway), but six members of the crew died. The people of the Yukon and Alaska, because of the closeness of the community, and the level of dependency many of them had on the sternwheelers, were deeply affected by the tragedy, and stories of the heroic rescue effort that followed the explosion were carried for weeks.¹⁵⁵ RNWMP Constable Randlesome had not been replaced at Conrad when he purchased his discharge, and the layoff of a large percentage of Conrad's labour force hastened Inspector Snyder's decision to close the detachment entirely, at least for the winter. On September 30, Sergeant Acland completed packing up the tent that had been the Conrad detachment, and moved to Whitehorse. A few days later, he was transferred to Dawson and put in charge of the town detachment.

The cold, wet fall had caused Charlie Barnes' rheumatism to flare up, and he decided to spend the winter in a more comfortable environment. On October 1, he left for Paso Robles Hot Springs, California, leaving the Yukon Hotel in the hands of Harry Baxter and Theo Sweet, "the champion mixologist of the north," who had just arrived from Atlin. The early winter, and the resulting decrease in labouring activity, also resulted in an early increase in social activity. On October 3, the first of what were planned as weekly dances was held at the Northern Hotel, with music provided by Captain Campbell. Some of the town's business people got the chance to show that they had talents other than the ones normally seen by their neighbours; mule-skinner Billy Weisdeppe was praised as the champion two-stepper, and George Curtis for "his graceful and agile movements" in the waltz and schottische.

Within a few days of his arrival, Joe Tyrrell had sent a telegram to William Mackenzie reporting that he found the general situation at the camp to be chaotic. To ensure the security of their communications, Mackenzie and Tyrrell had arranged to send all messages in code, using a code book that was not commonly used in the west; suspecting that Tyrrell's work may not be in his best interests, Colonel Conrad asked to borrow his code book, saying that he had misplaced his. When Tyrrell refused this request, Conrad became "very obstructive and ugly", and Tyrrell was forced to rent a typewriter and take it to his hotel room to complete his work.¹⁵⁶ Desiring more privacy than living in a hotel afforded, he managed to talk J. P. Rogers into letting him use the old telegraph office, then hired a carpenter to make some changes to make it more comfortable.



J. B. Tyrrell's cabin at Conrad. Photo by Tyrrell.

Tyrrell's first assessment was conducted on the 64 claims owned by the Canadian Yukon Mining Company. On October 4, he went to Skagway to complete the final report, and the following day sent it out on the *Princess Beatrice*. Fast delivery of the report was not necessary; Mackenzie already knew basically what was in it, summarized by a single sentence in the introduction: "in view of the facts set forth in this report I would recommend that the option now held by you on the properties of this company be not

taken up." Each claim group was described separately, but all evaluations ended with very similar comments: the Rams Horn Group was "of no value"; the Columbian was "valueless"; at the Howard, the vein was "too small to have any value"; and the Pride of the Yukon "would seem to be worthless." The only report that was not totally negative was the one on the Caribou, where Tyrrell felt the vein was "erratic", but worth a smelter test.

While Tyrrell was quietly performing his assessment, two more grisly accidents were reported in the *Star*. On October 5, Robert Clegg was brought to Whitehorse hospital with serious injuries to his face after being caught by a blast while working on the road between Conrad and the British Columbia border.¹⁵⁷ In Carcross, Jack Pooley was using a circular saw to build cupboards for his cabin, renovating it in anticipation of his marriage to Drucella Scott later that month. On October 7, he somehow slipped and fell against the spinning blade, almost severing his right arm at the shoulder. If not for the arrival of the train from Whitehorse ten minutes later, he may well have not survived the trip to the railroad's hospital in Skagway.

Construction was continuing unabated at Conrad; four buildings were going up near the public wharf, the largest being a two-storey building to serve as store and home for Billy Robison, who had moved his painting and wallpapering business from Whitehorse. Rumours were flying that he also intended to bring in a bride shortly. Charlie Watson's Northern Hotel was complete except for some minor finishing; Allan MacDonald had put the logs together, they were caulked by Captain Bamfield, the iron roof was on, and the inside was being lined with coast lumber. The Queen and McPhee grocery store was taking on a much more substantial look as Frank McPhee covered over his tent, inside and out, with lumber. Joe Talmire, another new arrival from Atlin, was putting up a small commercial building on his lot next to Proulx and Hume's tobacco store. With a slow winter expected in Conrad, William Jefferies closed the P. Burns & Company butcher shop in the middle of October and moved back to Whitehorse.

The post office at Conrad was finally able to give full service; Mr. Beyts had come down from Whitehorse to train James Murray to issue and cash money orders, and a bank of one hundred lock boxes had been installed. The *Star* noted that the rental of lock boxes would "furnish the postmaster a little money with which to buy 'Dutch courage' when he comes to sign his salary voucher of \$2.06 per month,"¹⁵⁸ which was calculated to work out to two and one-third cents per hour for Murray's labour.

An ample supply of firewood to ward off any weather the Yukon could throw at the little town was rapidly being stacked up beside each building. Six hundred cords of firewood had been rafted in and landed at the beach, and a crew was at work with a power saw bucking it up into useable lengths.

For those hunters who were willing to go well off the beaten track, particularly to the southeast (the least accessible region), there was still plenty of game around to stock up the cellar freezers with. Mountain sheep were a favoured quarry; Tom Fleming managed to bring back six from Tutshi Lake during the first week of October. Everyone, including the police, seemed to ignore the fact that such hunting was being conducted in British Columbia, where the bag limits were much lower than in the Yukon.

Test shipments of ore from all of the mines were still being sent out for experimenting. Even though no information from Tyrrell's reports had been made public, rumours of serious trouble at Windy Arm had been growing in intensity for several weeks when the *Star* passed on the news, without comment, that the Mountain Hero tramway would be shutting down from October 19 until the spring. Carl Faulk told a *Star* reporter that once the tram quit running, an airship would be the most efficient way to get mail to the mines.

Adding more fuel to the rumours was the report that J. P. Rogers had tendered his resignation to Colonel Conrad in early October, giving up his "princely salary" to return to railroading. Michael J. Heney, construction genius of the White Pass route, had joined with a partnership that combined the resources of the J. P. Morgan and Guggenheim fortunes to build the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad from Cordova, Alaska to a new copper mine at Kennecott. Rogers joined several other former White Pass people that Heney had called to join him on the project. Rogers was replaced at Conrad Consolidated by Herman Vance. Conrad's bookkeeper, Jimmy Barrager, had been living the bachelor life with assayer W. N. Musgrave since his wife and daughter had headed outside for the winter in October. Two weeks after Rogers left, he received a telegram offering him a job in Rogers' new office in Seattle; he quit immediately and headed south.

The rumours of trouble at the mines were not, however, accepted as fact by everyone; anticipating an even better season in 1907 than the one that had just closed, the Scott Brothers built two large additions to their hotel at Carcross. By early October, five more guest rooms, a large sitting room, and

a modern 16 by 20 foot kitchen were completed. As well, Pete Engler had enlarged and completely redone the hotel's bar.

A meeting was held at Conrad the end of October to discuss a letter from Commissioner McInnes offering a grant to start up and maintain a general hospital at Conrad. The 20 x 24 foot log hospital building being put up by the Sisters of St. Ann was nearly complete, and a board was chosen to see if funds could be raised to hire a nurse and cover expenses not covered by the government.

Towards the end of October work was completed on the former telegraph office, and Tyrrell moved in to finish his reports. On the 26th, he dashed any hopes that Colonel Conrad might have had for a peaceful end to their disagreement over the value of his mines. The introduction to the report stated that:

... the work so far done has not proved the existence of any large body of payable ore in any of the claims; that the Development work has been conducted ignorantly and extravagantly; and that large sums of the money provided for such work have been diverted to the erection and installation of permanent improvements.¹⁵⁹

He noted that three tunnels totalling 727 feet had been driven at the Mountain Hero without finding the vein, and the tramway now stood "as a monument of erroneous judgement and reckless and wasteful extravagance."¹⁶⁰ Even at the Montana, Tyrrell saw "nothing at present to warrant any confidence in a favourable issue, ... [as] the vein has become more and more barren with depth, and even small amounts of gold and silver have almost entirely disappeared."¹⁶¹ Surely the worst blow, though, was the report on the Venus, the supposed queen of all of the claims. Due to poor management, Tyrrell felt that "none of the expenditure thus incurred was warranted or justifiable by ore in sight, or by the progress shown in development."¹⁶²

While the reports that would determine the future of the town and its residents were making their way to Toronto, and then being discussed by the men who held the key to the vault, life went on as usual at Windy Arm. Robert Lowe, on behalf of the residents of Conrad, had continued pressuring the Territorial Council to open a school, despite the shifting population. On November 1, one of the first three Assisted Schools in the Yukon opened at Conrad.¹⁶³ The Yukon had no legislation in place to form such schools

except for the power given to the Commissioner "to establish schools in any part of the Territory not within a school district, as he sees fit";¹⁶⁴ as a result, the regulations used in British Columbia were used as guidelines. Miss Myrtle Turner, daughter of Mary Turner, was hired as teacher, at a salary of \$50 per month. Under the British Columbia regulations, the community was to supply the school building, and cover all other costs of its operation; however, some flexibility was deemed appropriate in the Yukon, and for the Conrad school, the Territorial government also paid \$87.54 to install a stove, and \$78.00 for fuel and rent.¹⁶⁵

The end of the navigation season was always an extremely busy time for all the steamers as people got their last-minute orders in, and it was impossible to keep on any kind of a schedule. All through October, bad weather plagued Captain Thomas Richards on the *Gleaner*; round trips from Carcross commonly had up to fourteen stops and took 35-40 hours, running through the night. Trip records included comments that they had a "strong gale down Windy Arm - had to turn back, could not steam against it"; "dirty thick slowing weather all way down and back"; and "heavy thick fog Taku Arm."¹⁶⁶ On November 5, the *Gleaner* was laid up for the winter, being hauled out of the water on makeshift ways at Wynton. Given the amount of freight to be moved, and the fact that the lake was not frozen yet, it seems likely that mechanical problems led to her being hauled out early. The little *Mabel F.* ran through the forming ice for another couple of weeks, even managing to tow a couple of scows loaded with timbers and tramway equipment destined for the Vault Extension; the new tramway, a truly remarkable piece of engineering, was designed to carry ore from the mine right to the beach.

On November 9, Colonel Conrad arrived back from meetings in Vancouver and Seattle, bringing with him the balance of the machinery for the new Vault tramway, for which the stands were already in place. The following day, Conrad received a telegram from Toronto. William Mackenzie had put his trust in Tyrrell's judgement; the telegram ordered Conrad to halt all operations immediately.

The *Star*, ever optimistic when other people's money was at stake, gave the information regarding the closure order a short piece on the front page, but optimistically reported that:

while it is not known just why the mines were closed down it is believed that it is for the purpose of arranging

for the treatment of all the output of the mines of the company and thus do away with the necessity of shipping ore to the outside. It is believed that concentrators will be installed and that a smelter will be erected the coming summer. In the meantime, the temporary closing down of operations at the mines will have a tendency to make Conrad City somewhat 'New Englandified' for the time being.¹⁶⁷

Colonel Conrad immediately headed for Toronto to meet with Mackenzie; he was successful in re-establishing a supply of operating capital by December 15, but the purse-strings were very tight. The glory days were over. With the collapse of Conrad's financing, most of the camps were abandoned, and the underground workings were allowed to glacialize while some minor work concentrated on the Montana, Vault and Venus.

With the workforce in the mines cut to about 15 men, the boom town of Conrad rapidly went into decline. Despite Colonel Conrad's protestations, by telegram from the east coast, that the mines were in excellent shape, and that he did not understand Mackenzie's reasons for halting work, most of his management staff had moved on within a few weeks. Harry Lay, with his wife and their son Wilson, headed east on November 30; Lay announced on his departure that he may return to the Yukon, but never to Conrad.¹⁶⁸ Gustave Singer, since his resignation as General Manager, had still been working with Colonel Conrad occasionally, but in late November his trail led to the Livingstone Creek placer fields, where he was soon president of a company that was "carrying on extensive operations."¹⁶⁹

The residents of Conrad took two opposite tracks that fall; while some accepted the town's death and moved on, others continued to plan for the boom they were certain would come in the spring. Whitney & Pedlar closed their Conrad store and transferred James Lucier back to Whitehorse in late November, while the same week, the beautiful new Windy Arm Hotel was finally completed.

At the same time that the Windy Arm portion of Conrad's empire was crumbling, the Palmer brothers were making a series of applications, in the name of the Yukon Smelting Company, Limited, to purchase 550 acres of land at Miles Canyon, and to divert 10,000 miner's inches of water (the equivalent of approximately 15,000 cubic feet per minute) for the purpose of power generation. The electricity to be generated "by means of water wheels

and other machinery" was to be used to power a smelter, with the surplus being distributed to the Whitehorse and Conrad Districts.¹⁷⁰ The Palmers' application had been a major bonus to customers of the Yukon Electrical Company. Willard Phelps had accepted the position of manager of the company in late 1905, and when rumours got around town that the Palmer brothers were planning a plant that could produce electricity at much lower rates than the Yukon Electrical's wood-fired boiler, he dropped Yukon Electrical's rates from ninety cents per kilowatt-hour to fifty cents in an apparent attempt to discourage competition.

In February, it was rumoured that Sergeant Acland was going to be heading to Telegraph Creek to start surveying for a military road from there to Hazelton, to join up with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, which was being built to Prince Rupert. In April, however, Acland was transferred to Carcross to replace Fitz Horrigan, who was sent to Whitehorse initially, and then, in September, to Dawson.

Conrad City was indeed quiet over the winter. In February, the Anglican reading room was averaging only four people a day. Fred Ronkendorf closed the German Bakery and Restaurant and headed for the silver mining town of Tonapah, Nevada with his family; Charlie Barnes had returned from California to find the Yukon Hotel abandoned.

In March, Conrad disappeared from the weather reports in the *Star*, where most issues recorded the closure of more businesses, and the relocation of more people from Conrad and Wynton. Among those people who moved to Whitehorse were Len Cousins and his family, Bert Wooldridge, Billy Robison and James Durie. Archie Gauld, owner of two hotels on Windy Arm, walked away from the Conrad Hotel and moved his family to Whitehorse, where they bought a house opposite the *Star* office; Archie was soon working as secretary of the Western Federation of Miners.¹⁷¹ The only businessman to buck the flow was Captain Martin; in early April, he went to Whitehorse to help his family, which now included a one-month-old daughter, pack for the return to Conrad for the summer.

One of the prospectors working in the Windy Arm district had by 1907 gained quite a reputation for a unusual hobby he had developed over the previous two years. Since his arrival at Whitehorse in July 1899, Gustave Gervais had been fascinated by the variety of native flora in the "frozen North". In 1905 he started collecting specimens of each different type of plant he came across in his travels throughout the southern Yukon; in two

seasons he had some 1,450 specimens, "the largest, finest, and most complete [collection] of northern flora that has ever been assembled."¹⁷² In April 1907 he had the collection on display in Seattle, and it took up 400 feet of wall space. He told a reporter that he was going to Ottawa as soon as possible to meet Professor Macoun, one of three botanists in North America capable of classifying his collection, which apparently included fifty types not yet described.

Through the spring, former Conrad residents rearranged their lives. In May, Jack Pooley finally married Drucella Melvina Scott at Carcross. Billy Weisdeppe and Angus Matheson were at work in Whitehorse after putting in the winning bid of \$1,973 to build a new garbage wharf downstream from the shipyards. Things had not worked out for Jimmy Barrager in Tacoma, and he returned to Whitehorse in May. On May 31st, Percy Reid moved the Mining Recorder's office to Carcross to better service the new boom area, the Watson and Wheaton valleys. In June, Charlie Barnes boarded up the Yukon Hotel, leaving the Windy Arm as Conrad's only hotel.

In early June, with Colonel Conrad still outside, trying to raise enough money to get back into full operation, a total of thirty men were working on the Venus and Big Thing. The *Mabel F.* was back in business, making daily trips between Carcross and Conrad, the Venus, and the Dail & Fleming mines, where about a dozen men were working.

On June 23, 1907, Colonel Conrad returned to New York from a three-week trip to England, where he "completed the largest mining deal ever consummated between American enterprise and European capital."¹⁷³ Though Conrad found receptive ears outside for his reports that twelve million dollars had been raised, and that "large smelters and costly mills will at once be erected in the vicinity",¹⁷⁴ the Skagway and Whitehorse newspapers had heard enough of Conrad's deals, and gave the story very brief coverage.

On July 6, Hugh Hamilton became the only fatality of the Windy Arm boom when he fell off one of the sheer cliffs near the Vault mine. His body was discovered two days later at the bottom of a nearly-inaccessible section of the canyon by Fred Whitman and his brother. On the thirteenth, William Young officiated at his burial on the hillside above the Conrad Consolidated powderhouse, half a mile north of town.¹⁷⁵ Virtually all the mines closed for the day, and the funeral was well attended by miners and townspeople who

had long been expecting such a tragedy. Thanks were given that the mountain, and the brutal working conditions, had claimed only one life.



This photograph by Ephrim Hamacher of the first Yukon Synod of the Anglican Church in 1907 shows several of the people who were influential in the initial development of Conrad City. In the back row, from left to right, are Reverend J. Comyn-Ching, rector of Dawson; lay worker William Dobbs Young, in charge of the Conrad reading room; Percy R. Peele; Isaac Taylor of Taylor & Drury; and Reverend Arthur Eugene O'Meara, rector of Conrad. In the front row are Reverend Hiram Cody, rector of Whitehorse; Bishop Isaac Stringer; Reverend John Hawksley, rector of Carcross; and RNWMP Inspector A.E.Snyder.

Colonel Conrad passed quickly through Conrad in mid-July to check on the Venus, where a new vein had been struck. A shipment of 185 tons of ore was sent out to the Ladysmith smelter, and a new bunkhouse was being built at the foot of the tramway to house the crew, which was being doubled to thirty men. The only businesses left in Conrad were the Arctic Trading Company, the Windy Arm Hotel, and Queen Grocers, but the Anglican and Catholic churches were still holding services for ever-smaller flocks. In July,

though, Father Allard packed up and left Conrad for Atlin, where, as well as conducting services, he set up a school and home for the Taku River Tlingit children of the area. He was well received at Atlin, and, unlike the situation at Conrad, he was able to operate his mission there with no outside aid, being wholly supported by donations from local residents, both native and white.

In late August, the Colonel left Carcross to spend the winter in New York. When work at the Venus was stopped for the winter on October 5, the *Star* once again inferred that the only possible reason for the closure was that a concentrator was to be installed soon. This time, however, they were correct.

Over the winter of 1907-1908, Colonel Conrad managed to raise \$600,000, and over the next few months he bought out William Mackenzie's controlling interests in all of their Windy Arm and Wheaton River properties. Conrad had reorganized his corporate structure as well; although he had four companies for various purposes,¹⁷⁶ the main Windy Arm mining properties were operated by the Yukon District Gold Mines, Limited.

One of the new company's first projects was to build the concentrator that had been promised since 1905. Two weeks after the Venus was shut down, Herman Vance announced that the machinery for a concentrator would start arriving at Carcross in February or March. As with all of Colonel Conrad's other purchases, the concentrator, with a price tag of \$60,000, was the most modern available at the time; it was also to be the first large concentrator in the Yukon, with a capacity of 100 tons per day. The extensive sampling and testing that had been conducted over the past two years had convinced Conrad and Vance that the most appropriate mill would be one using the Washoe process of pan-amalgamation.¹⁷⁷ This process, which had become the most widely-used milling method in the United States since its development in Nevada in 1861, was likely chosen due to the high percentage of sulphides in the majority of the Windy Arm ores; the Washoe process gave particularly high yields with such ores.

With few people left in Conrad except for the Conrad Consolidated representatives, Joe Tyrrell and J. H. Hoare, Captain Martin closed up the Arctic Trading store and took his family to Victoria for the winter.

The Whitehorse Copper Belt was the place to watch in the fall of 1907. A rise in the world price for copper had been accompanied by a rate decrease by the White Pass & Yukon; the railway was sure enough of the

district's potential under the new conditions that on October 21 they started work on a spur line to the mines. Several blasting crews were put to work, and every available man in Whitehorse was on the grade, using hand tools, horse teams, a steam stump-puller and a steam shovel. With the promise of huge savings in the elimination of the charges that had been paid for freighting the ore to the railway with horse-drawn wagons, the mines were competing with the railway for men, as several of the mines were pushed into production.

On November 10, James Murray resigned as postmaster of Conrad, closed up Robert Lowe's building, and moved back to Whitehorse to join his wife and children. A new postmaster was not hired until February 18, when Frank McPhee started distributing mail from his grocery store.

The flow of letters regarding which lots in Gustave Singer's Conrad townsite should be given to the government continued unabated through all the economic problems; in November, 1907, Robert Miller reminded the Department of the Interior that he:

...was well aware at the time that the selection made was not a particularly generous one on the part of the Townsite owners, but I had then, as I have now, no very exalted opinion of the present or prospective value of the lots in Conrad, and so advised that the blocks tendered be accepted and the lots sold at once.¹⁷⁸

In January, 1908, the Department agreed to the 79 lots that had been offered, but when Miller was asked for his suggestions as to prices for which the lots might be put on sale, his brusque reply was that "just at present the lots can hardly be said to have any marketable value whatever."¹⁷⁹

The influx of large numbers of people into the Windy Arm area had a devastating effect on wildlife populations, particularly moose, caribou, mountain sheep and mountain goat. The game laws at the time were very rudimentary; most large animals were protected from January 1 until October 1, and bison could not be killed at any time. For the three open months, though, each hunter was allowed to take two elk, two musk ox, six moose, six deer, and any number of other animals.¹⁸⁰ In 1908, *The Weekly Star* commented that "headhunters have swarmed to this country from the outside, [and] big game has been ruthlessly slaughtered or driven from its former haunts so far back into the mountains that where once it abounded not a track or hoof mark is now seen."¹⁸¹ The Windy Arm district was of

particular concern to Major Synder, who had been requested by Commissioner Henderson to supply information for the drafting of new game regulations. Snyder noted that Carcross residents had killed fifty-four moose and sixteen sheep the previous season, sheep "having been practically exterminated by headhunters who have scoured that entire country during the past two seasons."¹⁸² Snyder did not mention, however, that sheep-hunting was a favourite sport of his own, and he regularly took his own-of-town guests hunting.

In March, 1908, Colonel Conrad wired Herman Vance that the money for the concentrator was in place, and the materials were ordered. The first load of lumber for a wharf and the concentrator foundation arrived at Skagway on the *Delhi* on April 12, and as soon as the ice cleared from the lake, the wharf was built. Because of the steep slope of the mountain at that point, all building materials had to remain on the wharf or a barge, and materials were stockpiled at Carcross until space was available. The tramway that had been built on the Venus property was relocated slightly to the north to bring the ore from the lower adit of the Venus directly to the top of the concentrator, making virtually the entire operation gravity-fed.

Captain Martin and his family arrived back in Whitehorse in February, and with a promising outlook for the Windy Arm mines again, a new stock of goods was shipped to Conrad and the Arctic Trading Company store reopened in April. With most of the property in Conrad having been abandoned, he applied in May for a better piece of the waterfront reserve, on the south side of the public wharf. Under Commissioner Henderson, however, the policy on the types of businesses allowed to occupy the waterfront had been tightened up, and the application was rejected.

From the newspaper reports of the day, it seems that the most popular recreational activity in Whitehorse during the summer of 1908 was bowling. The North Star Athletic Association had bought the equipment for four alleys, and they were installed by Eli Hume in an annex built for the purpose. Rumblings of a new social disturbance were being heard from the outside as well. The *Star* reported that the ease of navigation on the Yukon River when it is in spring flood may be soon a thing of the past:

by next year it is possible that the temperance wave now sweeping over the outside country will have reached here and the demand for water will be so great that the river

will not be permitted to rise, in which event the railroad company may be forced to build on to Dawson.¹⁸³

Gene LaRose was still operating his sawmill at Wynton, but with the market drying up in the Windy Arm district, he needed to try to serve Whitehorse as well. In June, he managed to get a raft containing 45,000 feet of rough lumber as far as the head of Miles Canyon by himself; he then called on his brother Al to help him get the raft through the canyon and rapids. Taking a day from his work on the White Pass & Yukon spur to the Copper Belt, Al went to the canyon on the 20th. Testing the current with a canoe first, their passage through Miles Canyon, and then Squaw Rapids, was made successfully; in the main Whitehorse Rapids, however, something went very wrong - their boat was swamped, and both men were drowned in the foaming water as Harry Dickson watched helplessly from the bank.

The timing for the construction of the Venus concentrator could hardly have been worse; due to huge increases in the production of silver around the world, the price had dropped twenty percent during the year, to a new low of barely over fifty cents per ounce. In July, Colonel Conrad returned after a ten-month absence; visiting Whitehorse in late August for the first time in two years, his interviews with the *Star* made it plain that Windy Arm's glory days were over as far as he was concerned. His enthusiasm was now directed towards the stability of gold, including property in the Wheaton valley that he had just purchased from George Stevens, and even more so, his large hydraulic operation in the Porcupine valley, north of Haines, Alaska. He had just received a report from his manager, Edward E. Harvey, that 150 men were at work on the property, and they were getting \$72 in gold per pan at bedrock, "making it one of the richest mining propositions of modern times."¹⁸⁴ As if to emphasize his new focus, he signed Conrad City's death notice on September 1, 1908: the scrawled note said simply, "I wish to withdraw my application for waterfront at Conrad."¹⁸⁵

In order to secure enough ore to keep his nearly-complete concentrator busy, Colonel Conrad optioned the Dail & Fleming properties in mid-September, for a reported \$50,000. The opening of the concentrator was delayed when the head machinist, Mr. Woods, was injured, but as soon as he returned from the hospital at Skagway he finished the final adjustments, and the first ore was run through on about the 10th of October.

In the concentration process, a series of crushers reduced the ore to a size which would then allow the constituents of the ore to be separated by

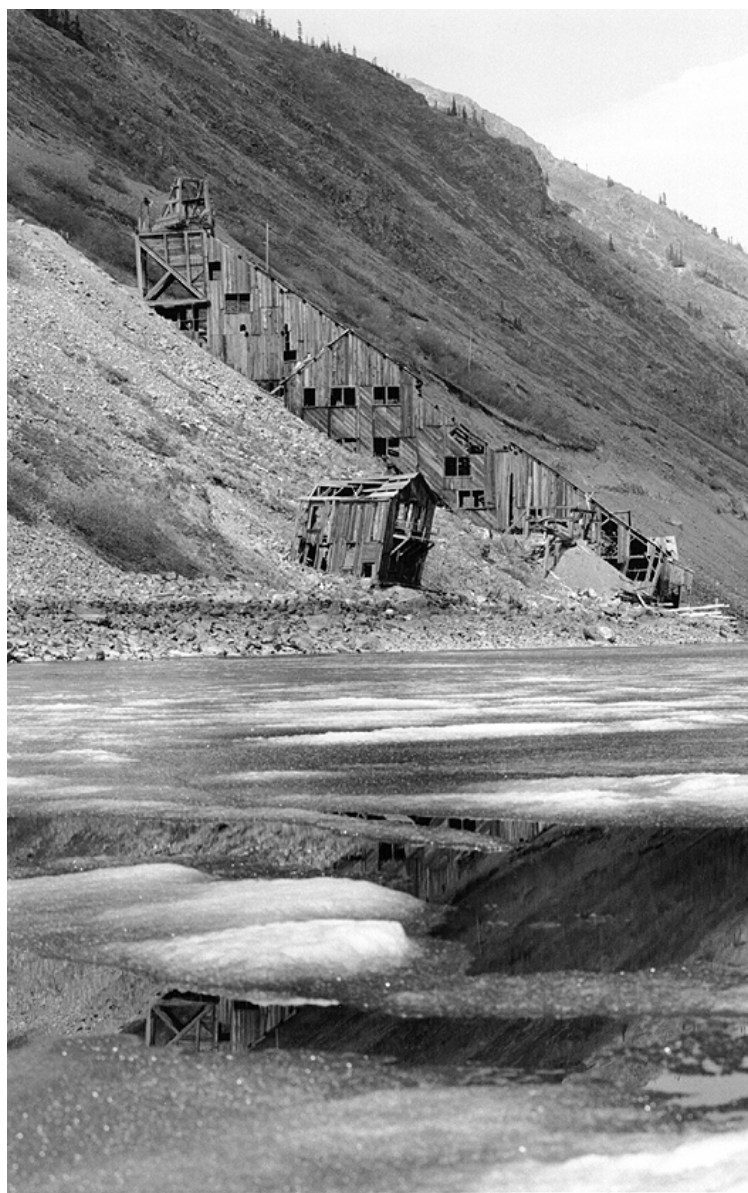
specific gravity. Although the concept was similar to that used in placer mining, the separation of gold is relatively simple due to the dramatic difference in the specific gravities of gold and the surrounding gravel. With other metals, that difference is much less marked, and the process is the most effective when the pieces are all of a similar size. The crushers, however, produce varying amounts of fine particles, which when mixed with water in the separation process, are termed "slimes"; although the mineral content of the slimes was often substantial, separation was very difficult to attain.

The concentrator was initially powered by a 75 horsepower gasoline engine, with a 100 horsepower boiler, but within a few weeks a Pelton water-wheel had arrived from Fairbanks, Morse & Company, and had been installed at the foot of Pooley Canyon to supply electrical power. At the Venus No.2 adit, the ore being stoped was hand-sorted into tramway cars before starting its 2500-foot trip to the top of the concentrator. A grizzly at the inlet ensured that no pieces that were too large would enter the system; the pieces screened out by the grizzly went through a Blake crusher before re-entering the system. In the actual concentration process:

the ore is sized by trommels giving three products. Fine crushing is performed by a set of high-speed rolls and a Huntington mill. A set of jigs and four Callow screens concentrate the crushed and sized materials. The slimes are settled in six Callow settling tanks, and afterwards concentrated on three Wilfley tables and two Frue vanners.¹⁸⁶

The Wilfley tables, holding about two tons of slimes, were steamed-heated before adding mercury to pick up the silver. Despite all the precautions taken in the selection of the concentrator design, however, the ore was so heavily oxidized that it broke up readily, and production of slimes was excessive. As a result, losses were unacceptably high, nowhere near the 81 percent concentrates that the system was capable of producing.¹⁸⁷ In November, the concentrator was shut down until it could be modified to rectify the problem. With some minor modifications to the mill, it was back in operation in December, and concentrates were being shipped out. Although some improvement in the recovery rate was noticed, it was still not what was hoped for, and the process was modified again several times over the winter.

At the Vault, a small crew had been put to work in another attempt to find a consistent vein, but at about the same time the concentrator was closed, the search for the Vault vein was abandoned as well. J. B. Tyrrell's prediction of two years previous had been confirmed: the two tramways, which had cost some \$25,000, would stand as monuments to Colonel Conrad's failure.



The ruins of the Venus concentrator and assay office, reflected in the spring ice on Windy Arm, May 1995.¹⁸⁸

The government's road-building program was still being used in attempts to improve the situation at Windy Arm in 1908. By October 14, a crew led by Sam McGee had finished building a new wagon road from Whitehorse to Carcross; from there to Conrad, all that was required was to remove trees from the little-used road.

Colonel Conrad was an amazingly difficult man to discourage; in October, he had Royal Riblet back at work, taking elevations for the design of a tramway across the Chilkoot Pass. Three tramlines over the Chilkoot had combined forces in 1899 as the Chilkoot Railroad & Transport Company to compete with the White Pass & Yukon Route's railway; to counter the threat, the White Pass bought them out and shut the tramways down.¹⁸⁹ Now Colonel Conrad was going to go head-to-head against the company on whose high freight rates he blamed his mines' failure. A total of nearly thirty miles of double tramway was planned; the main system would run fifteen miles from the head of the Taiya River valley over the Chilkoot Pass to Lake Lindeman.¹⁹⁰ Steamers would then be used to connect with shorter tramways running to the Big Thing, Wheaton valley, Montana, Vault and Venus mines. The survey was probably a bluff to force a lowering of freight rates on the railway, as Conrad had spread himself too thin, and could not hope to raise the capital for a project of that size.

At the Big Thing, a rich vein, reportedly sixteen to eighteen feet wide, had been struck 450 feet from the surface in January, 1909. Although only two men were working in the shaft on each shift, Jack Stewart had two teams hauling ore to Carcross at the rate of six tons a day in bitterly cold weather; by April, that figure had been doubled, and the stockpiles of ore at Carcross had been transferred to the Venus concentrator. The concentrator had been shut down again for several weeks by an equipment breakdown, but by March, thirty men were back working double shifts at the concentrator and the Venus mine. With low recovery rates still a major problem, though, the work was erratic, as the mill was often shut down.

Sam and Rose McGee had come to the difficult conclusion that their fortunes must lie elsewhere, although they were not sure where. On the 15th of May, 1909, the McGees left Whitehorse, headed for Saskatchewan initially; from that base, Sam intended to go looking for a permanent home. Before he left, thirty of the leading citizens of Whitehorse had presented him with a gold nugget watch chain to honour his service as "a pioneer pathfinder and [road]builder."¹⁹¹ By the following summer, he was settled in

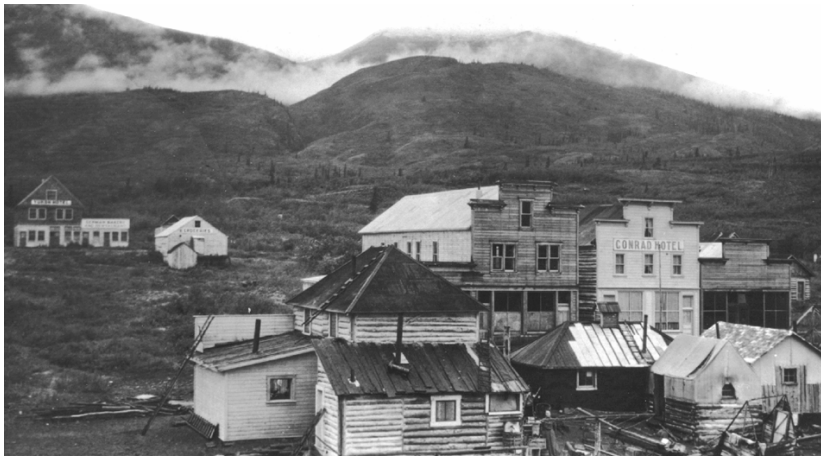
Summerland, British Columbia, enjoying life as a fruit farmer, but still holding on to his Yukon memories, in the form of three claims in the Copper Belt, and the "Blue Grouse No.2" claim that he had staked at Windy Arm five years previously.¹⁹²

In the spring of 1909, the Palmer brothers, while maintaining a wide variety of business interests in the Yukon, had also moved on. For them, British Columbia's Fraser Valley offered the opportunities they were seeking; they started a contracting business in New Westminster, and landed several lucrative contracts, including one to build a section of the B. C. Electric Tramline from Abbotsford to Chilliwack.

In May, 1909, Herman Vance resigned as manager of the Venus Mine, in order to concentrate his attention on the Big Thing, which he had invested heavily in. Shortly after, the population of Conrad dropped to twelve, and the town lost its last socially prominent family, when the Vances moved to Carcross and built a home on the waterfront near Colonel Conrad's property.

The town of Conrad was slowing disappearing, although not in as dramatic a manner as it had appeared four years before. Many of the cabins at Conrad were being torn apart and taken to other areas that summer; the logs of Percy Reid's office were carefully numbered, rafted to Carcross, and reassembled on the waterfront just up from the Vance's.¹⁹³ Arthur Sibbitt's cabin was also moved to Carcross, while the Burns Company butcher shop was loaded onto a raft and towed to the Engineer Mine. Even as the town was clearly dying, however, a new businesswoman appeared. In late May, Mrs. Jennie Spencer applied to lease the fifty feet of waterfront to the north of the public wharf. The property had of course already been leased, and she had to sublease it from J. D. Nichols, who had moved to the railway boom town of Prince Rupert, but she started operating a restaurant there before the transfer had been legalized. Business could not have been very brisk for Mrs. Spencer. On June 16, Captain Martin cancelled his waterfront lease application, stating that "things here in the way of business is very dull, and not much prospect of improving in the near future."¹⁹⁴ Twelve days later, Frank McPhee's grocery store and post office were closed; although post office records state that the post office was closed because McPhee died, he was very much alive. McPhee's departure was apparently the final blow for Captain Martin; within two weeks, he had closed the Arctic Trading Company, packed up his remaining stock, and left Conrad City for the final time.¹⁹⁵

Colonel Conrad, although things were definitely not working out the way he had planned in the Yukon, was still managing to live very well, with all-night, high-stakes gambling sessions where the whiskey flowed like water. Barnaby Conrad, after rejecting his father's advice to quit the Harvard Law School to attend the Colorado School of Mines, was conducting some of the Colonel's remaining business interests outside. During the final efforts to put the Yukon mines on a solid footing, Barnaby handled the sale of several parcels of land in Alberta, and shipped some Conrad cattle to Skagway to feed the miners.¹⁹⁶ On March 15, 1910, he made what he probably felt was another good investment when he married a woman he had met for the first



Conrad, probably from the deck of the Gleaner at the public wharf, ca.1910. Most of the smaller buildings have already been taken to more promising areas. A woman, likely Jennie Spencer, is standing behind her restaurant.

time during one of his business trips to New York. Three weeks later, *The Weekly Star* copied, without comment, a report on the wedding from *The Muscatine News-Tribune*.¹⁹⁷ His bride, the former Miss Nellie Elizabeth Robertson, was the 38-year-old daughter of a wealthy Iowa physician; the Iowa newspaper described her as "one of Muscatine's most accomplished and prominent young women, ... gifted with an exceptionally beautiful voice." Conrad was credited with being "engaged in gold and silver mining

and also in ranching in the northwest, chiefly in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan." The couple planned to spend the winter in New York before returning to the Yukon for the summer. The new Mrs. Conrad never saw the Yukon; although their union resulted in the birth of a son, within a year John and Nellie were divorced.

Back in the Yukon, the town that bore the Colonel's name was still struggling to survive. On May 1, 1910, Mary Turner was appointed postmistress of Conrad, but the position did not last for long. In October, restaurant owner Jennie Spencer wrote to Robert Miller explaining that her rent was late because "there is only 6 people in the Town of Conrad so you see it is hard to get money when there is no business."¹⁹⁸ On December 10, the Conrad, Yukon post office officially ceased to exist.¹⁹⁹

7 The Search Continues

In 1911, many miners still felt that the mines of Windy Arm just needed more development work done to locate the massive ore bodies that had been reported so many times, but which had always tapered off or ended at a fracture. As had been proved beyond doubt, though, hardrock development required enormous amounts of capital, of which little was available, so there were only sporadic attempts to work the properties. The situation was not much better at either the Wheaton valley, or the Copper Belt; although Atlas Mining was working the Pueblo copper property again, only about 250 people had spent the winter of 1910-1911 in Whitehorse.²⁰⁰ The White Pass & Yukon, seeing their freight tonnage dropping at an alarming rate, had followed the lead of many other railroads, and hired two mining engineers to assist prospectors in assessing any properties that were in the district served by the railroad.

The Territorial government was giving all possible aid to the miners; despite the quantity of gold, silver and copper ores that had been shipped from Yukon hardrock mines, no royalties had ever been paid to the government. This was in dramatic contrast to other jurisdictions, such as Ontario. The Department of the Interior seems to have ignored that fact until 1908, when Robert Miller, in his new position as Assistant Gold Commissioner, was asked to report on the reasons for not charging royalties; he replied that he simply did not realize he was supposed to. No records had been kept by any level of government, and the White Pass was reticent about giving out their figures for specific mines without permission from all the owners of the mines. Although the Department of the Interior wrote to Miller several times a year, he seldom replied again, despite the increasing frustration that showed in the letters; by February 1910, the Department had had enough:

... no reply has been received to any of these communications, and I am to ask you to furnish this Department with a prompt explanation as to why you refuse or neglect to reply to the Departmental letters which are addressed to you on this subject.²²¹

The royalty question had by that point, however, moved out of bureaucrats' offices and into the political arena; on December 13, 1910, following a long series of meetings and petitions, the royalty on copper was waived for a ten-year period, and on May 16, 1911, all quartz claims were given the same relief.

The most important work at Windy Arm in 1911 was being conducted at George Dail and Jack Fleming's Humper group. T. M. Daulton had abandoned his option on the Humper group in 1908, and was running a large hydraulic operation near Surprise Lake, in the Atlin placer district; Colonel Conrad had installed a fair amount of equipment on the Humper Group when he picked up the option following Daulton's departure, but little work had been done. As a result, Dail and Fleming had seized the equipment in 1910, and were working the property themselves, attempting to uncover the main vein with surface cuts, as well as to follow it underground from the two tunnels which had been driven by Daulton. In his annual report for 1911, Percy Reid expressed his opinion that the Humper group, having brought out ore that assayed as high as 3,000 ounces of silver to the ton, "no doubt will eventually be one of the great producing mines of the territory."²⁰²

Colonel Conrad's Yukon District Gold Mining Company was continuing work in a small way on the Venus, where the underground workings driven since 1905 now totalled over 3800 feet. The company's main focus, though, was the Big Thing property, where a small but rich and persistent vein was being followed. To keep the Venus and Big Thing going, the company was selling off some of the equipment that had been purchased with William Mackenzie's money in 1906; a small tramway that had never been installed (it had apparently been destined for one of the Wheaton properties) was sold to Otto Partridge, who intended to put it up at a mine he was developing near Ben-My-Chree.

In September 1911, rumours started spreading in mining circles that the vein being followed in the lower tunnel at the Big Thing was steadily widening. Colonel Conrad was uncharacteristically quiet about the matter, but a power plant was installed at the foot of MacDonald Creek, and a 2,300 volt power transmission line run nearly five miles to the mine, at a total cost of \$100,000. By November, four new Sullivan "Burley" drills had been brought in, and 75 men, the largest crew yet used at the Big Thing, were working in a fairly elaborate system of tunnels and drifts.

When the water was flowing in MacDonald Creek, sufficient power was generated with a 170 horsepower water wheel, but through the winter, power was supplied by a huge wood-fired boiler rated at 250 horsepower. In January 1912, thirty to forty men were employed cutting two to three thousand cords of wood on the west side of Lake Bennett. A very mild, nearly snow-free winter caused delays in freighting the wood across the lake to the power plant, and when Frank Asam attempted to start hauling sleds across with his new sixteen-ton Caterpillar tractor, it broke through the ice. Although the three men on the Cat were saved, the \$15,000 machine was lost in deep water.

On March 25, Colonel Conrad announced that the small vein that they had been following for the past four months had finally led to the main ore body. A total of nearly three thousand feet of tunnels and shafts, with the main tunnel alone running 2200 feet, had been driven over the previous six years in the search for that ore body. With the new discovery, there was of course "a likelihood that a smelter will be erected in the near future."²⁰³

Following court challenges to the White Pass & Yukon's freight rates, they had lowered their rates for ore being shipped from Carcross to Skagway from \$4.25 per ton to \$2.00 in December 1911, but Colonel Conrad insisted that rates for incoming equipment also needed to drop. The *Star* put all the pressure they could on the railroad:

if the railroad people will now do the right thing, the turning of the tide in the financial affairs of Southern Yukon will date from Monday, March 25, 1912, and prosperity and general development will thunder down the corridors of all time to come and the names of "Conrad" and "Big Thing" will be emblazoned on the pages of all future Southern Yukon history.²⁰⁴

In June, Colonel Conrad had a final assault on the White Pass & Yukon launched by Mining Engineer D. E. Blake. Blake's study of the mines was summarized by his recommendation that Conrad close all of his mines until "a fair transportation rate was guaranteed."²⁰⁵ White Pass president O. L. Dickinson, instead of ignoring the charges as they had always done in the past, published a reply that stated the amount of money that Conrad had actually spent on transportation, and clearly showed that even if the railroad transportation had been free, the Big Thing would not have survived. Dickinson also stated that the seven-mile ore haul from the mine to the

railroad was much more of a factor in the mine's high operating expenses, costing Conrad \$5.00 per ton.

The report by Blake had not been another bluff; the Big Thing was closed in late June. For a couple of weeks, former mine foreman William H. Ireland worked on the Big Thing tunnel by contract, but on July 10, 1912, Colonel Conrad cancelled the contract and left Carcross for the last time, headed for his Porcupine placer operation.²⁰⁶ A few weeks later, William Mackenzie forced what was left of Conrad's Windy Arm conglomerate into bankruptcy.



The last known photograph of John Conrad (centre), at the Pueblo Mine in June 1912.

In 1913, J. B. Tyrrell gained a small measure of additional scientific acclaim as a result of an unusual rock that he had found seven years earlier on Windy Arm. While inspecting the main shaft on one of T. M. Daulton's claims, he had made an extraordinary find:

the vein matter was quartz, mixed with galena and other sulphides, with considerable loose ochreous material near the surface. A few feet below the surface, and within the zone of oxidation, I found small irregular masses, up to the size of a walnut, of a brown translucent resin-like substance which, on being taken into the warm hand or out into the air, quickly flew into small sharply angular pieces. So readily did the substance break up that it was found quite impossible to carry away clear coherent masses of any considerable size.

Tyrrell passed the tiny samples on to Professor B. J. Harrington at McGill University for analysis. Only a cursory examination was made at that time; after Harrington died, the samples came to the attention of Professor R. P. D. Graham, and he conducted a thorough analysis in 1911 and 1912. He found that although the material appeared opaque, when it was examined under a microscope it was a brownish translucent, and when pieces of it were put into water, "they fly to pieces with a crackling sound and the disengagement of gas."²⁰⁸ Although its chemical composition showed it to be a hydrous arsenate of iron and calcium, no substance exactly like it had ever been seen before, and Tyrrell was allowed to name it; he chose "Yukonite".

On July 10, 1914, the *Star* reported that:

...what was once the liveliest little town in the North, eight years ago, is now wholly deserted, except for one resident, an aged woman who lives there all alone. Three of the best hotel buildings in the Yukon, one of them all furnished even to the bar glasses and cash register, stand like silent sentinels, reminders of former prosperity and halcyon days. There are sufficient buildings in Conrad for a town of 500 population.²⁰⁹

In January 1916, Fred Storey was superintendent of the Silver Queen and Ruby Silver Mining Company, which had property five miles north of Bennett and five thousand feet up the mountain. He reported that a crew of a

dozen men had driven a tunnel 400 feet over the past few years, and that a compressor capable of powering three drills was being installed. The attempt was short-lived, however, due as usual to under-capitalization.

On January 1, 1917, Matthew Watson's position as Acting Mining recorder for the Conrad Mining District was terminated, and the Carcross office was closed. One month later, the last official recognition of the Windy Arm stampede was erased when the Conrad Mining District was absorbed back into the Whitehorse District.²¹⁰

At the close of the 1916 season, the *Gleaner*, the Windy Arm queen, was put up on the ways at Carcross after her final full season of operation. Tourism was becoming big business on the lakes, and in 1917, she was replaced by the much larger *Tutshi*, which had appointments more suited to that trade. The *Gleaner* was used for a few trips in 1919 and 1923, and then abandoned at Carcross.²¹¹

With the demand for silver increasing as a result of the industrial needs of the first highly-mechanized war, the price of silver, which had bottomed out at around fifty cents per ounce in the summer of 1915, started climbing. By early 1917, with the price over seventy cents and rising by the week, the Dail & Fleming, Venus and Big Thing properties were re-opened, and the Yukon Council had allocated \$1500 to repair the wagon bridge at Carcross, and the road to the Venus.

The construction of the Carcross-Skagway Road, now known as the South Klondike Highway, was first attempted in 1913, when the governments of Alaska, British Columbia and the Yukon all joined forces to undertake the project, primarily to ease development costs for the Windy Arm mines, and future mining operations in the area.²¹² The planning started and stopped several times over the next six decades, always fought by the White Pass & Yukon, who did not want a highway built which would break their transportation monopoly. Although the Whitehorse-Carcross section was brought to a reasonable standard as part of the Alaska Highway project, from Carcross south it was only passable as far as the Venus Mine occasionally, when the mine was operating. The road was started by volunteers at the Skagway end in the early 1960s, but was abandoned when the Canadian governments did not follow suit. A coordinated effort to push the road through did not occur until 1977, and then problems were encountered at many levels, from the obvious engineering difficulties, to the legal tangles of crossing the Carcross Indian Reserve. Not until 1982 did the road finally open to private traffic.

On March 21st, there had been a massive cave-in at the Pueblo mine at Whitehorse; during the rescue effort to save nine men who had been underground when the cave-in occurred, the four members of the drill crew drove an 85-foot drift in 72 hours to reach three men. No more men were located, despite extensive drilling, and on the 29th, the mine was abandoned. Three weeks later, the members of the drill crew, Angus McDougall, Carl Gaunt, Angus Gillis and John McKenzie, still flushed with their hard-won reputation as both heroes and the top drillers in the Territory, met with Jack Fleming and optioned the Dail & Fleming group. They immediately put eight men to work, focusing their labours on the Venus Extension claim.

Another group of miners from Montana took over the Venus mine in 1918. In May, the Montana-Yukon Mining Company installed an oil flotation system in the old concentrator in an attempt to increase the silver recovery. By late June 1918, the mill was working at full capacity, and 800 sacks of concentrates were shipped out. The machinery at the concentrator was modified several times; in July 1918, a Hardinge mill and 2 double-deck Diester sliming tables were ordered, to increase the capacity of the mill, and the power plant that Colonel Conrad had installed at MacDonald Creek was moved to Pooley Canyon to provide more reliable electrical power than the Pelton water wheel had been able to supply. With more modifications, partially financed by Willard Phelps, the mill operated through the 1919 season with a crew of fifteen in the mill, plus a few woodcutters, but then closed permanently.

Stories about Colonel Conrad still made it to the Yukon occasionally; minus his title, "old man" Conrad was living in Seattle, playing the stock market, occasionally winning very big, but always losing it again on another venture.²¹³ For John Howard Conrad, boundless enthusiasm was not enough; on November 28, 1928, he died penniless in Seattle, an alcoholic supported in his final days by his son Barnaby, who did not attend the funeral. In the Yukon, his death passed unnoticed, and in Fort Benton, a single paragraph recalling him as a Montana pioneer was buried on page 8 of the *River Press*.

Reports from Montana Mountain were infrequent for the fifty years following the closure of the Big Thing; in 1936, L. W. Staples of the Inca Mining Company reported uncovering a vein running parallel to the Big Thing vein. Some minor development work was done on the vein that summer and the next; named the Broken Hill vein, it was said to be 6,000 feet long, up to forty feet wide, and with pockets assaying as high as \$35 in

gold and silver per ton. In 1939 and 1940, an adit was driven on the Jean claim, a mile south of the Big Thing; the assays were spotty, but reached a high of over \$50 in gold per ton. Despite the few small projects, the mountain had become better known by the 1950s for its hunting or berry-picking potential than for its minerals.

In the 1960s, the federal government instituted some major programs to develop the resources of northern Canada, resulting in two more ambitious projects being undertaken on Montana Mountain.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, all of the claims around the old Venus workings had been acquired by Whitehorse mining engineers John L. Phelps and John D. Scott, and in 1966, they started some limited testing of the properties. Following a feasibility study in 1968 that showed proven ore reserves of 65,470 tons, with another 60,000 tons "probable" and 425,000 tons "inferred", a new road was built to Carcross, and a 300 ton per day concentrator was built just north of the 1908 mill. After spending a total of nearly three million dollars, the new mill went into production in September 1970. The mill was designed to handle ore that had been graded at .39 ounces of gold and 11.55 ounces of silver per ton, as well as 2.58 percent lead, 1.67 percent zinc and 0.9 percent cadmium. The mine encountered a large number of problems; as well as a drop in the price of silver from \$2.15 to \$1.60, a drop in the value of the Canadian dollar, a high labour turnover and a severe winter that increased operational costs, the ore deposit turned out to be not as large or rich as expected. In June 1971, the value of Venus Mines stocks plummeted, and the company entered receivership.²¹⁴

On August 10, 1968, Arctic Gold and Silver Mines, Limited officially opened their operation on the old Caribou and Montana properties, following four years of exploration work; the new Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jean Chretien, was a special guest at the opening. Sixty men worked at the mine, with 40 living in camp and the rest in Carcross. Starting in June that year, 200 tons a day of ore was being put through a mill located on the access road from Carcross. The ore from the Caribou claim (renamed the Arctic Caribou) averaged 0.668 ounces of gold per ton, and 19.82 ounces of silver, for a value of \$61. per ton, and the prospectus projected healthy profits. In 1970, however, with problems similar to those at the Venus, the mine shut down.

Miners were not nearly finished with Windy Arm yet; in 1979, a huge block of property surrounding the Venus was optioned by United Keno Hill

Mines, Canada's largest supplier of silver for many years. Recognizing that a small mill would prove to be more efficient for the area's conditions, a concentrator with a capacity of 100 tons per day was built in 1979, five miles south of the mine. The new concentrator, however, only had a total of about 800 tons of ore (400 tons which came from the 1970 Venus tailings pond)²¹⁵ run through before being closed in 1981; a severe drop in silver prices resulted in production being delayed until 1984. That year, a huge exploration program was launched that extended over much of the southeastern portion of Montana Mountain. The relatively good condition of many of the high-country roads that are used today is a result of building or upgrading that occurred during that program. The concentrator, though, was never reopened.

The most recent attempt to tap the resources of Montana Mountain was undertaken by Feather Gold, who did some test drilling and open-cutting between 1992 and 1994; some fair values in gold and silver were encountered on what is thought to be an extension of the Big Thing vein complex, and although all of the equipment has been moved off the mountain, the property is considered to have future potential for a small operation.

Most of the difficulties encountered by the miners at Windy Arm have been caused by the extremely complex geology of the area. Movements along the faults and fissures in the maze of sedimentary and volcanic rocks resulted in silver, gold and other minerals being deposited in veins which are dramatically inconsistent, defying even current analysis of methods for economic extraction. The general consensus among geologists now is that there is still a potential for small, well-funded mines to profitably extract silver and gold from these irregular veins, but no large-scale mine will ever survive because the pockets of extremely rich ore are just too small.

Samples of ore from those rich pockets, combined with the enthusiasm and promotional ability of Colonel Conrad, caused fortunes to trade hands daily at the height of the Windy Arm stampede, but only the ghosts remain now to honour the hundreds of men and women who were so determined, and worked so hard to succeed. Although Conrad City has virtually vanished, most of the tramway stands remain, much of the mining equipment sits rusting where it was abandoned, and only ice caps many of the workings from which came the reports that, in the end, were too good to be true.

8 Montana Mountain Recreation

Montana Mountain today remains much as it was left by Colonel Conrad's crews; to most Yukoners now, the mountain's lure is no longer its hidden veins of minerals, but its natural beauty. The Montana Mountain complex offers one of the broadest mixes of ecological zones in the Yukon, from marshes to lichen colonies to a remnant glacier. If the mountain was not so heavily impacted by both historic and current human use, the amount and variety of wildlife would undoubtedly reflect that fact.

With relatively easy access from Whitehorse, summer weekends now generally see dozens of people on the mountain with cars, four-wheel-drive vehicles, mountain bikes, ATVs, or just walking. In the winter, the numbers decrease and the modes of travel change to skis, snowboards and snowmobiles, but the mountain remains popular.

A 1985 survey of tourism potential in the Southern Lakes area²¹⁶ stressed the importance of Montana Mountain for both its natural beauty and its potential significance in understanding the Yukon's mining history. The recommendations of the study included improved road access up the mountain, and the development of guided photography tours, trail riding activities and "guided ski-trekking combined with instruction"²¹⁷ on the mountain. However, the impact that improved access would have on the mountain - on the vegetation, the animal populations, and the historic artifacts - was not addressed.

The old timers used to say, when you need a caribou from up the mountain there ... just go up there and get what you want. And get off the mountain and bring your caribou back, your meat back and don't monkey around up there. They used to stop us from going skiing up there, when we were just young fellers ... They used to tell us not to go up to the top of the mountain because you going to disturb those caribou.²¹⁸

Due to both the size of the mountain and the variety of terrain, exploring the mountain in depth takes weeks of hiking. Many people derive

a great deal of pleasure from finding places that few others will see; because of that fact, this book will only give details on the two main routes on the mountain. With this basic information, the uninitiated can get a look at some of the area's attractions, but there will still be dozens of secluded spots for the more adventurous (including the author!) to "get away from it all."

The starting point for exploring the mountain should be the purchase of the 1:50,000 scale topographical map of the area (Carcross, 105 D-2), available at several shops in Whitehorse. Off-trail hiking should only be undertaken by those people who are competent at reading such maps; there are a great many dangerous, confusing gullies and canyons on Montana Mountain to trap the unprepared.

To find the road to Montana Mountain, take the second right turn past the highway bridge at Carcross (record your odometer reading when you turn off the highway). An intersection is reached at 0.5 kilometers (km); turn left, and begin the ascent of the mountain. Soon after starting the climb, you will come to a sign: "Road is maintained by and for Feather Gold Resources Ltd. Use at your own risk ...". This sign should be taken very seriously - this is not a road for drivers who are not alert, who are worried about scraping their vehicle, or who are made nervous by heights. The road is in fairly good condition as far as the treeline, at about 1350 meters (4400 feet), but from there the condition varies dramatically from year to year, and no generalization would be of value.

The road climbs steeply until reaching km 3.4, then the grade eases considerably. At km 4.4 is the remains of the Arctic Gold and Silver concentrator, with the magnificent *Xoots Tlaa Ta.eeti* cirque as a backdrop. The mill processed about 30,000 tons of ore, most of it in 1969;²¹⁹ unfortunately, no site restoration was attempted after abandonment of the concentrator, and the visual impact is considerable. Extensive testing, however, has shown no environmental impact except for a slight increase in local arsenic levels due to the natural oxidation of the arsenopyrite in the tailings;²²⁰ that arsenic oxidation is presumed to be occurring in all the tailings on Montana Mountain. The wetlands to the south and west of the tailings pond are one of the largest shrug bog/marsh ecosystems in the area,²²¹ and as such this area is extremely important to a wide range of birds, including, ospreys, tree swallows, mew gulls, herring gulls and Bonaparte's gulls. Wolves have also been reported to den in the kames in this area.

From the old concentrator site, the road travels through an open forest of spruce and pine, with ever-expanding views over Lake Bennett and the Watson Valley. The approximate treeline is reached at km 9.5, and half a kilometer further on, the road ends at a slide. The road across the slide was rebuilt in the fall of 1994 by Feather Gold when they pulled their equipment out, but each year more of the road slides away, and access past this point is by foot or mountain bike only.



Montana Mountain has been a popular recreation area ever since Colonel Conrad's mines shut down. This group is resting at the Big Thing stone house in the 1930s.

At km 10.6 is the well-known Buddhist ashram. In the early 1970s, the Karma Kargyu Society of Whitehorse purchased a water tower from the White Pass railway's steam-engine days and hauled it up here; the group still owns the property, and members use it occasionally. A few minutes at this site (if you can ignore the desecration) may be enough to help you get a feel for the spiritual power of the mountain that has been recognized for untold generations.

At km 12.7 the location of Willard Phelps' Big Thing mine may be seen below the road on the right, with signs of mining undertaken over about a

sixty-year period; as late as 1993 the small bunkhouse, built in the 1920s, was being lived in during the summers.

The first of the three "stone villages" is reached at km 13.2, the top of the road at 1690 meters elevation (5550 feet). This is the camp built for Colonel Conrad and Edmund Bristol's Big Thing Group by Herman Cane in September 1905. The small stone building above it seems to have been used to house the telephone exchange equipment that was installed the following month. On the talus slope above the stone village are three collapsed adits, and an old hunting blind that is invisible even from ten feet below.

From this point, the choices for exploration are virtually limitless; the level road to the left goes to the upper adit of the Big Thing/Arctic Caribou mine, the one that drops down to the left goes around to the opposite side of the mountain, and the one to the right leads to the glacier and the Montana Mountain peak trail. The peak trail will be described first.

Another caution must be added at this point; the Yukon and Northwest Territories are the only jurisdictions in North America that do not have legislation requiring that mine shafts and tunnels be sealed permanently after abandonment. To gain a sense of history, it is far preferable to leave the underground workings open. On Montana Mountain, the majority of the adits have either collapsed or iced over, but many are still accessible. The dangers of entering a ninety-year-old mine should be obvious; less obvious may be the fact that the public response to even one accident in one of these open adits could be enough to result in restrictive legislation being introduced.

The road to the peak trail is in fairly good condition for 3 km, then narrows to a cat-track; from that point, just below the unnamed glacial lake, hiking times will be used. It takes about 30 minutes to reach the adit of the Jean mine, staked on the Broken Hill vein in 1936, then worked again by New Imperial Mines and Arctic in the 1960s and 1970s. Good samples of both galena and arsenopyrite can be found in the ore dump.

Past the Jean, there is a maze of cat-tracks; follow the track that climbs the steepest, or stays on the south side of the ridge, for about 30 minutes to reach the start of the trail. The trail is not marked, and is really just a general route up the ridge, starting at 2025 meters. There is no source of water along the route except snow (which lasts into mid-summer), but a wide variety of alpine plants, including saxifrage and complex colonies of lichens, add splashes of colour to the rocks, particularly where frost action has brought

some soil to the surface. At 1 hour, 40 minutes (1:40) from near the lake, the trail levels somewhat on a magnificent rounded arrete, and a level area about 100 meters square is soon reached, at 2135 meters elevation. A series of frost boils, about three meters in diameter and 25 centimeters high, dominates this area. At 2:15 the ridge divides, and two other routes are possible as well as the one to the peak; to the right, the ridge leads to the site of the Thistle/Aurora mine; the head of Montana Creek is steeply below.

The final climb to the summit requires scrambling over and around large rocks, but the view from the top, at 2245 meters, is worth every step taken in the last 2 hours and 40 minutes. The summit itself lost some of its character in the summer of 1994 when a large radio relay system was installed for the Emergency Measures Organization. To descend from the summit, the same route should be taken, unless you are prepared for an extremely long day, or an overnight trip.

The woodland caribou that inhabit the Montana Mountain complex at various times of the year have always been one of the mountain's main attractions. Part of the Carcross herd, which currently consists of just under 500 animals, the Montana Mountain sub-herd was decimated during the Windy Arm mining stampede, and again in the 1960s as a result of easy access on the new mining roads; this was compounded by the destruction of a great deal of the herd's winter range as the population of Whitehorse and the Southern Lakes area increased. Carcross-Tagish Elder Winnie Atlin recalls children fighting over a telescope that was set up at the Choutla School in 1962 or 1963 so that the students could watch hundreds of caribou moving across the mountain.²²² In January 1992, a meeting was held in Carcross to discuss the herd's dwindling numbers; from that meeting developed the Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery Project. Supported by six First Nations and the Governments of the Yukon and British Columbia, and funded by the federal Arctic Environmental Strategy, the project includes radio-collaring some of the caribou in order to better understand their movements, a voluntary hunting ban by First Nations members, and a public awareness program aimed at reducing harassment of the animals at critical periods. The herd appears to be recovering rapidly; of the twenty females now collared, four use Montana Mountain for calving in May and June, and remain through the October rut, when, in 1995, a total of 80 animals were spotted.²²³ The hope is for the entire Carcross herd to eventually number 2,000 animals.²²⁴



The ruins of the main Riblet tramway, looking east from the Mountain Hero mine.

Returning to the Big Thing mine, the road leading around the mountain offers superb mountain-biking through both sub-alpine and true alpine ecosystems, with magnificent views over Windy Arm as a bonus. Those who travel silently, and have sharp eyes, may see caribou at any of several locations along the road, goat between the Mountain Hero mine and Pooley Canyon, and even a grizzly bear occasionally. In late 1996, a sow with triplets was spotted near Big Thing Creek.

At about 4 km from the Big Thing, the road goes through a small pass that is one of the most productive spots on the mountain for flowers. Alaska harebell and snow buttercup in particular flourish out of the direct blast of the ever-present wind, and there is a healthy field of Arctic cotton grass in the wet area to the right of the road.

The ruins of the Mountain Hero mine and tramway are reached at the point where the road crosses the head of Montana Creek. Of particular note is a large compressor below the tramway; this Leynor 12 X 14 compressor, hauled up here by Billy Weisdeppe's mules in 1906, was powered by a 50 horsepower gasoline engine, and was used to power air drills and as well as ventilation in the adit.

The main Montana workings are above and to the right of the road, just around the corner from the Mountain Hero, and at 11 km from the Big Thing, a magnificent cirque is reached, where the ruins of the Thistle/Aurora stone house are the best-preserved of any of the 1905 buildings. Scraps of newspapers from that era may even be found in the ruins of the building. The large stone foundation to the south of the main building was the "holding tank" for the outhouse. From the Thistle/Aurora, two roads offer routes to a series of lakes, or to views over Windy Arm.

For hikers, access to the South Klondike Highway is relatively easy from the plain between the Montana and Thistle/Aurora mines. By staying on the north side of Pooley Canyon (the south side is much more dangerous), the highway can be reached in just over two hours.



Artifacts from the Conrad-era mines are everywhere, giving the mountain an aura not easy to find anymore even in the Yukon, where most sites have been "cleaned up"; please leave them where they are. Steven Lundberg is examining a freight box lying beside the original rock-cribbed pack trail to the Vault mine.

Montana Mountain offers the people of the Yukon a unique opportunity to view both virgin wilderness and country that has been altered forever by man's search for riches of the material kind; unlike even the dredge tailings of the Klondike, the roads, open cuts and other mining developments in the alpine areas of Montana Mountain will never heal over. The mountain and its natural inhabitants have virtually no protection from man's encroachment at present; with respect and careful stewardship, though, the mountain can continue to provide both a wilderness experience and occasional employment forever.



The lower terminus of the first tramway to the Vault mine, with Windy Arm in the distance.

Appendices

Principal Mining Claim Groups:

Montana:

Montana: 51.65 acres, staked July 13, 1899 by William R. Young
Mountain Hero: 50.94 acres, staked July 24, 1900 by J.M. Pooley
Joe Petty: 44.31 acres, staked August 5, 1903 by Ira Petty
Black Jack: 51.65 acres, staked August 5, 1903 by Ira Petty
Little Johnny: 46.75 acres, staked August 5, 1903 by Ira Petty

Big Thing:

Caribou: 51.65 acres, staked July 2, 1905 by James Murray
Vanguard: staked August 2, 1905 by J.M. Pooley
Pride of Yukon: 51.55 acres, staked July 8, 1905
Pride of Yukon No.2: staked July 2, 1905
Nipper Fraction: staked July 29, 1905
Eureka: staked July 5, 1905
Eureka No.2: staked July 7, 1905
Vega Fraction: 24.8 acres, staked July 21, 1905 by H.W. Vance
Royston: staked July 13, 1905
Jupiter: staked July 21, 1905 by J.M. Pooley
Lone Jack: staked July 13, 1905 by R.J. Brittain
Chesley: staked July 20, 1905
Pedro: staked July 14, 1905
Dawson: staked October 4, 1905
Bellajora: staked October 16, 1905

Venus:

Venus: 50.44 acres, staked August 29, 1901 by J.M. Pooley
Venus No.2: 51.13 acres, staked May 28, 1902 by J.M. Pooley
Venus Fraction: 11.12 acres
Vault: 21.48 acres, staked March 22, 1905 by George Dail
M & M: 51.08 acres, staked August 3, 1904 by J.M. Pooley
Mars: 3.52 acres
Annex: 34.65 acres, staked June 28, 1905 by J.M. Pooley

Dail & Fleming:

Humper: 33.29 acres, staked August 6, 1904 by Ivan E. Fleming
Humper No.2: 51.17 acres, staked August 6, 1904 by George Dail

Red Deer: 51.65 acres, staked August 6, 1904 by Ivan E.Fleming
Venus Extension: 49.90 acres, staked August 6, 1904
Beach: 48.50 acres, staked September 7, 1904 by George Dail
Bull Moose: 10.35 acres

Mining Companies, 1899-1920

Alaska Corporation (1916-1918)

- incorporated May 24, 1916, with H.L.Faulkner, from Juneau, as president; A.B.Cole, also from Juneau, secretary-treasurer; and Robert A. Wilson, from Thane, Alaska, vice-president.
- in 1917, the company officers were W.L.Stevenson of Skagway, president; Maurice McMicken, from Seattle, director; James E. Louttit, mining engineer, secretary; and J.Harrington of Carcross had power of attorney.

Anglo-American Consolidated Mining Company (1906)

- in 1906, T.M.Daulton was manager, with George Erickson working as foreman; Mr.Chilberg (President of the Alaska Fair) and Fisher Brothers, wholesale grocers of Seattle large investors.

British Yukon Gold Mines, Limited (1908-1911)

- incorporated by J.H.Conrad ca.1908
- in 1911, Carl Faulk was Secretary, and H.W.Vance was Manager

Canadian Harper Mines Corporation (1917-1918)

- a subsidiary of Harper Mines of Seattle; operating the Venus, and on Prince of Wales Island in 1917 and 1918.

Canadian Yukon Mining Company, Limited (1906-1908)

- managed by J.H.Conrad
- stockholders William Mackenzie and ?

The Carcross Syndicate, Limited (1910)

- head office in Toronto

Conrad Consolidated Mines (1904-1908)

- in September 1905, J.H.Conrad was President; E.R.Butterworth Vice-president; H.R.Clise Secretary; and G.A.Singer Manager.
- William Mackenzie and ? invest in 1906

J.H.Conrad Bonanza Mines (1906)

- formed by Seattle investors in 1904
- in October 1906, stockholders were William Mackenzie and ?.

J.H.Conrad Yukon Mines, Limited (1905)

- incorporated federally in October 1905 by Edmund Bristol, Edward Bayley, W.F.McRae, C.W.Mitchell and William Kelly, all from Toronto.

Lackinaw & Tagish Mines (1917)

- based in Seattle, operating at Kennecott and Windy Arm in 1917

Montana-Yukon Mining Company (1919)

- incorporated at Dillon, Montana March 24, 1919. Edwin W.Gideon hotel-keeper at Carcross is local agent.
- never filed an annual statement.

Ruby Silver Mining Company (1906)

- N.S.Leithead, President; Wirt Hansbrough, Vice-president; R.H.Chadwick, Secretary-treasurer and temporary manager; Mr.Rudd, mining engineer.

Silver Queen and Ruby Silver Mining Company (1916)

- Fred Storey, president

Windy Arm Mining Company (1906)

- based in Seattle
- Directors were Wirt Hansbrough, T.M.Daulton, W.H.Robeson and R.H.Chadwick

Windy Arm Syndicate (1905)

- incorporated federally in October 1905 by Edmund Bristol, Edward Bayley, W.F.McRae, C.W.Mitchell and William Kelly, all from Toronto.

Yukon District Gold Mining Company, Limited (1908-1912)

- assets of Conrad Consolidated Mines transferred to YDGMCo in 1912.

Businesses and Business People in Conrad City

The Arctic Trading Company (Captain P.Martin)
Baxter & Mellott Hardware (George C.Mellott and Harry Baxter)
P.Burns & Company, butchers (William Jefferies, manager)
A.Chisholm Hardware (Alexander Chisholm)
Conrad Hotel (Herbert M.Wooldridge)
 (Archie and Lulu Gauld)
Diamond W Stage Lines (Billy Weisdeppe)
Dodson, Carrie (bath house and laundry)
Hansbrough & Robeson, general merchants
 (Wirt Hansbrough and W.H.Robeson)
K. Imamura, restaurant
Robert Lowe & Company (Robert Lowe)
McGee, B.J. (Windy Arm hotel)
McGee and Johnson, lumber (Sam McGee and Frank W.Johnson)
Miner's Refuge Hospital (Mary M.Turner)
Northern Hotel (George W.Curtis and Alvilla Chausse)
 (George and Mrs.Curtis)
Proulx & Hume, tobacco (E.J.Proulx and ? Hume)
Queen & McPhee, grocers (Frank McPhee)
William Robison, painting and wallpapering
A. Sibbitt Freighting (Arthur Sibbitt)
Spencer, Jennie (unknown hotel/restaurant)
Vancouver Hotel (Barney McGee)
 (Charles Watson)
Windy Arm Hotel (Charles Watson)
Wright, S.S. (lumber yard)
Yukon Hotel (C.S.Barnes, George C.Mellott and A.R.MacDonald)
 (Fred Ronkendorf)

Notes

Notes to Chapter 1

1. The studies which focus on Montana Mountain include R. G. McConnell, "Windy Arm District," in the *Geological Survey of Canada Summary Report for 1905*; D. D. Cairnes, "Explorations in a Portion of the Yukon, South of Whitehorse", in the *GSC Summary Report for 1906*; C.F. Roots, "Geological Setting of Gold-Silver Veins on Montana Mountain," in *Yukon Geology and Exploration 1979-1980* (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development [DIAND], 1982); and Lori Walton, "Textural Characteristics of the Venus Vein and Implications for Ore Shoot Distribution," in *Yukon Geology, Volume 1 - 1984* (DIAND, 1986).
2. For an excellent, moderately technical guide to the geology of Alaska and southwestern Yukon, see Cathy Connor and Daniel O'Haire, *Roadside Geology of Alaska* (Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press, 1988).
3. J. G. Souther, "Acid Volcanism and its Relationship to the Cordillera of British Columbia", in *Bulletin of Volcanology*, Vol. 30, 164.
4. Sheila Greer, *Site Locations and Archaeologically Significant Areas in the Southern Lakes District, Yukon Territory* (Edmonton: privately published), 1983.
5. Greg Hare and Sheila Greer, *Desdele Mene: The Archaeology of Annie Lake*. (Carcross/Tagish First Nation, 1994).
6. Hare and Greer, 19.
7. Greer, 18-19.
8. Julie Cruikshank, *Reading Voices, Dan Dha Ts'edenintthe* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1991), 29-30, 137.
9. Mrs. Angela Sidney, *Place Names of the Tagish Region, Southern Yukon* (Whitehorse: Council for Yukon Indians, Yukon Native Languages Project, 1980), location number 93.
10. Lake Bennett was named after James Gordon Bennett, editor and publisher of *The New York Herald*. Bennett is best known as the sponsor of Henry M. Stanley's 1871 expedition to Africa in search of missionary Dr. David Livingstone. Among Bennett's other accomplishments were winning the first yacht race across the Atlantic Ocean, on a \$50,000 bet, in December 1866, and building the first steamship with electric lights, in 1879. That ship, the *Jeanette*, was donated to the United States government that year for an exploratory voyage to the Bering Strait, during which she was crushed in the ice and sank. The people honoured by Lieutenant Schwatka had all contributed to the scientific knowledge of the Arctic and Subarctic, and it was this last voyage of the *Jeanette* that was recognized by the name of the lake.
11. There is considerable variation in the stories told of the discovery of gold in the Klondike, and it seems unlikely at this point that the exact truth regarding the chain of events leading to the discovery will ever be known.
12. The Treaty of St. Petersburg of February 1825 had set the 141st meridian as the boundary between Russian and British territories, and Canada and the United States have continued to honour that treaty.
13. William Ogilvie, "Information Respecting the Yukon District," in *The Yukon Territory* (London: Downey and Company, 1898), 407. The creek was later named Dundalk Creek.

14. The three years that A. E. Ironmonger Sola spent in the Yukon were not very rewarding financially; he seemed to always be at the wrong place at the wrong time. The only money he made from his northern adventure came from book sales.
15. Arthur E. Ironmonger Sola, *Klondyke: Truth and Facts of the New El Dorado* (London: The Mining and Geographical Institute, 1897), 59.
16. *The Bennett Sun*, June 24, 1899, 1.
17. *Ibid.*, 1.
18. The crew that packed the materials over the Chilkoot trail included W. S. "Sam" McGee, later made famous by Robert Service. The *Reaper* was sold, immediately after launching, to the Canadian Development Company, and renamed the *Zealandian*; the *Gleaner* continued to serve Lake Bennett and Tagish Lake until 1923, and the *Scotia* remained on Atlin Lake until replaced by the new *Tarahne* in 1918.
19. George William Richard Montague White-Fraser was to have been memorialized by a mountain on Windy Arm which topographer Arthur St. Cyr named for him in 1899; when the maps were produced however, the name had been shortened to "White." Several name changes have occurred since, and the entire range of mountains on the east side of Windy Arm is now called the White Range.
20. E. Deville, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Delimit the Boundary Between the Province of British Columbia and the Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1900), 8.
21. "Float" is the broken rock overlying the bedrock. Native silver was reported by GSC geologist R. G. McConnell to occur only on the Montana and Uranus claims ("Recent Mineral Discoveries on Windy Arm of Tagish Lake," *Report of the Minister of Mines*, 1906).
22. Roy Minter, *The White Pass: Gateway to the Klondike* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985). The Mountain Hero claim was recorded on July 30, 1900 (Yukon Archives - hereafter cited as YA: YRG I, series 6, file YQ 3660).
23. Dixie Read, "The Veins of Venus." Published as a series of articles entitled "Jack Stewart: Discoverer of the Venus Vein," in *The Midnight Sun - Yukon Magazine*. This biography of Jack Stewart, who was interviewed by Dixie Read, was run in the magazine from October 1969 until March 1970. Although some of the details do not match the written record, it is nevertheless a colorful account of turn-of-the-century Yukon.
24. David Morrison, *The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1906* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968).
25. R. G. McConnell, "Recent Mineral Discoveries on Windy Arm of Tagish Lake."
26. Julie Cruikshank, in collaboration with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned, *Life Lived Like A Story* (University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 50-52, 66-68.
27. In 1901, the first stamp mill was brought to the Yukon by George Munger, father of Martha Louise Black. The two-stamp Tremaine Prospecting mill had a capacity of five tons per day, and was set up on the Klondike River, about one mile from Dawson. This equipment was purchased by the Territorial government in 1902 and rebuilt under the direction of Daniel A. Matheson as part of their assistance to quartz miners.
28. For further information on Jujiro Wada and the Tanana strike, see William R. Hunt, *North of 53 Degrees* (New York: Macmillan, 1974) and Terence Cole, *E. T. Barnette: The Strange Story of the Man Who Founded Fairbanks* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing, 1981).

29. Marc Stevenson, "Archaeological Investigations of the Kluane Gold Rush," in *Research Bulletin* (Parks Canada, November 1980).
30. William Seymour Edwards, *In To The Yukon* (Cincinnati: Jennings & Graham, 1904), 195.
31. Register of government employees, 1898-1911 (YA: Victoria Faulkner collection, MSS-141).
32. Letter from Bishop Bompas to Acting Commissioner Z. T. Wood, November 29, 1904 (YA: YRG I, Series 4, file 13014).
33. Ibid.
34. Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka named this lake in 1883 to honour Sir George Strong Nares. Born in 1831, Nares joined the Royal Navy in 1846 and served in Australia for several years. In 1852 he served as mates on the *Resolute* in the Arctic. He became captain in 1869, and was in command of the Arctic voyage of the *Alert* and *Discovery* in 1875, publishing a book on the voyage on his return; in 1876 he was knighted for his services.
35. The Carcross Indian Reserve was not officially proclaimed by the Territorial Council until October 17, 1905.

Notes to Chapter 2

36. Tom Stout, editor, *Montana. Its Story and Biography* (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1921), 1030.
37. *The Encyclopedia Americana*, Volume 28, 166.
38. Ibid.
39. Oscar Handlin, *The History of the United States, Volume Two* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 45.
40. Serving as a militia colonel required a considerable financial commitment, as the colonel was expected to equip and maintain the unit under his command.
41. Barnaby Conrad III, *Ghost Hunting in Montana* (San Francisco: HarperCollins West, 1994).
42. Dan Cushman, *The Great North Trail* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 284.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 285.
45. Conrad, *Ghost Hunting*, 34.
46. Stout, *Montana*, 1030.
47. Conrad, *Ghost Hunting*, p.107.
48. Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roaeder, eds., *The Montana Past: An Anthology* (Missoula: University of Montana Press). During this period, John Howard Conrad was using the name J. Howard Conrad; however, the personal name "John" will be used in this book to avoid confusion.
49. After their divorce, Mabel moved to England. Barnaby inherited his father's sense of adventure; after graduating from Yale, he spent time ranching and surveying in Montana and Saskatchewan, then in 1918 became a member of the U. S. Naval Air Corps. He eventually founded the large West Coast investment banking firm of Conrad, Bruce and Company. He died in 1956, following years of neurological problems as a result of being

- hit in the head with a tree limb while riding a horse. His son, Barnaby Jr., gained fame as an author, particularly of bull-fighting stories; the most notable of those is *Matador* (1952).
50. In reporting Conrad's success in the Yukon, the *Kalispell* (Montana) *Bee* commented that he "is well-known as a broad-gauge promoter and a man of enterprise and courage. He was one of the first developers of the coal possibilities of the state and is well remembered as one of the most aggressive and courageous adventurers in the mining riches of Montana....He experienced temporary failures but there was that in him that made inescapably for larger successes. These have come to him in due time, and his financial success will be in some measure a lesson to his contemporaries of an elder day" (June 28, 1907, 1).
 51. Barnaby Conrad III, in *Ghost Hunting in Montana*, hints that Dr. Graves and Mrs. Barnaby may have been lovers, and that Mrs. Graves was involved in the murder. It is not difficult, however, to imagine the possible consequences of cutting a man with a "frontier spirit" such as John Conrad's out of a \$700,000 will.
 52. *Ibid.*, 236.
 53. *Helena Independent*, July 25, 1894, 1.
 54. Conrad, *Ghost Hunting*, 239.
 55. *The Daily Evening Star*, June 20, 1903.
 56. *Ibid.*, July 3, 1903.
 57. "Regulations Governing Placer Mining in the Yukon Territory." Order in Council and Ordinance dated March 13, 1903. Ottawa, May 1904.
 58. *The Daily Evening Star*, Thursday, June 9, 1904.
 59. Richard C. Berner, *Seattle 1900-1920: From Boomtown, Urban Turbulence, to Restoration* (Seattle: Charles Press, 1991).
 60. *Victoria Colonist*, March 27, 1906.
 61. Harold Clise had attracted a high-profile group of investors to Conrad's operation: Andrew Chilberg was the president of the Yukon-Alaska Exposition, which was to be held in Seattle in 1907; E. R. Butterworth was a partner in the mercantile company Butterworth & Sons, and president of the Olympic Mining Company; and William G. Norris was one of the most famous lawyers in the United States, having successfully defended entertainment manager John Considine in a 1901 murder trial. Brothers L. L. and J. F. Lane had done very well in the Nome placer fields, and had made several trips back to Alaska and the Yukon, looking to repeat that success.

Notes to Chapter 3:

62. *The Daily Evening Star*, January 19, 1905.
63. As a result of the decreasing importance of silver as a monetary standard, including the adoption in the United States of a gold standard in 1900, silver prices had slumped to an average of 52 cents per ounce in 1902. Starting in late 1903, however, the value began to climb again; the 1903 average had only risen slightly to 53 cents, but 1904 saw an increase to 57 cents, then 60 cents in 1905 despite greatly increased production. The outlook for 1906 was for an even stronger market.
64. A discussion of the "frequently misused" term "ore in sight" was published in *The Weekly Star* on January 17, 1903. *The American Mining News* suggested abolishing the term altogether, as it was generally used to indicate simply that "certain signs" were

interpreted by experts to mean that the stated tonnage of ore existed. It is stressed that such an interpretation “is dependent upon individual judgment and local experience,” and there are no guarantees. Less than three years later, the fate of the Windy Arm mines would prove the effectiveness of the misuse of the term.

65. John Fahey, “The Brothers Riblet,” in *Spokane Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 11 (November 1980); William Barr, “Man Against the Corporation,” in *The Pacific Northwestern*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (1987).
66. Following a suggestion by Bishop Bompas, the post office at Caribou Crossing had been renamed Carcross in 1904, to reduce confusion with other towns in the Yukon and Alaska with “Caribou” as part of their names. There was widespread opposition to the name change; the White Pass & Yukon Route refused to change the name of the railroad station until 1912.
67. *The Daily Evening Star*, August 8, 1905.
68. *Ibid*, August 9, 1905.
69. Riblet Collection, Kootenay Museum Association and Historical Society, Nelson, B.C.; Edward B. Durham, “Aerial Tramways and Cableways,” in Robert Peele, *Mining Engineer’s Handbook, Third Edition* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1941).
70. Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1985).
71. YA: YRG I, Series 4, file 204; YRG I, Series 5, file 364.
72. Letter from Superintendent of Public Works S. A. D. Bertrand to Robert Lowe, August 3, 1905.
73. *Revenue and Expenditure, Yukon Territory, Fiscal Year 1905-6*, 10.
74. Dawson had telegraph connection with Skagway by September 1899; the telegrams then went to Vancouver by boat. The telegraph line from Atlin to Hazelton and southern points went into service on September 24, 1901.
75. *Yukon World*, July 29, 1905.
76. *The Daily Evening Star*, August 7, 1905.
77. A look at a good topographical map shows that the border was moved too far north, and there is now a considerable jog to the north of sixty degrees latitude at Windy Arm.
78. *The Daily Evening Star*, September 9, 1905.
79. *The Atlin Claim*, September 9, 1905, page 1.
80. *The Daily Evening Star*, September 27, 1905.
81. R. G. McConnell, “Windy Arm District,” in *Geological Survey of Canada Summary Report for 1905*, 34.
82. *The Daily Evening Star*, October 30, 1905.
83. Reprinted from the *Toronto Star* (no date given), in *The Daily Evening Star*, October 24, 1905.
84. *Ibid*.
85. *The Daily Evening Star*, October 16, 1905.
86. *Ibid*, December 18, 1905.
87. *Ibid*, November 28, 1905.
88. *Vancouver News-Advertiser*, November 24, 1905.

Notes to Chapter 4

89. YA: YRG I, series 5, file 598.
90. *The Dawson Daily News*, May 23, 1905.
91. Dr. P. F. Scharschmidt, on behalf of the British Yukon Navigation Company, had named their sternwheeler landing at the site Boundary, but it was soon changed to Wynton.
92. Douglas Harper, *The Woodwards: A Family Story of Ventures and Traditions* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1976), 107-111.
93. *The Daily Evening Star*, September 28, 1905.
94. YA: YRG I, series 5, files 314 and 352.
95. W. W. Bilsland, "Atlin, 1898-1910: The Story of a Gold Boom," in *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* (July-October 1952), 156.
96. J. H. Conrad had no legal right to the land that he ordered his house built on; although some of the people who built on the waterfront reserve had made proper applications for the land, Conrad was merely one of the first of many squatters on the reserve. The White Pass & Yukon Route, which had to turn the land over to the government as a condition of its townsite plan, fought for years to have all the residences removed, including those which had been, according to the White Pass, approved contrary to accepted concepts of proper use of waterfront. The government finally ended the controversy in 1909 with a ruling that the property, because of the shallow foreshore, was "useless for other than residential purposes" (Letter from Robert Miller to Commissioner Henderson, January 22, 1909; YA: YRG I, Series 4, file 35).
97. *The Daily Evening Star*, October 4, 1905.
98. *Ibid.*, November 1, 1905.
99. Although direct purchase or staking of mining properties was forbidden by an Order-in-Council of March 29, 1899, other investments were not mentioned. When A.E.Snyder retired in 1912, the comptroller remarked that "he is one of the few Police officers who have made money in the Yukon Territory, and he is supposed to be worth over half a million" (L. Fortesque to A. E. Blount, Clerk of the Privy Council, April 4, 1912, RG 18, B-7, v.3439, quoted in William R. Morrison, *Showing the Flag* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985), 30).
100. Legal notice in *The Daily Evening Star*, November 15, 1905.
101. Letter from Robert C. Miller to Commissioner W. W. B. McInnes, January 15, 1906 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 591).
102. Letter from Robert C. Miller to Commissioner W. W. B. McInnes, August 29, 1905. Miller stated that he saw no objection to Anderson's application for the water rights on Montana Creek; with that recommendation, McInnes arranged for the Government Mining Engineer, A. J. Beaudette, to report on the situation when he went to Conrad City the following spring (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 575).
103. *The Daily Evening Star*, October 7, 1905.
104. The Mounted Police has gone through several name changes since the Force was founded in 1873. The prefix "Royal" was added to their title by King Edward VII in June 1904 to honour their service both to Canada and to the British Empire, during the South African (Boer) War.
105. Assistant Commissioner Z. T. Wood, in *Report of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, 1905*, Part III - Yukon Territory, December 1, 1905.

Notes to Chapter 5

106. The Reverend H. A. Cody noted that he held services in the Whitehorse rectory on January 21 because the church was too cold, but only six members of the congregation braved temperatures of 73 degrees below zero.
107. *The Weekly Star*, February 3, 1906.
108. *Ibid.*, January 27, 1906.
109. For a very readable, well-researched biography of Cody, see Ted Jones, *All the Days of His Life: A Biography of Archdeacon H. A. Cody* (Saint John: The New Brunswick Museum, 1981).
110. *The Weekly Star*, February 19, 1906.
111. *Ibid.*, April 12, 1906.
112. Alex Inglis, *Northern Vagabond: The Life and Career of J.B.Tyrrell* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).
113. *The Daily Evening Star*, April 14, 1906.
114. *Ibid.*, April 26, 1906; J.B.Tyrrell report to William Mackenzie, October 26, 1906.
115. *The Weekly Star*, April 26, 1906
116. Reprinted in *The Daily Evening Star*, April 28, 1906.
117. *The Weekly Star*, May 4, 1906.
118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1906.
120. In his year-end report for 1906, RNWMP Superintendent A.E.Snyder recommended the purchase of several “portable houses” to permit the police to respond more effectively to the rapid changes in mining camp locations: “these, when it became necessary to establish an outpost in some new district, could be easily and without great expense, transported to the scene of the new camp and erected with but little trouble. If later on the detachment was moved the buildings could be taken apart and re-erected where required” (“Annual Report of Superintendent A.E.Snyder, Whitehorse,” 8).
121. Letter from Assistant Gold Commissioner Robert C. Miller to Acting Commissioner of Yukon Territory J. T. Lithgow, March 8, 1906 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 600).
122. The Ram’s Horn properties were at the heart of the stampede that occurred during Frank Oliver’s visit to Conrad City on September 4, 1905.
123. *The Weekly Star*, Friday, June 1, 1906.
124. *Dawson Daily News*, June 13, 1906.
125. The government’s financial report for the fiscal year 1906-1907 shows that \$1,153.05 was paid to Hatfield for “conducting certain meteorological experiments at King Solomon’s Dome.” Despite his problems in the Klondike, and the opinions of some historians that he was a “charlatan” (David R. Morrison, for example, in *The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909*), Charles Hatfield did have an amazing string of successful rainmaking contracts between 1905 and 1916. For more information, see the *Dawson Daily News* from June 5 through July 28, 1906, and Gary Lockhart, *The Weather Companion* (New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1988).
126. Mount Matheson, just over one mile southwest of Montana Mountain, was named by Cairnes to honour his assistant.

127. *The Weekly Star*, Friday, June 22, 1906.
128. Edwards, *In To The Yukon*, 75; taken from his diary written in Atlin on August 29, 1903.
129. Letter from Robert C. Miller to Mary M. Turner, June 8, 1906 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 619).
130. *The Weekly Star*, Friday, June 15, 1906.
131. Ibid.
132. No copies of the *Conrad City Miner* are known to have survived.
133. Archibald R. Gauld's surname was always incorrectly spelled "Gould" by newspapers, as well as by directories such as *Polk's*.
134. *The Weekly Star*, Friday, June 29, 1906.
135. J.B.Tyrrell report to William Mackenzie, October 26, 1906. There are indications that the wage increase may also have been intended to deter membership in the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), which was apparently recruiting in the southern Yukon; by August 1907, the WFM had applied to purchase a building lot in Whitehorse (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 728).
136. *The Weekly Star*, Friday, July 6, 1906.
137. Ibid., July 13, 1906.
138. Ibid., July 20, 1906.
139. Ibid.
140. Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rocks: The Story of the Geological Survey of Canada, 1842-1972* (Ottawa: Macmillan, 1975), 216.
141. Wynton's founder, Charles Wynn-Johnson, remained in the Yukon until September 1908, when he left for Vancouver. He shipped the former RNWMP launch *Jessie* to Vancouver to have her refitted as a private yacht. Later that fall, he bought a large ranch at Alkali Lake, in the heart of British Columbia's ranching district; by the 1920s it was one of the most famous ranches in the province, running 3,000 head of purebred Herefords.
142. The large log building which had been built at the southeast end of the narrows in 1899 to serve as both the NWMP post and telegraph office was in a very inconvenient location, and in April 1906 it was given to Bishop Bompas; two tents were set up near the hotels to serve as a temporary office for Sam Chambers until more proof was seen of the need for a permanent structure. On September 28, Archie Gauld finally started work on a new building.
143. *The Weekly Star*, August 17, 1906.
144. Letter from Robert C. Miller to G. E. Petittclerc and W. Kinloch, August 3, 1906 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 633).
145. The first three postcards described (Numbers 1, 3 and 4) were published by the Illustrated Post Card Company of Montreal, for the Bennett News Company of Whitehorse. A copy of postcard Number 2 has not been located. The fourth card described was distributed by D. E. Kern of Skagway.
146. *The Weekly Star*, August 31, 1906.
147. Royal Northwest Mounted Police Records, RG18, D2, Volume 1.
148. *The Vancouver Province*, August 17, 1906.
149. Letter from Department of the Interior Secretary P. Keyes to Bishop Stringer, October 10, 1906 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 583).

150. J.B.Tyrrell, "Report to William Mackenzie on mining claims held by the Conrad Consolidated Mines and the J. H. Conrad Bonanza Mines, October 26, 1906," page 4 (YA: J.B.Tyrrell papers, MSS 81/82; originals at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto).
151. Sister Margaret Cantwell, S.S.A., *North to Share: The Sisters of Saint Ann in Alaska and the Yukon Territory*, 93.

Notes to Chapter 6

152. For an excellent biography of a surprisingly little-known Canadian hero, see Alex Inglis, *Northern Vagabond: The Life and Career of J.B.Tyrrell* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).
153. Records of the Territorial Court of the Yukon Territory; Joseph B. Tyrrell vs The Bonanza Creek Hydraulic Concession, Limited (YA: YRG I, Series 4, file 6).
154. Inglis, 175, 217.
155. For more details on the *Columbian* disaster, see Sam Holllway, "The Wreck of the *Columbian*," in *The Yukon News*, August 19, 1994.
156. Inglis, 218-219.
157. Eight months later, the Yukon Council appropriated \$500 as compensation to Robert Clegg for permanent disfigurement to his face caused by the blast.
158. *The Weekly Star*, October 12, 1906.
159. J.B.Tyrrell, "Report to William Mackenzie on mining claims held by the Conrad Consolidated Mines and the J. H. Conrad Bonanza Mines, October 26, 1906."
160. *Ibid*, 3-4.
161. *Ibid*, 8.
162. *Ibid*, 18.
163. The first Assisted School in the Yukon opened at Carcross on June 21, 1906; a fully-funded school had been operating there, but the population of the village had dropped to the point where there were longer the seven school-age children required to qualify for funding. The second Assisted School, at 9 Below on Dominion Creek, opened on September 1, 1906 (*Revenues and Expenditures, Yukon Territory, Fiscal Year 1906-1907*, 8).
164. *Consolidated Ordinances of the Yukon Territory, 1902*; Chapter 79, "An Ordinance Respecting Schools," Section 10 (1).
165. The Conrad school was the only Assisted School that was allocated any money beyond the teacher's salary (*Revenues and Expenditures, Yukon Territory, Fiscal Year 1906-1907*, 8).
166. White Pass & Yukon Route, River Division Records; Master's Trip Reports for October 8-10, 11-13 and 25-27 (YA: COR 819).
167. *The Weekly Star*, November 16, 1906.
168. Harry M. Lay would eventually gain the social standing that he felt he was entitled to. In 1911 he married Janet Lindsay (Jennie) King, the sister of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, and the couple became members of the social elite of southern Ontario, living at Walkerton, Ontario (R. MacGregor Dawson, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958)).

169. *Royal North-West Mounted Police, Annual Report for 1907*, "Report of Z. T. Wood, Commanding," 6.
170. It took until February 16, 1909 for the applications to be approved; by that time, the Palmers were not interested in meeting the government's conditions that they produce a minimum of 1,000 horsepower and spend at least \$50,000 on the project over three years (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 658).
171. Western Federation of Miners organizer Thomas Steffensen seems to have been unsuccessful in signing up any of the Yukon mines and, by early 1908, the Union had left the Territory (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 728).
172. *The Weekly Star*, May 10, 1907.
173. *Kalispell* (Montana) *Bee*, June 28, 1907, 1.
174. Ibid.
175. When Conrad City was abandoned, Hugh Hamilton's remains were re-interred at the Whitehorse Cemetery (now the Pioneer Cemetery).
176. In the spring of 1908, Colonel Conrad operated Conrad Consolidated Mines, the Canadian Yukon Mining Company, British Yukon Gold Mines and the Yukon District Gold Mines.
177. *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, 1911; Vol. 26, 113-114.
178. Letter from Robert C. Miller to the Department of the Interior, November 23, 1907 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 560).
179. Ibid., February 19, 1908 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 560).
180. As well as the generous bag limits, there was an exclusion that allowed all other regulations to be ignored "by explorers, surveyors, prospectors, miners or travellers who are engaged in any exploration, survey or mining operation, or other examination of the Territory, and are in actual need of the beasts, birds or eggs for food" (Chapter 72, "An Ordinance Respecting the Preservation of Game in the Yukon Territory", Section 6).
181. *The Weekly Star*, March 25, 1908.
182. Ibid.
183. Ibid, Friday, July 3, 1908.
184. Ibid, Friday, September 4, 1908.
185. Letter from J. H. Conrad to R. C. Miller, September 1, 1908 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 664).
186. D. D. Cairnes, in *Summary Report of the Geological Survey Branch of the Department of Mines for the Calendar Year 1908* (Ottawa, 1909), 31.
187. *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, 1911; Volume 26, 114.
188. During the research for this book, 290 colour slides and 327 black-and-white photographs of artifacts and historic sites on Montana Mountain were taken; the collection of black-and-white prints was donated to the Yukon Archives, and is available to researchers.
189. Minter, *The White Pass*.
190. The practical limit on tramway length, depending on loads and terrain, was approximately four miles. For longer distances, two or more tramways, with automatic transfer of cars from one system to the next, were used; the Mountain Hero tramway is two separate systems, with a transfer station at the upper end of the longest canyon crossing.
191. *The Weekly Star*, Friday, May 21, 1909.

192. Sam did not stay long at Summerland. From there he moved to the Edmonton area, then to Great Falls, Montana, where he was involved in road-building and mining. By 1938 he was settled at Beiseker, Alberta, but he had not lost his wanderlust; in the summer of 1938 he celebrated his 70th birthday at a little cabin on Burwash Creek, where he was mining with Dick Corless. On September 6, 1940, William Samuel McGee died at Beiseker (YA: W. S. McGee papers, MSS 130, #83/59). That fall, his Whitehorse cabin was donated to the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, who obtained a lot across from the Log Church to put it on. It was subsequently moved to the MacBride Museum. Sam's cabin at Conrad City is gone, its fate unknown.
193. The Conrad Mining Recorder's office was moved to Carcross, where it may have become the home of famous big-game guide Johnny Johns ("A Discovery Guide to Carcross," 1966).
194. Letter from Captain Patrick Martin to Robert C. Miller, June 16, 1909 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 770).
195. Captain Martin never quit trying out new ideas; in 1914, he was president of Colwell Fur Farms, the largest fox breeder in the Yukon. Upon the death of photographer Ephrim J. Hamacher in 1935, "The Skipper" took over the studio, operating it until his death on June 4, 1940, at 76 years of age. The warmth of the final farewell to Captain Martin took more than half the front page of *The Weekly Star* to express. He was buried in his home town of Victoria.
196. Conrad, *Ghost Hunting*, 299-300.
197. Reprinted in *The Weekly Star*, April 8, 1910.
198. Letter from Mrs. Jennie Spencer to Robert C. Miller, October 16, 1910 (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 663).
199. On February 23, 1911, Robert Miller reported to the Department of the Interior that only two people remained at Conrad, Jennie Spencer and an unnamed person (YA: YRG I, Series 5, file 663). Sometime in the fall of 1911, Mrs. Spencer became the final person to give up on Conrad City; Percy Reid reported in 1913 that she had gone to California.

Notes to Chapter 7

200. "White Horse District of Canada", in *Mining and Scientific Press*, January 28, 1911, 185.
201. Letter from the Department of the Interior to Robert C. Miller, February 23, 1910 (YA: YRG I, Series 6, file 758).
202. Report from Percy Reid to Gold Commissioner F. X. Gosselin, February 7, 1912.
203. *The Weekly Star*, March 29, 1912.
204. Ibid.
205. Letter from Consulting Engineer D. E. Blake to Colonel J. H. Conrad, June 17, 1912.
206. A month later, the *Haines (Alaska) Pioneer Press* reported that Colonel Conrad had bought fifteen claims in the Porcupine District for \$350,000 cash, and that "railroad transportation must soon be installed." Conrad later gave his house at Carcross to Willard Phelps, possibly in lieu of payment for Phelps' legal services; the cabin has been beautifully restored by Phelps' descendants.
207. J. B. Tyrrell and R. P. D. Graham, "Yukonite, A New Hydrous Arsenate of Iron and Calcium, from Tagish Lake, Yukon Territory, Canada;" in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd Series, Vol. 7, May 1913, 14.
208. Ibid.

209. The identity of the woman living at Conrad in 1914 is not known; Archie Gauld's Conrad Hotel was the one which was still fully equipped.
210. YA: YRG I, Series 6, file 630.
211. The *Gleaner* seems to have been scuttled in Nares Lake in the late 1930s or early 1940s.
212. *The Empire*, from Juneau, reported in the August 16, 1913 edition that a road was to be built from Skagway to Dawson, with Alaska starting on the former Brackett Wagon Road, the British Columbia government surveying the route from Carcross to the White Pass, and the Yukon having set aside money for the Carcross to Dawson section.
213. Letter from Robert Lowe to Sam McGee, October 1, 1927 (YA: MSS 130, #83/59).
214. In 1974, an extensive testing program was instituted by Environment Canada to ascertain whether runoff from the tailings pond at the mill was having any effect on the water, fish or invertebrates of Windy Arm. The tests for lead, zinc, mercury and arsenic showed that despite public concern, all levels except within a few feet of the tailing pond were safe (W. Robson and K. Weagle, "The Effect of the Abandoned Venus Mines Tailings Pond on the Aquatic Environment of Windy Arm" (Environment Canada, 1978). Due mainly to wind-borne contamination from the pond, signs were erected to warn people not to pick berries in the area of the pond. The highly visible position of the tailings pond, however, led to the construction of a composite soil cover on the pond in 1995; consisting of layers of sand clay, more sand, and topped with gravel, such covers have been proven to prevent the oxidation, leaching and erosion which have caused the problems at the Venus.
215. Dr. N. Poushinsky, *Venus Mine Tailings: Study of Remedial Options* (Richmond, B.C.: Klohn-Crippen, May 1994).

216. Notes to Chapter 8

217. *Carcross - Southern Lakes Tourism Development Strategy* (Yukon Tourism, 1985).
218. *Ibid.*, 2-8, 2-9.
219. Norman James, Carcross-Tagish First Nation elder. Council of Yukon First Nations: Elders Manuscripts, Carcross-Tagish Traditional Knowledge Project, June 1994 - March 1995.
220. During the year 1969, 25,132 tons of ore were processed, from which 4,627 ounces of gold and 119,887 ounces of silver were recovered (*Mineral Industry Report for 1969 and 1970*, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1972).
221. K. Weagle and W. Robson, *Water Quality and Biological Survey of Arctic Gold and Silver Mines Ltd.* (Environmental Protection Service, September 1976); M. Kalin, *A Synthesis and Analysis of Information on Inactive Hardrock Mine Sites in Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Toronto: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, December 1985).
222. Jamie Bastedo, "A Resource Survey Method for Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in the Yukon, With Results from the Bennett Lake/Carcross Dunes/Tagish Lake ESA" (unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Waterloo, Ontario, 1982).
223. Council of Yukon First Nations, Carcross-Tagish Traditional Knowledge Project.
224. Janet McDonald, personal communication, January 1996.
225. Ray Quock, quoted in *The Yukon News*, October 1, 1993.

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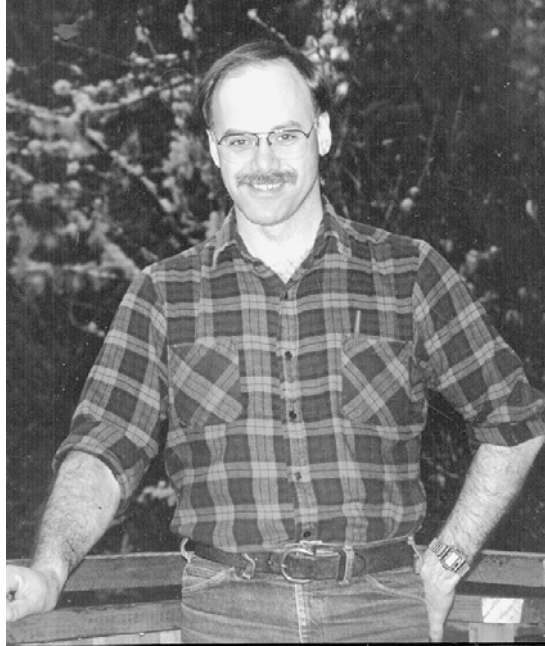
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About the Author



Murray Lundberg has always been fascinated by both the history and the natural wonders of North America's "West" and "North." In 1976, he spent seven months working underground at the Granduc copper mine at Stewart, in British Columbia's northwest, whetting his appetite for both mining and the Northern lifestyle. Returning south, he worked as a tractor-trailer driver in the Fraser Valley through the 1980s; during that time, he became an anti-clearcut-logging activist, as well as serving on the Boards of several Museums and Historical Associations, and writing trail guides and mining histories of the Chilliwack River Valley (never published).

In 1985, he flew his little Cessna to the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and fell in love with the country; in 1990, he quit his job in Langley and moved to Whitehorse as a tour bus driver, on routes running from Skagway to Anchorage to Inuvik. This gave him the unexcelled opportunity to see the North (at least the part that has roads) in great detail, and to learn much about the history of the country.

Montana Mountain has held his attention since he first arrived, and he has spent many days exploring the area. He now lives year-round in a 60-year-old cabin at the foot of the mountain, overlooking Lake Bennett.