

**“FREEMASONRY
IN
THE YUKON TERRITORIES”.**

A 45 Minute Paper

**To be presented on the
26th October, 1999.**

To

**The Temple of Athene Lodge
No.9541**

PROVINCE OF MIDDLESEX

**At the
New Uxbridge Masonic Centre
Hercies Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex.**

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To have had the opportunity of "visiting" this wonderful world of the Klondike, was to me a personal invitation to become part of their lives for just a fleeting moment, but long enough to realise the depth of the feeling of pride and respect the "Insiders" have for their heritage.

To have been allowed to encroach into the personal lives of complete strangers for just a short while, and obtain so much co-operation and understanding, is attributable to that love and friendship instilled into us all, by our belief and continuing support of Freemasonry.

My eternal thanks to all the Brethren who have contributed to the support given to me, and in allowing me to visit "Gods Country", the Yukon Territories.

Dennis M. Eve.

My grateful thanks, and acknowledgement, to the following Brethren, for their kindness and continuing support, in enabling me to complete this project.

R.W.Bro.Don Frizzell Atlinto Lodge #42 City of Whitehorse.YT

R.W.Bro.Jim Reilly Yukon Lodge #45 Dawson City.YT

W.Bro.Bill Fry Henderson Lodge #84 City of Victoria.B.C.

And by association,

R.W.Bro.Tom Mickey Whitehorse Lodge #46 City of Whitehorse.YT

R.W.Bro.Jim Smith Atlinto Lodge #42 City of Whitehorse.YT

R.W.Bro.Calvin Mitchell,Jr.,Yukon Lodge #45 Dawson City. Y.T.
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Colonel C. W. Bennett, Jr. Metropolitan #11 Richmond, Virginia.

(# in text represents, "Number")

YUKON TERRITORY - AN INTRODUCTION.

The Yukon Territory, an area of 186,661 square miles in the extreme northwest of Canada, lies directly north of the province of British Columbia, with the Northwest Territories to the east and the U.S. state of Alaska to the west. In the north it stretches well above the Arctic Circle to border the Beaufort Sea, its capital is the City of Whitehorse. The mighty Yukon River from its source at the Llewellyn Glacier, high above Atlin Lake in northwestern British Columbia, runs for a distance of approx. 2300 miles, northwards through the Yukon territory, via the Cities of Whitehorse and Dawson, continuing westwards across Alaska to the Yukon Delta where it empties into the Bering Sea, South of Norton Sound.

Brethren, it is not my intention to present to you this afternoon a geography lesson, but it is of course necessary to make sure you are aware in what direction we will be travelling together, I hope !. The mighty Yukon River is the main artery that has, since time immemorial been the waterway that was once the arteries of life in the communities of the Yukon Territory.

As the source of the river is in the south and the river flows northward from Whitehorse to Dawson, downstream would therefore be north and people still say "down north" or "I'm going down to Dawson" for the weekend.. So a visitor of course would say " Down to Dawson. Isn't it up North??"

Just how Freemasonry was introduced into the territory is not easy to say but in 1844 ships from England and San Francisco were arriving at Fort Victoria in British Columbia.

It was in 1849 that Vancouver Island, of which Victoria is now the capital, was proclaimed a British Colony by Great Britain. In 1866 the mainland and island colonies were merged into a single entity "The Colony of British Columbia" and on July 1st 1871, the first Dominion Day was celebrated in British Columbia and she assumed her place as a Province of the Dominion of Canada, even though the Terms of the Union Act was not official until July 20th, 1871.

With the population growth and existence of freemasonry now becoming established, "The Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of The Province of British Columbia" was consecrated on the 26th December 1871, and as a matter of interest, Captain James Cook became the first freemason to set foot in what is now the Province of British Columbia in 1778..

The Origins of the Birth of Freemasonry in the Yukon Territory and the umbilical cord that tied them together "Gold".

In 1896 prospector George Carmack and his Indian brother-in-law "Skookum Jim" Mason, and another Indian relative named "Tagish Charlie" were panning for gold far up north on the banks of the Klondyke river. George Carmack lifted some sand from Rabbit Creek, (which we now know as Bonanza Creek a small stream running into the Yukon River,) and discovered the precious metal which precipitated North America into its frenzied existence. Unwittingly, George Carmack had created the greatest gold rush in history.

Fortune hunters in their thousands disgorged themselves from ship after ship at Skagway (Skaguay) in Alaska. A shanty town of saloons and gambling dens grew up as they prepared themselves for their journey into the Klondyke region over the infamous White Pass. It was as if the world was trying to funnel its way along this tiny thread, of hell on earth.

The Chilkoot Pass, was approximately 3000ft in height at its summit, with temperatures reaching -60c degrees in the winter, snaked along a trail of ice and rock no more than four feet wide that was permanently packed with a line of prospectors, an ant- like black army crawling up the icy pass, each man with a huge pack on his back, clinging to its slippery face. Their sleds, carrying a years supply of food and weighing up to 2000lbs, traversed the canyons that lay ahead, with the aid of the "Jacob's Ladders" that were carried with them. Those with horses blindfolded them; even so, thousands of dead horses lay sprawled at the foot of Dead Horse Gulch. Men dropped, and the gaps closed up, the march went on, "Klondike or bust" was the slogan that bound together these men of the High North, the Arctic Brotherhood.

The Arctic Brotherhood was a fraternal society, formed aboard the Steam Ship, City of Seattle, as she steamed up the Lynn Canal towards Skagway, Alaska, in early 1899 with stampedeers bound for the Klondike. The fellowship that had brought everyone together consisted of miners and prospectors from both sides of the international border, "No Boundary Line Here" became their motto. While on the ship, they pledged to leave cabin doors open, to care for the sick and destitute comrades, and to prevent cruelty to animals, a truly unique Northern Order had been born.

Their #1 Camp was built at Skagway, Alaska, to give them the opportunity to acclimatize to their new environment, and prepare for that terrifying trek over the Chilkoot Pass.

Of those who had managed to traverse the Chilkoot Pass before the freeze-up in the winter of 1898/9, arrival in Atlin B.C., gave them the determination to build on their fraternal beliefs, bringing with them their initiation rituals which were elaborate, if somewhat tongue-in-cheek. The badge was a beer bottle cork and the dues a bottle of beer.

Such was the immediate explosion of support given to this fraternal society that they built their own hall in Atlin B.C., which was approx. 160 miles east of Skagway, Alaska. The fraternity flourished, due to the need to support each other and desperately needed by those whose health had buckled on the rails with their arduous journey north.

The winter of 1898/9 had been particularly cold and a good number of those who arrived in the early months of 1899 were in a weakened condition. The Provincial Government Hospital facilities were so inadequate that a private infirmary was built, it opened on the 1st May 1899 and included private rooms, there was even a room reserved for members of the Masonic Lodge. Sadly, in less than a year the founding members had left the area, and the Atlin Arctic Brotherhood Building was defunct. However the fraternity continued to flourish in the North.

ATLINTO LODGE #42 B.C.

In 1905 another camp was established in Discovery B.C., 7 miles east of Atlin and a Hall was built next to the Nugget Hotel. The membership rose to 182 and included Discovery and Atlin's most prominent citizens. Dating from the summer of 1899, there are regular reports of meetings of the Masonic Brotherhood in Atlin and Discovery. It was in July 1899, that 75 "sojourning brothers" gathered in Atlin with one aim in view, to form their own Masonic Lodge. The Grand Lodge was not convinced of the permanence of Atlin though, and Atlinto Lodge #42 was not founded until December 1904 and its charter issued in June 1906.

The history of Atlinto Lodge and the town of Atlin are closely linked. The town came into being as the result of gold being found in the adjacent creeks during the latter part of the 1890's. Many of the social events in the town were organized by the Masonic Lodge and were not restricted to "members only" but were designed to include everyone who wanted to attend. The annual picnic to Ben-My-Chree on Tagish Lake on the steamer Tutshi (too-shy), marked the end of the summer season.

Attendance at Lodge meetings was looked upon as mandatory for members living in the district and it was a regular occurrence for many to walk from the creeks where they worked and lived, to Atlin on a Lodge night. Distances varied but for some the round trip would be 15 miles.

When RWBro. J.A. Fraser of the Atlinto Lodge was honoured by the appointment to the office of District Deputy Grand Master, he was required to pay official visits to Whitehorse, Mayo and Dawson City, whose Lodges constituted District No. 10. He did in fact, present the new charter of The Grand Lodge of British Columbia to Whitehorse Lodge in 1907. This visit would be done in the summer months by boat and train consuming at least a month of his time. The Grand Master however, on his occasional trips would need six weeks to complete his tour via Vancouver, by boat.

On the 7th April 1908, the secretary of Atlinto Lodge #42 wrote the following message to the secretary of Whitehorse Lodge #46:-
"According to section 165 of the constitution, the jurisdiction of each lodge extends half way in every direction to the nearest Lodge, consequently our jurisdiction is half way between Whitehorse Lodge and Atlinto Lodge (113miles), and we should endeavour by the simplest means to determine amicably where the said line is situated, so we may avoid any differences that might arise with reference to applicants residing at or near the boundary lines.

As the Dixon Bro's. of your town are familiar with the territory I would suggest that they determine where the line should be. In my opinion it will probably be found about half way between Conrad and Carcross. Hoping that you will co-operate with us in this matter,
I beg to remain, fraternally yours,
A.F. Couley, Secretary. "

Atlin suffered several fires that consumed the town and in one of them the Lodge premises were destroyed along with most of the records. This was in 1929 and while new premises were obtained the Lodge appears to have suffered a blow from which it never really recovered and neither did the town. By the late 1960's resident numbers were not sufficient to keep masonry alive and only the frequent support and attendance of Whitehorse based Masons saved the day. About 1970, the decision to move the Lodge to Whitehorse was taken and there it remains to this day. At the present day Atlinto Lodge has 50 members including affiliates, they average 15 in attendance at their meetings. Their ritual is Ancient, or "American Work"..'`

Although gold was discovered in the Klondike in August of 1896, it was not until July 1897 that this news reached Seattle and San Francisco. Most argonauts remained "frozen in" for the winter, on trails over inhospitable mountain passes and it was only after the ice on the lakes "went out" that the gold-seekers were able to continue their journey. They hiked treacherous mountain passes, rafted wild rapids and sailed storm blown lakes, in all directions. Vancouver and Seattle doubled in size almost overnight, the capital cities of Victoria and Edmonton tripled.

In one day alone – May 29th, 1898 – 7,000 homemade boats and rafts of all descriptions set forth from Bennett Lake, where they had spent the remainder of the winter, to complete the last part of their journey via the Yukon river and it's tributaries to Dawson City, a distance of 600 miles.

To give you an example of the type of challenges that awaited them, I will relate to you a journey assumed to have been made by Robert William Service, a great poet and author who did so much to bring the "insiders", the Yukoners, to the outside world, with works such as "The Shooting of Dan McGrew", "The Cremation of Sam McGee", just two of approx. 1000 poems that were written with such drama and intensity, of his time spent in the Yukon.

Service was working for the Bank of Commerce in Whitehorse in 1905, and by 1909 he had moved to Dawson, his poetry was proving so popular that he became financially independent and made a short visit to the U.S.A. However, he yearned again for the Yukon and decided by 1911 to return the hard way, by "The Edmonton Trail", a journey by canoe down the Mackenzie River, over the Mackenzie Divide via the Rat, and down the Bell and the Porcupine to the Yukon River. The following description was sent to me recently by my friend in Whitehorse:

"Firstly, no one in their right mind would do that today, foolhardy would be the mildest term that I could think of. The entire area beyond Edmonton, Alberta, is still mostly wilderness today with only a few settlements, there is no road or trail remotely close.

Let's presume he is leaving Vancouver. That would be either by train if there was one, to somewhere in North Dakota, U.S.A., thence by stage coach or horseback to Edmonton. This wouldn't be difficult as we are now in the great plains area of the U.S.A. and Canada. Only a few rivers to cross, the Saskatchewan river at Edmonton is about ½ to ¾ miles across, very swift and usually dark gray from the mud and silt flowing down it. There may have been a cable ferry in those days but they probably swam it with horses".

"Today it is 335 miles from Edmonton to Peace River, Alberta, but in those days it would have been a trail in places, no trail in places, a quagmire, mosquitoes, unfriendly native Indians, many small rivers to cross, and any one of them could take your life. Once on the Peace River, a canoe trip down the Peace into the Mackenzie River and down it, to somewhere around, today what would be shown on the map as Fort Simpson or a bit further north. Then it would be overland by foot to what today is known as Fort McPherson near the N. W. Territories Border."

"Service could have travelled the full length of the MacKenzie River, however he would have to leave it somewhere and go on to Fort MacPherson as records show that he arrived there. He could have left at Arctic Red River but in some of the records they think he left at Fort Simpson.

Another interesting item not very well known, is that the eskimo natives in that area in the late 1800's were cannibals, they fought constantly with the north American Indians in the Fort Simpson area.

This could be a very good reason why the trail historically, takes to the west, overland, after Fort Simpson."

"The terrain would be a mixture of thick timbered country coming west from the Mackenzie river, to a sub alpine area with shrubs 3 - 4 ft high. This country is extremely difficult to walk on, figure one of your cobblestones roads as an example, change the cobblestones to round rocks 15 inches in diameter and cover them with 3 inches of slippery moss and fill in all the low spots with water.

That is tundra, you would not walk on that today for much farther than a ½ mile before you changed your mind. That walk to Fort McPherson must have been 3 - 400 miles, maybe more. Now in the same terrain find the Rat river (named after the small muskrat animal that abounds - approx. 90 to make a fur coat), build another canoe, go downstream and find the Bell river. I have no idea how they could have done that as people get lost even today trying to find the Bell river, and there were only primitive maps available in those days."

"Once in the Bell, it is downstream to the Porcupine river past the town of Old Crow, which didn't exist then, but is shown on today's maps. The Porcupine is 1½ miles across at the town of Old Crow and gets bigger as it flows towards the Yukon River. On reaching the Yukon River he would have had to paddle upstream for over 100 miles to get to Dawson. The Yukon River flows at an average 9 miles per hour, provided they got to the Yukon before October 1st, they may have been able to catch the last sternwheeler of the season to Dawson. If not, they would have had to wait a month for freeze-up and walk the river to Dawson.

"All this time, they would live out of a 60 – 80 lbs packsack containing food and bare essentials such as axe, bedroll, utensils, rifle, spare clothing etc.

The rest of the food would have to come from the land, Deer, Moose, Bear, Caribou, Grouse, Ground Squirrels, berries etc. A person would have to be eccentric or goofy to do that journey today but of course many people did it, so there would be a few people on the trail coming and going to give details of what lay ahead . The journey from Edmonton to Dawson could have taken up to three gruelling years, hundreds who left from Edmonton were drowned by the mighty Mackenzie River or frozen solid by the arctic winter."

"Once back home in Dawson, Robert William Service became attracted to Freemasonry and in 1912 he was initiated into the Yukon Lodge No.45, was passed to the degree of a fellow craft sometime during the period up to 1920. It appears that his name was taken off the Lodge roll soon after. He travelled extensively through Europe the U.S.A. and returned to Monte Carlo where he died on the 11th September 1958. Having been sixty years a bard and penned thirty thousand couplets, he had introduced the world to the Yukon, a country that had tested to the full, the endurance and indomitable spirit of the Klondikers.

DAWSON CITY, YUKON TERRITORY.

When most of these people did eventually arrive at Dawson in July 1898, after arduous months of travel and a torturous winter, they found that all the best claims had long since been staked by experienced prospectors who had been in the Yukon for years seeking their own Eldorado. Consequently the law of survival determined that the people should start to build their own lives and so it was, that in the years of 1897 and 1898 Dawson City, with a population of around 30,000 people, became the biggest City west of Chicago and north of San Francisco.

The following "Yukon Nuggets" were sent to me by a good friend who is the lodge Historian, of Whitehorse Lodge #46 and a member of Yukon #45. He retired from Parks Canada ,a few years ago.

The life story of Dawson City is much like that of a beautiful butterfly , in that it matures fully in one year and then dies. You could get anything you wanted, from the finest of French Champagne at \$20 to \$40 a pint, and Paris fashions, to the best foods. Prices were sky high, a shave was \$1, haircut \$1-50, bath \$2-50, nails sold for as high as \$8 a pound. Hurdy- Gurdy dancers were available and one was bought by a miner for her weight in gold!. There was never a city in the history of the world like Dawson it was truly unique. Diamond Tooth Gertie (Gertie Lovejoy) was a bona fide Yukon dance hall queen. Her nickname came from the sparkling diamond she had wedged between her two front teeth. She made a fortune unloading the miners of their golden nuggets.

Unlike most mining towns, Dawson counted women and children among its first residents. Martha Louise Black, abandoned by her husband en route to the Klondike in 1898, hiked the Chilkoot Pass, sailed pregnant down the Yukon River in a home made boat to Dawson. She later married George Black and became Yukon's first, and Canada's second, woman Member of Parliament.

It was as if someone had picked up a town and its people from the Canadian plains and transplanted it on the banks of the Yukon River. By early 1898, all the usual amenities of city life were available including the telegraph, electricity sidewalks, a police force, banks, a post office, theatres, and more bars than any one man could visit in a single evening.

The saloons of Dawson were magnificent, a man could get a drink of anything he wanted, providing that he had the money. Whiskey flowed faster than the Yukon River, and legendary ladies like "Klondike" Kate Rockwell and Diamond Tooth Gertie, were in demand. For many, payment was in gold dust only, with everyone taking their share. Barkeepers let their fingernails grow long to pick up a little dust. One enterprising youngster swept the sawdust off the floor every morning and panned the gold droppings out of it, that was what Dawson was like in those days.

YUKON LODGE #45, Dawson City.

In the 28th June 1898 issue of the "Klondyke Nugget" a local newspaper out of Dawson City, there was a report of a Masonic Meeting held at the Pioneer Club on Saturday night. The meeting was of a social nature and is supposedly the first Masonic assemblage on the Yukon Territory.

At the request of a number of Masons in Dawson City, who at that time were themselves from lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, application was made for a dispensation to open a Masonic Lodge at Dawson City under the name of "Klondyke Lodge".

On the 15th December 1898 a dispensation was issued by the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, but on the 12th June 1900 it was replaced with another dispensation that was now issued in the name of "Yukon Lodge #79" who received their charter in 1901. Their ritual is the Canadian Working which is similar to our Emulation ritual.

Amongst the professions of the brethren of the lodge at this time were:- Dentist, Plumber, Blacksmith, Bookkeeper, Advocate, Undertaker, Physician, Vet. Surgeon, Fishery Insp., Architect, Fireman, Electrician, Photographer, Master Mariner, Supt. R.N.W.M.P., Laundryman, student at Law and of course, miners too. They were all Freemasons, who had come from all walks of life, and had travelled from all parts of the world.

After the two lodges at Dawson City and Whitehorse had continued for some years, it was found that most of their communications and business relations were with British Columbia. In 1907 both Yukon Lodges petitioned the Grand Lodge of Manitoba to surrender their Charters and seek new ones from the Grand Lodge of British Columbia.

Both of these petitions proved successful and on the 26th June 1907, The Grand Lodge of British Columbia issued warrants for The Yukon Lodge #45 (79) in Dawson City, and The Whitehorse Lodge #46 (81) in the City of Whitehorse. A new Masonic District, No. 10, was created for the Yukon Territories which also included Atlinto Lodge #42 at Atlin, B.C.

The building now being used by the Yukon Lodge #45 for their Masonic meetings is the original "Carnegie Library" building. Their previous masonic hall having been burnt down in about 1932.

The need for a library was paramount in those stampede days, as news was at a premium and reading material and newspapers at times, had more value than gold. It was fortunate that Mr. A. Nicol the President of the Dawson free library at that time, had an uncle who was a friend of Andrew Carnegie, the well known philanthropist, who lived on his estate at Skibo, in the Highlands of Scotland.

He wrote to Mr. Carnegie on the 18th April 1902 to appeal for financial assistance to build a library. Mr. Carnegie's reply was as follows:-

"Dear sir, Yours of 18th April received, Mr. Carnegie's will has been to give about \$15,000 for a population such as yours, but as it is more expensive to build in the Yukon, Mr. Carnegie will give \$25,000 to erect a free library building, if the council pledges maintenance of the library at a cost of not less than \$2,500 a year and provides a suitable site for the building."

The city council voted on the 1st January 1903, to accept Mr. Carnegie's gift. Work commenced quickly, the trench for the foundations was burned and chopped down into the permanently frozen muskeg, or permafrost. The ground is permanently frozen from the surface down, the moss on the top acts as insulation and keeps it from thawing. Dawson has had recorded temperatures in the summer of 105 degrees F., and the permafrost doesn't thaw.

The building materials had arrived in the White Pass and Yukon Railway area in the autumn of 1903, but were side-tracked to make room for perishable goods. The route taken for goods destined for Dawson City usually began in San Francisco, Seattle or Vancouver, ships then carried their cargoes to Skagway, Alaska, where it was transferred to the White Pass and Yukon Railway.

The 110 mile narrow-gauge track ended in Whitehorse where the goods were again carried by water. The 450 mile journey on the Yukon River finally led to Dawson, the materials, in five hundred and eight packages, finally arrived on board the sternwheelers Columbian and Victorian on 26th June 1904.

Work commenced immediately and with the addition of the ninety foot flagpole of yukon spruce donated by the McClaskey brothers, the Carnegie Library was an imposing site on opening day, 16th August 1904.

An up to date appraisal of the building was sent to me recently by my friend in Whitehorse:

"The building is two storey, consists of a banquet room that would comfortably seat 40 or 50, a small kitchen, small office, very small bathroom with no running water and stairway to the upstairs. On the top floor we have a very nice (old) lodge room, small preparation room and a foyer. The inside walls and ceilings are made of formed tin with a design hammered on them and everything is blue and white (cream colour actually). The floor is 4 x 1 fir flooring, varnished and the Master sits under a red velvet canopy of sorts.

The exterior of the building is flat sheet tin, white and some parts are stucco. We have a nice double door entrance, set off by two pillars, at the top of a three sided set of stairs of about 7 steps from the wooden sidewalk on the street.

We have electricity and a sewer but the water has been turned off as it is expensive and we only use the building for 6 meetings a year. It has been a chore to try and keep the building, with our dwindling membership. Myself and others have been raising funds for the last two years and as of today we have all the bills paid, a small amount of money in the bank and a plan to keep the building for 10 more years (2 used up, leaving 8.)."

We have about 115 members today, most of whom are affiliated , about 10 members are resident in Dawson and a support group that travels from Whitehorse for each meeting (335 miles). We muster about 12 - 15 for each meeting and for the Grand Masters Official visit in May this year we had about 75 present and a very good time was had by all who were there. We even had the Grand Master of Alaska there with about 6 of his Officers and their wives."

Freemasons of the Yukon Lodge #45. Dawson City.

In the fall of 1897 Bro.Frederick Albert Hewitt Fysh, who was #90 on the register of the Yukon Lodge #79, an accountant who had affiliated from the Tuscan Lodge #195 in London Ontario, on the 10th December 1903 was, together with his brother-in-law Charles Williams, working a small creek flowing into the sea, well north of Seward Peninsula in the west of Alaska .

They had travelled north from San Francisco on a small schooner to St.Michael, then continued onwards north to the Arctic Circle towards their destination the Klondyke, when a freeze-up came. They had two choices, to return to St.Michael by an overland route, or strike south-east to the Yukon. They opted for the Yukon, these two men pulled a hand-made toboggan across half of Alaska, crossing wind-swept tundra, snow-choked valleys, and ridge after ridge of unknown mountains until they reached Fort Yukon and the comparatively easy highway of the river. No man had ever come that way before nor is there a record of any other stamperder who followed in their footsteps. This is what some freemasons are made of.

Bro.Joseph Burr Tyrrell #6 on the Lodge register, aged 42, occupation mining engineer, founder member. Bro.Tyrrell has two features named after him. "Mount Tyrrell", between the sixtymile and Yukon rivers, and "Tyrrell Creek", a tributary to the Nisling river.

Bro.Tyrrell was born in Ontario on the 1st November 1858 educated at upper Canada College and The University of Toronto, he won scholarships and graduated with distinction. He served with the militia, Queen's Own Rifles and The Governor General's foot guards, was a crack shot with both pistol and rifle. Bro.Tyrrell served the Geological Survey of Canada from 1880 to 1898 in the North West Territories and Yukon. Resigning from the Geological Survey of Canada he practised as a mining engineer for several years in Dawson, his hobby was writing about men of the early fur trade and their exploration in Northern Canada. He died in Agincourt, Ontario, his house here in Dawson is a log house and still stands today.

Bro.William F.Schnabel #10 on the Lodge register, aged 40, occupation Stockman, Founder member. "Schnabel Creek" which flows into Annie Lake, about 35 miles from Whitehorse, at the big bend of the Wheaton river is named after Bro.Schnabel.

The register shows Bro.Schnabel using his middle name "Frederick" but he had a nickname "Cowboy" this was given to him because he would not walk anywhere where he could ride a horse. "Cowboy" came into the Yukon in 1897 and was the first man to prospect Gray ridge in 1898. He found a coal seam on Schnabel creek in the summer of 1898. His wife was the first white woman in this part of the country, they lived in the district until 1914 when they moved to Oregon.

Bro. John Alexander Gillis #26 on the Lodge register, aged 35, occupation Dentist. "Gillis Lakes", a large group of small lakes west of the Peel river have been named after Bro. Gillis who was the Speaker of the Yukon Council from 1912 to 1915. He represented South Dawson on the council.

Bro. George Brimston #22 on the Lodge register, aged 36, occupation Undertaker, raised as MM April 1st 1901. In 1973 The topographical surveys branch named a feature after George Brimston. "Mount Brimston" and "Brimston Gulch", Mount Brimston is in the Nahanni range, north of the Ogilvie river, Brimston Gulch flows into sulphur creek in the South Klondike district. George staked and named this creek in late 1897. In 1898 he was working his claim and had built and was operating a roadhouse at the mouth of this stream. He worked this for a number of years before moving to Dawson. Bro. Brimston was for many years, Sheriff of the Yukon. I have not been able to determine when he became an undertaker as stated in the Lodge records.

RW Bro. George Allen Jeckell #126 on the Lodge register of the Yukon Lodge, has had a mountain named after him, "Mount Jeckell". Bro. Jeckell came to the Yukon as a teacher and was initiated in the Lodge at the age of 25 on the 11th January, 1906, he was Worshipful Master in 1909. During the depression the Government did away with the position of commissioner of Yukon and on 30th June 1932 appointed Bro. Jeckell Comptroller of the Yukon, he held this post until 18th September 1947. Bro. Jeckell was awarded the Order of the British Empire for his outstanding work. Bro. Jeckell is still attending Lodge in spirit through the wearing of his Past Masters Jewel by myself. This jewel is a masterpiece which was made here in Dawson City.

Northern Lights Lodge #157, Mayo, Yukon Territory.

Was "Under Dispensation" from the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and received that on the 15th May 1953, personally from the Grand Master. After continuation of the dispensation for 1953 and 1954, Grand Lodge ordered the Warrant of Constitution for the Lodge on 23rd June 1955 and the Grand Master duly constituted the Lodge in Wareham Memorial hall, Mayo, Y. T. on the 30th August 1955. The lodge adopted the Canadian work for its ritual, and for its name that glorious phenomenon of nature in the common name of *aurora borealis*, the Northern Lights.

The Lodge operated until July or August of 1980 when the Grand Master removed their charter at his official visit. Not enough officers were present to hold a quorum and the Worshipful Master of the lodge had attended a different function (Lions Club we think). I would think that the Grand Master was in a fairly hostile mood when the Worshipful Master was not there to receive him!

It is believed that a W. Bro. McLeod White was the first Master of the lodge, he was a mining engineer from the United Keno Hill Mine at Elsa, Y. T., about 25 miles east of Mayo. The last Master was W. Bro. Bill Bennet, Mill manager at UKHM, he was well known to my friend in Whitehorse, who recalls that on his one and only visit in May or June 1980, there was a very small turnout.

The mine closed about 1987 or so and was a large silver mine for many years and has a very colourful history of its own. The ore was placed in gunny sacks and hauled by cat train and sleigh to Mayo during the winter months. They stockpiled the ore on the waterfront and when the river opened in June, the riverboats would then haul the ore down the Stewart River to the Yukon River. There, they transferred the ore to larger steamboats who took the ore to Whitehorse, then it went by the White Pass and Yukon Railroad to Skagway, and on to larger ships for Vancouver or Seattle, and finally by train to the smelter at Trail B.C, a total journey of 2900miles.

The lodge building in Mayo was originally a store with two rooms. The Masons used one room for the lodge and the other room for banquets. They had two pillars and an altar but can't find out what happened to them, we know they were sent to a lodge someplace. The building was owned by the lodge members at the time and of course, was sold when the lodge shut down. It is still standing today, is owned by the Yukon Government and used as a storage warehouse.

WHITEHORSE LODGE #46, CITY OF WHITEHORSE, Y. T.

The first form of a Masonic organisation in Whitehorse was a picnic held during the summer of 1901, at which the V.W.Bro. Judge Chadwick of Skagway Lodge #113, Grand Lodge of Washington was an honoured guest. To the surprise of the organizers, it was found that there were approximately forty Freemasons in the Whitehorse area.

W.Bro.R.D.Pinneo, a past master of Skagway Lodge, saw the possibility of establishing a Lodge here and directed his enthusiasm towards that end, he was at that time a cashier with the British Yukon Navigation Co. and a member of various Masonic orders. It was mainly due to his energy and perseverance that Whitehorse Lodge was established.

The first organizational meeting was held on November 6th 1901, at the Post Office building with twenty eight Freemasons gathered together. A committee was formed and authorized to communicate with the Grand Lodge of Manitoba to obtain all the necessary information for forming a lodge in Whitehorse. At the very same meeting another committee was immediately formed to extend assistance to deserving brethren in distress.

On St. John's Day, December 27th 1901, at a general meeting it was decided to apply to the Grand Lodge of Manitoba for a dispensation. A Dispensation to form a Lodge, dated 5th March, 1902 was received and an amount of \$300 was advanced by twelve worthy brethren for the purchase of furnishings and supplies.

During this time Dr.N.J.Lindsay was Worshipful Master, R.D.Pinneo was Senior Warden, and C.W.Pennefather was Junior Warden and on the 11th June 1903 a warrant was issued by the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, to the Whitehorse Lodge #81.

As with Yukon Lodge #45(79) the Whitehorse Lodge successfully petitioned the Grand Lodge of British Columbia for a warrant, and on the 26th June 1907 it was issued. Whitehorse Lodge now has the distinction of having two Charters hanging on its walls.

After a disastrous fire in the city in 1905 from which the lodge emerged unscathed, the entire building (which was originally the Savoy Hotel on the East side of the river), was moved across the Yukon River on the ice during the winter of 1900-1901 where it continued as a hotel for a few years.

The lodge occupied the building on Second Avenue in the 1920's, it was used regularly for many years, especially during the construction of the Alaska Highway, when 10,000 servicemen were in town. On the 18th September 1967, the lodge moved into their new and present home, on Lambert street.

In the early days enthusiasm was high, gold was king and there were few counter-attractions. The lodge prospered, the winter population was about 350 and the summer population about 450. During the First World War the Yukon suffered from the exodus of men, but during the twenties, better days returned.

The lodge carries a very widely scattered membership as a result of the days when soldiering brethren took their degrees only to leave for the "outside" shortly afterwards. During the period between 1946 and 1948 the lodge was enhanced by visiting brethren from the RCAF and Canadian Army.

They also participated as a combined degree team on numerous occasions, particularly when a serviceman was to be initiated into the Craft. It was a very colourful ceremony, as the brethren would wear their regimental uniforms. The Canadian Army departed the area in 1965 and the RCAF station closed down in 1968.

When Whitehorse became the central point for the construction of the Alaska Highway and later the Canol Project, the Masonic Hall was often found to be inadequate to hold the many visitors most of whom were U.S. Army personnel. Various American degree teams exemplified their different ritual workings from time to time and Courtesy Degree work kept the lodge officers busy. Whitehorse does the "Canadian Work".

At the time of the celebration of the 75th Anniversary on the 28th May 1977 there were 217 members, the lodge building was theirs having paid off the mortgage in 1975, which was quite an achievement.

At this present time, Whitehorse Lodge has a membership of 150, which includes many affiliates. It averages about 15 in attendance at its regular meetings.

Letters on File.

The White Pass & Yukon Route
Accounting Department

July 7th 1902.

Worshipful Master and Brethren of the White Horse Lodge.
Dear Brethren,

Your committee named at last regular meeting, to secure a suitable meeting place at the first opportunity, beg to report briefly as follows:-

The proposition of Brother Whitney to fix up the hall above his store suitable for our purpose to be leased to us for one year at \$50 per month was accepted, he also consented to put in the raised platform, which you now see in the East, free of charge. (He decided that to have a platform in the East with 3 steps would not be in keeping with the hall on account of the low ceiling).

The carpet for the hall was selected by the committee for Bro. Whitney. We then decided to go ahead and fully equip the hall in a first class manner, which caused the following orders to be honoured:-
To Vancouver for furniture etc as follows that Bro. Whitney was instructed to order, Carpet, window shades, and other materials needed to put hall in shape, also 3 dozen comfortable chairs, which are now in hall.
Five officers chairs were ordered direct from the factory at Vancouver to cost \$125, also 4 deacons & stewards chairs @ \$48.
W. Bro. Lindsay ordered the 3 Pedestals and Altar @ \$95.

Arrangement was made with the Yukon Electric Co. to furnish light at \$1 per meeting, until the 1st August the unit would charge at 20cents per light per meeting night, this is however subject to revision if better rate can be made.
Trusting you will accept this hurried report and order committee discharged.
I am yours fraternally and faithfully,
R.D. Pinneo, Chairman.
(Estimate for furniture etc mentioned was for \$550.)

.....

Calgary, Alberta
21st April 1902

N.J. Lindsay, M.D.,
White Horse, Yukon.

Dear sirs and R. Em. Fratis

As you are now starting a new lodge I would like to tell you of a plan we have adopted in Bow River Lodge, when the appeal for charity is made to the candidate in the N.E. corner. The bag of benevolence is first passed to every Brother in the lodge. We have done this since the beginning of last year, our collections average about \$5 each initiation ceremony, and are kept in a separate fund. This has been highly commended by the Grand Master and has been adopted by other lodges. As we used to do it, now seems like a humbug, But this does away with any such feeling.
Faithfully and Fraternally,
E. Nelson Brown.

.....

White Pass Lodge, F. & A. M.
Masonic Hall,
525 Fourth Avenue
SKAGWAY
Alaska
May 9th 1902.

To W.M., Wardens, & Brothers of
White Horse Lodge, U.D., A.F. & A.M.
White Horse
Yukon Territory.

Gentleman,

You are respectfully requested by this Lodge to Confer the
Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees upon, E.A., Bro. E.S. Busby-he
having been duly elected to receive the degrees by this Lodge and has
paid the fees for the same vis \$75.

Please notify when finished and oblige.

Yours truly and fraternally,
Geo.E.Howard

Secretary.

.....
**The White Pass & Yukon Route
Traffic Department**

Vancouver, B.C. Feb. 23rd 1906,

Mr. L.M. DeGex,
W.M. White Horse Lodge No. 81
White Horse
Yukon Territory

Dear Sir and W. Brother,

I enclose herewith one dollar bill to cover January and
February dues. Wish you would kindly forward to me a Dimit as I wish to
join one of the Vancouver Lodges. I am loathe to withdraw from White
Horse Lodge, but as I belong to so many Masonic Lodges it makes dues
pretty high, and as you know I must keep a little cash for the family.
However, my heart will always be with you and the Brethren and I will
be glad to act for you here at any time.

I want to join here, for if I don't I will surely get rusty and soon become a
back number.

With love to the brethren, I beg to remain,
Yours fraternally,

Roger D. Pinneo. (Founder and
S. W. in 1901.)

The White Pass & Yukon Railway.

Early in 1897, William Brooks Close, a Partner in Close Brothers & Co, a well respected financial house in London, was introduced to Charles Henry Wilkinson, who represented a syndicate by the name of the British Columbia Development Association Ltd.

The purpose of this meeting was for this syndicate to solicit financial support from Close Bros.Ltd, for their project, the building of the White Pass & Yukon Railway, after several unsuccessful approaches had already been made in the U.S.A. and Canada.

In his wisdom, and against the advice of his firms solicitors, W.B, as he was affectionately known, decided that with the solid connections and substantial interests his firm had in the U.S.A., felt that they should go-ahead and provide the financial backing for this project.

In the early spring of 1898 at St.James Hotel in Skagway, a young Irish Canadian surveyor by the name of Michael Heney, with great experience of railroad construction, together with Sir Thomas Tankrede, an engineer representing Close Brothers of London, England, Samuel H.Graves, their U.S. representative and E.C.Hawkins, an American engineer, held a meeting that brought about the reality of The White Pass and Yukon Route.

On the 27th May 1898 the first men, horses and material were landed at Skagway and by 21st July, the first train was operated for a distance of four miles out of Skagway. It was the first passenger train ever operated in Alaska, so far North of anywhere on the American continent.

The railroad was a marvel of engineering, to be able to build through the White Pass's rocky precipices, meant that men were suspended on ropes to stop them falling off the steep slopes while cutting the grade. Dynamite had not yet come into use and immense quantities of black powder were used for blasting through the solid granite.

The building of the railroad continued mercilessly through the freezing winter, at one time there were 3000 men shovelling snow to clear the way for the blasters to be able to get to the end, so that the tracklayers could get started. From sea level the summit reached 3300feet in 21 miles. A total of 35000 men had worked on the railroad and 35 had lost their lives.

The railroad reached the summit of White Pass on the 18th February 1899, and the head of Lake Bennett on the 6th July 1899, so began the White Pass and Yukon Railway. At this time W.B.Close had travelled from England, and upon his arrival at Skagway Camp No.1, was made an Hon.Member of the Artic Brotherhood.

The 31st July 1900 was a day that the people of White Horse can quite justifiably, consider to be the day that their city was born.

It was the arrival of the first passenger train from Skagway, which brought to fruition, a dream made by W.B.Close ,in December 1897. This project had proved to be the "golden nugget" for the finances of Close Brothers Ltd, they had indeed struck gold, and the key to the heart of the Yukon Territories had been provided.

Such was the gratitude shown by the people of the city of White Horse to Close Brothers Limited, that they re-named their city " Closeleigh", in gratitude to this historic birthright given to them, by the opening of the gateway to the rest of the world.

The Chilkoot Pass (Trail) and the White Pass are both mountain passes which the people walked along. Today the railroad and highway go through the White Pass, so very little hiking is done there. People do however come from around the world to hike the Chilkoot and it is a family event for many. My friend tells me that two of his daughters have hiked it, and one has hiked it three times. It is no picnic either, most people take 3 to 5 days as it is very steep, very rocky, and very scenic.

This last summer, R.W. Bro. Art Christenson and his wife Ione (I own) who was the Commisioner of the Yukon, for many years, ran a small hotcake stop, at Lindeman Lake (near Bennett Lake),which is at the end of the 33 mile trail, and served over 2000 hikers in 3months.All the monies were donated to charity, they served a sourdough pancake,(a traditional piece-de-resistance, that came over the trail in 1898 by Art's father in law, who was in the North West Mounted Police at that time.

And that Brethren is another story !.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

While researching and writing this paper, I was given great support and encouragement from these and other sources, for which I am deeply indebted.

W.Bro. Trevor W. McKeown
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For allowing me the use of the 'Canadian Studies Collection' held in the
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